

# Hospice scrapbooking program creates memories for crafters, families

It began as a way to honor veterans and the service that they gave to America. It has grown into a program that creates a treasured memory for a family grieving the loss of a loved one who has been in the care of PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Hospice.

"It" is the Hospice Scrapbooking Project, an endeavor that has been capturing the memories of hospice patients through the use of photographs, historical documents and other memorabilia.

The program began in 2013 when hospice began an association with We Honor Veterans (WHV), a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"This was a natural program for us to join," said hospice volunteer coordinator Donna Becker. "We have many veterans who come through our service and the We Honor Veterans program is a beautiful way to honor their service and commitment to our country."

That association introduced Becker to the Scrapbook Project, which she wanted to incorporate into the PeaceHealth WHV program.

Not knowing where to turn, she posted a flyer at Rosie's Art Carnival, a local art and crafts store, (now closed) asking for volunteers.

Several stepped forward, including Pauline Orozco, who became the unofficial leader of the scrapbook group.

For the first two years, the group concentrated on creating scrapbooks for veterans and their families who wanted to participate.

"Many people do not really know what a scrapbook is," Orozco said. "When patients and their families see a completed one, they not only are astonished at the creativity and the work that went into it, but obviously they see happy memories preserved forever."

The small circle of scrapbooking volunteers meets every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. at the Hospice office on Kingwood Street.

The two hours have become both a social event and a way to feel good and give back in a charitable way.

One or two team members meet with the family to explain the program, interview them and collect stories and photos.

The journey of gathering the raw material for the scrapbook is as meaningful to the

families as the final product.

"It was our opportunity to celebrate our lives together since our marriage in 1981," the wife of one Hospice patient explained. "We revisited our blending of two families and adding another son to the mix; our hobbies and good times — both serious and silly with the kids — and then, just the two of us and our empty nest adventures."

Gathering the photos, old and new, brought laughter and tears as she revisited photographs that she had not seen in years.

"Yes, there was sadness in anticipating saying goodbye," she explained. "But there was also joy and gratitude in seeing that his was a life well-lived and that he was well-loved."

"Collecting the photos really began a healthy grief process."

When the scrapbook was delivered, the emotion was overwhelming.

"Gratitude, joy, sadness all came together in a sweet bouquet," she said. "It was beautiful beyond our imagining. It captured the essence of my loved one in a way no obituary or epitaph could ever do. I am so grateful for this program."

Margaret Free heard about

the project after Rosie's Art Carnival had closed its doors.

"It was a place, initially for me, to come together with other crafters," she explained. "It's social, but we learn from each other and we work on these books, knowing it will be so meaningful to someone."

There have been about a dozen scrapbooks created by the group since 2013, some were for veterans and the others made after the offer to create the memory was accepted by a patient or family.

The group has also made small memory boxes that hold special items that were meaningful to the patient. One family received both a scrapbook and six memory boxes. The boxes were given to the six children at Christmas and they were excited to receive the gift of the memories those boxes contained.

Because there are times when there is no scrapbook project on the table, the group has been making cards and special holiday-themed gifts that Hospice workers can take to their clients.

Orozco remembers hearing about one patient, at an assisted living facility. "His caregiver was tidying up," she said. "When she picked up the

card, the patient said, in a very stern voice, 'Don't move my card!' These little gifts mean so much."

"Faces light up when these gifts come through the door," Becker said. "The holiday themed gifts are especially wonderful for some of our patients who live in care facilities or foster homes and who don't have family close by. For some, this is the only celebratory gift they receive."

"It is precious."

The program is not without costs however. The group purchases the blank books and the materials used to create the special effects and frames around photos and memorabilia.

"We received some targeted donations for the scrapbooking project through Light Up A Life donations," Becker said. "But the funds are running out. We are seeking donations to help keep the project going."

The group is also looking for more volunteers to help with the creation of the books.

Experience is not necessary, according to Sharry Fitzgerald, another volunteer.

"It is an avenue to get together with other crafters and learn from each other,"

she said. "It's a social event but I am also using my skills to accomplish something that feels good and charitable."

While the families revel in the beauty of the books and the memories of their loved one, the scrapbookers come away from each book with tears and a feeling of pride.

"Making those scrapbooks and spending time with the photos and the notes from the families about the person, you feel like you know that person," Fitzgerald said. "You feel like you've contributed something to help them in a time that is very hard."

Free agreed. "Once a loved one dies, it's hard to get over the grief," she said. "It takes time. If we can put memories together for them, in a book that they can sit with and reflect on a beautiful life, it makes it easier for them. It just feels good."

Anyone interested in learning more about the scrapbooking project can contact the new Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, Christopher Huntingdon, by email at [CHuntingdon@peacehealth.org](mailto:CHuntingdon@peacehealth.org), or by phone at 541-997-3418. —Submitted by *Becky Goehring*

## Check voter registration as May elections near

If you plan to vote for your favorite candidate in the 2016 Presidential Primary Election on Tuesday, May 17, you must be registered to vote by Tuesday, April 26.

