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# Life Lines

October 2009

Four Seasons' Bi-Monthly Publication

## About Four Seasons

Four Seasons is one of the premier hospice and palliative care providers in the country. We've provided a high level of compassionate and professional care for people facing serious life-limiting illness in Western North Carolina since 1981.

We are a recent recipient of the prestigious Circle of Life award, which recognizes exemplary palliative and end-of-life care.

We specialize in end-of-life care. Led by health care professionals, social workers, spiritual care professionals and volunteers, we work passionately to serve more than 600 patients daily across an area that includes Buncombe, Henderson and Transylvania counties. Our purpose is to help patients and their families face end-of-life issues with as much care and compassion as any other milestone in life so they can enjoy the best quality of life possible.

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## Four Seasons receives Circle of Life award



Over 120 staff members, volunteers, donors and friends of Four Seasons gathered on August 18 at Greatrex Place for "an exiting announcement and celebration." Even though they were not sure what the announcement would be, they were all pleased and proud to hear that The American Hospital Association (AHA) had awarded the prestigious Circle of Life Award to Four Seasons of Flat Rock, NC, in a ceremony on July 24 in San Francisco. Four Seasons was one of only three programs nationwide recognized for expanding the reach of palliative and end-of-life care in its area.

President/CEO Chris Comeaux and representative Four Seasons staff members Nikki Granere, CNA; Eunice Frady, clinical nurse coordinator; Jane McKown, chaplain; and Rikki Nugent, nurse practitioner, travelled to San Francisco to receive the award.

AHA President and CEO Rich Umbdenstock said of the award recipients, "Dealing with life-threatening illness and end-of-life decisions is difficult for all involved, and the Circle of Life honorees understand that respect, compassion, and honesty are vital aspects of palliative care."

At the celebration on August 18, Richard H. Wade, senior vice president for strategic communications from the American Hospital Association visited Four Seasons

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**Ken Adams**

*Four Seasons board chair*



CIRCLE of LIFE®

***"The Circle of Life Award acknowledges that we are one of the best end-of-life care providers in the country."***

***- Chris Comeaux***

## Board of Directors

# Four Seasons is prepared for the future

◦ *by Ken Adams, Four Seasons board chair*

As I close my term as the board chair of Four Seasons, I am happy to say this organization is on sound footing for the next chair, Greg Burnette. I have been privileged to work in different capacities with Greg on other civic endeavors in this community. From those experiences, I know he will lead Four Seasons to further accomplish its mission in the region. Chris Comeaux and the staff have been exemplary in navigating the murky waters of healthcare, and I feel confident that we will not change, even as much flux will continue due to the economic, social, political and demographic dynamics influencing the strategic planning. That extensive planning and execution will insure that Four Seasons continues

to offer the best hospice and palliative care in the country.

I am pleased to communicate to the citizens of Henderson, Buncombe and Transylvania counties which we serve that Four Seasons is staffed with the most capable personnel, is fiscally sound, and has the under girding of community support from volunteers and donors that allows it to carry out its mission with as much, if not more, success than they had this year. I can't say how great it was to see the organization honored with the "Circle of Life Award" as an exclamation on an already great year. It's been a great year to be board chair of Four Seasons.

continued from page 1

## Circle of life

to re-present the award in front of the gathering.

Chris Comeaux said, "The Circle of Life Award acknowledges that we are one of the best end-of-life care providers in the country. We will continue to live up to that expectation in all our interactions with patients, families and community partners. We are entering a very challenging time in healthcare where there are many unknowns. Our goal is to not just preserve, but to further our mission and vision."

Four Seasons was chosen to receive the award along with Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, OR, and Wishard Health Services in Indianapolis, IN, from about 50 nominations submitted from around the country. The selection committee included leaders from medicine, nursing, social work and health administration. The committee visited programs that respect patient goals and preferences, provide comprehensive care, acknowledge and address that family or caregivers' concerns and build systems and mechanisms of support that ensure the programs continue. Four Seasons and the other programs selected serv-

ice as innovative models for other communities as well.

Four Seasons has a



◦ *Four Seasons founder, Jean Hoogstra, and her husband, Don, at the celebration.*



◦ *(Left to right) Eunice Frady, Four Seasons clinical nurse coordinator; Nikki Granere, Four Seasons CNA; John Mastrojohn III, vice president, Palliative Care, Quality & Research, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, Alexandria, VA; Chris Comeaux, Four Seasons president/CEO; Richard P. de Filippi, trustee, Cambridge Health Alliance, Cambridge, MA and chairman-elect, American Hospital Association; Jane McKown, Four Seasons chaplain; and Rikki Nugent, Four Seasons nurse practitioner.*

multi-disciplinary approach to improving patients physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well being.

