



FOCUS ON COMPASSION

a quarterly newsletter

Can you imagine being very sick and far away from home?

Cooperation between FHSSA Partner Hospices Fulfills a Patient's Wish: Going Home to Ethiopia

It had been five years since Genet had last seen her children.

"It's a long time," she said. "It's a long, long time."

Her deepest desire was to reunite with them, and time was of the essence. Genet was in the care of middle Tennessee's Alive Hospice. You wouldn't have known that she was sick as she sat talking with staff at Alive Hospice Residence Nashville in June, 2010, but she knew time was growing short.

She wanted to go home, and for Genet, home was half a world away. Home was Ethiopia.

She came to US 10 years earlier and made her way to Tennessee. Though her two children were born in the United States, they have lived in Ethiopia for the past five years. Her sister lives in Canada, her brother in Rome.

There were phone calls with her children, but there is no substitute for talking with someone face to



Genet's hospice journey took her home to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to be with her children and family.

face. Sometimes, long distance is just too long.

Genet was a patient at Alive Hospice Residence Nashville for six months. In that time, she got to know the staff there very well, and they came to know her. They knew that returning home and seeing her children was Genet's most desperate wish. Hospice is about family, and Genet needed hers.

And so, for six months, Alive Hospice staff worked behind the scenes to get her home.

That day in June, as she sat in room 158 talking with a social

worker (just one of the people who worked tirelessly on her behalf), Genet's bags were packed. The next morning, she would board a plane bound for Ethiopia.

A Complicated Process

It was a complicated process that involved a seemingly endless series of steps. Coordinating with her family to arrange safe passage home. Providing the medications she needed on the 16-hour trans-Atlantic flight. Coordinating with the airline due to Genet's delicate circumstances. Ensuring that she would have access to hospice care when she returned to the Horn of

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Africa. And the last step: working with Genet's church in Nashville to arrange transportation to the airport.

Once she arrived, Genet would be in the care of Hospice Ethiopia Association. Making that happen required cooperation between hospice providers: not only between Alive Hospice and Hospice Ethiopia Association, but also between two competing providers: Alive Hospice and Caris Healthcare.

Both organizations have established FHSSA program partnerships. Alive Hospice is partnered with Hospice in the West which is in

South Africa. Caris Healthcare is partnered with Hospice Ethiopia Association. In response to Alive Hospice's request, Caris Healthcare was ready and willing to provide supplies and equipment as necessary once Genet was in the care of its Ethiopian sister hospice.

Working together, these hospice organizations made Genet's wish come true. As she spoke with Alive Hospice staff the day before she left, one word summed up what she was most looking forward to when she arrived: "Hugs."

And while her departure was a great

joy for Genet, it meant a bittersweet goodbye to her Alive Hospice family.

"I'll miss everything. Everybody I miss," she said in beautifully accented English. "I'm happy. Everything is good. Everything is good."

After all, there's no place like home.

Genet arrived safely in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on June 10, 2010. She died peacefully on June 26 at home with her family. She was able to be with her children, which was her greatest wish of all.

Submitted by Alive Hospice

Shelley Smith Named Director, FHSSA

Shelley Smith takes on the newly developed role as director, FHSSA. Shelley has been with FHSSA since January 2007, when she joined the FHSSA team as the project director for the USAID funded New Partner Initiative (NPI). Since that time, Shelley has worked with FHSSA team members and our NPI Implementing Partner, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT), in developing a robust palliative care program at 13 rural sites in Tanzania.

In her new role, Shelley will focus on the day-to-day operations of FHSSA, where she will work with FHSSA team members to expand the partnership program, develop the FHSSA "Champion" program, provide oversight of all FHSSA grants, and work to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of FHSSA. As Director, FHSSA, Shelley will report directly to John Mastrojohn III, Executive Director, FHSSA.

Prior to joining FHSSA, Shelley served in various leadership roles in global health for Social & Scientific Systems, Peace Corps, USAID, Global Health Council, and UNICEF. Shelley also served as a volunteer for the Peace Corps in Ghana (1984 – 1986).

Shelley brings over 20 years of experience as a public health professional to her new role and has a masters degree in public health (MPH) from Columbia University's School of Public Health in New York, New York; and a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology from the University of New Hampshire.



Shelley on a site visit in Tanzania.

