

# COMPASSION and CHOICES Of OREGON



December 2007 Issue

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## Compassion and Choices of Oregon® Staff

George Eighmey, JD  
Executive Director

Yvonne Shaw, B.S., MPA  
Administrative Director

PO Box 6404  
Portland, OR 97228  
Ph: 503-525-1956  
Fax: 503-228-9160

or@compassionandchoices.org

## Compassion & Choices of Oregon A DECADE of DIGNITY

More than 190 guests gathered at the Multnomah Athletic Club in Portland on October 27th to show their support for *Compassion & Choices of Oregon* and to commemorate our tenth annual dinner and auction. The wide range of auction items included a diamond pendant, hand sewn quilt, massages, a diamond watch, an airplane ride and many more fabulous gifts. The dinner/auction raised more than \$75,000 toward supporting *Compassion's* services to the terminally ill.

The evening's keynote speaker was not a speaker, but a 16 minute video featuring *Compassion's* staff, board members, clients, family members and highlights from the national news media. The video told the story of our history, our struggles and how our clients and their loved ones feel about Oregon's aid-in-dying law.



A glimpse of the evening's guests.



Nancy Crumpacker, MD  
Volunteer of the Decade



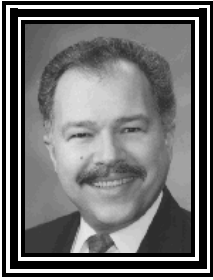
Governor Barbara Roberts

In addition to showing the video, *Compassion* recognized the contributions to our cause made by Dr. Nancy Crumpacker, who was presented the volunteer of the decade award for her nearly nine years of commitment to *Compassion* and our clients. Nancy's guidance, contacts with hundreds of other physicians and her willingness to donate countless hours to our clients enables *Compassion* to be a leader in providing end of life assistance to thousands of Oregonians.



## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Our special thanks to our sponsors who gave generously to make the evening a wonderful experience and a huge financial success – **Emily Andrews Portrait Design, Bay 13 Restaurant, Esther Bell Massages, Bedford Brown, East West Fusion Zen, Ellis Travel House, don frank photography, Klorafil LLC, Tara Krupich, LMT, Margulis Jewelers, Beth McKee, LMT, Neat, Palaquin, Portland Center Stage, Portland Spirit Willamette Cruises, Rhino Digital Printing, Rice Studio Supplies, Storables, Teardrop Lounge, ten 01 Restaurant, The Heathman Hotel and Heathman Restaurant and Bar, Small Luxury Hotels, and Willamette International Travel.** We must also give a huge thank you to **Michael Beard, Dr. Nancy Crumpacker, Ellen Damaschino, Pat Dennis, David Dietz, Dan Donham, Kate & John Eskew, Nancy & Dodd Fischer, Peter & Erica Goodwin, Teresa Grove, Mike Hampel, Jordis Jensen, Rev. Shakti Kahn, Wayne & Joan Kingsley, Tim & Marianne Leipzig, Julie & Brad McMurchie, Dr. Jeff Menashe, Melissa Meyer, Laura Middleton, Michael Moody, Derianna Mooney, Si & Lisa Newland, Jane O'Dell, Sue Porter, Bobbie Regan, Chef Brian Reilly, Harriet Richard, Peg Rhodes, Brian Ruess, Carol Samuels, Claire Simons, Barrett Stambler, Jill Sydnor, David Taylor, Victor & Jeanne Vore, Bill Wright, and Chef Jack Yost**

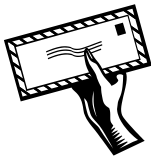


**Executive Director's Page**  
(George Eighmey)

2007 is the first year during which Compassion and the people of the state of Oregon



**Send Your Help Today**



We continue to need your support to serve terminally ill Oregonians. Please donate to *Compassion & Choices of Oregon*, PO Box 6404, Portland, OR 97228. You may also choose from:

**COMPASSION'S WISH LIST**

1. New computer - \$1,000
2. A month's rent - \$600



**Compassion's Executive Director salutes his mother**



I wish to give a hug and kiss to my dear mother, Sophie, who at age 88, gave me strength and love during my grieving over the loss of my son, Greg. I love you, Mom.



