



compassion & choices arizona

... choice and care at the end of life

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Fall 2012

Dedicated to educating and expanding compassionate end-of-life choices for all Arizonans including the right of terminally ill adults to physician aid in dying as a fundamental civil right.

Comments from our Board President Freda Anderson



The past few months have been a period of considerable transition for our local organization and I am happy to share with you my optimistic outlook for our efforts moving forward in Arizona.

In June, in addition to new Board member Skip Pollock, we welcomed two new volunteers - Denny Flaherty and Nancy Foster - to our team. Their diverse experience, fresh ideas and ability to devote considerable time to our efforts are very much appreciated. The Board spent many hours this summer creating a strategic plan to keep us both focused on our goals and provide a means of measuring our success in the future. We also acknowledged that frequent Board meetings were essential to keep us coordinated and on track with our efforts.

Realizing that the time commitment to Board activities had increased significantly and also due to personal considerations, three of our long standing Board members - Bob Wallace, Irene Weitzmann and Bill Haley - all reluctantly felt that they were unable to participate fully. So the Board of Directors voted to create a Board of Advisors and invited them to serve in an advisory capacity where their vast experience with the organization and innate wisdom will remain invaluable to us on an as needed basis. On behalf of the Board, I would like to express our huge gratitude to Bob, Irene and Bill for their enormous contributions over the years and their willingness to guide us in the future.

We also need to pay tribute to our newsletter editor, Deb Darby, who too has elected to retire from her official duties. Deb served very effectively as Sedona Chapter Leader for several years; as editor, she has been an integral part of ensuring our newsletter is truly newsworthy. So thank you Deb for your tireless contribution - you will be sorely missed. Any budding editors out there wanting to step in?

Looking ahead, our strategic plan focuses on diverse efforts covering support, education and advocacy. Realizing the essential need to raise public awareness of Compassion & Choices as an organization offering a full range of services, Nancy and Skip will

create a "community education program" offering regular presentations throughout the state.

Other opportunities for early 2013 in the Greater Phoenix area include participation in Senior Expos as well as a round-table discussion with diverse religious leaders on the topic of death and dying.

Nationally we await the outcome of the aid-in-dying voter initiative on the ballot in Massachusetts in November; similarly the result of litigation in New Mexico where a cancer patient and two physicians are asking the court to rule that the state's statute against "assisting suicide" does not cover the medical practice of aid in dying. In our own state, Linda Lopez, Arizona State Senator (D) from Tucson, discussed with the Board her thoughts and vision for AZ legislative efforts this coming year - the Board has unanimously committed to supporting her endeavors. Stay tuned - we will need every member and supporter to do their part too in the coming months!

So while your Board continues with their efforts, we ask for your help in contributing to the success of our organization. Do I hear a roar of "how"? Let us count the ways...

Encourage like-minded family and friends to stand up and be counted in support of our efforts by signing up as members. And remember to renew your own annual membership if it has expired, or better still, consider becoming a lifetime member. This Board is committed to increasing our state membership.

Share with us a suggested venue or community location within your area that would welcome a speaker from our organization. We will arrange the rest.

Volunteer - whatever your expertise or interest, we can utilize your efforts and time effectively, whether a couple of hours occasionally or on a regular basis.

It is said "When one door closes, another opens". So while changes are challenging, as President, I am truly confident that your Board and volunteers will continue to serve our cause effectively and with determination, as we all strive to meet our shared goal of the availability of aid in dying for all who seek it.



Meet Your Board Members

Susan "Skip" Pollock, Ph.D.

State Board Member,
Compassion & Choices AZ

Dr. Skip Pollock is a licensed clinical psychologist with more than 35 years of professional experience in clinical practice, college/university teaching, and organizational consulting. Skip is originally from Florida where she received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from University of Miami. She was in private practice for over 30 years in three different states and her clinical specialties are depression, anxiety disorders and trauma/abuse survivors.

Skip was also an academic and organizational consultant. She served as Associate Professor & Director of Consultation at the Wright State University School of Professional Psychology. As part of her consultation role, she was under contract with the U.S. Air Force Systems Command at Wright-Patterson AFB for six years. Earlier, she was Chair of the Psychology Department at Miami-

Board Members:

Freda Anderson – President
Margot Champagne – Vice President
David Brandt-Erichsen
Enci Lajos
Anne Mardick
Skip Pollock
Giselle Suarez

Dade College and was most recently a professor in the Psychology Department at Mesa Community College.

Skip is a long-time CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer, training new CASAs in working with traumatized children. Skip is a certified T'ai Chi instructor and continues her practice. She is now retired except from the volunteer work that she loves. She and her husband, Ken, have eight grandkids and four cats.

Skip and her husband have been members of Compassion & Choices for more than eight years. Skip discovered Compassion & Choices when she was teaching a college class on Death & Dying.

