

“A SHELTERING EMBRACE”

What is the Price of Compassion?

What is the price of compassion? This is the question members of the Homecare & Hospice Foundation of Manhattan, Kansas asked themselves before launching their first multi-million dollar campaign.

“How we treat our families, friends, and strangers at the end of life says a lot about us as individuals and a community,” said Rita Keating, campaign co-chair. “We are defined by our compassion. We believe that death should involve dignity, respect, and fellowship. This was the overriding consideration as we decided to move forward with the campaign.”

The construction of a hospice house would be the goal of the campaign. Homecare & Hospice of Manhattan had provided traditional hospice services for 30 years. However, the traditional model of in-home hospice was being challenged by changing demographics and real-life stories related to the difficulties and impracticalities of in-home, end-of-life care.

Grown children were living and working half a continent away and could not return to help during a parent’s final days. Husbands and wives, living longer, were challenged in their final years by their own health challenges and unable to care for a dying spouse in their personal residence. Young parents—dying of cancer or another disease—did not want their

prolonged death to be a hardship on young children. Some private residences could not logistically accommodate the medical equipment necessary for in-home hospice. Long distances between farms, ranches, and rural areas challenged delivery of hospice services.

The circumstances – the stories of both the dying and the living – motivated the members of Homecare & Hospice and its charitable foundation to complete a campaign assessment and, ultimately to launch a campaign. “A Sheltering Embrace,” the campaign title, was also the mantra and the message throughout the endeavor.

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“They had several challenges when they started,” said Robert Swanson, Vice Chairman of Hartsook Companies. “A new executive director, some different philosophies between the agency and foundation boards, and very little history of major-gift donors created hurdles that had to be cleared. As well, this was their first attempt at a multi-million dollar fundraising initiative and the agency lacked a real culture of giving.”

According to Dean Thibault, Keating’s campaign co-chair, the early stages of the campaign were slowed

