



SHARING HOSPICE

Dedicated to the care and comfort of the dying
A Quarterly Newsletter of the Madre de Amor Hospice Foundation

APRIL TO JUNE 2008

ISSUE 30

CHRISTMAS IN JUNE

Christmas came early this year to Robin Coligado, one of Madre de Amor's young patients. Robin, the boy, who at the hospice Christmas party last Dec 2007, sang so beautifully to the obvious delight of the guests. One guest in particular, Ms. Reena del Mundo of B Meg, a division of San Miguel Corp., was so touched by the plight of the boy that long after the party, she agonized on what can be done to alleviate his suffering.

It was Ms. Reena and Cathy Sunga, who made Robin's Christmas in June possible, assisted by a number of angels from the Hospice and GMA Wish Ko Lang staff and from her own San Miguel Corp., notably Norman and Avic Ramos.

And so on June 11, 2007, the angels came to transform Madre de Amor compound into a wonderland for Robin and his family. A cute rolling store filled with San Miguel products was set up in a corner of the compound garden, and in the backyard, a gazebo like structure decorated with hanging balls made from fresh red roses and white daisies interspersed with red toole and green leafy vines was put up to be the venue of Robin's parents' wedding. Inside, the long dining table was laden with scrumptious sausages, barbecued chicken and others, courtesy of Monterey meat products, a subsidiary company of San Miguel. At the center of the table was a whole lechon, the centerpiece of all Filipino feasts. Draped on an armchair by the door to the garden, were the bride's and the groom's wedding

attires including shoes. The bride's bouquet, made of red roses and bright green ferns, completed the ensemble ready to surprise the Coligado family who had no idea what was in store for them! Outside on the frontyard, guests of the family, the Hospice staff and volunteers waited excitedly for Robin and his family who were given a run around tour of Los Baños by the GMA people, to allow ample time for the grand preparations. Waiting too, by the sidelines was the cream of the surprise package, Joaquin Bordado, Robin's favorite TV character played by his and his Dad's movie idol, Robin Padilla. For the occasion, Bordado was played by one of Robin Padilla's stunt men.

The next day however, the boy and his family met the real Robin Padilla, which completed the boy's three wishes...a store for his Mom, the legalization of his parents' union and meeting Robin Padilla in person!

There were other gifts, like an expensive Play Station Portable, a gift check from Robin Padilla and BMeg, even scholarships for him and his two siblings from STI Calamba, but it was the genuine care for the sick boy and the real happiness felt by everyone for him that really made that day in June like Christmas!

Robin Coligado at a young age may have a very dark world due to an apparent incurable disease...but as author Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote," only when it is dark enough, you can see the stars." May Robin's night be filled with stars always.

Llta Canonizado

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>CHRISTMAS IN JUNE</i>	P. 1
<i>THE VIEW FROM THE HORIZONTAL</i>	P. 2
<i>HOSPICE DAY CARE OUTING</i>	P. 3
<i>A JOYFUL DAY</i>	P. 3
<i>ANG AKING KARANASAN SA HOSPICE</i>	P. 4
<i>DONORS</i>	P. 4



THE VIEW FROM THE HORIZONTAL BY: RHODORA OCAMPO, MD

Doctors are supposed to make their patients get well, doctors don't get sick. This is what most doctors including me and people think. But I was so wrong.

Since early this year, I had been having bouts of shortness of breath and dizziness. This lasted for just a few seconds so I thought nothing of it. As months went by, my symptoms became more frequent. Until it came to a point when I thought I was going to pass out. I finally got around to having some tests done and to my surprise, I found out I was severely anemic and had low protein in my blood. I needed a blood transfusion as I could no longer tolerate prolonged activity of any kind.

My doctors looked for the cause and found that I had been losing too much blood through my menses. I underwent a hysterectomy last July 29. Post operatively, I developed a spinal headache as a complication of my epidural anesthesia. This condition is called "the headache of all headaches". It was excruciatingly painful, 10/10 on the visual analogue scale and accompanied by nausea, dizziness, ear fullness and ringing of both ears. The treatment was to lie flat on my back and drink fluids.

I could not tolerate sitting; lying down helped. For someone used to being on the go, the thought of lying down was not palatable. More so when my back and neck muscles started aching. I literally could not do anything but lie down- one can only watch so much TV, the iPod did not help as I was hearing the songs off key, reading was no use as the letters got muddled up. By the fourth day I was depressed as I felt no better.

Visits made my day. They were a welcome site and my link to the outside world. Plus it gave me a chance to be updated on family matters. It also hurts when people you expect to visit you do not. So to my dear hospice volunteers, your work is priceless indeed. You are not family or friend and yet you make time to visit your patients.

Words are powerful. I thought of our hospice patients and how they must feel once they become house and bed bound. At least I knew that a few more days and I would certainly be able to get up and go back to my normal activities. What about them? We usually say to our patients "sige, pagaling ka" or "pahinga ka lang" or "kain ka ng madami para sumigla ka". But when we are the receiving end of these words, I want to retort "you don't know what you are saying". Who doesn't want to get well? Its so hard to eat when one doesn't have an appetite or when your mouth is so bitter. Rest? That's what I've been doing for the whole week! How much sleep and rest does one really need? I made a promise to myself that I would not utter these

words to another patient again

Patience is a virtue but so is being on time. Because I was a doctor, I had the express lane on my consults. I did not wait; as soon as I got to their clinics, I would be the next patient. Until I was referred to a specialist who did not know me. I had to wait three hours for her to see me. I sat in the waiting room along with the other patients. It amazed me as to how ready they were to wait for their doctors : one was doing sudoku, another reading a book and there were the sociable ones who talked to anyone who would talk to her, others simply slept on the chairs even if they were uncomfortably hard.

