



## KIDS CAMP EXPANDS TO NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

We are happy to offer a third location for our Optimal Hospice Foundation Kids Camp hosted by The Taylor Family Foundation.

The NorCal Kids Camp will be held at The Taylor Family Foundation at Camp Arroyo in Livermore Friday, August 21 through Sunday, August 23.

*Please see page 4 for more Kids Camp information.*



## Gifts Truly Appreciated, Even Life-Changing

The Foundation staff are stewards of the monetary gifts and grants that allow us to continue impacting the communities we serve. Your generous donations are the lifeblood of what we do.

In 2014 the Foundation provided for 1,479 days of hospice care for patients in need, investing more than \$73,000 in the Direct Patient Care program. Under the umbrella of Bereavement Support, we held three Kid's Camp sessions touching 81 grieving children, we were instrumental in ongoing bereavement support groups to the public, and we supported child-specific counseling through Kid's Grief Connection. We also hosted 11 Light Up a Life celebrations to commemorate loved ones. Our community outreach efforts sought to provide education about hospice care.

While there are many statistics to report, we thought that sharing a few personal experiences would better demonstrate the impact your giving makes. The following three stories are just a few examples of the scope and reach of your contributions.

### ■ DIRECT PATIENT CARE

***"Without the care, I would have been gone."***



Teddy is grateful for the support of Optimal Hospice Medical Social Worker Tracey Wilson and the Optimal Hospice Foundation.

Teddy was a typical Californian with a wife, a job and the day-to-day cares that come with that. But when Teddy was diagnosed with a disease that ultimately led to him not being able to work and needing hospice care, the typical turned to desperate. As Teddy explained it, "The insurance provided by my employer was coming to an end, and although I could've had a temporary continuation of group health coverage, I couldn't afford the \$900 per month premium."

Teddy and his wife Michelle were looking at an impossible situation. Teddy wasn't on disability long enough to qualify for Medicare, their income was too high for Medi-Cal, and coverage through the Affordable Care Act would not be in effect

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for another 30 days. They faced a month-long gap in insurance coverage and the possibility of not receiving crucial care and medications.

“Our medical social worker Tracey Wilson [from Optimal Hospice in Stockton] said the Foundation could help fill the gap. With their help I was able to continue receiving hospice care while waiting for coverage through Covered California,” said Teddy.

“Without the assistance from the Foundation, there is no telling what might have happened. I had days when my body would break down, and without the care, I would have been gone.”

Teddy said Tracey took a proactive approach and looked into options before the expiration of his employer’s insurance, and before they knew it, they were covered. Teddy remarked, “It was so seamless that I wondered, did that really happen? My wife and I are very OCD about making sure things are taken care of, and we had always had insurance coverage and paid our way. But sometimes circumstances are beyond our control. We needed help.”

Michelle added, “I appreciate everything the Foundation has done. It was a real concern. What would we do for that month? We didn’t know what might happen to Teddy if we had to stop his care. Tracey and the Foundation made it possible for us to have the care and support we needed.”

Teddy summed it up by adding, “What the Foundation does really has an impact on peoples’ lives. It was a bridge to get us over this gap in hospice care. We really appreciate it.”

## ■ BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

### *“The experience gave us back our old selves.”*

In the area of bereavement support, the Foundation offers many options free of charge. (Our current support groups are listed on the back page of this newsletter.) In addition to support groups, child-specific bereavement support is provided through Kids Camps in Fresno and Bakersfield.

Sixteen-year-old Nick Hudson was a recipient of, and then a contributor to, Kids Camp. Nick’s grandmother, who was his best friend, passed when he was 13. Nick tells of how her death impacted him,

“I became sheltered and withdrawn after her death, and to help me work through my grief my mom looked into the camp and kind of forced me to go. I had some doubts, thinking it would be a Kumbaya-type of camp.”

Nick’s impression quickly changed upon his arrival. “I remember getting off the bus, walking up to the counselors and talking with them. From that point on, I knew it would be different than what I expected,” said Nick.

He participated in three days of camp where the focus was not about topics of

death and grief. Nick said the point was for them to remember how to have fun – loads of fun – and that it is OK to laugh even when grieving.

Nick remembered, “The support of Ms. Cindy and Mr. Scott was unbelievable. It could be midnight and you could go talk to either of them about anything. You are so busy and so active. You meet other kids and make great friends, and I am still friends with them today.”

Nick continued, “After the camp, I had more self confidence and was cheered up. It took me about two months of practicing how to be who I had been before, more outgoing and talkative. For me and others, the experience gave us back our old selves.”