The organization was founded over 25 years ago at the beginning of the hospice movement. In 2002, the board of directors made the decision to take the organization to the next level, and as a result, the organization now cares for over 2,200 people on a yearly basis with a full range of hospice and palliative care, research and bereavement services. With community support, Four Seasons grew from serving 26 percent of all deaths in its area to 76 percent.

*The AHA is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the improvement of health in their communities.*

## Life Lines

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We welcome your comments and/or suggestions. Please call or write:

Kathy Thielke  
Four Seasons

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kthielke@FourSeasonsCFL.org

# 11th annual golf tournament supports Four Seasons

◦ by Anne Marie Scherbarth, Event Coordinator

The 2009 Annual Golf Tournament was a great success! Thank you to all who participated, volunteered and sponsored the event. This year, 88 golfers had a wonderful day of golf and friendship at Cummings Cove Golf & Country Club. The weather was perfect, the energy was high and the atmosphere was filled with a luau ambiance.

The proceeds from our golf outings go to support the different programs we offer at Four Seasons. From clinical research to palliative care to hospice care to our inpatient residence the Elizabeth House, our programs at Four Seasons thrive because of the generous support of staff, volunteers and the community.

A warm thank you goes to our sponsors of this year's tournament; Park Ridge Hospital, Thos. Shepherd & Son, Morrow Insurance Agency, Economy Drug, Atlanta Bread Co., Brown and Bigelow, Care Solutions and Webb Insurance.



◦ Many golfers, including Debby Chapman and Lynn Neil (pictured above), enjoyed a beautiful day on the links.

A SPECIAL thank you goes to Dick and Nancy Burns, Norman and Barbara Campbell, Don Jackman, and Jody Pearce, our 2009 Golf Committee. Without these wonderful volunteers the tournament could not have happened.

We look forward to another wonderful tournament in 2010. Mark your calendars now for August 27, 2010 at Cummings Cove Golf and Country Club.

*"This year, 88 golfers had a wonderful day... the weather was perfect, the energy was high and the atmosphere was filled with a luau ambiance."*

- Anne Marie Scherbarth

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Staff

## Meet Todd Neel, Four Seasons Nurse Practitioner



**Todd Neel**  
Four Seasons RN, FNP

Todd Neel, RN, FNP, earned his bachelor's degree in English and German from Vanderbilt University in 1986 and worked for several years as a schoolteacher and science writer before returning to Vanderbilt for a master's degree in nursing, which he earned in 1996. He chose to train as a family nurse practitioner, with skills for health care across the lifespan, in order to be able to work in a variety of positions over the course of his career.

Todd first took a position at Blue Ridge Community Health Services in Hendersonville, NC, working with the early adolescent population in a school-based health center. He eventually assumed the directorship of the school-based health program and developed an approach to identifying adolescents with significant risk factors for obesity-related

chronic disease development which he presented at several state and national conferences.

Todd then transitioned within the same agency to their family practice, providing comprehensive health care to a varied population of adults and children, studying Spanish in Mexico to be able to communicate with Spanish-speaking patients who made up more than half of his practice.

In 2008 he joined Four Seasons as a palliative care nurse practitioner, spending most days visiting patients in their home. He enjoys seeing patients in their home setting and helping them and their families to cope with serious chronic illnesses, and he especially enjoys learning about the life experiences of patients born in the teens, twenties, and during the Great Depression.

*Four Seasons centers services around the patient and family, helping them live well.*

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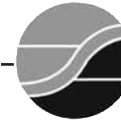
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# Camp Heart Songs

◦ by Ann Greenleaf Wirtz, Four Seasons volunteer

*Camp Heart Songs: the name itself is uplifting.  
To experience the actual camp is life-changing.*

On August 22, twenty children and teens, ages 6 to 14 years old, gathered with dedicated volunteers at the beautiful Falling Creek Camp in Tuxedo, North Carolina. They took part in Camp Heart Song's sixth successful season.

Any child or young person in the community who is dealing with the death of a loved family member or friend can attend this camp, explained Tricia Williams, coordinator of the Heart Songs program at Four Seasons. The one-day camp is filled with encouragement, acceptance, fun, and both comforting and challenging activities designed to help in the grieving process.

It was a perfect summer day for team games, swimming, rock wall climbing, and creating memory boxes, but first the day began with music. "Sharing Life's Melodies" was the encompassing message on each t-shirt donned that morning, summing up the essence of the camp experience. Music Therapist Emily Keebler led the first event before the four groups scatted to their scheduled activities. Campers formed a circle of melody, choosing whimsical musical instruments with unique sounds to express their feelings about camp: happiness to be there, nervousness, some sadness.

