

Women's Fund

Women's Fund Honors

Quiet Oaks Hospice House

Quiet Oaks recently took in two women with terminal illnesses, an 81-year old with spina bifida and breast cancer, and a 43-year old who had no family to care for her. Neither had the finances to pay for their stays.

The 81-year old enjoyed spending time with many friends. When she moved to Quiet Oaks, the staff made it possible for her to go to lunch with friends and even host gatherings with groups of friends when she was feeling up to it.

The woman with no family strongly preferred organic food. When she first arrived, she told the staff it was all she ate her entire life. Quiet Oaks was happy to make her meals organic so she would feel more at home.

"We celebrate the individuality of the people here and make sure that whatever is familiar to them is around them," said Joe Bauer, executive director of Quiet Oaks.

A \$15,000 grant from the Women's Fund at the Central Minnesota Community Foundation is helping to fulfill even these simplest requests. The grant helps cover the costs of caring for guests who cannot afford the services. Quiet Oaks also was featured at the Women on Stage event last year.

"We thank the Women's Fund for this recognition," Bauer said. "Individuals in our care appreciate all we can do to make their lives more special during the time they have."

Giving Comfort

Quiet Oaks understands how simple things can make it easier for people with a terminal

illness. From a side-opening tub with air flow and comfort pads to thermostats in every room and the scenic beauty outside, there's comfort and ease in every part of the facility.

"We're here to alleviate as many care-giving responsibilities as we can for family members, so the time they spend together is a time that they can just enjoy each other," Bauer said.

Joe's younger brother, Dan, died of colon cancer in 2003 at the age of 48. Although Dan was surrounded and cared for by his family and friends, his last weeks were difficult for his wife and seven children. Joe and his wife, Mary, recognized the need for alternative options for people in similar situations. The result, Quiet Oaks Hospice House, opened to its first residents in October 2008.

The first person to stay at Quiet Oaks was a woman in her 80's with only about two weeks left to live. The first night she was there, she said to Bauer, "I like to have a nightcap at about this time." When Bauer offered to bring her something she said, "I'd like it if you joined me." Bauer, not being a drinker, made her the drink she requested and poured himself a club soda (*which looked very similar*), and sat down with her to visit. He had a "nightcap" with her every night until she was unable to join him.

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