

HOFFMANN HOSPICE 
REFLECTIONS
A Non-Profit Hospice

FALL 2009 • VOL 37

*Dad's
bucket
list*



*Light
up★
a
Life
2009*

**Reflections
is a publication of
Hoffmann Hospice**

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On our cover
Jason O'Donnell and dad
Harold O'Donnell share a
Sky Walk adventure at the
Grand Canyon.

FROM OUR FOUNDERS

At Hoffmann Hospice we're always striving for excellence in patient care, but, according to those who have allowed us to walk with them through their loved ones' end-of-life journeys, it's a subject we already know a lot about.

I say this not to boast (okay, maybe a little), but to assure you when Hoffmann pledges to provide the highest quality end-of-life care to the people of Kern County and the Antelope Valley, we mean what we say. Results from the latest Family Evaluation of Hospice Care survey by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization bear this out.

Hoffmann was one of 84 hospices in California – and one of 1,162 nationally - to participate in the quarterly survey, one of several benchmarks by which we measure our progress. I'm delighted to share just a few of those results with you.

Allow me to start with the result that most warms my heart. Of the families surveyed, 100 percent said they would recommend Hoffmann Hospice to others. Misconceptions about hospice care abound, but this is the figure that tells me we're breaking through those barriers of misinformation and are serving our families well. It doesn't get any better than that.

Speaking of high marks, we earned another perfect score in the category of "information given on pain management medications" and a nearly perfect score of 98.7 in "family had enough instruction on patient care," two areas of crucial importance to family caregivers. Our philosophy is to prepare families for what's to come by empowering them with the information they need to give that final gift of love. Caregivers are our heroes and it's our job to support them, to be their primary resource as, together, we guide their loved ones through this final season of life.

Hoffmann Hospice gladly participates in the quarterly Family Evaluation of Hospice Care survey

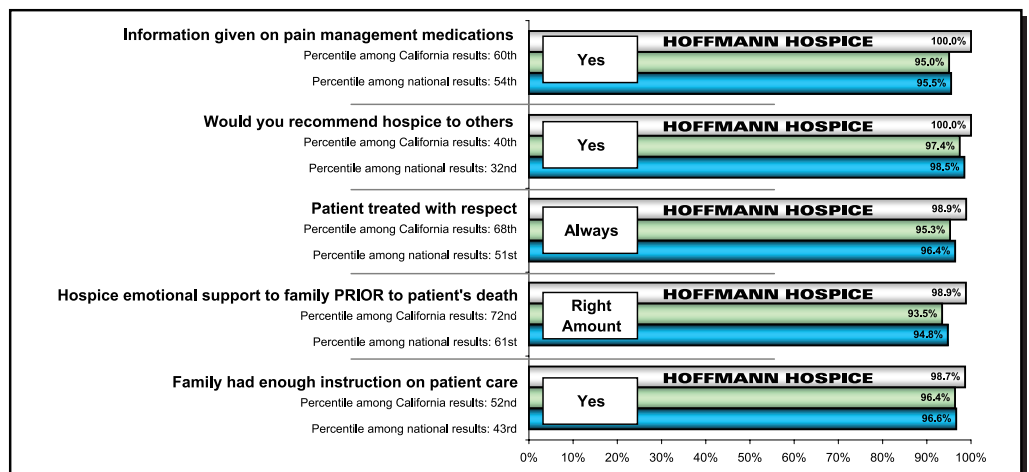


because we want to give our patients and their families the best possible care. It's not that we're looking to compare ourselves with other hospices, it's that we're not satisfied with the status quo. We will never embrace the attitude that it's time to coast, but will always look for the best ways to meet our families' needs.

It's a Hoffmann habit to participate in surveys and rigorous certification processes. Hoffmann has long been accredited through the Community Health Accreditation Program. A CHAP accreditation is the highest available in the health-care industry; a seal of approval that assures families their loved ones are in good hands.

To those family caregivers who participated in the survey, our thanks. To those who are tempted to skip future surveys, please reconsider. We want to hear from you. To those who are considering hospice for themselves or a loved, be assured that the numbers don't lie. We care and we're here to help. Just ask our families.

Tom and Beth



Family Evaluation of Hospice Care, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

JOURNEY'S END

Attorney-client privilege: When your secrets are secrets no more

by Gary Fachin

Your attorney has a duty under the California Business and Professions Code not to reveal your confidential conversations or other communications. In fact, in California, attorneys have a duty “at every peril to himself or herself” to preserve the secrets their clients share. It is only by a court order that an attorney may be compelled to disclose such secrets.

Such confidentiality is crucial if you are to speak freely with your attorney, assured that no others may know what's been discussed.

If others seek a court order against your attorney in order to force a disclosure of your secrets, you or your attorney may assert a privilege given by the California Evidence Code known as the attorney-client privilege. Under this privilege, you and your attorney may refuse to disclose confidential information.

This privilege certainly exists throughout your lifetime. But what happens to those secrets after your death?

In general, this privilege no longer

exists after your death except in very limited circumstances. It doesn't exist at all if your confidential statements are relevant to any of the following: a dispute between persons making a claim as a result of your death; an issue concerning your intention in making a deed, a will or other document affecting an interest in property; an issue concerning the validity of such documents.

Suppose, for example, you have two sons, Dennis and Bob. Dennis has been a menace for a number of reasons you don't want Bob to know about. In fact, you don't want any member of the public to know about Dennis' activities. As a result of Dennis' behaviors, it's apparent that he will squander whatever he receives from you upon your death. You explain all this in detail to your attorney so he will understand why you're giving a small portion of your estate to Dennis, with the remainder going to Bob.

