

Successful Hospice Acquisition Letter

Shared with the generous permission of the Grossmont Foundation...

The overview

This letter went to a mailing list of people who had made one-time memorial gifts to Sharp HospiceCare, part of San Diego's Grossmont Hospital. The hope: to convert them into repeat donors.

The letter brought in more than \$15,000 for a cost-per-dollar-raised of 33 cents. The letter adopts Memorial Day as a day especially relevant for those who believe in Hospice. It was printed one-sided on two sheets of ivory watermarked Classic Crest monarch-sized stationery.

It's a pretty straightforward letter. It makes a logical connection to a holiday of remembrance. And it tells a story of loss and consolation that could find an emotional echo in almost anyone. To get in the proper mood, I put on some somber music and imagined how I'd feel if my own beloved wife were gone (sorry, Simone). I bawled like a baby and wrote.

The letter

Dear Jane Doe,

This Memorial Day, you and I will share something special...

...a memory of what Sharp HospiceCare did for a person we hold dear.

In 1998, Betty, my wife of 34 years, died of cancer.

Thanks to the people at Sharp HospiceCare, Betty finished her days with dignity, free of suffering, at peace. Most important, she died at home in a circle of love, with her family and friends around her.

I don't need to tell you what Hospice means. You know.

But here's something you might not know: Hospice can't survive without your help. That's the plain, unvarnished truth. The kind of hospice care that you find at Sharp includes so many things that Medicare fees and other insurer reimbursements just won't pay for.

That's why I'm writing, to ask that you give a tax-deductible gift today -- as much as you can afford - to help Sharp HospiceCare continue its mission.

Your gift goes immediately to work, helping other families cope successfully with the suffering, confusion, doubts and fears that surround a loved one's death.

Every gift is appreciated...and will do real good.

Your gift of \$25 . . . helps purchase cleaning supplies for the volunteers who wash the windows and weed the gardens at Sharp's beautiful and serene new Lakeview Home.

Your gift of \$100 . . . helps Sharp HospiceCare write, print and mail its valuable bereavement newsletter, sent free to families for up to 13 months.

Your gift of \$250 . . . helps Sharp pay for chaplains specially trained in the difficult work of counseling grieving families.

Your gift of \$500 . . . helps underwrite the cost of Sharp's amazing June retreat, a weekend of counseling and healing in the mountains . . . where two bewildered children who recently lost their mom can explore their feelings with other grieving kids, under the watchful eye of social workers . . . and begin to heal.

If you believe in Hospice as much as I do, please follow your heart and give with as much generosity as you can manage.

I hope you'll give at least \$100 . . . for this special reason:

Gifts of \$100 or more are "In memory of..." gifts.

When you give an "In memory of..." gift, both your name and the name of your loved one are featured and thanked in our annual donor report. (Of course, you can choose to remain anonymous if you prefer.)

I miss Betty so much. I think of her all the time. I remember our wedding day, as if it were yesterday. You know, when you're saying your

wedding vows and come to the end where you pledge "Until death do us part," you really don't think it will ever come true.

But it does. For all us, in some way. Loved ones die, and suddenly you don't know what to do.

That's when Sharp HospiceCare matters most. Please give today.

With my sincere thanks and appreciation this Memorial Day,

A. Lee Edgar, M.D.

P.S. Each Memorial Day I do two things. I bring Betty flowers, to tell her how much I still love her. And I give a gift to Sharp HospiceCare, in her name . . . because they cared for her when she needed them most, and now Sharp needs me.

The envelope