Mark Neville, coordinator of the bereavement and music therapy program, presented a xylophone, offering each



◦ Twenty campers along with a group of dedicated volunteers participated in Camp Heart Song's sixth season.

German shepherd, and Bandit, a cuddly French lop eared rabbit were in their fourth season at camp. Wolfy, a striking Alaskan Malamute mix came for the first time.

Music continued, as the campers sang "Let my Heartsong Sing," a song composed and written by Tom Fisch. His chorus provides a hopeful answer for sorrow, "I cannot change what happened, but I can do something; I'll remember you every time I let my heartsong sing."

At the closing ceremony, a video was shown of the day's events. "The Butterfly Song" by Cynthia Gullage and Laura Bollinger was sung, its message, "So, let go of your butterfly. Let healing time begin," a final thought before hundreds of Monarch butterflies were released over the lake. This was a powerful finish to a glorious Camp Heart Songs day.

camper an opportunity to play a melody and share a special memory of their loved one. The music was comforting, the memories a lesson.

"Papa was the first one to ever take me fishing," "Every Christmas Mom would make hot chocolate," "My sister made people happy," "Papaw gave us popcorn and bubblegum," "My uncle took me blackberry picking," were some of the simple memories, ones to last a lifetime.

Two counselors accompanied each group; three therapy animals were available for added comfort. Hannah, a beautiful

## Healing With Horses A teen grief support group

*Teens are invited to join us for 2 days of sharing and learning with horses! This will be a unique opportunity to explore your individual grief experiences and discover new ways of moving forward and coping together. Come experience how horses can help you during YOUR journey.*

*Part I: Saturday, November 14  
8:00 am until 4:00 pm  
@ "Horse Sense of the Carolinas"*

*Part II: Saturday, November 21  
9:00 am until 2:30 pm  
@ Four Seasons' Campus*

*Transportation for the first session will be provided from Four Seasons to Horse Sense of the Carolinas. The second session will be at Greatrex Place on Four Seasons' campus.*

*Registration Deadline: October 1  
Space is limited to eight teens -  
14-19 years of age.*

*Please call Tricia Williams for  
more information  
692-6178*

*Sponsored by:  
Horse Sense of the Carolinas,  
United Way of Henderson  
County, and Four Seasons.*

**Greatrex Place Wish List**

Portable CD/cassette players & CDs

Books on Tape

Crossword or word search puzzle books (fill-ins)

Pocket amplifier for hearing

Headphones

DVDs/Videos

Washcloths

Lightly-scented body sprays and lotions

*If you would like to donate any of the items on the Wish List for Greatrex Place or Elizabeth House, please call Kathy Thielke at 233-0332.*

*Or, if you prefer, you may drop them by Elizabeth House 581 South Allen Road or Greatrex Place 571 South Allen Road.*

New Hires in July and August

# Look who's joined our staff at Four Seasons

We ask our new employees "What compelled you to join Four Seasons?" Read and enjoy their responses.

**Kelly Case, Referral Center Coordinator**

"Wanting to find 'a home' and people I enjoy working with." Outside of work Kelly enjoys watching movies and cooking out.

**Deb Gamache, Volunteer Coordinator**

"I wanted to do something meaningful with my life." Outside of work, Deb enjoys photography, antiques, museums, theatre, travel and family time.

**Anna Hicks, Staff Physician**

"I want to be a part of an organization that has a holistic approach to patient care so that I can work as a part of an interdisciplinary team." Outside of work Dr. Hicks enjoys cooking, traveling, and playing with her son.

**Season Jacques, LPN**

"We decided to move to the mountains from Wilmington and I missed working with hospice patients. They have a special place in my heart." Outside of work Season enjoys camping,

scrapbooking, cooking/ baking, going to church and spending time with her family.

**Cindy Morgan, LPN**

"Your staff cared for my husband, Sam prior to his death on 7/2/09 and my mom, Jennie Bell, prior to her death on 6/15/07. Your compassion and care for others impressed me and prompted me to work first as a volunteer and now as an employee. I appreciate the opportunity to be on your staff!" Outside of work Cindy enjoys scuba diving, gardening, four wheeling, motorcycle riding, needlework, reading, grandchildren, traveling, and photography.

**Karen Murdock, Clinical Research Coordinator**

"The opportunity to work with an organization that serves others with grace and compassion." Karen enjoys volunteering in the community, scrapbooking, reading, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. She is also a big Pittsburgh Steelers fan!