After your death, Dennis learns about the unequal distribution of your assets and contests your will, claiming that Bob exerted on you undue influence in the making of your will and that you were

wrongfully pressured into cutting Dennis out of what he views as his fair share of your estate. As a result, Bob's attorney subpoenas your estate-planning attorney to a deposition to find out whether you had made any statements concerning the unequal distribution between Dennis and Bob.

Because your previously secret statements are relevant to your intent in the making of your will and its validity, it may be very difficult, if not impossible, for your estate planning attorney to refuse disclosure, however much he may want to respect your wishes. It's something to discuss with your attorney when it's time to make out that will, deed or other important document.



Gary Fachin is a Bakersfield attorney specializing in issues important to seniors. Reach Mr. Fachin at 328-0363 or gmfachin@fachinlaw.com.

KindWords

To Laura, Michelle, and Maria and all the staff at Hoffmann Hospice (Bakersfield),

We thank you for your kind and caring concern for my mom. Laura, you are amazing – the love of the Lord flows from you to others and touched us just when we needed it. Maria, your compassion and gentle care for my mom was so appreciated – you both are angels. Michelle, your flexibility and patience with me meant so much.

You all were so helpful and comforting. Your work is such a great help to each of us struggling with letting go. It made it a lot easier.

Rejoicing that Mom is dancing before the Lord and singing His praises,

Lisa Caploe for the family of Virginia Dosel



Virginia Dosel



Dear Tom and Beth,

My mother, Loreen Kinder, was a patient of Hoffmann Hospice (in Palmdale) for several months. In the middle of all the hardships and emotional stress, your staff was a God-sent blessing. Because of your entire staff, my mother felt loved and pampered. They always treated Mom with respect and loving care. Though they had others to see, they always stayed as long as they felt we needed them. I wish I could remember everyone's names, but angels are angels no matter what their names!

Mom passed away in her sleep at home on July 4th. She wanted to be at home, but I know I would not have been able to respect her wishes without everyone from Hoffmann Hospice. Thank you for the wonderful care and love you gave Mom and my family. You will always be in my heart.

Vicki Steel

Light up a Life



The holiday season will soon be here and for a growing number of local residents Light up a Life is its official kick off.

Light up a Life, Hoffmann's annual remembrance ceremony, is a much-anticipated holiday tradition for many in Kern County and the Antelope Valley who wish to honor the memory of loved ones who have passed away. More than 500 guests attended the Bakersfield ceremony at The Marketplace last year to enjoy the camaraderie, the poignant reading of names and the joyous lighting of the Christmas tree.

This year, Hoffmann will host Light up a Life at The Marketplace once more, 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 1. Remembrance services will also be held in Palmdale, December 3 and in Kernville, December 8.

Gretchen Daughtery, public relations director, says the annual event serves as a connection to the people and memories we cherish.

"Everyone is so busy, especially during the holidays," she says. "Light up a Life is a comforting annual tradition, a way to stay true to those memories."

The remembrance ceremonies are free and open to the public. Attendees may honor or memorialize a loved one by placing a symbolic light on the tree. Guests are asked to make a \$10 donation for each

individual they honor. Those who donate \$100 in memory of a special family member or friend will be recognized at the ceremony as Starlight Sponsors and will receive a commemorative ornament.

To order a light in memory of a loved one who has passed away or to honor one still living, fill out and send the form below.


For more information, please call (661) 410-1010.

Please join us for Light up a Life at the following locations:

BAKERSFIELD
6:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 1
The Marketplace
9000 Ming Ave.

PALMDALE
6:30 p.m., Thursday, December 3
Antelope Valley Mall
1233 Rancho Vista Blvd.

KERNVILLE
5:30 p.m., Tuesday, December 8
Big Blue Bear & Circle Park
101 Piute Dr.



Name of person submitting form: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

In memory of a loved one: Name of person _____ No. of lights _____

In honor of one still living: Name of person _____ No. of lights _____

I wish to be a Starlight Sponsor in memory of (\$100 per Starlight): _____

Please read my loved ones named at the ceremony in: BAKERSFIELD PALMDALE KERNVILLE

Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ lights (min. \$10 per light).

Please make check payable to Hoffmann Hospice. Your cancelled check is your receipt for donations under \$50.
In order for the name of your loved one to be included in the Light Up a Life program, please send your information for receipt in our office by November 23, 2009.

Hope for the Holidays

Pre Holiday Grief Support Luncheon

11:45 – 1:30 p.m., November 13

The holidays are a happy time but can be difficult for those who have recently lost a loved one. If that's you, let us help you find joy this holiday season. Join us on November 13 for lunch and a video presentation of "Grief: Coping with the Holidays" at Hoffmann Hospice, 8501 Brimhall Rd., Bldg. 100. Counselors will be on hand for after-video discussions. There is no charge for this event, but seating is limited, so please RSVP at your earliest convenience by calling (661-410-1010).

Ornament Decorating Party

4 – 7 p.m., December 10

Hoffmann Hospice cordially invites you our annual Christmas ornament decorating party for adults and children. This open-house event will be held at Hoffmann

Hospice, 8501 Brimhall Rd., Bldg. 100. Bring that special photograph, a lock of hair or other cherished keepsake and decorate an ornament in memory of your loved one.

Ornaments and decorating supplies are provided. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call (661) 410-1010.

