Hospice of Tennessee Valley Celebrates Handy Week

Hospice of Tennessee Valley (HTV) is excited to be a part of this year’s annual WC Handy Music Festival.

HTV, along with Regency Square Mall, Dr. Keith Thompson and Shoals Pharmacy, will be sponsoring the “Mall Jazz” event, scheduled for Monday, July 25th. This event will take place in the Sears Court from 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

“Mall Jazz is a traditional big band music event that always draws a great crowd,” said Tommy Richardson, senior property manager for Regency Square Mall. “All of the top notch musicians in the area, including the President of the Board with the Music Preservation Society, will be playing for this event. The 20 member ensemble includes musicians from all stages and walks of life, and that is why it is always fabulous.”

“We are so pleased to be celebrating Handy Week by co-sponsoring such a great event that naturally fits the demographic that our agency serves,” said David Crosby, HTV Director. “We invite you to come out and join us for some big band era music in an air-conditioned venue and have some fun.”

Passion for People Drives our Administrator

Blake Edwards has a passion for people and making a difference in their lives. It is that passion that led him to start Hospice of Tennessee Valley in October of 2002.

This Florence-native and University of North Alabama graduate is proud to call the Shoals home. In fact, he’s never lived anywhere else, and doesn’t intend to. It’s the reason he feels such a connection with the city he calls home and the many people who make up its personality.

“What led me to start our company was my strong desire and conviction to see individuals cared for in the same way that I would want my own parents or family members to be cared for in the same situation,” said Edwards.

Hospice of Tennessee Valley (HTV) is a local, free-standing hospice that is not affiliated with any other agency or hospice. Because of this, HTV is able to be in total control of the care our patients receive. Our staff is made up of registered nurses, social workers, certified nursing assistants, chaplains and volunteers who work together providing care for those who have been stricken with a life-limiting illness.

“By being locally owned and operated, all policies and decisions are made right here at home. That enables us to be in full control of the care of patients,” Edwards said. “We do not rely on a decision-maker from another area, who doesn’t know the Shoals or its people, to make instructions or policies related to the care of our patients.”

Edwards said he is most proud of the fact that HTV has been able to provide the type of care he envisioned when he stepped out in faith to start the company.

“It is so important that we treat people with respect while caring for them and controlling their pain,” Edwards explained. “We are not just dealing with patients from a physical side, but also from an emotional and spiritual side. The physical is temporary, but the spiritual is everlasting. It’s what you take with you, and nothing is more important than that.”

Edwards and his wife, the former Vickey Rhodes of Florence, have three grown children and three granddaughters.
**Community Relations Coordinator Named**

Courtney Hurt joined the staff of Hospice of Tennessee Valley in May as Community Relations Coordinator. In this role, Hurt’s key responsibility will be the development and maintenance of physician relationships namely in Colbert, Lauderdale and Franklin counties.

“I am so honored to join such a worthy organization,” Hurt said. “Being able to represent Hospice of Tennessee Valley and its staff both in the community and with our physician base is something that I am proud to do.”

Hurt is a 1997 graduate of the University of Mississippi. She is married to Florence native, Jimmy Hurt. They have three sons: Trey, Brooks and Holt.

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**Around Town:**

**Bible Studies**

The Chaplains of Hospice of Tennessee Valley teach Bible Studies in several area nursing homes and assisted living facilities, offering residents an opportunity for spiritual study and growth in the comfort of their own home.

“These non-denominational, devotion-based studies last about 30 minutes each week,” said David Crosby, Director. “We want to offer residents a time to study God’s word, to ask questions and to fellowship with other believers. This is a time they are free to talk about anything that is on their heart.”

Presently, Bible studies are being offered at Heritage Manor every Wednesday at 2 p.m., Morningside every Wednesday at 9 a.m., Southern Manor every other Wednesday at 9 a.m. and Cottage of the Shoals every other Friday at 10 a.m.

**Helen’s Happenings /Social Hours**

Our Volunteer Coordinator, Helen Walker, has ongoing events at several of our area’s assisted living or nursing home facilities. Helen’s Happenings at Cottage of the Shoals is set for every Tuesday at 1 p.m. while Social Hour at Mitchell Hollingsworth is each Wednesday at 2:30 followed by Merrill Gardens Social Hour each Thursday at 2 p.m.

“These events are a great time of socialization and fellowship for residents,” said Walker. “Anything from pen pals to our Red Hat Ladies and Gentlemen’s Fellowship Club. They enjoy it all.”

