



The Hospice of the Upper Galilee, ISRAEL

Providing free palliative hospice home care
and family support services



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HUG

Activity Report

Hospice of the Upper Galilee

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The Hospice of the Upper Galilee (HUG) was founded in 1994 as an Israeli non-profit organization to provide free, end-of-life home hospice care for people suffering terminal illness, and support for their families. HUG's devoted professional staff and compassionate volunteers, on call 24/7, tirelessly and unceasingly strive to ensure that patients peacefully and comfortably die at home, rather than in an acute care hospital unit, one of the primary goals of the hospice movement. Responsible for raising 70% of its annual operating budget, HUG does not charge for its services.

Reflections on the past two decades

In 1979, American-born Professor Nancy Caroline authored "Emergency Care in the Streets," a pioneering resource for paramedics, which, among other things, called for mobile intensive care units to reach patients within three minutes, at the time an unthinkable notion. Today, her directives remain the standard of care.

Fifteen years later, Prof. Caroline, an immigrant to Israel, shifted her focus from saving lives to helping those whose lives were nearing their end. Her idea – to provide high quality, hospice care focused on the physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs of patients and their families, in their own homes!

The Hospice of the Upper Galilee (HUG) was founded in 1994 in Israel's northern periphery by Prof. Caroline to help ensure that every moment counts for those facing end-of-life issues. To date, our trained professionals and volunteers have attended to more than 1,100 patients, ensuring them dignity and comfort as they leave this world, and to their family members as they anticipate and then deal with the death of their loved ones.

Beyond our impact in Israel's far-flung northern region, HUG is a major player on the national and international scene. We have received numerous awards both in Israel and abroad recognizing our unique interdisciplinary model of home hospice care in Israel. Tragically, Prof. Caroline became a HUG patient herself before succumbing to cancer in 2001 and did not live to see how her compassionate ideas have forever changed the way home hospice care is delivered in the region for which she cared so deeply. Her legacy, however, continues with each person we treat.

We are proud to share with you the 2014 activity report as well as plans for the future. We thank our partners and supporters, whose involvement makes it possible for the HUG team to travel to households around Israel's Upper Galilee and beyond, enabling us to reach our 20-year anniversary, celebrated this past November.

Dr. Asa Lev El
HUG Board Chairman

Dr. Eyal Goldberger
HUG Medical Director General

Mr. Srulik Knoll
HUG Managing Director

Snapshot of 2014

- HUG cared for 119 patients and their families, 98 of them new patients. The average age was 70.
- HUG increased our bereavement activities for patient family members, reflecting our philosophy of integrative care and commitment to the entire family unit.
- HUG handled a shifting patient load which varied from 25 to 42 patients at any given time.
- HUG expanded our catchment area north of the Jordan Valley and into Carmiel, considerably increasing our geographic range.
- HUG concluded year three of our oncological "Brilliance" initiative at Zief Hospital in Safed.
- HUG's medical and nursing staff regularly lectured on the principles and practices of hospice care at Zief Hospital, Ha'Emeq Medical Center, Hillel Yafe Medical Center and other facilities.
- HUG increased its training and internship activities for family physicians, psychologists, social work and medical students and initiated a new volunteer recruitment and training program.
- HUG hosted two major professional conclaves for doctors, nurses, caregivers, and policy makers from around the country.
- HUG turned 20 and threw a party for the region!

Patient care: one family's story

Quentin moved from Minnesota to Israel with his wife, Patricia, more than four decades ago. Together they had 15 children, 33 grandchildren, and 6 great grandchildren. They shared a wonderful life and were in love with both one another and their adopted country. Quentin, at 82, lost his life on Yom Kippur, October 3, 2014, following organ failure. He quietly passed away, on his own terms, in his own bed, in his own home, in the remote Golan Heights town of Katzrin, surrounded by family who came from around the world to say goodbye. That this was the way that Quentin left this world was a blessing says Patricia.

"Three months after my husband's first hospitalization, multiple procedures, and lots of poking and prodding, the well-meaning doctors said they would continue to do more tests, but held no hope for improvement. Quentin was very clear – he'd had enough, he wanted to go home! He was released from the hospital and told he would not likely make it through another day.

"Before we even returned home from the hospital, two hour's drive from our town, HUG (Hospice of the Upper Galilee) mobilized itself and met us on our front door step. We'd called them the day before at the suggestion of my daughter, a teacher's aide who'd once heard a lecture about HUG's services. There was an immediate connection with HUG's doctors and nurses. Right away, we knew we'd made the right decision.

