

# The Masonicare Annual Appeal News

Fall 2017



From left are the Order of the Amaranth's Sue Koty, Past Grand Royal Matron, Grand Royal Patron Wayne Rettburg, Grand Royal Matron Sandie Allen, and Masonic Charity Foundation Executive Director Jennifer King

## A True Friend of Masonicare: The Order of the Amaranth

For many of our donors, giving to the Masonicare Annual Appeal is a show of appreciation – a way of saying thank you for the compassionate care shown a friend or loved one. This holds true whether the donor is an individual, a family, or even an entire Masonic body.

The Order of the Amaranth is a social, fraternal, and charitable organization whose membership is open to both men and women with a Masonic affiliation. Charity is a guiding principal of the Order. The

Order's main charity is the Amaranth Diabetes Foundation, though Grand Courts and local courts throughout the nation support many other worthwhile causes. The Masonic Charity Foundation is grateful that the Grand Court of Connecticut, along with many of its individual members, has chosen to support the good work of Masonicare by giving to the Annual Appeal.

Sandie Allen, Grand Royal Matron of the Grand Court of Connecticut, said that quite a few

Masonicare employees deserve a share of the credit for earning the Amaranth's financial and volunteer support.

"I have had a number of friends who've used Masonicare's services and some who are current residents," Allen said. "It's always a pleasure to hear good stories from them about the quality of care they're receiving. Being in the field of human services, I have been so impressed with most, if not all, of the staff I have met at Masonicare – from dining services to the nursing staff."

"As long as I've been a member of the Amaranth," added Sue Koty, Past Grand Royal Matron, Grand Court of Connecticut, "giving to The Masonic Charity Foundation has been a priority. We've seen Masonicare do so much good for members of Amaranth as well as for all Masonic bodies. We know the organization's history caring for our aged members, and some of us are getting to be aged members ourselves. Masonicare is near and dear to our hearts."

Koty, who currently sits on the boards of Masonicare at Home and Masonic Management Services, fondly remembers when her late grandmother – who worked as a live-in aide to others – required additional care herself and became

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# Thrift Shop Sales Benefit Annual Appeal



*Ashlar Village residents Francette Gingell (left) and Bibiane Bernier co-manage The Closet Shoppe*

**H**idden treasures, great bargains and convenience draw customers to The Closet Shoppe, a cozy, resident-operated thrift shop on the lower level of the Hartog Activities Center at Masonicare at Ashlar

who had previously run an annual rummage sale at Ashlar Village and donated the proceeds to The Masonic Charity Foundation. In 2012, Blanche was given a space in the Hartog Center to open a thrift shop to sell goods year-round.

**“It’s a lot of work, but we get a lot of pleasure knowing that this is benefiting people in need.”**

Village. Proceeds from sales benefit several local charities, including The Masonic Charity Foundation. Since opening its doors five years ago, the store has contributed over \$10,000 to the Masonicare Annual Appeal – an impressive figure, when you consider that every item for sale is priced \$6 or less.

The Closet was founded by the late Blanche Newman (1916-2015),

Today, The Closet Shoppe is still going strong under the management of Bibiane Bernier and Francette Gingell. Aided by a small team of fellow volunteers, Bibiane and Francette collect, organize, display and ultimately sell a wide range of donated clothing and accessories: shirts, shoes, blouses, skirts, vests, sports jackets, winter coats, sweaters, purses, belts, gloves and much

more. Their customers include residents as well as Masonicare staff, one of whom recently purchased 30 – 30! – scarves, and promised to buy more if any come in.

“We won’t put out anything that’s not clean or has any holes,” said Bibiane, who spent 14 years working at the G. Fox & Co. department store in Meriden and knows a thing or two about moving merchandise. “It’s a lot of work, but we get a lot of pleasure knowing that this is benefiting people in need.”

If not for that, Francette adds, “I wouldn’t be doing this.”

