



WOMEN SWIMMIN' PRESS KIT

The Eighth Annual Women Swimmin' will be held on **Saturday August 13, 2011**
At the Ithaca Yacht Club, 3 miles north of Cass Park on Glenwood Road
First swimmers enter water at approximately 7:00am
Event ends approximately 10:30-11:00 am

History of Event

In August 2004, 127 determined women between the ages of 18 and 82 swam across Cayuga Lake on a beautiful but chilly morning. The distance was 1.2 miles, and the swimmers were accompanied by over 35 small craft including canoes, kayaks, and motorboats. This was the first Women Swimmin' for Hospicare.

The idea for Women Swimmin' was born in a conversation between an Ithaca woman looking for a unique activity to mark her 60th birthday, and her primary care physician. Both swam that first year and continue to be involved with the event. The first Women Swimmin' raised over \$54,000 for Hospicare and Palliative Care Services (HPCS) and last year a staggering \$303,606—a demonstration of the incredible generosity of people in Ithaca (and beyond) and their recognition of the importance of HPCS.

As Women Swimmin' grows, we continue to be profoundly moved by the growing enthusiasm and energy of our community for the event.

Where can the media park? The media can park at the Glenwood Pines lower parking lot, or at Cass Park Union Fields and take the shuttle bus to the Ithaca Yacht Club. Media can also be dropped off at the Yacht club, but parking there is reserved for handicap supporters and for boaters.

How many swimmers are there?

This year we increased the number of swimmers from 300 to 350. Registration filled up in less than one week.

What is the fundraising goal?

\$275,000—all of which goes directly to patient care and support services.

Media Contact:

Melissa Travis Dunham, Event Coordinator
Hospicare and Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County
Phone: 607.272.0212
Fax: 607.277.3785
Email: mdunham@hospicare.org

***Hi-Res photos are available on the web site in a separate zip folder
The photos in the ZIP file were taken by Jon Reis and his staff as a donation to Women
Swimmin' and Hospicare. If you use any of the photos in your publication, please give
proper credit to the photographers and to Jon Reis Photography by citing the credit
found under FILE INFO in Photoshop. Thank you.***

www.womenswimmin.org

10 Swimmers the Media can contact

Name: Sue Ellen Stewart; 1st year swimming

Bio: Sue Ellen has dedicated her nursing career to home care. She has worked in management of home care for over 30 years and moved to Ithaca two years ago to become Executive Director with Visiting Nurse Service. She has two children, three grandchildren and two cats. She is swimming in honor of her mother, Kathleen, who died at the Hospicare residence last December. She is grateful to both Laurel Hospice in Pennsylvania, who was involved with her care for 10 months at home, and to Hospicare in Ithaca who provided the emotional and physical support needed to get through those last very tough days. She was involved in the swim last year as a kayaker because of not having the time to train for the swim and she looks forward to really diving in this year to honor her Mom.

Quote: “My mother died at the Hospicare residence on December 4, 2010. She spent 10 months prior to that time at home with hospice in Pennsylvania. We felt that she had deteriorated so that she needed more care than could be given at home. She was at the Hospicare residence for nine days before she died. Those nine days were so important to us. We knew she had the care she needed and the family was also able to get additional support. I could not have gotten through her last days without the support of the Hospice staff! The whole hospice philosophy is what is so powerful. Death is a natural part of life but creating an environment where people can die with dignity is a gift. I will always be grateful for the gift that was given to my mom and our family. She was able to die with dignity and she knew she was very loved. There is much peace in knowing that.”

Contact info: sstuart@vnsithaca.org; 607-273-0466

Name: Elizabeth Heywood; 3rd year swimming

Bio: Above-knee amputee and writer Liz Heywood will doff her prosthetic leg this summer and leap into the water for her third participation in Women Swimmin’ for Hospicare. In 2007 Liz made the decision to have her fused left leg amputated for health reasons. After thirty years working with horses, she especially appreciates that the lake can't buck her off. She has only done these swims as an amputee; her younger daughter says she's like a mermaid. Her older daughter swam with her last year. Liz swims in support of Hospicare's inclusive humanity and caring. Her credo is "We're all in this together."

Quote: “I've only swum as an above-knee amputee and this will be my third swim. I love the feeling of physical freedom and power I have in the water as well as the exhilaration of being part of hundreds of women participating--like a huge flock of birds in the sky. And this sense of involvement and power is transferred to the whole community through the support and caring of Hospicare. We are literally all in this adventure together.”

Contact Info: lheywood2@frontier.com; 607-589-6539

Name: Sally Pezzulo; 2nd year swimming

Bio: Sally Pezzulo is the legal administrator of a law firm in downtown Rochester. She has 4 children and 3 young granddaughters (who she is teaching to swim). Sally joined the Women Swimmin’ group a few years ago, and was so moved by the experience. She did it alone, and loved the cause, as she has personally experienced losing loved ones with the wonderful assistance of a hospice organization. This year, she is being joined by a long time friend who lost her husband Jan.1, 2011, at the age of 59. They are doing this swim in his memory.