"While we had all the love and heart to give to Quentin, HUG had the skills, understanding, and patience to support the experience of having to let him go. No matter how much a person plans, you are never really ready for this. Our family received more than we could have asked for, more than we could have imagined.

Quentin did not die an anonymous patient on a hospital ward floor. He passed with humanity and dignity, all made possible by HUG's professionals and volunteers, truly there for us around the clock. HUG gave us respect; HUG gave us comfort; HUG gave us time. In the end, we had three marvelous weeks together. Bereft and exhausted, we didn't know what to do after Quentin, our patriarch, died. HUG guided us through burial issues and helped make this step a bit easier. Some 400 attended Quentin's funeral, and another 500 came to pay their respects at our family home.

As I am writing, not even six months after Quentin's passing, I am preparing to attend a support group for bereaved families to be led by a HUG social worker. My husband, a self described 'simple farmer' would have been proud of us for moving forward and planting new seeds of growth.

Thank you HUG."

Community outreach, professional development, and geographic expansion

Volunteer social workers and human service students add value:

Each year, in an ongoing collaboration with neighboring Tel Hai Academic College, two social work students intern at HUG, both within our office and in the field, considerably extending our reach into the community. This past November we were fortunate to enter into a new partnership with Tel Hai. Through July 2015 six students, majoring in human services, will volunteer for HUG six hours each week, gaining the opportunity to learn the hospice model and perform non-clinical practical field work, while also receiving supervision. Such collaborations are actively helping cultivate important relationships within the communities benefitting from HUG and encourage professional sustainability within the region.

Supervising and teaching: Dr. Eyal Goldberger, HUG Medical Director General, is also supervising a medical student who is preparing her dissertation on end-of-life care options, likely in the field of palliative home care among pediatric oncology patients. Her research will examine the reasons why the vast majority of families in HUG's catchment area opt for hospice services in the center of the country, far from their communities and homes, when dealing with end of life issues for their terminally ill children. HUG is also working with two visiting physicians who are advancing their knowledge of the field.

"This new initiative with Tel Hai College's Human Services Department is not only benefiting HUG, its patients, and the region, but is helping to open the minds of a new generation of students to the critical need to ensure the future of palliative care in the Upper Galilee AND lead the way for the whole of Israel."

HUG

Collaborating on an international level: This past year, Israel's Ministry of Health chose Mr. Yaniv Ben Shoshan, HUG social worker and Head of Zief Hospital's Social Work Services, to represent Israel in an annual eight week International Enhancement of Leadership Program. The program is coordinated and managed by the Department of Social Work Services at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. During his two month residency, he lectured on the topic of family intervention in end-of-life situations in the community and during hospitalization, designed to encourage appropriate "letting go" behavior.

Geographic expansion to Carmiel: At the request of Israel's second largest health maintenance organizations – Macabbi – HUG recently scaled up its operations by responding to the need to extend services to Carmiel, a culturally diverse city of more than 50,000 people, including many immigrants, a move which has considerably increased our catchment area.

Professional conferences

Committed to advancing the significantly underappreciated and underfunded field of home hospice care in Israel, HUG serves as a center of knowledge and an example of successful professional palliative health care practices.

Tapping into our close ties to some of the world's foremost authorities on palliative care practices, HUG organized two large-scale professional gatherings in 2014 which brought together doctors, nurses, social workers and spiritual mentors from hospitals and hospices in our area and from the center of the country for training and the renewal of professional connections.



Conference participants

On February 9, 2014, HUG organized a day-long workshop in Rosh Pina for professionals working in the field of palliative health. The conference, entitled "Providing Compassionate Care for the Dying Without Burnout," which brought together some 150 professionals from around the country, focused on patient care and job fatigue.



Dr. Weller and Prof. Cassell

On December 17, 2014 HUG hosted a day of learning, this time on "Questions and Insights on Palliative Care at the End of Life." A total of 170 doctors, nurses, caregivers, and policy makers took part. The conference, which offered numerous special interest workshops, featured three internationally renowned guest speakers.

The workshop was created and led by internationally renowned London-based psychotherapist Rose Oliver, a counselor and trainer and a student of Sogyal Rinpoche, author of the "Tibetan Book of Living and Dying."

Ms. Oliver's session on Deep Listening Training was eye-opening to the participants who learned that the simple act of listening can appreciably help healthcare professionals cope with the sickness and pain they encounter on a daily basis and connect more effectively and meaningfully with their patients.