A few years later, Nick was looking for something to support with his 4-H charity heifer. His mom had an idea to give back; Optimal Hospice. And they did. The donation was more than \$5,000. Foundation Director Cherie Shoemake invited Nick back to the Camp as an honorary leader as a thank you for donating his proceeds.

Nick said, “Going back to camp and seeing all the stuff they do with the kids, I just realized that what they said about the camp changing your life was true. It was certainly true for me.”

Visit the Optimal Hospice Foundation website to hear more from Nick in our Kids Camp video.



*Nick Hudson in mid-swing at camp.*



*Campers show off the aftermath of the Colored Water Fight fun. (Bakersfield Kids Camp 2012.)*

Our Kids Camp video was made possible by a generous Kern Community Foundation grant. Thank you!





## ■ BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

### *The Art of Grief — Drawing on Others' Drawings*

Optimal Hospice Group Facilitator Cindy Stone, M.S.W., GC-C, was traveling a few years ago and stopped at cancer clinic. Inside she saw a lobby full of patient and family art. She said, "I thought it was odd to have art in there. It was called 'Oncology on Canvas' and anyone associated with the patient could submit art reflecting a snapshot of their journey with that person."



It had a profound impact on her, and she wondered how she could use this idea in her counseling.

Cindy said, "I decided to make a notebook of art by, and for, children that can't talk about death and grief.

She approached Foundation Director Cherie Shoemake with the idea and got approval.

The artwork is either done by the child or with the child. It speaks about their journey, but it speaks to others as well. The children often don't know how to talk or even want to talk. The notebook was a great tool, a great comfort."

And so the book *The Art of Grief* was born. With support of the Foundation, Cindy made 200 copies to hand out, and she ran out in a week.

She said, "When I meet a child who is not opening up, I hand them the book and as they flip through it, they connect right away. The book is worth its weight in gold. Students even take the book with them to school. We had so much success with the book last year we are going to doing it again. It exceeded my expectations."

Cindy needs enough books to give to all of the art creators and those that come for support. The Foundation provides funding for art supplies and printing.

## *Your generosity also helps us to ...*

### *... Light up a Life*

Each year during the month of December Optimal Hospice Foundation hosts remembrance events called *Light up a Life Celebrations* throughout Optimal Hospice's service areas. These uplifting gatherings offer the community an opportunity to renew the spirit of remembrance and reflect and honor loved ones and friends who have been a part of our lives. Participants are invited to sponsor a light on the Tree of Life in memory of a loved one or to honor someone living. Eleven celebrations were held in 2014.



The generosity of our Location Sponsors help make these celebrations possible. Thank you to our 2014 sponsors:

- Bakersfield Family Medical Center  
Bakersfield, Kern River Valley, Taft and Tehachapi
- Beddingfield Funeral Service  
Bay Area
- Bethel Retirement Community  
Modesto
- Dell'Oso Family Farm, Stockton
- Vintage Cerritos, Vintage Senior Living, Long Beach
- Well-Being Senior Solutions  
Holistic In-Home Care, Fresno
- Whitehurst Peters Loyd Funeral Service, Porterville

The stories above are glimpse of the good and necessary work that the Foundation and its staff are able to do through your charitable contributions and grants. The impact is real and we thank you for your continuing support and involvement in the Foundation's efforts.

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## *Your generosity,* continued from page 3

### **... Correct Hospice Misconceptions**

While a large part of the community knows that hospice exists, generally they don't have a complete understanding of how it works which leads to many misconceptions. Debunking those myths and helping people understand that hospice is about living, not just dying is one of our missions.

The Foundation provides education thorough newsletters, our website, community events and educational materials.



## **Foundation seeking referrals, sponsors for Kids Camp 2015**

If you know a child who has suffered the loss of a loved one in the recent past, you've probably struggled with how to provide comfort to him or her. Optimal Hospice Foundation can help.

The Foundation is now accepting referrals for Kids Camp 2015, to be held this summer in Bakersfield, Fresno and Livermore.

This 2½ day overnight camp for children ages 8 to 16 provides kids a safe environment to find healing and peace through games, activities and common fellowship with each other. Bereavement counselors are on site to work with children who may need one-on-one time and attention. The camp is open to any child in the community even if their loved one didn't utilize hospice services.

**Thanks to the generous support of businesses and individuals, the Foundation provides this service at no cost to campers.**

- The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual **Bakersfield Kids Camp** will be August 2–7 at Gergen Ranch. Session I runs Sunday through Tuesday for ages 8 to 12; Session II runs Wednesday through Friday for ages 12 to 16.
- The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual **Fresno Kids Camp** will take place July 10–12 at Camp Oakhurst.
- Our new **NorCal Kids Camp**, hosted by The Taylor Family Foundation, will be August 21–23 at TTFF at Camp Arroyo in Livermore.