The election will include voting for Lane County Justice of the Peace, Lane County Sheriff and several county measures.

Ballots will be mailed and

official drop sites will be open on Friday, April 29.

For more information about voting in Oregon, go to [www.sos.oregon.gov/voting-elections](http://www.sos.oregon.gov/voting-elections).

For more information about voting in Lane County, go to [www.lanecounty.org/Departments/CAO/Operations/CountyClerk/elections](http://www.lanecounty.org/Departments/CAO/Operations/CountyClerk/elections).

## SENIOR SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL NEEDS NEW MEMBERS

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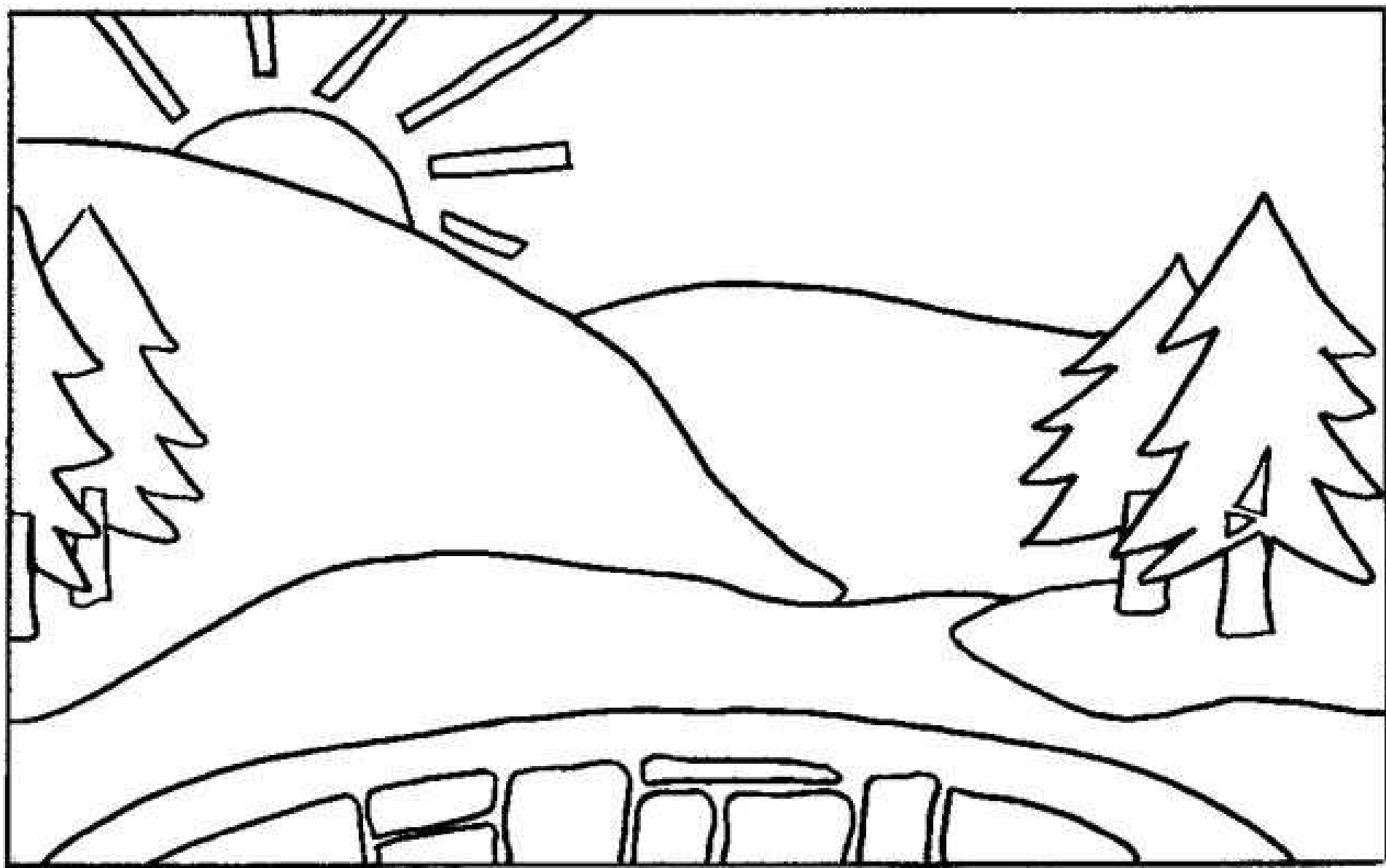
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**HEY, KIDS!** Color this picture and add yourself doing one of the many activities you can do at Honeyman – swimming, fishing, paddle boats, sandboards, quads, sand castles...whatever you like! Bring your picture to **"Art in the Park"** and get your picture taken with J.B. Beaver, the park mascot.

The Friends of Honeyman and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department will host **"Art in the Park"** on **Saturday, April 30, from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm.** We will be located at the Bathhouse Heritage Center at Cleawox.

**Happy 75th Birthday, Honeyman State Park!**