A NATIONAL HOSPICE MONTH EVENT

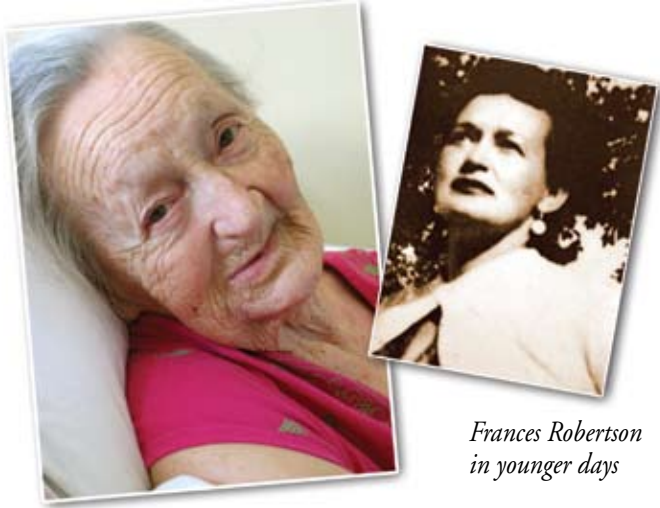
Brighton Bunco Night

6:30 p.m. Tuesday, November 17 at Christine's
4915 Stockdale Highway

\$25 per person. All proceeds to benefit Hoffmann Hospice.

Participants are encouraged to make reservations early, as seating is limited. To sign up call 834-3068.

Hoffmann patient Frances Robertson



Frances Robertson
in younger days

Frances Robertson has known considerable adventure and hard work in her 95 years. She's lived in exotic far-off lands and received 10 marriage proposals, three of which she accepted. Three times a widow, her pursuits these days are more of the sedate sort, like writing limericks to entertain caregivers at the E Street residential home in Taft where she lives. Her caregivers, she says, are like family.

"I like to make people laugh," she says. "I just like to make them happy."

Ode to my Caregivers

*Here I lay in a pose
An oxygen tube up my nose
And one in my bladder
Nothing could make me madder*

*It could be worse
I could be riding in the back of a hearse*

*I'm waiting for food and tea
They always chop it up for me
Here comes Donna with two trays;
she never spills it on the floor
One for me and one for the girl next door.*

*DeeDee takes me out of bed
So I won't fall on my head
And Marilee gets my pills and other things
And takes me to see Dr. Tang.*

*What a wonderful place to be
They take excellent care of me.*

Will your final wishes be honored?

We Americans are big on making plans. We like to be in control, particularly when it comes to our healthcare and end-of-life wishes. We make our wills, we pre-purchase our funeral plans and the really savvy among us fill out advanced health care directives to ensure their wishes are followed to the letter.

The problem? If we don't discuss those wishes with loved ones, and that health-care directive is tucked in the bottom of the sock drawer, there's a good chance those wishes won't be honored. After all, how can medical professionals honor what they don't know exists?

People with serious health conditions can now make certain their wishes will be known and respected by filling out a Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment form. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger last year signed AB 3000 into law, implementing the use of POLST forms in California. The forms – a vivid, eye-catching pink – are signed physicians' orders that allow seriously ill people to choose the treatments they want at the end of their lives.

The POLST form is voluntary for those with serious health conditions and is used to make medical-care wishes known to doctors, nurses, emergency medical personnel and other healthcare staff. A social worker, nurse or other healthcare professional can complete the form with the patient, but it must be reviewed and signed by a doctor. Patients or their surrogates must also sign the form. Once signed by the physician, the forms are official and must be honored.

The signed form is then kept in plain site (the refrigerator door is a traditional spot) and goes with the patient wherever they go - from hospital to nursing home, for example.

Pam Young, Clinical Educator for Hoffmann Hospice and a member of the Greater Bakersfield Better Care Coalition, says without this information, emergency responders and ER doctors must always err on the side of full treatments.

"If they don't know otherwise, heroic measure will be their default," Young says. "Some of those measures may not be what you want, particularly if you're in your advanced years and struggling with a serious and progressive illness."

The POLST form reinforces, but does not replace, an Advance Healthcare Directive, which is legal written instructions stating how you want future medical decisions made and who you want to make them should you become unable to make those decisions for yourself. The POLST form presents those wishes in a single-page, easy-to-understand way.

Only about 10 percent of Americans die suddenly; the remainder die of prolonged illnesses, according to the California Coalition for Compassionate Care. Even so, only an estimated 25 percent of Americans write down their medical-care wishes and about half will not have the ability to participate in their own end-of-life care, Young says.

"POLST is not just a form, it facilitates rich conversations that integrate the patient's values with treatment preferences," she says. "When these conversations happen, people are truly making an informed choice."



The POLST form

Dad's B

by Marylee Shrider



Picnicking at Lake Huntington.

As a medical social worker, Jason O'Donnell has spent countless hours working with terminally ill patients and their families. Even so, he was hardly prepared for the phone call he received from his father on April 19, 2009.

I'm in the hospital, his dad said. Renal failure. Doesn't look good.

A shaken Jason immediately called employers Hoffmann Hospice and Kern Valley Hospital in Lake Isabella to request family leave. Minutes later he left for Clovis where his father, Harold O'Donnell, lived and was hospitalized. Jason arrived to find his dad in the acute care unit, weak, but ready to face the reality of his condition.

Two days later, doctors discovered Harold also had cancer, stage four and terminal. His doctors gave him two weeks to two months.

"Within an hour of his diagnosis, I asked him if there were any things he really wanted to do," Jason said. "I mentioned the movie 'The Bucket List' and we watched it in the hospital."

The 2007 film - the story of two terminally ill friends who make lists of things to see and do before they "kick the bucket" - inspired the 63-year-old O'Donnell to sit down and make a bucket list of his own. First on the list? A "big, fat steak," a pleasure he'd denied himself for several years.