**Letters**

**Oregon Department of Human Services Announces New Term**

Within months after Compassion representatives met with DHS personnel DHS issued a statement that they would no longer use the term "physician assisted suicide" and that hereafter they would refer to the process as "people who use Oregon's Death with Dignity Act." We are asking the legislature to officially change it to "aid-in-dying."

did not have to fight Congress, the courts, the administration or other opponents of Oregon's



It is always gratifying to know that what we do for our terminally ill clients is appreciated. We wish to share a few of the letters we receive.

*Dear Nancy & George – and of course, the un-named staff:*

*The day has been set – and as I face a new anxiety I reflect back on your kindness, gentleness in all my moments of anxiety.*

*So now, I am full of elation that I am going to pass over surrounded by caring, supportive friends. Of course what I face now is the stark reality of doing it, but as I started this 2 day countdown, I felt a sense of both comfort and confidence that I am sustained by my loving God. Love J.S.*

*(From a Compassion client who died peacefully in November after consuming the prescribed medication.)*



*Just a brief note of thanks for all of your efforts, care and concern during my mother's illness and passing. She passed away on her 68<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

*I believe your organization serves an important and special service to those who choose to take advantage of their ability to make life ending choices.*

law to save it from being overturned or eviscerated.



*Without your guidance this would not be possible.*

*Again, thank you for being there for us.*



*George, Nancy & Harriet –*

*Thanks so much for your help and support.*

*I miss him terribly, but not with the disease that took his life years ago.*

*Thanks, Sharon*

*(Wife of Compassion client who hastened his death)*



**Letters to the Editor**

Julie McMurchie, pictured below, whose mother hastened her death under Oregon's law, wrote a letter published in *The Oregonian* on 11/15/06. Julie is Compassion's client support volunteer and annual dinner coordinator.



*"What's in a name?," philosopher Patricia Backlar asks in "Death act's alias has state tongue-tied." Backlar correctly asserts that, "The terms have political implications." What she fails to*

note is that the terms also have personal implications.

The Department of Human Services' decision to stop applying the term "physician-assisted suicide" to the actions of people who use the Death with Dignity Act is a sign of respect -- respect for people like my mother.

Terminal lung cancer led her to access the law, but it did not take away her will to live. Hospitalizations, chemotherapy and radiation treatments did not stop her from engaging in her hobbies and in the lives of her children and grandchildren.

When she no longer had control of her bodily functions

and tumors in her airways left her breathless and coughing up blood, she chose her time. Surrounded by her loved ones, she drank the medication and died peacefully.

I knew that her final act of dignity and control was not "suicide," but rather a peaceful and loving act that validated the personal freedom she held so dear.

Julie McMurchie

### Presentations by Compassion & Choices of Oregon

In order to educate the public, professionals and law makers about the dying law, it is necessary for Compassion to offer groups throughout Oregon. Our trained speakers provide a presentation on the law. The following is an Oregon University whose name and university are omitted to protect his identity. The importance of our presentations and the impact they have on those

*I had a long conversation tonight with my co-instructor at (University) that you are a person who has found and served his calling. You have made an enduring difference in end-of-life care in ways that few will ever fully appreciate. Your group have been a lightning rod for awareness of the precarious vulnerability that we all experience at the end of life. Thanks to you, we are more compassionate and resourceful. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the ethic of pain management, advanced directives and consciousness, palliative care vs. curative therapy owes much credit to you, George, and your conscientious work for Compassion & Choices. I am personally grateful for the moments we shared in July 2001 when my dad was dying. Together, are we not?*

Please contact us if you or a group to which you belong wish to have a presentation. Call us at 503-525-1956 or email us at [contact@compassionoforegon.org](mailto:contact@compassionoforegon.org)

You are special to us. We appreciate your support and confidence. Our staff, board and volunteers extend to you and yours the merriest of holidays and a new year.



Compassion & Choices  
of Oregon  
PO Box 6404  
Portland, OR 97228  
503-525-1956

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