When she retired, Skip knew that she wanted to contribute more to the local organization and contacted us to see how she could assist as a volunteer. After working on an ongoing Hospice Project, she agreed to join the Board and focus primarily on the area of community education. She says, "What an opportunity! "

Welcome to the Compassion & Choices AZ Board, Skip! We appreciate your efforts on our behalf! Email Skip at skip@choicesarizona.org.

Advisory Board Members:

William E Haley
Robert (Bob) Wallace
Irene Weitzman PhD

If you have any questions or comments, email info@choicesarizona.org or contact the national office at 800-247-7241.

**Would you prefer to receive your newsletter electronically?
If so, please drop us a line at info@choicesazrizona.org.**

Suggested Bibliography for End of Life/Death and Dying

The Best Care Possible: A Physician's Quest to Transform Care Through the End of Life

by Ira Byock

Dr. Byock, who opposes physician assisted dying, is the director of palliative medicine at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Centre and a professor at Dartmouth Medical School. His book is a plea for those near the end of their life to be treated more like individuals and less like medical cases on which all available technology must be attempted, even in the face of certain death. With two decades' experience in the field, he makes a good case for sometimes leaving well enough alone and helping people to die gently if that is what they want.

No One Has to Die Alone: Preparing for a Meaningful Death

by Lani Leary, Ph.D.

Dr. Leary has cared for more than 500 people by sitting with them as they died, including her own terminally ill father. In this book, she guides caregivers, families and friends through the difficult aspects of the transition at the end of life. She offers practical skills, vocabulary and insights to help you address the needs of the individual who is dying, while maintaining your own self care.

How Doctors Die

by Ken Murray

According to a Huffington Post blog by Barbara Coombs Lee, doctors die “differently” than the rest of us. In November 2011, Dr. Ken Murray published a blog on Zocalo Public Square called “How Doctors Die.” It’s been reverberating through the Web ever since, prompting a continuous stream of comments and inspiring others to offer their own essays and input.

What struck a chord was the assertion that doctors with terminal illness often reject the long-shot technology that traps other people in cycles of hospitalizations, surgeries, procedures and chemicals and ensures their final days will be in intensive-care lockdown. Do the same doctors who personally reject such misery recommend miserable, intrusive, painful, toxic and inhumane treatments for their patients?

In the editor’s opinion, this piece is one of the most profound articles written on the topic of “how we die” and highly recommended. Read it online at tinyurl.com/howdoctorsdie.

Editor’s Corner...By Deb Darby

It is with some sadness that I have offered my resignation as the editor of this newsletter. My first love, writing, along with a wealth of volunteer work in my community, needs more attention. Having recently “retired” I also discovered that I just don’t want every minute accounted for...I like having free time! What a concept!

I am grateful to Freda and to all board members past and present for allowing me to have this opportunity and want to encourage anyone with a gift for writing or editing to contact Freda to see if your putting the newsletter together is a good fit.

Again, I thank you and Compassion & Choices! But for now, I’m off to play!

National Conference "First Class"

By Denny Flaherty



I am pleased to report that everything about the first National Compassion & Choices Conference was first class! Each day included plenary sessions – for all attendees – and breakout sessions that were organized in four tracks:

- ✓ Personal Planning
- ✓ Personal Activism
- ✓ Community Advocacy
- ✓ Patient Support

Attendees were free to sit in on any breakout session. I chose to attend most of the sessions on the Community Advocacy track. As a new member (and volunteer) of Compassion & Choices, I was fortunate to have Barbara Combs Lee, Compassion & Choices President, and Theresa Connor, Compassion & Choices Director of Government Affairs, as co-presenters in my first breakout session. They talked about issues such as why doesn't Compassion & Choices just introduce a bill in each state to make aid-in-dying affirmatively legal? And why not just do ballot initiatives, like in Oregon? *Their response... Compassion & Choices has limited resources that are most effective when used in states that are considered ripe for change. In the forthcoming year, Compassion & Choices is focusing its efforts in Massachusetts, New Mexico, Montana and Hawaii.*



Denny Flaherty

"My epiphany regarding Compassion & Choices occurred while watching *How to Die in Oregon.*"

I was explaining to one of our sons how strongly

I felt about a legal option for aid-in-dying. He looked me in the eye and said, "Dad, you're retired. You've got the time. Why don't you get off your butt and do something about it!"

So here I am, reporting for duty!

Denny, following a 30-year career in the Air Force, also worked for the State of Arizona. He's been married to his wife for more than 51 years! Welcome to Compassion & Choices Denny! If you'd like to contact Denny, you can email him at denny@choicesarizona.org.

During the two morning and two afternoon periods at the conference, I was able to attend seven breakout sessions and four plenary sessions. I was like a sponge, soaking it all in, until I realized I needed a bigger sponge. My note taking gave me writing cramps. Even our breakfasts were organized to support focused table discussions. One morning, the breakfast table discussion was facilitated by Jessica Grennan, National Field Manager for Compassion & Choices. Jessica focused the conversation on New Mexico's effort to protect physicians from liability when providing aid-in-dying...and the need for neighboring states to assist where possible.