Not everyone was happy with Harold's list, at first. The acute care nurses protested when Jason announced he was taking their patient out to dinner, but the O'Donnell men were determined. After helping his father dress, the two left for the nearest Outback Steakhouse with a nurse "chasing us down the hall, holding a pass from the doctor saying it was okay for us to go," Jason said, laughing at the memory.

"Our leaving like that was kind of breaking the rules," he says. "Dad really liked that because he'd been a follow-the-rules kind of guy his whole life."

Harold was soon released from the hospital, but agreed to regular dialysis treatments on the condition they contributed to his quality of life. Once home, and believing he had only a few weeks to live, Harold got serious about his bucket list.



A favorite spot: a Kaiser Pass meadow.

as the pleasurable. Funeral preparations and financial arrangements came first, followed by deeds dedicated to closure – letters to friends and visits with loved ones he hadn't seen in while.

Mountain picnics, time with siblings and "a lot of steak dinners" made the list, as did destination trips with Jason. The two dined out frequently, picnicked in Harold's favorite spots and hosted get-togethers in his Clovis condominium.

Throughout their final three months together, cards, emails and calls came in from friends near and far. Visits with family and friends were happy, poignant occasions, compelling the normally reserved Harold to "open up completely" and share with his visitors what they meant to him, Jason says.

"Dad was so filled with love and gratitude, it was like being in the presence of a saint," Jason says. "It surprised me a lot that he was so emotionally expressive – his illness changed him in a positive way."

Father and son continued to cross adventures off Harold's bucket list, scheduling their outings around his thrice weekly dialysis treatments. About two months after his terminal diagnosis, however, Harold's health began to deteriorate, often leaving him weak and in pain.

One afternoon, after a picnic in a Kaiser Pass meadow, Harold and Jason had a heart-to-heart talk about his declining condition. His pain, and the amount of medication he needed to control it, was on the rise and he began to fear he would soon lose the dignity and control he so desired. Sitting quietly together, Harold matter-of-factly told his son he'd had enough, that it was time to stop dialysis treatments and let nature take its course.

Jason supported his father's decision and helped him enroll onto hospice service with Hinds Hospice of Fresno that same week. That done, Harold devoted himself to plans for the final trip on his bucket list. The following week, two days after Harold's final dialysis treatment,

To everyone's surprise, those few weeks lasted three months.

"I really didn't expect him to last very long," Jason says. "Neither did his doctor, who told him to get his affairs in order and focus on the quality and joy of life. So we did."

Harold's bucket list covered the practical as well

Bucket List

he and Jason flew out of Fresno for the Grand Canyon and Las Vegas.

They treated themselves to a helicopter tour of the Grand Canyon and a stroll on the Skywalk, the glass-floored walkway suspended 4,000 feet over the canyon floor. Despite his weakness, the rigors of travel and the heat – it was 111 degrees the day of their trip – Harold loved every moment.

“It was interesting to travel with someone who was so weak, with a wheelchair and a giant bag of medications,” Jason says. “In the middle of all this we still had to manage his symptoms. It was tricky at times.”

Even so, they traveled on to Las Vegas, where they spent four days exploring the town’s elaborate casinos. There was much to do. They watched the sun set from the top of the Eiffel Tower at the Paris Las Vegas hotel, people-watched along the strip and treated themselves to a daily helping of gelato, a treat Harold loved.

Dining at some of Las Vegas’ famed gourmet restaurants was a high priority. Harold could hardly wait to try one of the most famous, the Bellagio buffet. Ravenous after taking an appetite stimulant approved by his doctor, Harold ate like a sultan, polishing off huge helpings of roasted turkey, prime rib and “a whole plate of crab legs,” Jason says.

On their final night in Las Vegas, they dined at the award-winning Zeffirino Restaurant at The Venetian hotel and casino. They lingered over dinner for hours, with Harold savoring every bite, every sweet note sung by the gondola pilots as they steered their narrow boats through the hotel’s winding canals. The gourmet Italian meal at Zeffirino’s was the last to-do item on Harold’s bucket list.

Three hours later, in his hotel room, Harold fell into a sudden and rapid decline. Jason remained at Harold’s bedside through the night, fearing his father wouldn’t make it home.

“I was afraid the airline wasn’t going to allow him on board, but he rallied just enough to get on a plane,” he says. “When we got back to Clovis, hospice met us at the house.”

Safely at home, Harold slipped off to sleep. Three days later, on July 19, he died with Jason and daughter-in-law Lottie at his side.

“He woke up a few minutes before he died and looked right at



Fooling around at Eagle Point, the Grand Canyon.



Flying over the Grand Canyon.

me,” Jason says. “I think he just wanted to know we were there. He squeezed my hand, took a few deep breaths and he went.”

In honor of Harold’s 16 years of military service, his family held a Catholic mass with military honors. They placed in his cremation casket a small American flag and dressed him in a Superman shirt, emblematic of his last, most courageous battle.



Gourmet dining at the Zeffirino Restaurant in Las Vegas.

Despite the stress, exhaustion and time away from his wife and work, Jason doesn’t regret sharing his father’s end-of-life experience. He’s grateful, he says, for “the lessons about control and letting go,” the hospice support and the time he had with his dad. There isn’t a thing he would have done differently, he says.

“It was a sacred and important time for me, an experience I will carry with me always,” Jason says. “Dad liked to say he did the best he could with what he had and he always did. He did such a good job of dying – he couldn’t have gone any better.”