“Keeping The Closet stocked is a huge undertaking,” said The Foundation’s Executive Director, Jennifer King, “and I am so thankful to Bibiane, Francette and everyone who has helped carry on the work started years ago by Blanche Newman. It’s a major volunteer effort, and The Foundation is very appreciative of this ongoing show of support for Masonicare’s mission.” ■



*Bibiane and Francette inspect a recent addition to The Closet’s inventory that will soon find its way onto the racks*

# Your Dollars at Work: Hospice Memorial Services



*Masonicare Hospice Spiritual Care Coordinator Robin Blundon speaks at a memorial service in Norwich*

As much as Masonicare is focused on enhancing the quality of life for all of our residents and patients, we also accept that death is a part of life ... and a journey that patients and their families need not take alone. When a hospice patient passes, Annual Appeal dollars are used to support memorial services in communities served by the various branches of Masonicare Hospice. Held annually, these non-denominational services

offer compassionate support to bereaved families, caregivers and even Masonicare hospice staff grieving the loss of their patients.

“Bereavement,” said Rev. Carl Anderson, Vice President for Mission Effectiveness at Masonicare, “is an important part of the service we provide for people who are dealing with grief over the loss of a loved one.”

Family members who had loved ones pass away within the previous year are invited to the next scheduled memorial service in their Masonicare

Hospice coverage area. Jean Morris, Lead Spiritual Care and Bereavement Coordinator of the Wallingford and Eastern branches of Masonicare Hospice, explained that each service is a little different – one might include a dove or butterfly release, depending on the season – but some of the staples include music, words of inspiration, a reading of the names of those who have passed, live readings of poems, an expressive arts display communicating a particular

theme about loss and healing, memorial tables where family members can place photographs or personal belongings of their loved ones, and a ritual table where attendees can engage in a ritual to remember and honor their loved one. Refreshments are also provided – one of the many expenses paid for by gifts to the Annual Appeal.

**“It’s cathartic and therapeutic for the staff as well as for the families. Hospice memorial services are mutually beneficial for everyone.”**

“One of the special things about these services,” Morris said, “is that they’re planned and run by the hospice staff themselves. Although I and the other Spiritual Care Coordinators might lead the services and explain the meaning behind the rituals, it’s the hospice staff who are doing readings, setting up the ritual tables, and greeting the families afterward. It becomes a reunion – an opportunity for families and

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## *Amaranth - Continued from Page 1*

a long-term care resident of Masonicare.

“The care she received was excellent,” Koty recalled. “The staff was so nice and so supportive. My grandmother loved finally being the one who had others waiting on her. In fact, when Masonicare put out an informational brochure explaining what the facility was all about, my grandmother was on the front cover.

That was my first opportunity to see what Masonicare is all about.”

“The Foundation truly appreciates its long-time association with The Grand Court of Connecticut, Order of the Amaranth,” said Foundation Executive Director Jennifer King. “I have had the good fortune to meet many Amaranth members over the years, and I have always been struck by their positive, charitable

spirit and desire to help others in need. The Masonic Charity Foundation is honored to be among the charities supported by The Grand Court of Connecticut!” ■

## Memorial *Continued from Page 3*



***Hospice memorial services have included a dove release – a peaceful and healing tribute and a beautifully symbolic way of expressing a final goodbye***

caregivers to reconnect in a time and place separate from when we were providing hospice care.”

Hospice memorial services have drawn as many as 200 guests. Morris hopes that everyone in attendance leaves better equipped to handle their current or any subsequent losses they experience.

“I tell the audience that even if no family members showed up,” Morris said, “we would still do this because of the benefit to our hospice staff members. We work in a high loss environment and sometimes we need to stop the clock. Ritual and remembrance help us do that. It’s cathartic and therapeutic for the staff as well as for the families. Hospice memorial services are mutually beneficial for everyone.”

Annual Appeal donors should feel proud that their donations are helping to bring comfort to others when they need it most.

“One of the prime concerns expressed by people who are dying is for the loved ones they leave behind,” Morris said. “I am deeply grateful for the resources of The Masonic Charity Foundation that help support the hospice program in its care of the grieving families of our patients.” ■