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Hospice News

Providing Peace, Comfort, & Care to the People of Kittitas County

“This is something I have decided that I need to say yes to.”
 Gordon Boone

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Either Way I’m A Winner by Andrew Lyons

It is not easy to put into words a story that transcends life itself, a story of spiritual journey, of loss, and of healing. Gordon Boone told me such a story late last night as I sat in my living room.

Gordon called me at 10:30p.m. from a friend’s home in Virginia because in his words, “I have had to learn to say no to a lot of things in life lately, but this is something that I have decided that I need to say yes to.” And what does “this” refer to? It is his unyielding desire to provide peace, comfort, and hope to those that have experienced the loss of a loved one as he and his family did on March 9, 2006.

On their way back from Yakima, Gordon was at a total loss for words. After looking at the MRI the doctor had informed him that Tamera, his wife of 22 years, had an aggressive form of brain cancer. He couldn’t even begin to express or understand his own emotions, much less what Tamera may be feeling. When they arrived at the doctor’s office in Ellensburg, he finally said, “God has us on a journey. I don’t know where it is going or where it will end, but all we can do is trust in Him.”

Within days they found themselves at Virginia Mason Hospital in Seattle. The neurosurgeon was optimistic that he could remove the tumor and return Tamera back to

“normal.” Ultimately, though, Tamera would have to undergo at least three months of therapy and recovery after surgery and have about three months of “normal” life before the cancer would take over again and return her to her current condition.

With a father as a doctor, Gordon’s has a strong trust in the medical community, but at what point do you weigh the cost of “heroic measures” with quality of life? Tamera and Gordon discussed what would be best, and at one point during a very lucid moment Tamera looked at Gordon and made her intentions clear by saying, “Gordon, do whatever you decide, I’m a winner either way.”

“Although this was a decision that I could not make alone,” said Gordon, “I also knew it was my decision to make.” Gordon consulted and prayed with their three children (Layne, 19, Deborah, 17, and Marcia, 14) along with numerous other family members

and friends as to the best course of action. In the end, they decided to take Tamera home and cherish the last few days with the woman they knew and loved.



Tamera Boone



Gordon, Layne, Deborah, & Marcia

During Tamera’s life she gave her heart and soul to those around her. She had a spirit of service, generosity, and encouragement.

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Send Us Photos of Your Loved Ones

We want to make this year's Tree of Love Ceremony special by having a picture slide show of honored loved ones who are no longer with us. Thus if you have pictures that you are willing to share with us, please let us know. If they are digital photos, you can email them to us at hospicefriends@eburg.com or you can bring the physical photos by the office

and we will find a way to scan them into the computer and return them to you. A photograph truly speaks a thousand words and will allow others to honor and remember your loved ones. However, we can't do this project without your participation, so please get us your photos before November 28.

Tree of Love - A Night To Remember

At this special time of the year our thoughts turn to our loved ones. Enclosed you will find a personal invitation to this year's Tree of Love Ceremony and Reception. Hospice Friends has held this event every year since 1996 to remember and celebrate the lives of loved ones who have passed away. A short tree lighting ceremony will take place outside and be followed by an indoor reception with

food, music, and a time to share with others. There are two ceremonies (see side bar for dates, times, and location). With two locations, we hope everyone will be able to attend. If you do not have transportation, please let us know. We have volunteers who are willing to bring you to the ceremony and/or reception.

A Chance to Honor & Remember

Tree of Love also is the signature fundraising event for Hospice Friends. By sending a donation in memory or honor of a loved one, you will ensure the continuation of Hospice Friends services for those in need in the years to come. Suggested donations of \$10.00 or more per person remembered or honored will go a long way in providing the needed supplies, equipment, and friendship for the elderly and those facing a life-threatening illness. Please use the enclosed remittance envelope to indicate whomever you wish to honor or remember with your

contribution. Those donating \$50.00 or more in any one person's name will receive a personalized glass ornament made by Peggy

McLean of *Unique Creations of Millinocket, Maine*. This year's ornaments are heart-shaped and hand painted with royal purple and white colors to create a marble-like effect. We only have a limited number of ornaments; thus send your donations in soon to receive one of these special gifts from Hospice Friends. Glass ornaments and receipts for donations will be given out at each



Tree of Love event and/or mailed after Tree of Love for those not able to pick them up.

Tree of Love

ELLENSBURG

Friday, Dec. 1
6:00 PM

Third & Pine
(Outside
Cone Gilreath
Law Office)
Reception to
follow at Hal
Holmes Center

CLE ELUM

Friday, Dec. 8
6:00 PM

Upper County
Senior Center
(719 E. 3rd
Street)
Reception to
follow inside
Senior Center

"Your mailings have been invaluable to us this past year as we have been learning to deal with our loved one's passing."

-Family member touched by Hospice Friends' Bereavement Services

Quilt Drawing

Hospice Friends' 2006/2007 quilt drawing will include not one, not two, but three separate quilts. Mary Kay McPhillips has graciously made and donated yet another beautiful wall hanging (51" x 56") that was quilted based on a Grandmother's Flower Garden pattern and thus is titled "Granny's Garden Patch." The second quilt (60" x 60") was quilted by Harriett Sparks, Jeanne Fisher, and Debbie Vosburgh and donated by Sew Much More. The third quilt (41" x 41") was quilted by Harriett Sparks and donated by Kim Brittain.