Quote: “I did this swim a few years ago (driving from Rochester) and was so moved by the experience. Also, my mother-in-law was in hospice years ago and we were all touched by the care she received. Lastly, our family has lost members & I have lost good friends so I think this is a wonderful cause to support.”

Contact info: spezzulo@culeymarks.com

Name: Marjory Martin; 8th year swimming

Bio: Marjory Martin has been an enthusiastic participant in Women Swimmin' since the first year! She is a potter and teacher, member of Handwork Cooperative Craft Store, proud mother of four children, and resident of the Ithaca area for many, many years. She swims in memory of several people, but particularly for her friend Margi, who passed away almost exactly two years ago. Marjory witnessed, first hand, how wonderful and caring Hospicare is in action. Marjory and her friend never got the chance to swim Cayuga Lake together, but she hopes that one day their daughters will be able to participate together in Margi's honor. Maybe next year!

Quote: "I have been participating in the swim since the very first year. It has been an exhilarating event every single time but each year it takes on new and additional meaning for me. As friends and family members have turned to Hospicare for care, I have fallen more and more in love with this organization. I have learned to appreciate Hospicare more and more each year. Every year, the moment that brings me to tears of joy, love, and appreciation is when I am surrounded by women with all their different colored caps as we swim together toward the flags and the shore. It is an incredible sight to behold. I am so very grateful."

Contact info: marjorym3@gmail.com; 607 273-1140

Name: Edna Brown; 1st year swimming

Bio: Edna is a Pre-K Social Worker with ICSD. She is mother to Maya and Julia who continually inspire her with their athletic ability. She has been a Hospicare volunteer for just over a year. She will swim in honor of the two patients she has been a companion to as a volunteer and in memory of several friends who were lovingly cared for by Hospicare during their last months. In addition to providing companionship and respite to patients and their families, she has recorded one woman's life story and is also hoping to use her singing voice to comfort others. This is her first year to swim. In fact, she doesn't consider herself a great swimmer but decided to take this challenge on to increase awareness of Hospicare and the wonderful hospice and palliative services they provide. She will be working on improving her own physical fitness as she trains for 3 months for the swim.

Quote: "I am currently a Hospicare volunteer. I've provided respite for one woman's son and provided companionship for another patient (as well as recorded her life story). Hospicare is dear to my heart. It's the best non-profit in Tompkins County and has an awesome staff and corps of volunteers. I have had friends whose passing was made so peaceful for them and their families; I just want more people to know about all the palliative and hospice services Hospicare provides."

Contact info: edna.brown@gmail.com; 607-592-9157

Name: Liz Kinast; 1st year swimming

Bio: Liz is the mother of two young girls, ages 4 and 3. She is also a teacher at Trumansburg Community Nursery School and a part-time project manager at Stewart Howe in Lansing. Liz is swimming in memory of her mother, Marty Gabriel, who passed away in February 2001 at the Hospicare residence. She remembers gratefully the care Marty received and sees Women Swimmin' as a terrific opportunity to give back. This will be her first year in Women Swimmin'. An avid runner, Liz is eager to try this new physical challenge and enjoy the camaraderie of her fellow swimmers.

Quote: "My mother died at the Hospicare residence ten years ago, at the age of 48, and this seems a fitting way to remember her and the unbelievable care she received. It's almost too hard to put into words how wonderful her time at the residence was, despite her illness. We could stay with her all night, eat together as a family, even bring our dog to visit. It was truly like being at home, with around the clock care. I also knew that I could leave her for a few hours to shower, to run errands, or to just have some time to regroup. And the volunteers were wonderful. I distinctly remember sitting up nearly through the night once while a volunteer sang beautiful Native American songs to us. Hospicare truly made what could have been a very traumatic time in our lives incredibly peaceful and for that I am eternally grateful."

Contact info: lizkinast@hotmail.com; 607.592.2770

Name: Christina Valesente; 7th year swimming

Bio: Christina is currently a Teaching Assistant in the Carmel School District in New York. She hopes to become a full time Special Education or Regular Education teacher soon. She is also the Program Director at an after school program. This will be Christina's 7th time swimming in Women Swimmin'. She is swimming in memory of her Grandmother, Virginia Valesente, who passed away in March, 2011.

Quote: “Back in March of this year my Grandma Val became very ill and was placed in the hospital for a few days. After several meetings, Hospicare was the result of long term care for her. While in the hospital, she continued to get worse and at that time Hospicare began to come and make visits to her. They were extremely helpful, gentle, and courteous to my mother who was the only one there all the time. I was on my way home and my dad was in California and my uncle was on his way from Germany. Once I arrived home, we could tell that time was running out and told her to hold on until her son (or at least one) got there. My dad wasn't able to get a flight out right away. The woman from Hospicare offered to go to the airport with a sign to pick up my uncle so Mom and I could stay with Grandma. She went to pick him up and held a sign that said his name on it. We were so grateful because we knew she had never met him, but did it anyway. My uncle was able to make it to the hospital, and 20 minutes later, he said goodbye for him and my dad and she died very peacefully. We will never forget how much Hospicare meant to all of us that day, because we were able to say I love you and goodbye!”