VFW auxiliary front and center for hospice care

The women of VFW Post 97 Ladies Auxiliary work with a single mission in mind – to support American military veterans and their families. One of the countless ways they do that is through generous donations to Hoffmann Hospice.

“The best thing my family did was have hospice take care of our dad,” says Post President Isabel Banducci. “My dad, son and brother were all veterans. Helping hospice helps them.”

The auxiliary has donated to Hoffmann at least five times in the past several years, hand-delivering the funds to the non-profit’s Brimhall Road headquarters. To raise funds for Hoffmann and other worthy causes, the auxiliary’s 127 members host spaghetti feeds, luaus, rib dinners and rummage sales throughout the year. They



Members of the VFW Post 97 Ladies Auxilliary present a donation to Hoffmann Public Relations Director Gretchen Daughtery. From left are Gladys Thoe, Margie Rizer, Daughtery and Isabel Banducci.

say it’s the least they can do to for our brave men and women in uniform.

“We try to do different things to raise

money,” Post President Isabel Banducci says. “We don’t make a whole lot at any one time, but if you have three or four events, it really adds up.”

The compassionate ladies of Post 97 donate to a number of local causes, but remain focused on veterans. Last year, they gave \$1,000 to Wounded Warriors of the High Sierras, an organization that trains disabled vets to climb, snowboard and kayak. They also support Wounded Heroes of Kern County and send packages overseas “wherever soldiers are fighting,” Banducci says.

A lot of our older vets have already passed, but we have a lot of Vietnam veterans,” she says.

“We’re now getting vets from Iraq and all the others. We help where we can.”

Hoffmann bereavement program now in Spanish

Bereavement Coordinator Katie Nelson well remembers the moment she decided the Hoffmann’s bereavement program would finally be translated into Spanish.

“The clincher for me was the day one of our bereaved, who had just lost her father, called to say how helpful she found our “A Journey Through Loss” workbook and she wanted one for her mother,” Nelson says. “The problem was her mother didn’t speak any English and I didn’t have anything for her.”

That was two years ago. After a months-long search for grants and donations to cover printing and translation costs, a determined Nelson budgeted for the expenses and received approval from Hoffmann’s Board of Directors to proceed. With funds in hand, Nelson moved quickly to complete the project.

“Spanish-speakers are a small, but significant population among our bereaved,” Nelson says. “What good does



Katie Nelson, Bereavement Coordinator

it to do send a sympathy card to someone who can’t read it?”

Nelson says she is especially pleased with the translation of “A Journey Through Loss” a workbook that helps the bereaved through the grieving process.

The book covers a host of issues people might confront during that process, like loss of appetite, the pitfalls of addiction and where to find comfort. It also answers questions about spirituality and who we are when our significant others are no longer with us.

“All these questions are about promise and hope,” Nelson says. “A person can wait six months to fill in the pages or use the book through the entire process – different things come up and different times during grief.”

Hoffmann doesn’t expect to be deluged with requests for the Spanish-only bereavement materials, but it’s important that those materials be there when they’re needed, Nelson says.

“Prior to this time we couldn’t serve these people and now we can,” she says. “That fulfills the Hoffmann mission of serving everyone. And that makes me happy.”

As Kern County's only non-profit hospice, Hoffmann Hospice cares for all who need our services, regardless of their ability to pay. We are able to fulfill this mission based on the availability of funds donated by generous individuals, businesses and foundations in our community. Hoffmann Hospice wishes to thank the following donors who gave from March through mid-August of this year.

Names in bold are those in whose memory donations were made.

George Ashby:

Debra Ashby, Dan &
Patricia Giordano, Andrea Graboff, Walter
Hand, Beverly Lamb, Joyce Schasteen, James &
Patricia Snelling, Gary & Kathleen Whitney. **Ronald Arslan:**

Theodore Baker, Sandra Berman, Paul & Dorothy Breedlove, Joan
Cooney, Kern County Museum Foundation, Brenda Haynes, Frank &
Margaret Kain, Lora Kizer, Cheryl Miller, Verner & Jane Mize, Gwen Thomas.

Theora Bartholomew: Esther Baxter. Phyllis Fram: Joe Fram.

Brown, Molly Gregory, William and Carol Harden, Y v o n n e

Beverly Gibbs:

Keith & Wilma Agee, Beverly & Jennings

Kellogg, Alice Keltner, Sharon Kindig, Jodine Parra, Phyllis Row, Craig &
Patricia Stevenson, Marsha Welch, Donna Whitson, George & Janet Yamakawa. **Michael McGraw:** Mellie Boone, James Costello,

Colleen McGraw, Virginia McGraw, Deborah Rhodehamel. **Shirley DeRisio:** Gary DeRisio. **Elinor Stegman:** Joan Brown,

Dennis & Christine Calaba, Samuel & Joan Cerise, Lorraine Gaudi, Wilma Lofgran, Paul & Kay Lupo, J.R. Quigley, Jack Sawyer, Charles Stegman, J.E.

