Volunteer Service: Adult

Nominee or Primary Contact First Name: Beth
Nominee or Primary Contact Last Name: Carson
Phonetic Spelling: Beth (like breath without the “r”) Car-sun
Is the nominee being recognized for volunteer service done primarily in New Hampshire?: Yes
Nominee’s Local Newspaper: Nashua Telegraph
Which organization does the nominee primarily volunteer with? (There are opportunities to discuss additional organizations later): Home Health & Hospice Care
How many years has the nominee volunteered with this organization: 3
On average, how many hours per month does the nominee spend volunteering with this organization: 40+
If the nominee volunteers with any other organizations, list them here (and include approximately how many monthly hours they spend volunteering at each): N/A

Narratives

Please respond to each question, being as clear and specific as possible. Each response may be up to 1,800 characters (approximately 250 words).

Reviewers are looking for nominations that provide:
1. a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested
2. a clear and compelling description of the nominee, their service, and the impact of their service
3. specific examples and/or details about the nominee’s service

Note: While service history is relevant to include, nominees are being considered for their contributions to the community in the past 12 months.

1. Provide a description of the nominee's service activities and who/what benefits from the service. (If nominating in the National Service category, please describe how the nominee's service extends beyond their standard service activities)

Beth Carson is a remarkable hospice volunteer, actively serving in 5 ways:
1. Beth is, in her heart, first and foremost a vigil volunteer. She sits at the bedside of hospice patients in the last hours to days of life. Beth may sit alone with a patient, or in the midst of family members who are also in need of presence.
2. Beth covers the vigil phone most weekdays throughout the year, essentially being on call to receive new vigil requests as they are submitted by hospice nurses or social workers. She posts information to the organization’s web-based volunteer site (in a HIPAA-secure manner) so that volunteers may sign up to sit vigil. Beth actively reaches out by phone, email and text to fellow volunteers to fill needed spaces. She is often balancing the
scheduling of multiple vigils and locations, making sure that each gets as much care and attention as if it was the only one.

3. Beth and her robotic therapy cat, Tinkerbell, visit nursing home patients throughout the greater Nashua/Manchester area. Many of the individuals they visit have dementia and respond to Tinkerbell as if she was a live cat. Beth is exceptionally skilled at facilitating visits, and together they bring tremendous joy and comfort to many.

4. Beth acts as courier to deliver CD players and other resources throughout our service area. She makes it a priority to deliver items as quickly as possible, as time on hospice is sometimes brief.

5. Beth shops 2-4x/month for the Community Hospice House.

2. Describe how the nominee’s service has impacted others. How has the nominee contributed to a culture of service?

Beth’s volunteer service benefits everyone she comes into contact with -- hospice staff who value her role and perspective, nursing home facility staff with whom she communicates and collaborates regularly, her fellow volunteers, whom she is scheduling and regularly checking in on, and the patients and families she serves.

In the past fiscal year, Beth logged 910 hours of direct patient service and made 260 visits. Direct patient time. Beth’s total hours, including drive time for assignments, reached 1047 hours. Since completing hospice training in 2015, Beth has sat vigil with 155 actively dying people, and been present at the time of death with 24 of them. That is astounding. In itself, her service sitting vigil has a deep and profound impact beyond words -- that each of those individuals did not die alone, but felt the safety and comfort of a compassionate presence. And her presence continues to ripple out to each of those individual’s family members, who has the peace of mind that their loved one received one-to-one attention, care, dignity and respect through that very sacred (and often challenging) time. She is also an inspiration and mentor to fellow volunteers, as new volunteer Janeen Ackerson describes, “Beth was such a help and a lifeline for me with my very first vigil. She knew I was coming and waited … to ‘show me the ropes’. She literally helped me find my way to the patient and stayed with me until I felt comfortable. She provided me with support and encouragement ... She made the unknown not only less scary, but enjoyable in a sense.”

3. Describe the nominee’s character, strengths, and any specific information that differentiates the nominee from others.

“Beth Carson is a volunteer who takes complete responsibility for anything she agrees to help with. As a lead Vigil Volunteer, she has developed a depth of experience with both the patients and the family members that allows her to meet any situation with confidence and skill. She is known and loved by HHHC staff, who frequently call her directly to make requests for information about vigil patients. Beth is known and respected by facility staff for the competence with which she manages vigil patient coverage and volunteers alike. Her dedication to making sure patients have companionship in their last hours is unparalleled.”
Spirit of NH Awards: Sample Nomination (2018 top award recipient)

– Judy Gross, volunteer program assistant

“Just by knowing Beth, one benefits. The patients and family members benefit from her ability to see the full picture. She not only comforts and advocates for the patient, she does so for the family, as well. Each facility at which she volunteers, benefits because their patient has Beth’s expertise of the dying process. The facility staff knows that the one they love and care about... is being given undivided attention.”
– Anne Olasz, volunteer

“She is able to approach each patient/family as a unique and special experience. Beth offers a warm and compassionate vibe that brings comfort to any room she enters. ... She chooses to give of herself in her available free time as if it were her only task. I am in awe of the dedication Beth gives to those who are at their most vulnerable point.”
– Karen Aucoin, volunteer

4. Include any additional information you would like reviewers to be aware of.

Beth continues to work full time in a job unrelated to hospice, yet fiercely carves out time and space for her volunteerism. Everyone who knows her knows her commitment to making a time that is often marked by challenge and sadness to also be filled with love, connection, and comfort. She listens deeply and is present with her whole being. She is wise in what she sees, and skillful in what she communicates. Her responsiveness to vigil patient needs demonstrates HHHC’s culture of service excellence in that she will sit multiple 2 hour shifts with the same patient, day after day, and if needed, split/stretch her time between other vigil patients as necessary.

Beth stands out as an exceptional volunteer because she never hesitates to step forward to help. No request is too small, and she appears to thrive on wearing multiple volunteer hats.

5. In 400 characters or fewer, please summarize the nomination (including name, volunteer organization, and impact). This summary may be used in promotional materials.

With HHHC, Beth Carson’s spirit of giving is unparalleled. Though not yet retired, she makes time for what she loves. In the words of a fellow volunteer, “I believe her to be at ‘home’ when supporting a person at the end of life. She is such a self-giving person. Beth does not do what she does for recognition or self-gain. She does what she does because she loves doing so.”