Tickets will be \$1.00 apiece or six for \$5.00. Don't miss out on this chance to win any one of these exquisite quilts from award-winning quilters. Support Hospice Friends and buy your tickets soon by calling 962-7379 or emailing hospicefriends@eburg.com. The drawing will be held at the Hospice Friends office on February 28 at noon. The quilts will be on display at both Tree of Love events or you can view them in color on our website at www.hospicefriends.net (click on "Upcoming Events").

Grief During The Holidays

"Coping with Grief During the Holidays" will be the subject of two free workshops in Ellensburg and one in Cle Elum. During the holidays our community is filled with a high volume of activity and cheery messages. This can be a difficult time for people grieving the loss of a loved one.



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The sessions will consider these concerns, offer practical coping strategies, and provide a time for individual sharing and questions. The workshops are open to anyone who is experiencing grief. Individuals may attend one or all of the sessions. For additional information, call (509) 962-7379.

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Gordon admits that there were times when he felt jealous of her involvement in other people's lives. But as he started to call people and tell them the news that Tamera was dying, he was overwhelmed by the outpouring of support, encouragement, and prayer. Looking back, he sees clearly how Tamera's love for others was repaid to him and his family a hundred times over again. Tamera's last days were filled with friends and family surrounding her in love and prayer.

After returning home from Seattle, Tamera was signed up on hospice services. Over the next eleven days the Boone household was a constant flurry of activity. Nurses, family, and

friends were coming and going all the time. In some ways this was hard for Gordon. "I didn't fully realize it at the time, but the activity of caring for a dying loved one also tends to separate you from them." It was hard to provide for her and simply be with her at the same time. The night before she died Gordon was sitting with her alone. It was the first time when he went to hold her hand that she didn't respond by squeezing his back. "That's when it really hit me that she was leaving me," he said. She had not been able to communicate verbally for some time, and thus he was struggling for the right words to say.

Continued on next page...

Grief Groups

ELLENSBURG

**Hospitality House
1403 N. Vista
Ellensburg**

**Thursday,
November 16
7-8:30pm**

&

**Thursday,
December 7
7-8:30pm**

**CLE ELUM
Upper County
Senior Center
(719 E. 3rd
Street)**

**Thursday,
December 14
7-8:30pm**



**Hospice Friends is a
United Way of
Kittitas County
Partner Agency**

Either Way I'm A Winner...Continued from page 3

"I just prayed that God would give her the assurance that He would take care of us and the grace to let us go." God appeared to grant Tamera that grace as she died peacefully the next morning, March 9, at the age of 42.

Tamera's death was closely followed by the deaths of three people with whom the Boone family was associated. Then on June 22, just over three months after Tamera died, Gordon lost another significant woman in his life. His mother, Edna, died following an extended battle with amyloidosis. Yet in a strange way, the series of deaths the Boone family experienced gave Gordon the strength he needed to reach out and give to others. "I felt highly energized. I was grieving, but was able to 'deal with it.'" After Tamera's death, Gordon feels strongly that God was calling him to minister to others who had suffered the loss of a loved one. "People were there for me and I can be there for others. As it says in Corinthians 1:3-4, 'Praise be to God..., who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.'" Gordon daily communicates with people he knows who have lost a loved one, calling them at the beginning of each day to give encouragement and prayer. "You have to understand that this was not the Gordon I knew before Tamera's death. She was the one that was encouraging and giving to others. When she died it was almost like her spirit gave me the ability to serve," he said.

The past two months have been the hardest for Gordon. He admits that for awhile he lost some of his ability to comfort others. It was hard to get up in the morning, hard to motivate himself to work, and hard to make those calls of encouragement that seemed easy a month before. He has now reached

the point where he is able to say, "I don't know what you are feeling, but I know what it is like to hurt and have no one understand." Gordon knows that the journey before him and his family will neither be short nor easy, but he has been able to clearly see God working through it all.

"I know what it is like to hurt and have no one understand"
Gordon Boone

Before hanging up, I asked Gordon why he was in Virginia. "That," he said, "is another story." When Tamera died it was important for Gordon and others who loved her to be involved in a hands-on way in creating her memorial. One church brother made the casket by hand, family members wrote the service, and

others contributed in unique and personal ways so that her service was the creation of many hands working as one. Gordon experienced healing through this process. Soon afterwards he learned of a family in Virginia who crafted their son's headstone and were deeply touched by this hands-on experience. They felt so blessed by the experience they now craft them for others. When Gordon called them and explained his story, they invited him to work with them to create a headstone for Tamera.

As I hung up the phone the imagery of Gordon carving his wife's name in stone filled my mind. In the words of Michael Card, "There is healing that only comes through God's touch. There is another healing that only comes through others that God uses to touch us. Finally there is a healing that only comes when we share our story." I felt honored and privileged to listen to Gordon's story and hope that by sharing it with you it will bring new comfort and hope into your life.

Hospice Friends now has a website!! Check us out at www.hospicefriends.net

Hospice Friends is a non-profit charitable organization that provides peace, comfort, and care to the frail elderly and anyone facing a life-threatening illness in Kittitas County. We work in coordination with Home Health & Hospice of Kittitas Valley, a department of Kittitas Valley Community Hospital, to provide quality care in the home, nursing home, or hospital in a professional, empathetic, and confidential manner. Hospice Friends promotes a caring community without affiliation to any specific religious orientation or political view.

All of our services are free of charge.

If you would no longer like to receive mailings from Hospice Friends, please contact us and we will remove you from our mailing list.

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