Vossen. **James & Elinor Stegman:** Diane Stegman, Jeanie Stegman. James Stevens: Rosemarie Witt. **Jeannette Stuart Townsend:** Stephen Aceves,

Dr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Anderson, Terry & Vickie Black, Bebe Burke, Michael & Irene Davis, Frank & Donna DiLiето & Frank DiLiето III, Fred & Lucille Douglas,

Jordan & Frances Eliades, Jim & LC Gardiner, Michael & Tami Hankins, MJ & Barbara Harrison, Michael & Linda Hopkins, Cathie Joughin, Bruce & Janey

Keown, Keith & Kim Kuwahara, Terry & Ann Kuwahara, John & Christine Romanini, Thomas Trefilek, Vivian Wegis, Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.,

Woolgrowers Partnership, Richard & Patricia Young. **Bill Walsma:** Philip

Bartko, Dorothy Bolt, James & Barbara Cavanaugh, Mark Del

Papa, Janet Hanks, Wayne & Ruth Hoffmeyer, Richard & Barbara Holub, Mark & Eileen

Hutchinson, Vicki Jansen, Nancy Johnson, Richard

& Patricia McKinley, Pacific Pride Services, LLC, Petro Computer Systems, Inc., Gene

Phillips, Ramos/Strong

Inc., Roy & Cloye Ramey, Philip & Melba Thomas, Walter & Betty Troth.

Gary Wheeler: Vince & Kelli Brown,

Sharron Clark, Brenda Dow, Bertie &

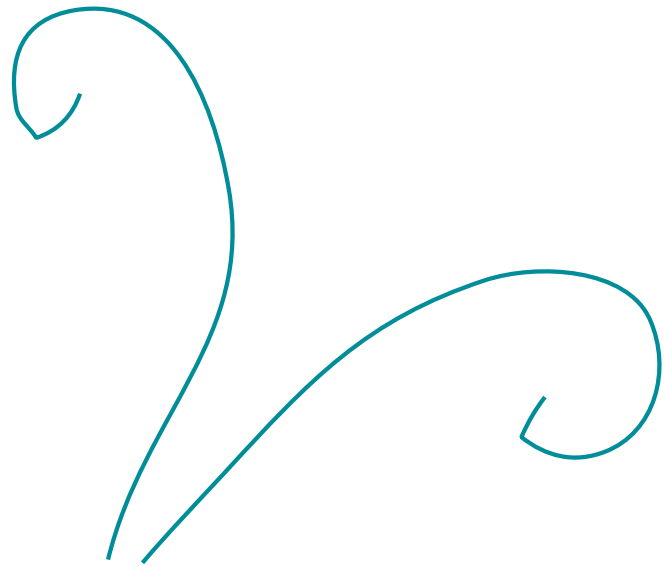
Donald Kinkade, M.A. & Bobbie

Lahargoue, Janice Smith, Edwin &

Alice Walter, Dallas & Geraldine

West, Mark & Helen

Wheeler.



A ride to remember

In 24 years of marriage, Ernie and Roxanna Batz were rarely apart. That may not sound like a big deal to a lot of married couples, but in the early years of their marriage, being together often meant long days on the road and, on occasion, nights sleeping in the car.

Not that they minded. Ernie was, and is, an accomplished accordionist; a “one-man band” who goes by the stage name of The Flying Dutchman. Back in the day, he says, he and Roxanna would entertain the crowds and each other, having a lot of fun along the way.

“We sang and danced together,” he says. “We danced to songs like the Blue Skirt Waltz.”

Sadly, their days of making sweet music together are over – Roxanna died on September 24 after 10 months on Hoffmann’s service. Just weeks before she died, though, she reminisced about the early days of her marriage.

“Sometimes he’d play at a place until two in the morning, and then we’d load up the car with his equipment and go to the next town,” she said. “Those were the days.”

Theirs was a successful and happily crowded second marriage. The couple not only shared the stage, they shared seven children, 13 grandchildren and 29 great grandchildren.

It surprised no one, then, when Roxanna said she wanted to share a special last trip with her husband. It was a trip that included two of



Ernie and Roxanna Batz in the dining car of the Fillmore and Western tourist train.

his favorite things – spending time with her and trains.

“He’s a member of a steam engine club,” she said of Ernie. “He loved trains and this was something the people from Hoffmann Hospice thought I could do.”

Accompanied by a son and a daughter-in-law, the Batzes drove to Fillmore, Calif. and climbed aboard a 1940 Pullman car of the Fillmore and Western Railway. The couple enjoyed a lunch of chicken cordon bleu and cheesecake in the train’s dining car while staring out the window at the Heritage Valley’s scenic orange, lemon and avocado groves. The round trip, including a stop over in Santa Paula, took only about three hours,

but Roxanna and Ernie loved every minute.

“The train was something she’d never done and we wanted to, but could never get to,” Ernie said. “I’m glad we finally did.”

So was Roxanna. She was grateful, she said, for the trip and for the care that made it possible.

“The Hoffmann people made us feel that what we’re going through isn’t a big deal; that it’s up to God when we go,” she said. “In the meantime, it’s up to us to live life and enjoy it.”



Shopping together at Albertsons.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS IN BAKERSFIELD

When: Tuesdays at 6 p.m. and Thursdays at 10 a.m.
Where: Hoffmann Hospice 8501 Brimhall Road, Bldg. 100

CHILDREN’S GRIEF SUPPORT

When: Thursdays, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Where: Hoffmann Hospice 8501 Brimhall Road, Bldg. 100

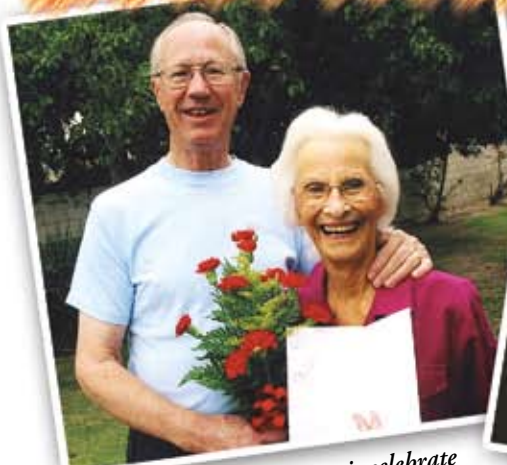
KERN RIVER VALLEY

When: 10 to 11 a.m., the first and third Friday of each month.
Where: 6048 B Lake Isabella Boulevard in the True Value Hardware Plaza.

