SEASONS HOSPICE FOUNDATION®

for Every Season



Suzanne's Spa Day: A Final Wish Come True

All Suzanne Wanted was a Bath. For You or I, that May Seem Simple Enough.

However, if, like Suzanne, you live in a townhouse where the only bath is a tall flight of stairs away, it can get trickier. It can get trickier still if you have advanced metastatic breast cancer. Suzanne's cancer made her bones brittle – if she tried to take more than a few steps, she was at risk of fracturing her bones. For her, getting into a warm, bubble-filled bath seemed no closer than ascending Mt. Everest.

Seasons Hospice and the Seasons Hospice Foundation came into Suzanne's life when she was 48. By the time we had the honor to begin caring for her, her cancer was fairly advanced. She was tired a lot of the time, and even small tasks like getting dressed took a huge amount of effort. Still, when we talked to her about what her goals were, she was adamant that "getting stronger" was one of her top priorities.

From the moment she entered their narrow, cozy townhouse, Seasons RN Malissa bonded closely with Suzanne and her family. They discovered that they enjoyed the same sorts of music, and were able to communicate in an easy, familiar style. Suzanne's care goal of getting stronger piqued Malissa's curiosity. She was puzzled – Suzanne had come onto Seasons' service with her eyes wide open. She knew Seasons was here to assist with her end-of-life journey and that she had only weeks to live. Why, Malissa wondered, did Suzanne want so badly to focus on getting stronger with the time she had left?

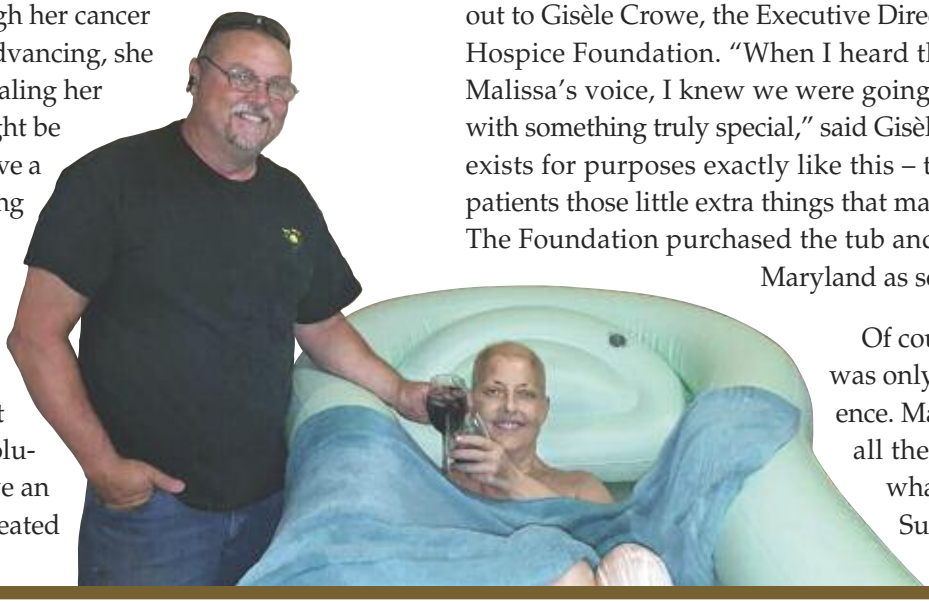
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As it turns out, the bath was the answer. Throughout the chaos of fighting her cancer, through the rounds of tests, diagnoses, and treatments, Suzanne had come to place extra value on creature comforts. The relaxing feeling of soaking in a warm tub excited her in a way few other treatments could. If she could be lucky enough to have a glass of red wine while soaking, and perhaps a small snack, well, so much the better!

Here at Seasons, we take great pride in finding creative solutions that add quality to the lives of our patients. Suzanne's case was no different. Her Maryland-based care team, led by Malissa, was going to get Suzanne her relaxing bath, obstacles be damned! Malissa began brainstorming ways to help Suzanne have a bath to remember. At first, the team researched some basic solutions like enlisting the help of several of the stronger Seasons aides to carry Suzanne upstairs. Unfortunately, the stairs were simply too narrow to allow Suzanne to be safely carried up the steps. Next, the Seasons team researched installing a chair lift elevator, with Malissa going so far as to volunteer her husband, a contractor, to do the installation. However, because the townhouse was a rental, it would have been cost-prohibitive to install the lift and remove it afterwards.