**Free Blood Pressure Checks**

Available each Wednesday at 8:30 a.m., inside of Regency Square Mall, directly in front of Kay Jewelers.
Alene Chambers smiles when she talks about the early days of dating her husband, George. “I guess the big thing to do back then was go see a drive-in movie,” she recalls. “We had known each other for years, having both grown up in the area and had dated prior to George serving in the Korean War. When he returned, we were married shortly thereafter. And that was in 1956.”

So began a love story that would last more than 55 years, and take the Chambers on a journey of wonderful blessings and great heartaches before Mr. Chamber’s death in January 2011.

In their years together, the Chambers raised two sons, Philip and Michael, and went on to enjoy being the grandparents of three grandsons, one great-grandson and one great-granddaughter, who affectionately referred to George as “Papaw.”

After serving two years with the Navy, five years with the Army, Mr. Chambers settled into the life of a family man. “He was just happy to enjoy life and his family,” recalled Alene. “He was a good, kind person who was easy going. A true gentleman.”

Mr. Chambers worked for years at Bryson’s Furniture in Sheffield, where he developed a love of furniture making. In 1966, the Chambers launched their own business, Chambers Upholstery. George would do what came natural for him and build couches and chairs, while Alene did all the sewing. After this time, Mr. Chambers went on to work for the Tennessee Valley Authority for the last 16 years of his career. He retired in January 1993. Unfortunately, in 1996 Mr. Chambers was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. “If you haven’t been through something like that, you just don’t have any idea how it feels,” said Alene. “Talking to someone you’ve always depended on and they just don’t understand anymore. It is so difficult. His health and his mind gradually declined to the point that he became bed-bound. And that is when we found Hospice of Tennessee Valley.”

“I knew that for our situation, hospice would have to be involved,” explained Alene. “The support that they gave me and the care that they gave to George proved to be invaluable,” said Alene. “They were always here when I needed them, even if it was during the night. I can truly say that I didn’t think of any of them as hospice workers, but as family. You knew you could depend on all of them, and it was a comfort to have them in and out of our home. It brightened our days. The staff at Hospice of Tennessee Valley truly are sincere and dedicated in their jobs, and I would recommend their services to anyone.”

Hearts & Soles

Hospice of Tennessee Valley (HTV) is proud to sponsor the “Hearts & Soles” mall-walking club. Participants in the program track their mileage throughout the year, and are presented with Annual Mileage Awards at the May Awards breakfast each year. HTV also provides a quarterly breakfast for participants, which includes a speaker and door prizes.

“Hospice of Tennessee Valley has been a great partner for our mall walkers program over the last year,” said Tommy Richardson, Regency Square Mall senior property manager. “They always have a great program for our participants each quarter. Their time and effort have proven to be a key component to the program’s success.”

According to Richardson, the inside walking area of the mall, including the corridors, is 6/10 of a mile. He said there are typically around 60-70 walkers who log their miles. This past year, the top walker logged over 500 miles.

If you would like to participate in the “Hearts & Soles” program, the registration station is located in the Honey Baked Ham entrance, across from the police office. This is a great way to improve your heart one step at a time.

Bereavement Support Groups

Working through the grief process after the loss of a loved one can be difficult. That’s why Hospice of Tennessee Valley (HTV) offers bereavement support groups to the community, as well as to the families of our patients.

Each group consists of six, hour-long sessions. Meetings generally take place in the family room at HTV, although in-home meetings are offered when requested. Grief and bereavement education is offered in the first few sessions. At times, homework assignments are utilized when an individual could benefit from them.

“This really becomes a time of sharing,” said John Henry, HTV Chaplain and Bereavement Coordinator. “Every session is a time to let group members express their feelings and thoughts. We give them an opportunity to process their grief and work through it in a setting that is non-threatening, non-judgmental and confidential. Everyone is encouraged to share only to the degree that they are comfortable. We want participants to know they have full control over what they choose to share. A safe, confidential environment is key and that is what we offer.”

For more information, please contact John Henry at 256-767-1322.
The Heart of Hospice...Our Earth Angels

Hospice of Tennessee Valley offers many types of volunteer service opportunities and can help you decide which area of service is best for you. Volunteers provide companionship and emotional support and offer help in a variety of ways.

The volunteers of Hospice of Tennessee Valley come from diverse backgrounds, each with unique talents to share with patients and their families. Our volunteers give their time, their hands and their caring hearts. As essential parts of the interdisciplinary team, they play a vital role in hospice care.

For more information, please contact Helen Walker, Volunteer Coordinator, at 256-767-1322. You may also mail the volunteer application below to our office.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION:
Complete and return to:
Hospice of Tennessee Valley
200 W. Tennessee Street, Florence, AL 35630

Name: _______________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________________________

Phone #: _______________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you!