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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Unity Celebrates the Contributions of Its Volunteers
National Volunteer Week April 19-25**

Green Bay, Wis. – April 16, 2009 – Unity, leaders in hospice and palliative care, today announced that in recognition of National Volunteer Week, April 19th through 25th, it is honoring its hospice, palliative and bereavement care volunteers who bring hope, dignity and love to those facing a life-limiting illness and comfort to their families and friends.

Unity volunteers assist patients and their families by providing respite for families and companionship and support for patients; transporting patients; creating prayer shawls and keepsake teddy bears; and even easing some of the daily activity burdens of light housekeeping and meal preparation. Individuals of all ages are members of Unity's volunteer team, with some 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 very important mission.

At Unity, more than 211 volunteers provided 19,925 hours last year to help care for patients and families throughout Northeast Wisconsin. "*Celebrating People in Action*, this year's theme for National Volunteer Week, certainly captures the contributions of Unity volunteers," says Lisa De Sieno, Director of Outreach. "Their dedication to providing assistance to patients and families who are facing a very difficult time is invaluable. We are pleased to have this opportunity to honor all of our volunteers."

Hospice, palliative and bereavement care volunteers make sure that the people they care for and their families find hope within each day, have their dignity preserved and are surrounded by love



even at the final moments of life. “When I retired, I pledged that I was going to volunteer. I’ve found it to be a calling. It is a way of giving back, and in the process, I have found people to be so grateful and thankful,” shares Bobbie Conard, a Unity volunteer.

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 400,000 hospice volunteers providing more than 16 million hours of service to hospice programs each year. As a Medicare-funded program, Federal regulations require the involvement of volunteers in hospice care.

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 is a continuation of the former Bellin Hospice program founded in 1977. 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).

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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