I was restless as I had to pick up my son from school and I did not want to be late or else he might cry. When she did finally see me, the visit was so short that left me wanting more. I made a note that I should strive to be on time for my clinics and make sure that I am able to answer their questions well.

Family is precious. During my first admission for the blood transfusion, I did not tell family nor friends about it because I wanted to get some sleep and rest. Some of them were surprised at my actions and in fact berated me for it. However for my operation, I dutifully informed them. I asked my aunt to stay with me as I had no mother already.

My dad and step-mom in turn looked after the kids at home. When I got home, my four year old son was always at my side. He would play with his toys while sitting beside me. If I needed any help, he would be the one to go out and call my yaya. The kids and I had precious time bonding as they are not used to me being in the house when they got home from school. My husband too had to assume certain roles; he had to accompany my daughter to the store to buy new shoes. In times like this, it is wonderful to have family.

This experience is new to me. It made me realize that I should take care of my health. I thank God for making me well again; thanks too to all who prayed for me, sent cards, flowers, fruits, food and emails. The view from the horizontal is not so bad after all.

HOSPICE DAY CARE OUTING

It was indeed a very exciting day for the day care patients! On May 16, 2008 the group went to Joremi Private Resort at Solemar del Pansol, Calamba, City to spend the day with fun and joy. Our patients with the occupational and physical therapist partners were very happy with their water therapy activity, patients whom we thought could not make it to the water proudly showed their ability to swim.

Nanay Marita, who complained of on and off pain on her edematous arms played with her feet in the cool water. Tatay Tony with an open wound at the neck played the billiards. And some surprised us from their ability to sing.

As a hospice daycare coordinator, I am very happy and thankful that at least an activity like this can make them forget the pain and problems they are facing. One laugh or a simple smile give me another day of hope and an inspiration to appreciate life more. And for the people who unselfishly share their blessings to make this activity possible, may their tribe increase! We hope that more will follow their footsteps in a worthy endeavors like this.

Virginia Cabrera



A JOYFUL DAY

I remember the first time I attended hospice daycare activity, Alvin, our Rehab Supervisor asked me if I can lead the program, I immediately accepted the task thinking it was going to be easy. We started the program by introducing ourselves, me and fellow physical therapists Jamir, Den and Olive. In spite of all our preparations, I felt awkward, anxious.

As the activity went on I could not hide my feelings.. The people in the hospice brought out the best in you, like tatay Johnny, a patient with histiocytoma. This is the reason why our activity became more enjoyable as we moved on with our program. One may notice the joy and laughter of every patient who participated in the activity which was considered the highlight of the day's activity. The two hours of joy and laughter made them forget the pain and trials they are facing. Maybe it is not the sense of humor that made them laugh but the sense of irony that helps one get through the sad moments of their life.

The daycare made me feel good and excited. I am looking forward to the coming activities knowing that the day will be another gift from God.

Gina Postigo
Occupational Therapist



“SHARING HOSPICE
IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF
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FOUNDATION”
TEL NO.: (049) 536-0644
www.hospice.org.ph
E-mail: info@hospice.org.ph
hospicelb@yahoo.com

ANG AKING KARANASAN SA HOSPICE

Buwan ng Hulyo 2006, lumabas ako sa hospital (PGH) pagkatapos ng aking ikalawang operasyon, putol ang aking kaliwang braso. Halos hindi matanggap ng aking asawa, mga anak at mga apo. Masakit din para sa akin ang nangyari. Nagkaroon ako ng iba't-ibang pananaw sa buhay. Damangdama ko na ang malawak kong kapaligiran ay sumisikip, kalungkutan ang madalas kong nararamdaman. Halos ayaw ko ng lumabas ng bahay. Ang pagbabasa na lamang ng mga aklat pang-simbahan, lalong lalo na ang Bibliya ang aking naging libangan. Marami pa akong hinahanap para malibang at kahit paano mabawasan ang aking kalungkutan. Malaki ang epekto sa buong pamilya, ang dating masaya at masiglang pagtitipon ay naging matamlay at malungkot. Sa nangyari sa akin naniniwala ang buong pamilya na hindi kami pababayaang ni LORD.

Buwan din ng Hulyo 2007 ng magkaroon kami ng di inaasahang panauhin at sila pala ay mga taga hospice. Ayon sa paliwanag, sila ay mga nag-aaruga ng mga pasyenteng may sakit na cancer. At napabilang ako sa kanilang pasyente. Ang mahirap na pagtanggap ng buong pamilya ko sa nangyari sa akin ay naging madali na. Unti-unti ko ng naramdaman ang kasiyahan at ang araw ng Martes ang pagbisita ay laging pinanabikan. Salamat una kay Lord, sa Hospice, sa mga volunteers na sina Daph at Etta, at ang aking mabait na nars na si Des.

At isang nagpapalakas sa akin at ang buong pamilya ay and day care activity na ginaganap minsan isang buwan. Dito ay nakita ko ang kapwa ko pasyente na sa kabila ng kanilang karamdaman ay malugod nilang tinatanggap ang ano man na ka-loob ng Diyos. Ang Day Care activity ay nakapagbibigay ng panibagong lakas, katatagan at pag-asa sa kabila ng aming mga karamdaman. Ang regalo ng Hospice ay pag-ibig sa mga pasyenteng nabiyayaan ng libre serbisyo. Ang kabuuan nito ay nagbibigay liwanag, tuwa, katatagan, kapayapaan at pag-asa ng bawat isa.

Bro. Johnny Herrero
Pasyente ng Hospice
Lungsod ng Calamba

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