

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pleasant Hill, CA, December 7, 2010 – Hospice Launches Vigil Program

The passage into death is as momentous as the passage into life. Dying alone is often listed by patients as their greatest fear as they face the end of life. Yet many people are left to make the journey alone. They may have few, if any, relatives living nearby, or they have outlived their family and friends, or they are, for whatever reason, estranged from family. Such patients face the disheartening possibility of ending their lives with no one at their side. Some of them die in hospitals or long-term care facilities, unable even to experience the comfort provided by the familiar surroundings of home.

In an effort to make patients' final passages as peaceful and dignified as possible, *Hospice of the East Bay* works to bring them physical, emotional, and spiritual relief. Nothing is more central to the idea of hospice care than ensuring that each patient has someone with him or her at the end of life. However, it is difficult to predict exactly when the end will come; much less guarantee that each patient's loved ones can be present during the final hours or days of life.

To fill this gap in service, *Hospice of the East Bay* has launched a *Vigil Volunteer Program* where trained patient support volunteers are at the bedside of actively dying patients. The Vigil Program helps *Hospice of the East Bay* support its patients *every step of the way* - bringing relief to family members who are unable to be present for the death of their loved one. And, most important, patients will know that they are not alone.

Established in 1977, Hospice of the East Bay is a not-for-profit agency that helps children and adults cope with life-limiting illnesses by providing medical, emotional, spiritual, and practical support for patients and families, regardless of their ability to pay. To learn more, or to make a donation of time or money, please contact (925) 887-5678, or visit www.hospiceeastbay.org.