Through it all, Suzanne never wavered. For her part, even though her cancer was still aggressively advancing, she kept focusing on marshaling her strength so that she might be able to get upstairs to have a quiet afternoon of soaking in a warm, bubbly bath – on her own terms.



Undeterred, the Seasons team kept looking for a solution. We have an oft-repeated goal at Seasons – to strive to provide the perfect end-of-life experience to every patient, every time. This bath challenge was like an itch Suzanne's team couldn't scratch. Without helping Suzanne in the way that mattered most to her, could we say we had achieved our goal of that perfect experience? Certainly not.



It was late one night after a full day of visiting patients that Malissa stumbled upon the solution. While doing a little evening online shopping, she had an epiphany – if Suzanne couldn't get to the bathtub, why couldn't the bathtub come to Suzanne? Her fingers furiously tapped the keyboard as she Googled for a solution. Within minutes, she had found a perfect option – an inflatable tub that could be blown up with a person inside of it! This was a double-win; not only would Suzanne not have to be lifted up multiple flights of stairs, but she also wouldn't have to go through the difficulty of trying to enter a slippery tub. In every single way, the tub could come to her!

As soon as Malissa found the item online, she reached out to Gisèle Crowe, the Executive Director of the Seasons Hospice Foundation. "When I heard the excitement in Malissa's voice, I knew we were going to be able to help with something truly special," said Gisèle. "The Foundation exists for purposes exactly like this – to help give our patients those little extra things that matter most to them." The Foundation purchased the tub and had it shipped to Maryland as soon as they could.

Of course, the tub itself was only part of the experience. Malissa wanted to put all the final touches on what they had dubbed Suzanne's "spa day."

"The Foundation exists for purposes exactly like this – to help give our patients those little extra things that matter most to them.

– Gisèle Crowe
Executive Director, Seasons Hospice Foundation

For more information on how to make a donation to the Seasons Hospice Foundation to help make wishes come true, please visit **SeasonsFoundation.org/donate**, email **foundation@seasons.org** or call **847-692-1000**.

She enlisted her coworkers Kisha and Hillary from the Seasons interdisciplinary team to help arrange those final details. They wasted no time in their preparations, as Suzanne's health had continued to decline.

Finally, the spa was ready. Early that morning, Malissa stopped at the grocery store and picked up a beautiful tray of fruit



and cheese, and a bottle of Suzanne's favorite blended red wine (her own favorite also!). Her teammates brought the flowers and scented candles. Together, they transformed the first floor of that small townhouse into a spa worthy of an A-List Hollywood celebrity. As the tub started to inflate, and then fill with warm, soapy, scented water, you could see Suzanne's shoulders slowly relaxing. She leaned back and closed her eyes, soaking in the experience. Her husband sat attendant beside her – joking, snacking, and making sure



"Into The Mystic"

We were born before the wind
Also younger than the sun
Ere the bonnie boat was won as we sailed into the mystic
Hark, now hear the sailors cry
Smell the sea and feel the sky
Let your soul and spirit fly into the mystic

And when that fog horn blows I will be coming home
And when the fog horn blows I want to hear it
I don't have to fear it

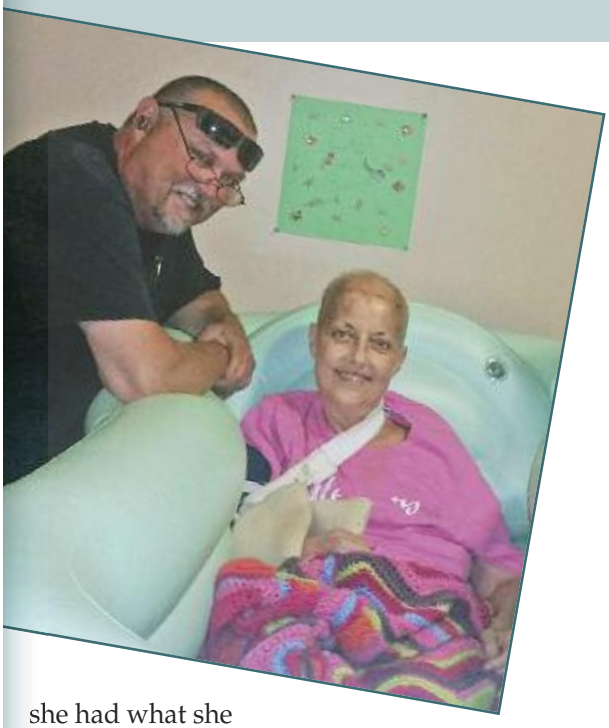
And I want to rock your gypsy soul
Just like way back in the days of old
And magnificently we will flow into the mystic

When that fog horn blows you know I will be coming home
And when that fog horn whistle blows
I got to hear it
I don't have to fear it

And I want to rock your gypsy soul
Just like way back in the days of old
And together we will flow into the mystic
Come on girl...