All grief support meetings are free and open to the public. You need not have had a loved one on our service to attend.
For more information call (661) 410-1010



Celebrating life's blessings



Philip and Ella Davis celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary eight days before Ella's death on August 31.



Gayle Martin and Lola Pardue enjoy a Christmas date at the Crystal Palace in 2008.



Lola Pardue is prepped for the big date.

The bride was lovely. The two-year-old was tickled. The couple married for 50 years was still in love.

Each celebrated a special day; each faced the end of life. Their friends at Hoffmann Hospice helped them do both.

Hoffmann launched its Celebrations program three years ago and hasn't stopped partying since, treating patients and their families to catered meals, nights on the town and parties at the park to commemorate birthdays, anniversaries and other milestone events. In the past year, the Celebrations program recognized eight such events, including birthdays, a 50th wedding anniversary, a first date and a wedding.

Volunteer Coordinator Kim Pounder, whose department facilitates the program, says helping patients celebrate important days is a privilege and a pleasure. She and her volunteers have yet to find a limit on the milestones they commemorate. The celebrations, she says, mean everything to the patients and their families.

"More often than not, it's the men in the family who come to me with tears in their eyes and say 'thank you – without you this day would have come and gone,'" she says. "That's what Celebrations is all about."

Pounder takes referrals from Hoffmann

nurses whose patients have expressed a desire to celebrate a special day. She then works with her volunteers and local businesses to make it happen. Wedding anniversaries are often celebrated in the couple's home with a catered meal by candlelight. Hoffmann staff provides everything from the bistro table to the fine



Hoffmann patient Darlene Moriarity and Scott Slota marry on Feb. 7, 2008. The bride passed away twelve days later.

Photo by Casey Christie, The Bakersfield Californian.

china to the meals, courtesy of Frughatti's or the Crystal Palace. A bottle of sparkling cider and a small floral arrangement from Stockdale Florist generally completes the scene.

"We set everything out for them, then we

leave so they can enjoy a quiet dinner," Pounder says. "When they're done, they just bundle it up and drop it in a basket for us to pick up the next day."

The Celebrations are personalized as much as possible, says Pounder, who doesn't hesitate to ask limo and carriage drivers, bakeries and others to donate their wares and services. Most, like Jim Balmain of Smith's Bakeries, are enthusiastic participants.

"We had a little girl celebrating her second birthday and I told Mr. Balmain it needed to be the cake of every little girl's dreams – the prom, the princess and the wedding all wrapped into one," Pounder says. "It had three tiers, with glitter, a tiara and lace and it was all pink. He totally got it."

Families are sometimes hesitant to ask for a Celebrations event when their terminally ill loved one is no longer interested in food. Pounder says families should celebrate milestones anyway, because "it's not about the food, but what food does – it brings people together."

"In times of sadness and sorrow, people are often afraid to celebrate the here and now," she says. "By bringing food and flowers, we help them get past that fear and bring everyone together to create those beautiful memories."

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The Bakersfield Californian

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Nightingale Award winner “an angel”

Lynn Cambria scored a first when she won Hoffmann’s 2009 Florence Nightingale Award. Not that the prize is new – it’s awarded annually to Hoffmann’s most outstanding nurse as chosen by her peers.

It’s just that, for the first time in the agency’s history, the vote was unanimous.

The only nurse who didn’t vote for Cambria was Cambria. For everyone else, the vote was an apparent no-brainer.

“I was totally blown away,” Cambria says. “When Tom (Hoffmann) made the announcement that I was chosen and that it was a unanimous decision I just started to cry.”

Cambria says there is nothing more affirming than recognition by one’s peers, which is why she calls the award the highlight of her career. Given her eventful 23-year career, that’s saying something.

Cambria graduated in 1986 at the age of 44 from the Los Angeles Valley College nursing program and jumped right into what would become her life’s passion - oncology. She was offered her first nursing position at Sherman Oaks Hospital before she graduated.

Sherman Oaks Hospital was home to Cambria for ten happy years. Looking for more and greater challenges, Cambria then worked for a time with AIDS patients, followed by several fulfilling years in melanoma research at the John Wayne Cancer Institute in Santa Monica.



Lynn Cambria

“It was very rewarding to see something that was in a test tube that will hopefully come to fruition as a cure for melanoma,” she says.

As much as she enjoyed her work at the institute, the southern California traffic and cost of living led Cambria to move in 2004 to the Antelope Valley, where she soon discovered

a new passion – Hoffmann Hospice.

“When I applied at Hoffmann, I looked at everything they stood for,” she says. “Their values were my values and still are. I’ve never been more pleased with one company.”

The feeling is mutual. Director of Patient Care Services Julie Wotasik calls Cambria “an angel.”

“There’s her helpfulness, her cheerfulness, her beautiful smile, the list goes on and on,” Wotasik says. “She’s so compassionate and caring – and she always takes the most challenging patients.”

Cambria has worked at nearly every nursing position Hoffmann has, including triage, nurse education and, most recently, quality assurance. Her love for nursing has rubbed off on her two adult children, both of whom are following in their mother’s footsteps. Daughter Kim is a nurse’s aide and is currently completing the necessary prerequisites for her school’s nursing program. Son David works at Hoffmann as a home health aide and is prepping for his LVN board.

