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Dr. Kitzhaber to Speak at First Luncheon

Governor John Kitzhaber, MD will address end of life care and Oregon's Death with Dignity Act at Compassion & Choices of Oregon's (CCO's) annual fundraising luncheon to be held at the Oregon Zoo on October 27 from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

"Twelve Years of Compassion - Twelve Years of Choices" is the theme for the luncheon, which is one of Governor Kitzhaber's stops prior to his returning to the campaign trail. The former governor has been a long-time supporter of Oregon's Death with Dignity Law during his years as governor of Oregon from 1995-2003.

CCO Executive Director, George Eighmey, welcomes Kitzhaber, who in 1994 was the governor of Oregon when the Death with Dignity Act was first passed by the voters and in 1997 as well, when it was approved for the second time. In 1997 Governor Kitzhaber contacted the Clinton administration to receive assurance that the DEA would back away from its threat to revoke doctors' licenses to prescribe some drugs if they write lethal prescriptions. Dr. Kitzhaber contended that the DEA overstepped its authority

and has been a strong supporter of Oregon's law from the day it first passed.

This is the first time the organization has hosted a fundraising luncheon. Past

fundraisers included successful dinners and auctions.

"We are excited to try a new event and a new venue," said Executive Board Chair, Julie

McMurchie, whose mother used Physician Aid in Dying in 2001 to control her death from cancer.

"This gives us the opportunity to reach out in a way we haven't before, and hopefully we will attract some donors who were unable to attend our evening events."

Invitations were mailed to donors and supporters on September 21. There is no charge for attending the luncheon, however donations are encouraged and gifts in excess of \$40 may be tax deductible. If you have not received an invitation by October 1, and are interested in attending or reserving a table, please contact the CCO office at (503) 525-1956 or by email: or@compassionoforegon.org. ■





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S PAGE



George Eighmey

2009 has seen CCO enter a new era, one where goals have been met and exceeded, programs expanded and improved, and our services enhanced and implemented.

CCO has added nine new volunteers in the past year who are providing our services throughout the state. Our Southern Willamette Valley team now has 8 team members serving our clients from Eugene to Coos Bay. We also have a new volunteer in Bend.

The services CCO provides would be impossible without the dedication and passion of our volunteers.

CCO has also reached out to provide information to hospices, students, physicians

and the general public. We have given educational programs in Bend, Medford, Wilsonville, Albany, LaPine, Klamath Falls, Prineville, Eugene, and Portland during the past six months.

We are now providing information, guidance and comfort to more than 135 terminally ill Oregonians of whom only 15 will likely complete the aid-in-dying process, but all of whom will find great comfort knowing if worse comes to worse they have Oregon's Death with Dignity Act available to them.

CCO is proud and pleased to continue to be the model for other states on how the Death with Dignity Act is implemented. ■

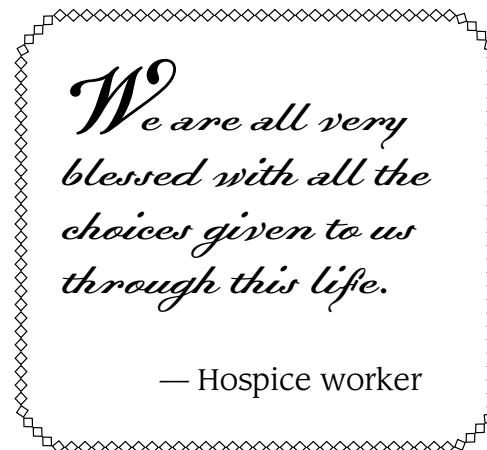
Two CCO supporters will be featured on a national TV series and web project.

In recent years, controversies about death and dying have become more public, more frequent and seemingly more intractable. A new TV series is looking for first-person stories that shed light on how individuals have grappled with these issues, and how their experiences have tested or challenged their values and beliefs

Cody Curtis, a current client with terminal cancer, and Julie McMurchie, who's mother used Physician Aid in Dying, have submitted their stories to a new project that explores beliefs around death and dying. You can read their stories on the website: www.how-we-die.org.

