

Why I give

MY EPIPHANY

When I was offered the distinct honor of joining the board of what was then Hospice of Wake County, I knew — or thought I knew — what hospice was all about. After all, when my dad died in Tennessee in 1988, it was hospice that allowed him to die with dignity at home, as he wished. It was hospice that did so much to help my mom at the time. My brother, too, was in hospice care when he died, as was a good friend and colleague here in Raleigh.

My education, however, was just beginning.

In nine years on the hospice board here — plus time on committees — I saw what hospice provided for young children, for teenagers, for their families. I saw

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more and more of my friends and acquaintances being touched by hospice care. I came to understand that this was not an organization coming in to cure a patient, but

instead an outstanding group of nurses and doctors and caregivers and chaplains and volunteers who are out there every single day holding the hand of someone who needs care and helping the entire family prepare for what lies ahead.



“... death will touch every one of us. The need for help will never go away.”

DAVID CRABTREE
1979 Circle Charter Member

During those years, we began the capital campaign for the hospice campus. A group of us visited foundations, faith-based groups, philanthropists and every municipality in Wake County.

It was during one of these discussions that I had the epiphany.

There are countless organizations — wonderful, worthy organizations — that raise funds for good and noble causes. I suddenly realized that whether it was money for the homeless or victims of domestic violence or the heart association or the food shuttle, there's a possibility

that one day, some of these needs would be met.

But death will touch every one of us. The need for help will never go away.

I address any civic group out there that wants to learn more. I talk about it on camera when pertinent. I invite people for conversations about hospice care on my talk show. I tell them what you know, and what I know, about the critical services Transitions LifeCare provides. I speak from the heart. It truly hurts me to know that there are

folks in our community who have just learned that someone in their family is terminally ill. They're reeling, their heads are spinning, their worlds have collided; they don't know what to do or where to turn. I believe we must keep spreading the message that there is someone to talk with, there are people who can help right now.

Though I'm no longer on the board of Transitions LifeCare, my calling is for end-of-life care. However I am needed, whomever I am asked to talk to, whatever I can do to honor Billy Dunlap's unequivocal vision to never turn anyone away, I am both proud and humbled to do.