Nancy Sawruk Interview 5.25.23

Living in Chippewa County, MI, Nancy Sawruk has volunteered for Hospice of the EUP for 30 years. She attended a fundraiser for the organization, the director asked her to become a board member, and then she took the training to become a volunteer caregiver. Here is Nancy’s story.

I kind of fell into volunteer caregiving. While working with The Hospice of the EUP, I learned that many people have no family members when they become ill with end-of-life issues. They need support and encouragement from someone, and I try to fill that gap.

I like to spend time with the patient, take care of their needs, listen to their wishes, and hear their stories about the life they led. It’s important just to be there, holding their hand, as they slip away.

I live in a very small town. Many people I have sat with I have known for a long time. I realized that dying is a part of living. I want to make sure that these friends that I have made are comfortable and don’t feel they need anything at that time.

Over the years, I have done everything as a volunteer caregiver. I have taken people to doctor appointments, delivered their meds, sat with them at home and at hospice, and cared for their personal needs.

I also make sure their families are taken care of too. I cook for them so they can spend more time with their loved one. Family members sometimes like to talk, and I am there to listen. They tell stories about their loved one who is dying. In hospice, you’re not only there for the one who is dying but for their family, too.

I had a parent who was in hospice briefly, and I was sitting on the other side of the table. The compassion, care, and warmth that hospice volunteers and employees gave me and my family was overwhelming and comforting. I want to share that with others for as long as possible.

When raising my children, I encouraged them to become hospice volunteers in high school and college. I’m very proud of what they did, and they were good at it. It made them aware of other people’s needs at an early age.

Sometimes, it’s heartbreaking, especially if it’s a young person. One of the most endearing moments for me was when a young man in hospice asked if we would help him marry his girlfriend before his passing. I played piano at their wedding.

It can be very sad at times, and I am amazed at how strong people are as they slowly pass away. I have learned how important it is for people not to die alone but to show compassion and have someone be there for them.

Social Media Post 1:

Nancy Suwruk, Hospice Volunteer Caregiver for 30 years

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Social Media Post 2:

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