Tentatively titled "Stories," the series will gather personal stories on a range of issues. It's being developed by Marc N. Weiss, creator of the long-running PBS series P.O.V. and Tom Yellin, an experienced network news and public affairs producer, and President of The Documentary Group.

This site will explore how our most personal experiences have shaped what we believe about death and dying, and about the decisions we make for ourselves, for loved ones, or for patients at the end of life. The site welcomes stories from patients, their families, and medical providers. ■



CCO Welcomes Dotti Wilson

Dotti Wilson is CCO's first Development Director for Compassion of Oregon, and she began her work for the organization this past September 16. If you ever visited the Oregon Humane Society, OMSI or know someone affiliated with the Alzheimer's Association, then you might be familiar with Dotti's work.

Dotti brings her expertise, experience and skills to CCO, as part of a business strategy to increase funding revenues. She is excited to begin a job that combines her experience as a fundraiser with her passion for end-of-life choices.

"I strongly believe in the mission (of CCO)," she said, "It gives comfort to a great number of people to know options are there and support is there."

CCO Board members participated in the hiring process, and were impressed with Dotti's depth of knowledge and reputation of excellence

in fundraising. Her resume includes leading roles in establishing the new Humane Society building and she was Vice President of Development at OMSI during construction of their new building on the east bank of the Willamette. Prior to coming to CCO, Dotti was the Director of Development and Marketing for Southern Oregon Public Television. She will also use her talents in strategic planning, organizational development, and board development.

"My hope is to expand the organization to serve more people as well as adding adequate staffing for outreach programs," she said.

Dotti takes easily to meeting new people and driving the mission of an organization. She is already contacting potential sponsors for CCO's upcoming luncheon on October 27.

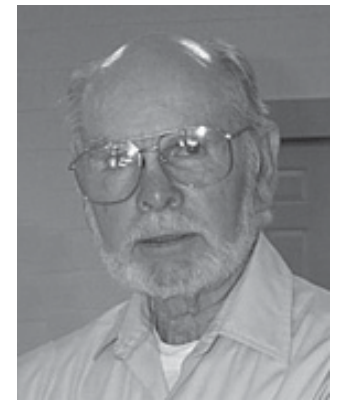
"I enjoy meeting a new circle of people," she said. "I have met and worked with people all over the state. It's nice to have a network of friends and acquaintances."

In addition to her work in the fundraising community, Dotti serves on several local Boards including the American Wildlife Foundation, the Beaverton Library Foundation, and the Beaverton Historical Society. She believes her work

as a volunteer gives her an opportunity to give back to an Oregon community that has been generous to her. Dotti has three children and two grandchildren in the Portland area. In her spare time she enjoys skiing and reading, and will soon start quilting.

If you are interested in supporting or hosting an event for Compassion & Choices of Oregon, please contact Dotti at (503) 525-1956. ■

In Memory



Dr. George Whatley 1925-2009

Generous benefactor who donated to CCO during his life and in his will. He is sorely missed.



Make a Donation



THANK YOU!

Become a supporter for end of life choices. Send your gift to **Compassion & Choices of Oregon**, PO Box 6404, Portland, OR 97228. ■



New CCO Volunteer, Mary Zenorini, is the United Way Volunteer of the Year

CCO Volunteer, Mary Zenorini of Mt Hood, received the 2009 Volunteer of the Year award from the United Way of the Columbia Gorge on July 22.

The award recognizes her work with Hospice of the Gorge, as a respite volunteer and designer of a community outreach class called "Dying Well." She received internship credit for her work as well, which is a bolster to her education track in Gerontology.

Zenorini left the corporate world in 2006 to assist in care giving for her parents. She shifted her priorities to elder care and end of life care in response to interactions with hospice workers, the dying and terminally ill. When both of her parents died in the same year; Zenorini decided to share her experiences with others going through end of life care, and family members of those with terminal illnesses.

