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HOSPICE HAWAII REFLECTS ON 30 YEARS OF CARING

HONOLULU (October 22, 2009) – Thirty years ago a group of hospice caregivers and experts sat around a dining room table to discuss the increasing number of terminally ill patients on Oahu. They concluded that Hawaii deserved and needed choices for high-quality hospice care services and Hospice Hawaii was born. As Hawaii's first stand-alone hospice program commemorates its 30th anniversary in November, coinciding with National Hospice Month, its staff and volunteers reflect on the past and look toward the future.

“Hospice Hawaii truly believes that the journey in the last phase of life should be a meaningful experience and for the last three decades, we have been committed to providing the best care and comfort possible during this time,” says Kenneth Zeri, president and chief professional officer of Hospice Hawaii. “While we are dedicated to helping our patients and their families in the here and now, we are also looking forward at ways to better serve our community.”

Since it began, Hospice Hawaii has served over 10,000 patients and raised the standard of hospice and palliative care. Its team approach focuses on the physical, psychosocial, emotional and spiritual wellness of the patient. Hospice Hawaii's comprehensive, interdisciplinary program of care is designed to support patients' choices, preserve their dignity, and allows them the opportunity to live life as fully as possible in the comfort of their home or other chosen setting.

Hospice Hawaii's services have expanded to meet the growing needs of the patient's loved ones and the community with support programs such as its annual family

bereavement camp, ongoing grief workshops, and training and education for other healthcare providers and businesses.

Recently, Hospice Hawaii began working with the staff and employees at Kalaupapa National Historical Park on Molokai to address the cultural and social changes they would experience as the community comes to an end in the coming years.

“Kalaupapa is a complex community where the patients and caregivers are socially intertwined and we realize that the staff will go through a unique experience as the last remaining residents begin to pass on,” said Zeri. “Hospice Hawaii staff members have spent extensive time with the employees providing free guidance and resources to help them through the transition of Kalaupapa and we’ll continue the support for as long as needed.”

About Hospice Hawaii

Hospice Hawaii was founded in 1979 to serve terminally ill persons and their families. Hospice is a philosophy of care and approach, which emphasizes palliative and supportive services. Hospice Hawaii strives to meet the physical, emotional, psychosocial and spiritual needs of patients by offering quality end of life care. For more information about Hospice Hawaii, visit www.hospicehawaii.org.

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