Too late to stop now...

– Van Morrison



she had what she needed. Her Seasons team even helped her shave her legs – no detail was left unattended.

At Seasons, the needs of our patients come first. If they need a bath, then our team will find a way to make it happen. With the help of the Seasons Hospice Foundation, we were honored to be able to get Suzanne one of the things that was most important to her before she died.

On the day of her spa experience, Suzanne asked for her favorite song to be played: "Into The Mystic," by Van Morrison. The bluesy lyrics that rolled through that small townhouse could hardly have been more appropriate:

"…then magnificently we will float into the mystic…
And when that foghorn blows, you know I will be coming home,
And when that foghorn whistle blows
I got to hear it, I don't have to fear it…"

Thank you, Suzanne, for allowing Seasons and the Seasons Foundation to be a part of your journey. You are in our hearts, and we'll never forget your wonderful bath.

I love hearing your stories!

The Legacy Bowl

By Lee Cohen, REACE, Art Therapy Intern

One of the wonderful programs that Seasons Hospice utilizes with patients and families is our Leaving a Legacy Program. To facilitate the completion of a legacy project, the Seasons team engages in many different modalities and creative processes. As defined by Merriam-Webster, a legacy is "something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor." In the world of art therapy, a legacy often takes the form of leaving a piece of oneself through the creative art process – forever existing as a visible and tangible art project representing the patient's hope for remembrance. As an art therapy intern at Seasons Hospice, I feel that the Leaving a Legacy Program carries a weight of love and remembrance. It was designed to benefit family members according to the wishes and hopes of the patient.

Art expression can be therapeutic for anyone who has experienced a loss or anticipatory grief. The desire to express oneself through an art form is often heightened during times of mourning or upon receiving a diagnosis of terminal illness. The creative arts (e.g., visual art, poetry, creative writing, music, or other art forms) flow naturally in the attempt to express the deep suffering that one experiences when confronted with a significant loss. Art therapists observe the power and potential of art to help identify, cope with, and encourage the healing of pain experienced during the grief and loss journey.



For patients at the end of life, creating art with the typical array of art materials is often difficult. With the support and guidance of an art therapist, however, individuals can address the profound changes they are experiencing and express their deep emotions. Art therapy can help bring meaning and a new perspective to people's lives during difficult times.

In one case, I encountered a patient who was resistant to engaging in traditional art therapy projects. As I developed the therapeutic relationship with her, I introduced a Leaving a Legacy project to promote her self-worth and elevate her self-esteem. Using colored tissue paper, the patient created a "legacy bowl." Despite the patient's concerns about her artistic ability as evidenced in her comment, "I am not an artist," the project's repetitive process promoted a safe and encouraging environment. For this 96-year-old woman, the legacy project provided a means to increase her autonomy and rediscover aspects of her creative self. This "Legacy Bowl" was left in her room next to a writing pad and a pen where all those who visited and cared for her (e.g., nurses, doctors, volunteers, music therapists, etc.) could write positive statements about their experiences with her. Each visit began with reading new messages as well as repeating positive affirmations from past sessions. Her smiles and expressions of surprise never ceased during these affirmation moments. This handmade bowl served as a tool to increase the patient's self-esteem and to convey the message of this patient's importance to the Seasons staff. The Legacy Bowl will be given to the family after this patient's death.

One of the most important outcomes of art therapy is to help patients or grief survivors understand that they still matter. Using art as a method of self-expression and gaining personal empowerment is a means to this end. Art can be used to convey the multifaceted nature of grief. By engaging in the creative process, they can reclaim their voices and leave their footprint. Every expression of art created by a patient or grief survivor is a powerful legacy.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL BOWL YOU'VE MADE! I THINK YOU'VE BEEN ARTISTIC ALL YOUR LIFE... AND JUST DIDN'T KNOW IT! ☺

Simple Home Maintenance

By Luisa Kcomt, LMSW

For survivors, the journey through grief is not simply about coping with the death of their loved one, but also adapting to new roles or responsibilities which they may not have had before. Whether it is learning how to do the laundry on their own or using the lawnmower for the first time, grief survivors discover that they must now assume responsibility for the household tasks that were once maintained by their deceased loved ones. Learning these new skills can be emotionally challenging because it makes them confront the reality of their loss. Survivors may feel somewhat overwhelmed in having to learn these skills. However, what one doesn't know can always be learned from family, friends, neighbors, and the internet. Below is a checklist of basic home maintenance procedures that grief survivors may find helpful, especially as we embark on the summer season.