"I have to thank my parents. From the time I was a child they instilled in me the importance of giving back through being a volunteer," she said during the presentation ceremony.

Zenorini will soon complete both her Master's degree in Gerontology and her training with Compassion & Choices of Oregon as a Client Support Team member. In that capacity, she will guide those who are terminally ill through their end-of-life options. ■



When the Latest Technology goes Awry

by Nancy Crumpacker, MD, CCO's Medical Advisor

Three years ago a 66 year old male with end-stage heart failure and declining kidney function called Compassion & Choices of Oregon. He told me he wanted to die because, "I do not want to suffer pain or be like a vegetable." Immediately before discharge from his last hospitalization, his cardiologist gave him the option of turning off his existing implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD). The physician also referred him to hospice care, which he accepted. When I spoke to him, he recalled very little of this conversation in the hospital.

In this case, we sent two CCO volunteers to his home to discuss his situation. They urged him to discuss his options with his heart specialist. He died peacefully six days after that meeting. But it might have turned out differently.

ICDs monitor cardiac rhythm and deliver shocks when rapid abnormal cardiac rhythm or bradyarrhythmias (irregular heartbeat) occurs. This is necessary for patients at risk for sudden death due to ventricular fibrillation. A moderate shock establishes a regular rhythm. But if sustained irregularity develops, the shock becomes much stronger. Patients describe it as "being kicked by a horse."

In the past five years physicians and others have published horror stories about family member's experiencing a loved one dying with an ICD in place. A Florida woman brought her husband home to die peacefully in his bed, but "She watched helplessly in the middle of the night as his ICD shocked him more than 30 times." What should have been a rapid, peaceful death became a slow and miserable one.

There are several reasons ICDs remain in place: Patients and their physicians may forget about them. Perhaps the patient does not accept an inevitable death. ICDs are not easy to turn off. (Taping a circular magnet over the device works temporarily, but permanent deactivation requires a hand-held programmer.) Finally, some physicians are uncertain if deactivation is ethical. ICD de-

activation is ethical and legal. Patients have the right to refuse medical intervention since withdrawal of treatment allows the underlying disease to progress naturally.

Thankfully, hospices in Oregon and around the country develop protocols to deal with this problem. Some hospices supply nurses with the deactivating magnets, as in our local case. Physicians who have pride in end-of-life care for patients should develop a mechanism to identify each patient with an ICD, to address the problem before it occurs.

In addition to the service our organization provided in this case, we provide information to physicians, patients, and others about all options in the spectrum of end-of-life care including the Death with Dignity Act. CCO has two full time staff and about 30 volunteers serving the state. CCO strives to lighten the burden of end of life care for physicians, their patients and families.

Dr. Nancy Crumpacker is a retired oncologist. She serves as the Medical Director for Compassion & Choices of Oregon. If you have a question for Nancy, you can contact her c/o Compassion of Oregon, PO Box 6404, Portland, OR 97228-6404. ■

OUR WISH LIST



- Laptop computer
- DVD projector and screen
- Office supplies such as copy paper, folders, 3-ring binders
- 100, 200 or 300 Forever postage stamps
- Sponsors for CCO exhibit tables at health fairs and medical conferences, \$250 each



CCO Elects New Board Chair, Julie McMurchie

The following is an interview with our 2009-2010 Board Chair, Julie McMurchie:

You have been involved with Compassion & Choices of Oregon for several years. Why take on the role of Chair at this time?

I really like the energy of the current Board. It has evolved over time to a more formal, structured board; one that is ready to accept the changes that I hope to see made this year. And I needed to finish some personal growth as well, in order to implement these changes in a way that allows everyone to exchange ideas in thoughtful and forward-thinking ways.

What is your vision for the Board?

I see our board expanding. Our current board members bring with them very good non-profit experience, as well as a fresh commitment to CCO. I would like to see more diversity in our

Board both culturally and from a business standpoint. Different backgrounds lend to different perspectives, and we want to capture as broad of a spectrum of knowledge and beliefs as possible.