If you would like to refer a child or sponsor a camper, contact your local Foundation office (see back page for contact information). More information and referral forms are available at [www.OptimalHospiceFoundation.com](http://www.OptimalHospiceFoundation.com).

## **Save the Date: September 11** **Golf in The Sun and Under The Stars**

Our 24<sup>th</sup> annual tournament will be held  
Friday, September 11, 2015  
at Stockdale Country Club in Bakersfield.  
Visit [www.OptimalHospiceFoundation.com](http://www.OptimalHospiceFoundation.com)  
for event information.

In addition to teams, we are looking for sponsors and prize donations. If you would like to sponsor or donate, please contact the Foundation office at (661) 716-8000.

## **Optimal Cares Halloween Car Show**

**Saturday, October 31, 2015**  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Presented by



at the Bakersfield RV Resort  
5025 Wible Road, Bakersfield, CA 93313

**100% of net proceeds benefit Optimal Hospice Foundation**

For event sponsorship, entry and vendor information, call the Foundation office at (661) 716-8000, email [cshoemake@optimalcares.com](mailto:cshoemake@optimalcares.com) or visit [www.OptimalHospiceFoundation.com](http://www.OptimalHospiceFoundation.com).

*Thank You* to these groups for holding events with proceeds benefiting the Optimal Hospice Foundation:

- ★ Delta Theta Tau Sorority Gamma Xi Chapter "Fleur Couture" Luncheon and Fashion Show held in March 2015 in Bakersfield
- ★ Bakersfield Purple Thunder Progressive Dinner Ride held in April 2015
- ★ American Legion Riders Chapter 20 Porterville Ride for Awareness held in May 2015
- ★ Porterville Church of the Nazarene Biker's Sunday Offering held in May 2015



# Thank You for Your Support

The following individuals and organizations generously contributed to Optimal Hospice Foundation from July through December 2014. On behalf of the patients and families we serve, thank you for your support.

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1315 Boughton Drive  
Bakersfield, CA 93308  
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### Community Offices

#### Bakersfield

1675 Chester Avenue, #401  
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#### Kern River Valley

6504 Lake Isabella Blvd, #E  
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#### Long Beach

3200 East 19th Street  
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1101 Sylvan Avenue, #B-10  
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#### Stockton

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#### Visalia

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1315 Boughton Drive  
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(661) 716-8000

*The Hospice Journey is published by Optimal Hospice Foundation*

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US Postage  
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Permit 873



## Support groups available through Optimal Hospice Care

These groups are open to the public and offered free of charge.

### Bakersfield

Tuesdays  
10–11:30 a.m.  
First United Methodist Church  
4600 Stockdale Hwy., Room 4

Thursdays  
6–7:30 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church  
4600 Stockdale Hwy., Room 4

**Kid's Grief Connection**  
Call (661) 371-2102 for info.

### Fresno

Mondays  
6–7:30 p.m.  
Sunrise of Fresno  
7444 N. Cedar Ave.

**Families Affected by Alzheimer's**  
Saturdays  
Somerford Place, 6075 N. Marks Ave.  
Call (559) 320-4000 for info.

### Lake Isabella

Wednesdays  
1–2:30 p.m.  
Optimal Hospice Care Office  
6504 Lake Isabella Blvd., Ste. E

### Madera

Wednesdays  
Cedar Creek Senior Living  
Center  
500 N. Westbury Blvd.  
Call (559) 320-4000 for info.

### Modesto

Last Thursday  
4–5:30 p.m.  
Optimal Hospice Care  
1101 Sylvan Ave., Ste. B-10

**Kid's Grief Connection**  
Call (209) 338-3000 or Stockton  
(209) 670-8000 for info.

### Porterville

2nd & 4th Thursday  
10:30 a.m.–Noon  
Sierra Hills Retirement Center  
2500 West Henderson

### Santa Clara

Optimal Hospice Care  
3372 Scott Blvd., Ste. 410  
Call for info: (408) 207-9222

### Stockton

Last Friday  
4–5:30 p.m.  
Optimal Hospice Care  
3461 Brookside Road, Ste. A2

### Taft

Thursdays  
1–2:30 p.m.  
Chevron Valley Credit Union  
1092 W. Kern St.  
Community Room, outside  
entrance

**Kid's Grief Connection**  
Call (661) 371-2102 for info.

### Tehachapi

Tuesdays  
1:30–3 p.m.  
Tehachapi Senior Citizens Center  
500 East F St.

### Visalia

2nd & 4th Tuesday  
3–4:30 p.m.  
Optimal Hospice Care  
2439 W. Whitendale Ave., Ste. B