Cambria says she is grateful for her fellow nurses and work that “touches her heart in so many ways, I can’t even number them anymore.”

“I’m where I am meant to be,” she says. “God’s got me here for a reason and he’s not finished with me yet.”

Hoffmann entry takes third in A-MAIZE-ING parade

The business of Hoffmann Hospice has nothing to do with corn, but everything to do with family, community and celebrations of life, which is why entering the Antelope Valley Fair Parade in Lancaster was a given for Hoffmann staff.

Inspired by this year’s parade theme, “An A-MAIZE-ING Event,” Hoffmann Community Liaisons Brandi Wheeler and Claudia Aguilar festooned a red Ford monster truck with corn husks, plugged in a sound system and joined the fun. Their entry, themed “A-MAIZE-ING Grace,” took third place in the decorated single auto category.

“We had posters, the music was blaring, were singing and waving,” Wheeler says. “It was just a great day.”

The hot August day was also a poignant



Ezekiel Gonzalaz, 7, enjoys the view from the Hoffmann Hospice entry in the Antelope Valley Fair Parade.

day for many in attendance, some of whom actually ran up to the Hoffmann truck in tears, calling out words of thanks and encouragement, Wheeler says. The theme of their entry, she says, seemed to strike a spiritual chord with many along the parade route.

“We chose the hymn “Amazing Grace” because it really reflects who we are and what we do,” she says. “At the end of life, we’re part of that grace God gives to people.”

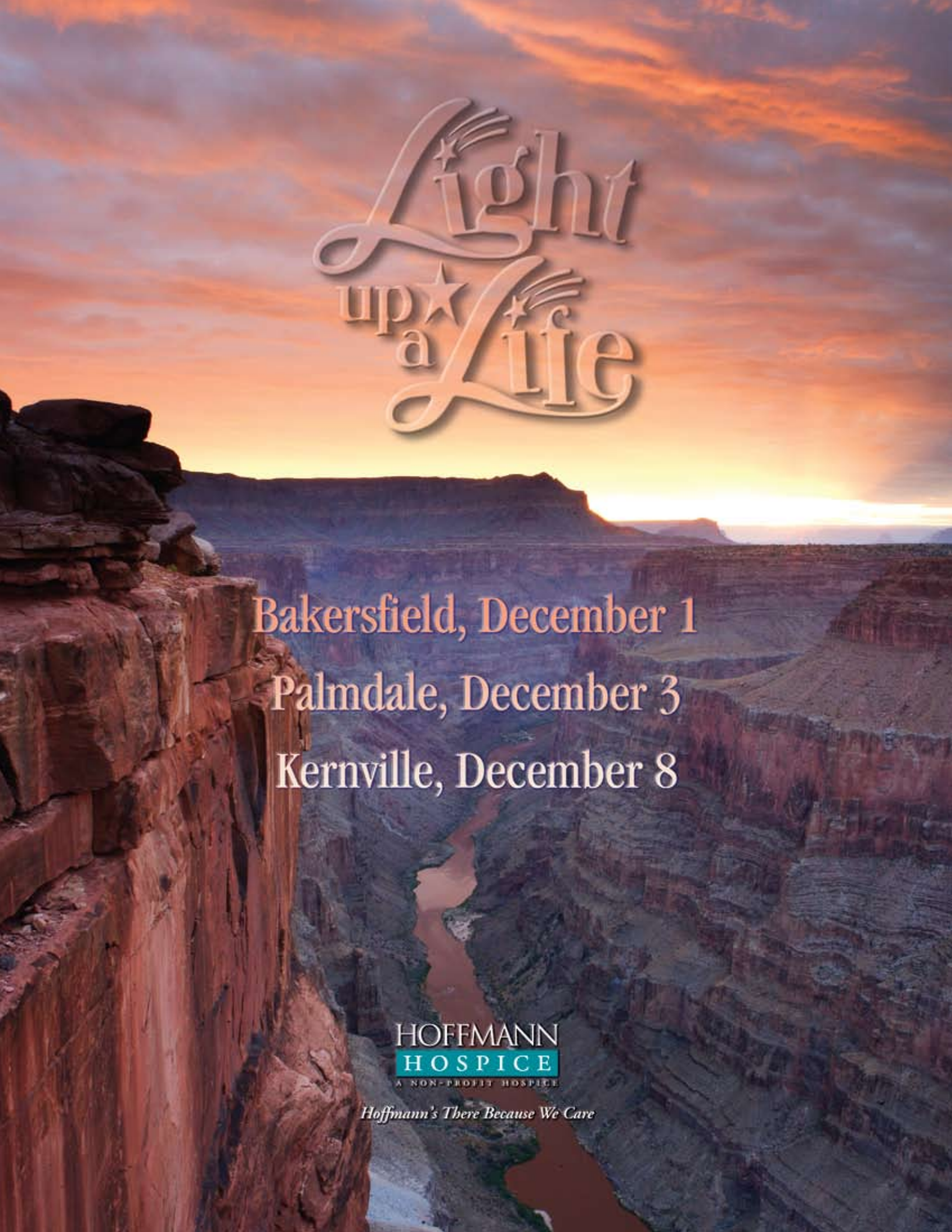
Officials estimate about 3,000 onlookers turned out for the parade which ran down Lancaster Boulevard and featured 70 entries. It was Hoffmann’s first year as an entry in the annual event, but it won’t be the last, Wheeler says.

“It was such a beautiful community event,” she says. “We’ll definitely be back next year.”

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Light up a Life

Bakersfield, December 1

Palmdale, December 3

Kernville, December 8

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