- As the weather gradually becomes warmer during spring and the grass comes out of its dormancy, it is time to fertilize the lawn. Hardware stores will have these products readily on display. Grass grows best when it is fertilized at least four times throughout the growing season from spring through fall. A helpful way to remember when to fertilize the lawn is to complete this task near the major holidays: Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day.



- Adding fuel stabilizer to the gasoline will help extend the shelf life of your gasoline and maintain the efficiency of your gas-powered lawn equipment.
- If you have an automated sprinkler system in your lawn, check each sprinkler head to make sure the water is flowing properly. If not, the sprinkler head will need to be adjusted.
- If you have central air conditioning in your home, the outdoor condenser unit should be cleaned of debris and dirt which could compromise its efficiency. Any foliage around the unit should be trimmed back at least 2 feet (0.6 meters) to allow for adequate airflow around the condenser.



- Cleaning the windows can help to brighten up your indoor living space and gain a clearer view of your outdoor surroundings. Tall windows which may be difficult to reach can be cleaned using a telescopic pole, which can be found at many hardware stores.



- Furnace filters should be changed on a quarterly basis.

For homeowners with questions about home maintenance, the internet can be a wonderful resource for information. There are a plethora of blogs and videos available online. Personally, I have learned to install new toilet seats, replace sprinkler heads, and maintain my lawn with the help of the internet. Talking to one's neighbors or consulting the salespeople at the hardware store may also prove helpful.

The journey through grief can be emotionally, spiritually, and physically challenging. However, it can also be an incredible growth experience. Completing the physical tasks of home maintenance can provide one with a sense of accomplishment – especially if a new skill is learned in the process. Although born of necessity and sadness, these learning experiences can also become fulfilling and a source of strength.

Did You Know?

Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care is celebrating its 20th anniversary! In partnership with Seasons Hospice Foundation, we recognize the following accomplishments in providing quality hospice care to the communities that we serve:

- 27 Medicare-certified sites and 17 inpatient centers in 19 states
- Ranked the 5th largest hospice organization in the United States
- Largest hospice employer of board-certified music therapists in the country
- Number of Children's Bereavement Camps offered from 2012 through present: 29
- Amount of charity care provided in 2016: $4,500,000
- Number of final patient wishes granted by the Seasons Hospice Foundation since its inception: 1,656

SEASONS HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE
20 YEARS OF HONORING LIFE OFFERING HOPE
ANNIVERSARY
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SEASONS HOSPICE FOUNDATION

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for EverySeason

If our mailing records need to be updated, or if you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact Seasons Hospice Foundation at 847-692-1000, ext. 4.

Helping Others Through SEASONS HOSPICE FOUNDATION

A gift to Seasons Hospice Foundation marks the love and joy that someone brought to our lives, while also helping other patients and their families.

To honor your loved one by making a gift or to learn more about the Seasons Hospice Foundation, please visit **SeasonsFoundation.org** or call **847-692-1000**.

SUPPORT

SEASONS HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care
3660 S. Geyer Road
Suite 120
St. Louis, Missouri 63127

314-909-6200
Toll free: 888-461-7733

Seasons Hospice Bereavement Groups

Open to Seasons Hospice and the Community:

Morning Drop-In Open Group
Every other Thursday, ongoing, beginning August 24, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care
3660 South Geyer Rd., Suite 120, Sunset Hills

6-Week Closed Group
Thursdays, August 24-September 28, 4:45-6 p.m.

Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care
3660 South Geyer Rd., Suite 120, Sunset Hills

6-Week Group is closed to new members after the 2nd meeting of the session.

Sneakers and Support

- **Morning Group**
  Thursdays, July 6, July 20 & August 3, 7-8 a.m.
  Forest Park Jewel Box
  1 Wells at McKinley, St. Louis
- **Evening Group**
  Thursdays, July 13, July 27 & August 10, 4:45-5:45 p.m.
  Laumeier Sculpture Park
  12580 Rott Rd., Sunset Hills

Pre-Registration is required for support groups.
For registration or more information, please contact Deborah D. Burch, Bereavement Specialist, at the Seasons Office at 888-461-7733.