American Prof. Eric Cassell is a practitioner, author and teacher who speaks around the world to both the medically trained and lay audience on medical ethics and understanding and treating suffering. Joining us for the second time was Dr. Judy Lacey, one of the world leaders in palliative medicine. Dr. Lacey manages a large hospitalization system and home hospice in Sydney Australia, where she is a senior staff specialist at Calvary Healthcare, the largest palliative care service provider in New South Wales. The conference was a tribute event in the memory of late Prof. Nancy Caroline, HUG's founder, on the 12th anniversary of her passing.

"Anytime HUG organizes a conclave for our professional community, my colleagues and I know we will benefit. These gatherings, important as much for the deep thinking they encourage and the training they provide, also allow us to meet our professional peers around the country."

Happy anniversary, HUG



For days and weeks, HUG staff and volunteers and community members were still enjoying the afterglow of our 20th anniversary event, held at Kibbutz Kfar Blum, on November 27, 2014. The evening kicked off a high note with a congratulatory call to Bernie Bell, chairman of the AFHUG, at his home in Rhode Island and a big 95th Happy Birthday greeting from all attendees!

Much-loved Israeli musician, singer-songwriter and guitarist, Danny Sanderson, a local, provided wonderful musical entertainment. More than 650 people joined for this very special evening. Some were familiar with our work through personal experience with loved ones; others knew us through professional channels; and many simply wanted to better understand our function in the community.

In addition to raising awareness, the event also helped raise funds -- approximately \$15,000, after expenses. Helping to make this event such a success was the fact that the location, food, wine and more were donated by locals. Here's to the next 20 years!

(Left to Right) Gala attendees: Giora Zelts, Mayor, Upper Galilee Regional Council; Dr. Eyal Goldberger, Medical Director, HUG; Srulik Knoll, Managing Director, HUG; Benny Ben Muvchar, Mayor, Mevo'ot Hermon Regional Council

Guests collecting their gala tickets



Organizational challenges and strategic planning

As part of the events of the twentieth year since HUG's founding, the organization took the time to consider our past efforts and future goals regarding:

- **Patient care**
- **Professional development**
- **Increased demand for services**
- **Shrinkage of government support**
- **Exporting HUG model to other regions**
- **Fundraising for ongoing programs**
- **Potential to create new in-patient facility**
- **Community education and support**

During the month of July 2014, some 30 HUG medical, nursing, social work, and administrative staff, as well as key HUG volunteers, met intensively in several sessions facilitated by the Executive Committee to re-examine the organization's vision and objectives established by its founders. At the conclusion of the process, guidelines for a five-year strategic planning process were established with the details to be developed by HUG's Executive Committee and directives outlined for annual working plans.

Promoting palliative care, a newly recognized medical specialty

In a much-anticipated development, palliative care was recently recognized as a special field of medicine by Israel's Ministry of Health, which identified 22 Israeli physicians as specialists. HUG's exceptionally devoted and highly regarded Director General Dr. Eyal Goldgerger is among this prestigious group. HUG is involved in a number of new initiatives to push for and promote the need for palliative care as a priority in advancing comprehensive medical care services in Israel.

HUG's influence reaches into the national sphere

Each year, the Ministry of Health identifies one field of medicine for development, goals, and regulation stipulations, etc. In 2015 focus will be placed on examining numerous positions and policies related to palliative care, through two separate committees. Dr. Goldberger is a member of the first, which will deal with all aspects of palliative home and community care, with HUG contributing to the development of a master plan utilizing interdisciplinary outreach based, in part, on our own unique model. The second, of which social worker Yaniv Ben Shushan is a member, is tasked with examining palliative care in hospital, nursing homes, and hospice settings with a focus on setting standards of care; staff training; continuum of outpatient care; various models of end-of-life care in inpatient settings; and other issues. HUG has much to contribute and we are glad that we are in a position to increase our reach on a national level.

Help HUG Help Others

We thank those who helped us help others this past year. HUG does not charge for its services. Government funding covers less than 30% of HUG's expenses; the balance must be secured through philanthropy from people like you.

With the right financial resources, we can give more time to more people. Tax-deductible donations can be made in NIS, US\$, CAD, and British Pounds Sterling. Help us help those in need by giving generously. Your donation really matters.

Please be in touch at hospice.ug.development@gmail.com for more information on how to make a contribution today!