Are you recruiting for new board members?

I'm always recruiting for new board members, in every facet of my life!

Everyone I meet is a potential new board member.

What would you like to leave as your legacy?

Our organization began as a small, informal, grass-roots network of supporters. It is now time for- and we are moving toward- a more professional organization. I want my legacy to be one of guidance through this transition, to an organization with an adequate infrastructure to handle our seemingly constant increase in requests for our services.

If you had one piece of advice for backers of DWD-type laws, what would it be?

To not assume they know how a particular group feels about the issue. Our support is more broad-based than people think. Keep it non-partisan, and keep an open mind when talking to potential



partners and associates.

Getting the word out about CCO is a challenge. What ideas do you have for outreach?

Everyone in this organization works toward increasing exposure to the mainstream and to media whenever we can. I think the way we are handling our luncheon event this year speaks to that. We asked our Advisory

Board members to bring new people to the event, which increases our exposure in the community.

What is it about the mission and vision of CCO that inspires you?

I feel fortunate to be part of this organization; I have such great respect for all the people involved, from the volunteers and staff to the Board members. End of life choices are so important for all of us, and we need to really invest our time and money into making sure that Oregonians have options. Having gone through Physician Aid in Dying with my mom, my work at CCO always has a personal meaning. I appreciate knowing that my efforts here bring other families the opportunity for the peaceful death my mother had. ■

Mental Health Outcomes of Family Members of Oregonians who Requested Physician Aid in Dying

Excerpts from Dr. Ganzini's Study

Oregon legalized physician aid in dying over 11 years ago but little is known about the effects of this choice on family members' mental health until now.

A study was recently completed by Dr. Linda Ganzini, published in the Journal of Pain and Symptom Management, in which the researchers surveyed 95 family members of decedent Oregonians who had explicitly requested aid in dying, including 59 whose loved one received

a lethal prescription and 36 whose loved one died by lethal ingestion. For comparison purposes, family members of Oregonians who died of cancer or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis were also surveyed.

Among those whose family member requested aid in dying, whether or not the patient accessed a lethal prescription, had no influence on subsequent depression, grief, or mental health services use compared to those who were in the control group; however, family members of Oregonians who received a lethal prescription were more

likely to believe that their loved one's choices were honored and less likely to have regrets about how the loved one died.

Oregonians whose loved one requested aid in dying felt more prepared and accepting of the death than comparison family members. In summary, pursuit of aid

in dying does not have negative effects on surviving family members and may be associated with greater preparation and acceptance of death. ■



George, Thank you so much for participating at our Dignity in Life and Death event his past Sunday. There have been many people who have told me how much they appreciated what you shared- both about your organization as well as some of your personal experiences. Thank you so much for your ministry. With gratitude,
— A. (Portland minister)

Thank you! You answered questions I didn't know I had!
— Presentation attendee

The in-service was done in a kind way and I need to know this information as a hospice worker.

Visit our website: WWW.COMPASSIONOFOREGON.ORG



What We Do and How You Can Help

A growing number of Oregonians are diagnosed with terminal illnesses every year. CCO offers support to those who wish to control their life until the end. CCO also supports Oregon physicians by assisting them in completing legal paperwork so they may submit compliance forms to the Oregon Department of Human Services. In addition, CCO supports a burgeoning volunteer program. All of these activities are covered through CCO operating expenses. These expenses include renting office space, producing patient packets for hospices, reimbursing mileage for volunteers who make home visits to clients, and paying staff. We never charge physicians or clients for our services.

You can be a part of this comprehensive support network by contributing generously to Compassion of Oregon. You can help by:

- Giving a contribution using the enclosed envelope.
- Lending your talents and skills by becoming a CCO volunteer.
- Joining the Advisory Board or Executive Board.
- Hosting a fundraising or friend-raising party.
- Attending our luncheon on October 27!

*Thank
You!*



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