*Shelley states,
"I look forward to
continuing to work with
FHSSA and develop
relationships with our
many talented colleagues
in Africa."*

FHSSA Partners Attend the APCA Conference in Windhoek, Namibia

Generous support by US hospices made it possible

In collaboration with the African Palliative Care Association, FHSSA called on US hospices to provide sponsorship so that their African hospice partners could attend APCA's triennial conference. The conference was held on September 15-17 in Windhoek, Namibia. Its theme of "Creativity in Practice" offered participants from across Africa and throughout the world the opportunity to learn from experts in a wide range of disciplines.

Conference attendees could choose educational opportunities from five tracks including: innovative ideas in



palliative care, creativity in resourcing palliative care, program development, clinical palliative care, and emerging issues. FHSSA, with generous support from the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and Hope HealthCare Services, co-sponsored a workshop focused on the role of social workers in palliative care.

"The response of US hospices to FHSSA's request for sponsorship was enormous," states John Mastrojohn, FHSSA's executive director. Through sponsorship, 17 representatives from 16 African partner hospices attended the conference. Sponsorship included international airfare, accommodations, food, and conference registration. For African partners operating on very tight budgets, this financial support made it possible for staff members to attend.

Debrah Ajulu of Ngora Hospice in Uganda stated: "Words cannot express all the joy I felt listening to those who had such a wealth of experience and the encouragement given to all at different levels."

"I met many interesting persons both from various regions of Africa as well as USA, and Europe. Just as we experienced when the group from Hospice of the Western Reserve visited us here last year, the human problems and challenges we face are not all that different from one region to another. It is largely the scale of the problem and the resources to address it that have the impact and challenges our creativity.

The theme of the Conference was Creativity in Practice and there was an energy there to make us all creative in the ways we do things. The whole emphasis was really on doing things better, smarter and cheaper but to preserve the depth of quality in all we do.

So it is a challenge to us all and our future seems to lie in partnerships and networks to together maximize our resources to deliver care.

Thank you for your gift that enabled me to be a part of the conference." — Gillian Wasserfall, Helderberg Hospice in South Africa

FHSSA extends deep gratitude to the following sponsoring organizations for their commitment to supporting quality end-of-life care beyond their local communities:

Four Seasons Compassionate Care · Gilchrist Hospice · Hope HealthCare Services · HOPE of Wisconsin · Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State · Hospice and Palliative Care of Western Colorado · Hospice of Northwest Ohio · Hospice of the Bluegrass · Hospice of the Calumet Area, Inc. · Hospice of the Chesapeake · Hospice of the Western Reserve · Infinity Hospice · Odyssey VistaCare Hospice Foundation · Prairie Haven Hospice · Regional Hospice of Western Colorado · Hospice of Summa · The Denver Hospice

Drums, food, art, and good conversation

“From Atlanta to Africa” Fundraising Event Was a Big Success



More than 120 individuals celebrated the important work of FHSSA in sub-Saharan Africa at a fundraising event, “From Atlanta to Africa.” On the evening of September 14, in conjunction with NHPCO’s Clinical Team Conference in Atlanta, conference attendees, NHF and FHSSA board members, and special guests mingled and dined for several hours.

Silent Auction bidding was competitive on more than 100 beautiful African auction items. Through brief remarks by leaders of the National Hospice Foundation and FHSSA, everyone learned more about the impact of FHSSA’s work. A theme sounded by Shareefah Sabur, incoming chair of the FHSSA board, was how life-changing her trip to Africa had been. Her words whetted the appetite of many attendees for a future journey.

The evening began with a special event for top-level donors. Performers from The Drum Café led participants in an energizing drum circle, which created amazing energy that swept through the room and continued into the reception. John Mastrojohn, Executive Director, noted, “We were overwhelmed by The Drum Café and

fully plan to bring them back to future FHSSA events. Next time, we’ll make sure all guests can participate. They were terrific.”

Many generous sponsors contributed in support of the FHSSA Impact Fund. Gold sponsors included CCR Events, Hospice Pharmacia, Hospice of the Western Reserve, and VITAS® Innovative Hospice Care®. NHF is grateful to all the sponsors and attendees who supported the raising of \$24,000 for the FHSSA Impact Fund.

“We are deeply grateful to all our sponsors, and all our guests, for their ongoing commitment to the work of FHSSA. Together, we are making a big difference in the lives of patients and families in Africa, where the need is so tremendous,” said J. Donald Schumacher, President and CEO of NHF and FHSSA.

For more information about how you can support FHSSA, please contact Sarah Meltzer, associate director of development at either smeltzer@nationalhospicefoundation.org or 703-832-3149.

The Foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa is now doing business as FHSSA.



FHSSA

Compassion has no borders

1731 King Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314

CFC# 11018 • (703) 647-5176

www.fhssa.org • info@fhssa.org



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