

Hospice

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By providing help, Hospice gives relatives time and energy to be themselves and to spend time with patients with fewer worries, officials said.

The organization also has workshops and support groups to help cope with grief.

The services are provided free, Hospice officials said. Medicare or insurance may reimburse expenses, but Hospice doesn't charge for its services or materials, they said.

Ann Wallace of Oneonta said Catskill Area Hospice helped when her husband, William, died in 2001.

Wallace said she doesn't like to ask people for money, so instead she has volunteered and is chairwoman for the Epicurean Festival, a fundraiser for hospice.

"I enjoy putting it all together," she said. The event last year raised \$62,000.

This year, the festival will be at the Otesaga Resort Hotel in Cooperstown from 3 to 7 p.m. Sunday, April 6. Chefs from area restaurants will prepare food, and the event will feature a silent auction and musical entertainment.

Garcia said between 160 to 180 patients are signed up for Hospice services on any given day, though a patient may receive visits or services three times a week or based on another schedule.

Rod Roberts, director of social work, said most help is given at a patient's home, but staff and volunteers also care for patients in nursing homes.

"We often get immense gratitude from our patient or families," Roberts said.

Patients or their family members may want to talk about death and family matters, including financial issues, health proxies and other concerns, Roberts said.

A physician referral isn't necessary to request hospice care, but at some point a physician must report that patient has six or fewer months to live, he said.

Survivors may find comfort with friends, relatives and church members, but Hospice stays in touch with the family for 13 months after a patient's death, Roberts said.

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Star photo by Brit Worgan

Payroll Coordinator Margie Heannings looks over a spreadsheet with Tammy Christman in the finance office at Catskills Area Hospice and Palliative Care's administrative offices in Oneonta on March 14.

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