Contact: 607-592-1670 (cell/day); 845-440-6569 (home/evening)

Name: Sharon Fornaciari; 2nd year swimming

Bio: Sharon Fornaciari is a licensed professional counselor in private practice in Stamford, Connecticut. She is also the proud owner of two rescue dogs, Mallomar (a Greater Swiss Mountain Dog) and Mabel (a Greater Swiss Mountain Dog/Basset Hound mix). For the second year in a row, she is swimming with her cousins BJ Nelson and Diane Collazo as members of Team Dee in memory of her beloved cousin Dolores “Dee” Hendrix, a longtime resident of Trumansburg, New York, who was at Hospicare from December 26, 2009, and passed away on January 4, 2010. That day, Sharon and her cousins decided to register for Women Swimmin’ to honor Dolores, who taught Sharon, BJ, and Diane to swim in Cayuga Lake when they were young. Sharon is proud to have been recognized as the 2010 Women Swimmin’ first-time swimmer with the highest fundraising total and hopes to exceed that amount in 2011.

Quote: “For the second year in a row, I am swimming to honor the memory of my beloved cousin Dolores “Dee” Hendrix, who lived in Trumansburg, New York, for 67 years; who was a community leader and a familiar, friendly face on Main Street; and who died as peacefully and as comfortably as possible—and with her usual great grace—at Hospicare on January 4, 2010, after a 10-day stay. In that short time, I was impressed by the professional yet tender and loving care that Dolores received from everyone at Hospicare. The staff and volunteers made sure that she had everything she wanted and needed any hour of the day or night, from an extra blanket, to another glass of apple juice, to repositioning her pillows, to holding her hand during a difficult moment, to reassuring her in a soothing voice. My family was so grateful for Hospicare’s serene environment and warm caregivers that Dolores’s daughter Diane, granddaughter BJ, and I decided on that brutally cold January day to register for the 2010 Women Swimmin’ event. It is only fitting that we swim for Hospicare in Cayuga Lake, where Dolores taught each of us to swim many summers ago. After the tremendous spirit we experienced at the swim last August, my cousins and I were so inspired that we agreed to make this fundraiser an annual event, swimming as proud, thankful members of Team Dee. We know that Dolores would be delighted—no, overjoyed—that we are giving back to a group of dedicated caregivers and a wonderful place that gave her so much.”

Contact: 203.968.0451

Name: Nancy Spero; 5th year swimming

Bio: This year, Nancy is swimming in honor of her father, who passed away unexpectedly on March 31 at the age of 84. He was a great swimmer and he taught her how to swim. Nancy's father swam almost 1 mile five days per week until the days before he died. The amount he swam at age 84 is more than most people could do regularly at a much younger age! This is Nancy's fifth year swimming for Women Swimmin'. Each of the past years, her father came to the event to cheer for her and take photos as she finished her swim. She will greatly miss seeing him there at the end of the event this year! Because he died unexpectedly, her family did not use the services of the Hospicare residence, but, Nancy's family found support from Hospicare while he was in the hospital during his final days. She was able to talk with the Hospicare physician and a volunteer who made rounds at the hospital. Nancy received support and information about what to expect and what questions to ask the hospital staff. She says that that Hospicare grief support groups have been a support to her family during this difficult time. She is thankful that we have such a wonderful service in Tompkins County and wants to continue to do her part to see that these services continue for those in need.

Quote: "This year I am swimming in honor of my dad who just passed away. He was a swimmer all his life and taught me how to swim. He died in the hospital, but we received support from the Hospicare physician and a volunteer while in his last days. This assistance was just what we needed at this time. I also had a friend who lost his son suddenly this year, and the Hospicare support groups have been helpful to him and his family."

Contact info: nspero@lightlink.com; 607.273.6603

Name: Ellen Cohen-Rosenthal; 4th year swimming

Bio: Ellen is a psychologist who works for Lansing Central School District, and in private practice. She loves to swim, although she finds open-water swimming a challenge. Swimming for Hospicare and in memory of loved ones gives her the motivation to jump in and keep swimming.

Quote: "This year I swim in memory of my beloved mother, Florence Cohen, who passed away in October of 2010. It is especially fitting that I honor her memory via Hospicare, as she was a compassionate, competent nurse. My mother was a woman of her generation who proudly carried a professional identity, in addition to that of mother and wife, and who modeled the pride in a job well done for her children. I also swim, as I have for several years, in memory of my beloved husband, Ed Cohen-Rosenthal. This year marks the 10th anniversary of his death from melanoma. Ed was cared for by a hospice center at the end of his life. I have been forever awed and grateful for the loving care he received. I also think of Ed when I feel daunted by the challenge of the open water swim--he endured so much to extend his life to be with us and to continue the work that he loved so much."

Contact info: ecohenrosenthal@gmail.com