

## Volunteering Is Warmth

Year:

Project:

Work:

Close to my home stands a building on a busy street corner. Every day cars pass this building on their way to work, to dine, to shop.

There really is little to make the building stand out, no neon sign flashing, no fancy shrubs or landscaping. But within this building resides a host of men and women whose warm spirit attends to the needs of those grieving or in the throes of loss. Its name is Hemet Hospice.

I've been asking myself lately, "Why do I volunteer at hospice?"

It is warmth.

We all have our reasons for volunteering. Some have the luxury of time. Some have certain talents. Some are suffering their own loss and need to fill a vacant spot within their heart and lives. Some are just sensitive to the needs of others.

Volunteering at hospice means never having a goal or reaching one. The drive to succeed is left on a back burner because it is an ongoing process.

People suffer loss every day of the year; therefore, the work is continual.

I volunteer at the store on Harvard Street.

It is not glamorous by any means. A volunteer can spend hours unpacking, sorting, and hanging bags and boxes of clothing. There are those who just steam rack of clothing. Those who separate, clean, and price household and collectibles. And how about the ones who must consider each electrical item for use and salability? There are those whose job it is to sort through piles and piles of books and such, just to get them on the shelves. Some days it can be daunting.

Then there are the daily tasks, such as vacuuming, sweeping, throwing out trash and boxes. Organizing tons of hangers.

No, I would not call any of it glamorous. It is warmth.

The warmth of standing side by side with another human being whose spirit is in sync with yours. In the back room of the store, economic, ethnic, and social status must be left at the door. We are a group with one mind. That mind is to see that those who are suffering loss, along with their families, have what they need.

I have met the most remarkable men and women while volunteering in the store. I have not lived in this town named Hemet for long. I knew absolutely no one when I moved here. The hospice volunteers have become a family to me. On some of the hardest days of my life, it has been their smiles that have carried me through the day. The generosity of some of them is worth their weight in gold. There have been days when facing the world seemed an uphill battle, but I knew that walking through that back door would be someone inside with a smile and a story to carry me through.

These volunteers laugh, talk, eat, and share their life experiences. They are devoted to their cause. The quality of their labor is seen in the success of the store.

They are a proud group, and have every right to be. They have given personal time, financial support, and physical energy to see to the needs of others whom they will never meet or know.

They are the volunteers of Hemet Hospice, and they are warmth!

## About the Author

Nadine R Lopez: I am the author and this story was published in our local paper "The Chronicle"

<http://www.thevalleychronicle.com/articles/2010/01/22/opinion/doc4b59fae14fccf945514328.txt>