This conference was as efficient as it was effective. I've attended numerous conferences in my working days and this one ranks among the very best. If in the future you are able to attend a Compassion & Choices conference, I strongly recommend that you do so.

Massachusetts Voter Initiative

A recent independent Public Policy Poll showed that 58% of Massachusetts voters would support "Question 2" on their state's November ballot proposing an aid-in-dying law similar to Oregon's. Polls show 24% Opposed and 18% indicated Undecided.

Reminder: If you know anyone who votes in Massachusetts, please take the time to contact that person to discuss this issue. Or if you simply know someone who might know someone who votes in Massachusetts, please help spread the word. As to be expected, the opposition is well organized and very well funded.

First Compassion & Choices National Conference

Busy, Inspirational, Life Changing



The First Ever National Compassion & Choices Conference

As Described by Giselle Suarez,
Sedona Chapter Leader
and Compassion & Choices AZ
Board Member

The very first Compassion & Choices National Conference in Chicago was a hit! The first evening we were treated to “a taste of Chicago” with typical local foods along with some Grade A entertainment coming from a group of local, talented and funny improv actors.

The conference was opened by the dearest of the Dears, none other than Dear Abby herself... but wait...let me back up a minute here, the conference was actually opened by the Master of Ceremonies, the Chief Program Officer of Compassion & Choices, the one and only Mickey MacIntyre. What a pure delight to have him guiding us. He was sharp, enthusiastic, supportive and most important, very, very funny. It was well worth the trip just to experience Mickey at his best. But it only gets better...

After the opening, we met our first guest speaker, Abigail van Buren, better known as Dear Abby. She opened her heart to us and shared her profound and intimate story dealing with the core themes of what Compassion & Choices is all about. Following her presentation were the many breakout choices. Everything from “Legislating Medicine and Morality” to “Organizing to Block Hospital Mergers” to “Being an Advocate for Clients” to “Hospice Demystified” to “Speaking About Faith and a Peaceful Death” which included a panel of six clergy people from six different faiths...and many more. In fact, the only complaint I heard voiced was, ironically, that *there were too many choices!*

And my favorites were “An Evening with Megan

Cole” and “The Wisdom of Wit”.

What a delight Megan Cole is!

So strong, so elegant, and what a force that comes through her on stage as she uses the art of theater and her breathtaking talent as an actress to present and explore the ways in which patient care and end-of-life care can benefit from compassionate understanding.

And then there was Stephen Jenkinson. At our last plenary session on Saturday morning, there was an unexpected, fierce yet gentle earthquake, shaking the very foundation upon which we built our beliefs, morals and expectations about death and the whole system that surrounds it. As dramatic as it may sound, it is equally true that I was shifted to my very core and will never be the same after hearing, really hearing, what Stephen had to share with us. At the very least, his presentation was definitely thought-provoking. If you’re interested in exploring this for yourself, check www.orphanwisdom.com.

And then the last gift to take home with us, the *State of the Movement* speech by the President of Compassion & Choices, Barbara Coombs Lee. Barbara is eloquent yet simple, clear and direct yet poetic and expansive. Her talk left us inspired and proud to be involved with this wonderful organization. I know that I was feeling pride and purpose in being a part of the momentum of growing awareness, change and possibility that is in store for the future of our organization. Recognizing at a global level the impact Compassion & Choices can have on assuring that everyone will have the best death possible. After all, it is our birthright.

You can reach Giselle via email at giselle@choicesarizona.org.

Join - Renew - Surf

Want to join Compassion & Choices, renew your membership, make a donation or download an advance healthcare directive or other helpful forms?

Visit www.compassionandchoices.org.

Upcoming Meetings & Chapter News

Compassion & Choices Board of Directors

The Annual General Meeting will be held on November 3 at Burton Barr Library in Phoenix, from 1 to 3 PM. Please contact Freda for more information: info@choicesarizona.org.

Northwest Valley Chapter

The Northwest Valley chapter meeting will be held at 1:30 PM on November 12 at the Coyote-Quail room in the Foundation Center in Sun City West, 14465 R.H. Johnson Boulevard. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Lorree A. Ratto, Ph.D. assistant professor, ASU-School of Medicine, Arizona. Dr Ratto was formerly counselor with the Odyssey Hospice. She will discuss her experience in a presentation titled *Dying to Communicate: The Healing Power of Healthcare Narrative*. For more information, please email Irene: irene@choicesarizona.org.

Sedona Community Chapter

The Sedona Chapter will hold a discussion of Hospice Programs on Saturday, November 10. Time and place to be announced, or email Giselle at giselle@choicesarizona.org.

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