

217 N. MAIN ST. SUITE 200
SANTA ANA, CA 92701

T: 714.881.2300
F: 714.881.2442

WWW.DGWB.COM



PRESS CONTACT:
Stacey Doherty, APR
Public Relations Director
714/881-2396
sdoherty@dgwb.com

Compassion Drives New “No One Dies Alone” Program At St. Joseph Hospital

ORANGE, CA. – February 1, 2006 – St. Joseph Hospital, committed to compassionate care, is the first hospital in Orange County to adopt the “No One Dies Alone” program. The program ensures that no patient at St. Joseph Hospital will ever die alone. If an individual is homeless or estranged from their family, or alone for any reason, a volunteer is assigned to them and is by their side in the final hours, to hold their hand or pray with them, providing them with the support they need.

The “No One Dies Alone” program was started by an Oregon nurse who had a life changing experience. A patient of hers was in their last moments of life and wanted her to stay with him. In that moment, however, she was paged to another patient who needed her assistance, and when she returned, the first patient had passed away. After that moment, she believed that no one should be alone during their final moments of life. The program has steadily grown through out hospitals around the country.

This remarkable program is staffed by volunteers, who are the true heart of the “No One Dies Alone” program. Volunteers participate in an orientation called “Compassionate Companion.” The program is rooted in St. Joseph Hospital’s mission and dedication to continually improve the health and quality of life of people in the communities it serves.

“It is one of the most compassionate, loving programs I have ever had the honor of being a part of, being there for someone that truly has no one as they pass from this life,” said Marie Polhamus, director of St. Joseph Hospital’s “No One Dies Alone” program. “No one should face those moments alone, and our volunteers are there for comfort and companionship, a peaceful calming presence that lets the patient know they are not alone during their final moments.”

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About St. Joseph Hospital

For 75 years, they have been dedicated to continually improving the health and quality of life of the people in the communities they serve. Situated conveniently in central Orange County, St. Joseph Hospital is a 412-bed, not-for-profit, acute care facility that provides comprehensive care to the County of Orange and surrounding areas in the state of California. St. Joseph Hospital is a values-based Catholic healthcare provider with a tradition of and commitment to excellence based, on the vision of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange. The hospital's strong belief in the intrinsic dignity of each person commits it to be a just employer, to provide healthcare for the whole person, body, mind and spirit, and to collaborate with physicians and other healthcare providers to increase access to quality healthcare. St. Joseph Hospital can be reached at 714-771-8075 or by visiting www.sjo.org

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