


# Celebrating the Circle of Life Citation of Honor

 On July 21, 2008, Rice Hospice was named a 2008 Circle of Life Award® honoree. Rice Hospice was recognized for its innovative program that improves the care of patients near the end of life or with life-threatening conditions.

The Circle of Life Award celebrates programs across the nation that have made great strides in palliative and end-of-life care. Major sponsors include the American Hospital Association, AARP, the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, the Catholic Health Association, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the National Hospice Foundation.

Rice Hospice, part of Rice Memorial Hospital, is one of nine organizations honored this year by the Circle of Life Award Program. They've been providing hospice services throughout the region – which encompasses 14 counties – for more than 25 years. They've brought comfort to more than 6,000 patients through a dedicated staff and network of more than 600 volunteers. Rice Hospice brings care to the patient's home using a successful outreach program based on partnerships with area communities and

*Accepting the Circle of Life Award, left to right: Mary Beth Potter, Evy Hatjistilianos, Les Erickson, Lorry Massa, Brenda Wiese.*



their critical access hospitals. In addition, Rice Hospice offers bereavement services to patients' families. There are satellite offices in Appleton, Benson, Dawson, Granite Falls, Montevideo, Ortonville/Graceville, and Paynesville.

Les Erickson, retired Director of Hospice, accepted the award in San Diego, Calif., on behalf of Rice Hospice, along with Lawrence (Lorry) Massa, Rice Hospital CEO, Mary Beth Potter, Director of Hospice, Evy Hatjistilianos, Volunteer Coordinator, and Brenda Wiese, Grief Center Coordinator. "This honor confirms

for the patients we serve that they are receiving the highest level of hospice care available in their own community," said Potter. "Care provided by Rice Hospice allows patients to retain their personal physicians and be hospitalized in their home community if needed.

Comprehensive bereavement support is available as well in each community."

On August 12, 2008, Rice Hospice hosted a Circle of Life Celebration Luncheon in the Lakeland Auditorium. Mary Beth conducted the program, congratulating the staff and volunteers of Rice Hospice ►

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*Hospice staff attending (l to r): Peggy Johnson, Carol Palmquist, Kim Muenchow, JoAnn Gilbertson, Stacy Park, Tracy Pederson, Lindsey Peterson, Cindy Enke, Shelley Vilven, Norma Olson, Caryl Antil, Carol Walker, Brenda Wiese, Judie Dunlop, Joyce Busiahn, Mary Beth Potter, Les Erickson, Kathy Tweten, Sandy Hanson, Cindy Lundberg, Sue Broberg, Bev Crute, Evy Hatjistilianos.*

◀ for achieving this prestigious award. First on the program was Paul Muraca with the American Hospital Association (AHA). “On behalf of the AHA, I am pleased to be here to celebrate and acknowledge your excellence in palliative and end-of-life care,” he said. “We are very impressed with your program, especially with the extensive support and outreach you provide in hard to reach areas.”

Lorry addressed the group next. “Congratulations! This is your award – a fantastic achievement,” he said. “Be proud of the lasting implication for the families in this part of Minnesota. You have a great staff and great support in the community. You made it all happen.” Les thanked all of the wonderful people who spoke up on behalf of Rice Hospice, as well as the staff and volunteers. She mentioned that she enjoyed working for Hospice during the past 20 years and that the Hospice journey really began over 25 years ago. “This is your award and you are to be commended,” she concluded. Evy paid tribute to the vision of Hospice, as well as the 200 Hospice volunteers from the past year and the more than 600 volunteers who have contributed to the program during the program’s twenty-five-year history.

Brenda said, “It’s a privilege to represent Rice in the Grief Center. Hospice does such a wonderful job of bringing grief support to rural families. Thank you for letting me be a part of this.” She mentioned that the Grief Center is available for hospice families as well as the general public and that the average age of people seeking grief support is about 38 years old, “I see a lot of children and young people.” Before Rev. Beverly Crute offered a blessing to begin the luncheon, she voiced the belief that lies at the heart of the Hospice program, “It is a privilege to care for people at the end of life, at the end of the journey, in this circle of life.” ☞

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*Above left: Jerry Aune, Roger Bengtson, Brenda Wiese.*

*Above right: Carol Palmquist, Cindy Enke,  
Kim Muenchow.*

*Right: JoAnn Gilbertson, Tracy Pederson, Judie Dunlop.*



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*Left: Peggy Johnson,  
Jan Jaeger.  
Right: Carrol  
Hanson-Breitkreutz,  
Marlys Pillatzke,  
Judy Savage.*



*Lindsey Peterson, Bunny Iverson, Al Iverson*



*Carol Laumer, Jody Nelson.*

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*Left: Doris Dodds, Joyce Johnson, Katie Bonde.  
Right: Cindy Lundberg, Carol Walker.*



*Caryl Antil, Norma Olson, Shelley Villven.*



*Les Erickson, Fern Watland, Peggy Sietsema.*