**Chari Price, Nurse Practitioner**

"I worked in home health for 22 years and enjoyed the relationships that are built in a home setting. I saw palliative care as a way to mix relationships with helping patients deal with chronic illness in their home. I was impressed with the staff members I met during the interview process and felt this was a relationship I would be proud to be a part of." Outside of work Chari enjoys traveling, reading, and spending time with family/friends.

**Ann Whisenhunt, Volunteer Coordinator**

"To continue to work in a setting passionate about its mission and involves volunteers enthusiastically to fulfill that mission." Outside of work Ann enjoys traveling, movies, walking, Wii, and photography!

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# Pausing to remember

◦ by Alan Taylor, Spiritual Care Coordinator

The essence of Four Seasons mission and values is our commitment to excellence in our compassionate care for those facing a serious life-limiting illness and our respect for each person and family we serve. This passion to provide caring service does not end with a patient's death.

Twice a year, our staff, Board of Directors and volunteers invite families who have experienced a death to gather for a special time of reflection and memorial. The Celebration of Life service is a program we are pleased to offer to meet the needs of our bereaved families.

Our society does not always understand the value and importance of such times. Bereaved family members are sometimes encouraged by others to "get on with their lives," and in the busy-ness of daily life, they may find it difficult to pause and remember those who have died. However, for many (including our staff and volunteers) this special time to pause, reflect and remember is very helpful and meaningful.

On October 29th Four Seasons will hold the fall Celebration of Life Service in a new location at the Blue Ridge Community College's Technology, Education and Development Center. This beautiful new facility will be very conducive for these meaningful services, including convenient parking and easy accessibility. This facility is also large enough to meet the growing number of persons who attend these services.

While we have been privileged to use the Barber Christian Life Center at First United Methodist for recent services, we were nearing capacity in this facility. Four Seasons

greatly appreciates First United Methodist, and we thank them for their help in providing these services to our bereaved families in these past few years.

*October's Celebration of Life Memorial Service will recognize, remember and honor patients Four Seasons has cared for who have died between March 1 and August 31 of this year. Bereaved families who have lost a loved one during this 6 month period will receive a personal invitation to attend.*

Four Seasons respects all faith traditions and cultures, and we welcome all bereaved families and friends at our Celebration of Life Memorial Services.

For more information, please call Alan Taylor, Spiritual Care Coordinator at 692-6178.

## Elizabeth House Wish List

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Body Wash  
Body Lotion*

*Lotioned or extra soft facial tissues*

*Colored bath towels*

*Flat colored twin size sheets*

*Masculine colors/print cotton material for gowns*

*Polyfil stuffing for pillows*

*Full or twin size washable colorful bed quilts*

*Calming music and gospel music CDs*

*Combo CD/radios for bedrooms*

*Non-slip socks or slippers*

*Individually wrapped mints, candy and snacks*

*Small size dessert paper plates and napkins for hospitality service to families*

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## Hospice Home Store

# Hospice Home Store reveals a new look

On Friday, July 31, the Hospice Home Store held a "Big Reveal Premiere" event to reveal the newly re-designed store. The staff and volunteers of the store dressed up as if going to a big movie premiere. Four Seasons President/CEO Chris Comeaux and Store Manager Eric Mills welcomed a large crowd of well wishers and at 9 am, volunteers and shoppers shouted "Move that bus!" before walking the red carpet to begin two days of big specials and Hollywood fun.



◦ Staff and volunteers gather to reveal the newly re-designed Hospice Home Store.

Terri Thompson, of Carolina First and thrift store specialist, helped organize the event, which was a roaring success! If you haven't been to the Hospice Home Store lately, please come see the new look and shop for great deals on quality, gently used items.

## Volunteers

# Looking for a new volunteer opportunity?

◦ by *Donna Nawrocki, Director of Volunteer Services*

The Volunteer Department is growing and looking to the future with new energy. We have just completed another volunteer training class and have welcomed many new faces to our family. These compassionate individuals are ready to work with Four Seasons in providing the best end-of-life care possible to our patients. That support comes in the form of direct one-on-one patient interaction (socialization, respite for caregivers, massage, pet therapy, etc.), as well as in the many hours donated weekly by our volunteers who provide indirect support (administrative, Hospice Home Store, special events, sewers, bakers, etc.). If you have your own unique, or not so unique, gifts to give but were not able to make it to our recent training, please don't let that deter you.

We are looking for volunteers in Henderson and Buncombe counties and we would love to talk with you about the many volunteer opportunities you can begin to help us with now. If you are interested in learning more please give us a call at 692-6178.



◦ A big thank you to United Way Day of Caring volunteers who sewed butterfly pillows for patients as their Day of Caring project on September 10.