

Hospice of the Valley of Northern California Honors Veterans

By recognizing the unique needs of Veterans and their families at end of life

SAN JOSE, Calif. – December 2, 2013 - One in four deaths in the United States today is that of a Veteran. Additionally, a vast majority of Veterans are not enrolled in Veterans Affairs (VA) and may not be aware of end-of-life services and benefits available to them, including the Medicare Hospice Benefit and VA-paid hospice care.

Hospice of the Valley, a leading provider in advancing palliative, hospice care, community grief support and education in Northern California, recognizes the unique needs of Veterans and their families at end of life. By utilizing respectful inquiry, compassionate listening and grateful acknowledgement, Hospice of the Valley's interdisciplinary team and Veteran to Veteran volunteers help by accompanying and guiding Veterans through their life stories toward a peaceful end.

This year, in honor of Veteran's Day, Gary Bertuccelli, MDiv, MSW, LCSW, manager of social work and spiritual care at Hospice of the Valley in San Jose, presented veteran John Thompson, 92, of Mountain View, with an American flag, a card and a flag lapel pin in recognition and gratitude for his military service. Mr. Thompson served as an Army Air Corps pilot, flying 35 missions over Germany during WWII.



Photographs courtesy of Hospice of the Valley

Mr. Thompson was among 40 veterans in hospice and Transitions programs recognized by Hospice of the Valley in honor of Veteran's Day. Additionally, in honor of National Hospice and Palliative Care Month in November and as a partner in the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's We Honor Veterans program, Hospice of the Valley hosted Hospice Foundation of America's educational program *Improving Care for Veterans Facing Illness and End of Life*, on November 7, for healthcare professionals and providers who serve veterans, in partnership with Dignity Memorial and Xilinx in San Jose.

Mr. Thompson enlisted in the army on November 16, 1941. He had just turned 20 in October. “I don’t ever remember dwelling on whether or not enlisting was the proper thing to do or the heroic thing to do. It was just something that had to be done,” said Mr. Thompson. Though his four years of military service are now just a fraction of his life experiences, the memories of dear comrades lost to the war still bring tears to his brown eyes.

With great clarity, Mr. Thompson can recall those “little things that you don’t know why they stick in your mind.” Those “little things” are often the stories of humanity, bravery, and kindness Mr. Thompson witnessed in the midst of the war that he still carries with him to this day.

About Hospice of the Valley

Hospice of the Valley is a nonprofit organization in Silicon Valley that provides serious illness and end-of-life care programs and services, including palliative and hospice care, grief counseling for adults, children and families, and emotional support, education and practical assistance. The organization also provides individual counseling and loss-specific support groups to anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one. Established in July 2013, the Palliative Care Center Silicon Valley™, the first independent, community-based, outpatient center of its kind in California for seriously ill patients and their families, is a division of Hospice of the Valley. Hospice of the Valley also provides a community resource website for caregivers and families at seriousillness.org/santaclaracounty. Serving Santa Clara County since 1979, Hospice of the Valley honors all cultures, beliefs, values and traditions and is committed to serving its diverse community and providing equitable access to care for all regardless of financial ability. For more information, call 408.559.5600 or visit hospicevalley.org.

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