

From Sedona, AZ – Common Passion

When Ron Hawley, social worker for RTA Hospice in Sedona, met the 86-year-old patient assigned to him, he could not help but wonder where they had met before. Ron knew immediately that there was a connection and was determined to get to the bottom of it.

As they talked, Ron learned that this lady had been a traveling gospel singer, and it was at this mention that a memory returned to him. Twenty years before they had met in another city and he had purchased a tape of her music from her. As they reminisced, they realized that they also shared a common love for horses. The patient was half Navajo and had grown up on the reservation where her love of animals had started at an early age. She was delighted to find out that Ron had a horse. That evening Ron told his wife about his patient and delightful planned visit was formulated.

Ron called his patient the next day and made arrangements for a Saturday morning visit. At the appointed time Ron and his wife loaded up his horse and traveled the lady's home. With great joy, his patient wheeled her chair to the front porch and leaned across the banister to touch and pet the horse...she was carried away to a time long before she required Hospice care.

Compassionate care differentiates a good hospice from a great hospice.

"From our first breath, we are each born to die. As a nurse and ordained chaplain, I have been privileged to walk with many wonderful people to the Valley of the Shadow of Death. But then came the pending death of my beloved Richard Ray. When our doctor stated it was time for hospice, my husband became very withdrawn. Hospice for him meant all had been done and it was time to die. This was far from the truth as he was soon to find out. Our experience was a long way from gloom and doom to a truly wonderful, memorable and cherished time. Such compassionate, caring individuals provided quality, up-to-date care. I have only one regret: that we didn't call hospice sooner."

~Rosemary Hanley, RN, Ordained Chaplain