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NEWS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Unity Celebrates Contributions of Volunteers
National Volunteer Week April 18-24

Green Bay, Wis. – April 14, 2010 – Unity, leaders in hospice and palliative care, today announced it is honoring the organization’s hospice, palliative and bereavement care volunteers in recognition of National Volunteer Week, April 18 through April 24. Volunteers bring hope, dignity and love to those facing life-limiting illness, and comfort to their families and friends.

Unity volunteers assist patients and their families in a variety of ways. Some serve patients by providing companionship or assisting with basic daily tasks. This support offers respite to families. Others serve by helping in the office with filing or data entry or helping at outreach events. There is a group of volunteers who use their creative skills by crocheting or knitting prayer shawls, sewing memory bears or making handmade birthday cards. Some volunteers provide grief support to family members and others assist at Unity’s hospice residence by preparing meals or working in the Gardens. Individuals with diverse backgrounds and skills are members of Unity’s volunteer team, with several having been a part of the organization since its inception more than 30 years ago. Unity depends on the generosity of community members who share their time and talents to help carry out its mission.

At Unity, more than 250 volunteers provided 22,522 hours in 2009 to help care for patients and families throughout Northeast Wisconsin. “Volunteers are indispensable to our hospice, palliative and bereavement programs. *Celebrating People in Action*, this year’s theme for National Volunteer Week, seems as if it was written to describe the contributions of Unity volunteers,” says Lisa De Sieno, Director of Bereavement and Volunteer Services. “Volunteers recognize the importance of each individual.

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Whether they provide companionship, help in the office or spread the word about our organization at health fairs, we are pleased to have this opportunity to honor every single one of our volunteers.”

Hospice, palliative and bereavement care volunteers help the people they care for and their families find hope within each day, have their dignity preserved and be surrounded by love even at the final moments of life. “My family was touched by the love and compassion of a hospice volunteer when my dad was fighting his battle with cancer fourteen years ago. It seemed only natural for me to become a Unity volunteer and to serve those in similar circumstances,” shares Ann Renard, a Unity volunteer and retired IBM executive. “My heart is warmed every day knowing that a few hours of my time truly made a difference in the lives of Unity’s patients, their families and their caregivers.”

Hospice began in this country over 30 years ago as a largely volunteer-driven community movement, and volunteers continue to be at the heart of hospice. Most hospice volunteers choose to give their time helping others because of their own experiences with the compassionate care hospice provided to their dying loved one. The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization reports that there are an estimated 550,000 hospice volunteers providing more than 25 million hours of service to hospice programs each year. As a Medicare-funded program, hospice has a federal mandate that five percent of all patient care hours be provided by trained volunteers. This regulation reflects the vital role that volunteers play in the hospice philosophy of care and ensures that a hospice program has roots deep in the community. Volunteers have naturally grown to be an important element of the palliative care program, providing the same level of services to provide comfort to those facing life-limiting illnesses.

Unity always welcomes new individuals to serve as volunteers throughout its 12-county service area. Visit the website www.unityhospice.org and click on “Join Our Team” or call (920) 338-1111 to learn more about how you can make a difference to those affected by life-limiting illnesses in your community.

About National Volunteer Week

Sponsored by Points of Light Institute and HandsOn Network—the nation’s largest volunteer network—National Volunteer Week was established in 1974 and has grown exponentially each subsequent year, with literally thousands of volunteer projects and special events scheduled throughout



the week. With the one-year anniversary of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, the creation of the Volunteer Generation Fund and the resonant call to serve from the President, this year will be even more energizing and inspiring.

About Unity

Unity, a not-for-profit leader in hospice and palliative care, is a partnership of Green Bay's three not-for-profit hospitals – Bellin Health, St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center and St. Vincent Hospital. Unity provides community-based hospice and palliative care, residential hospice care and grief support in twelve counties in Northeast Wisconsin. Unity is a member of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and the Hospice Organization and Palliative Experts (HOPE) of Wisconsin.

Unity is based in the Green Bay area with offices in Marinette, Shawano and Sturgeon Bay. For more information call (920) 338-1111 or visit www.unityhospice.org.

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