



## **DOROTHA C. WHITE FOUNDATION “ADOPT A NURSING HOME PATIENT” PROGRAM**

Across America, we adopt orphans from other countries, domestic born babies, and foster children. We adopt highways. We adopt laws. These efforts exercise the heart of a free society and give all human beings a chance at life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Where this philosophy seems to end is at the threshold of our nursing homes.

The Dorothea C. White Foundation (The Foundation) is dedicated to improving the quality of life in nursing homes by restoring Elderpride. The Foundation's "Adopt a Nursing Home Patient" program connects community volunteers with patients that will benefit from this one-on-one social interaction. This program, which applies to both skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and assisted living facilities, will benefit patients who:

- May not have friends and family nearby who can make frequent visits
- Are looking for companionship
- May be depressed and lonely

Our volunteers will meet with a representative of the facility and adhere to all volunteer protocols and requirements set forth by both the Foundation and the facility.

Under our "Adopt a Nursing Home Patient" program, patients will benefit from:

- *COMPANIONSHIP* – A visit by a person, who is compassionate and interested in the patient's feelings, needs, problems, and hopes will create healing that is not medicinal.
- *EMOTIONS* – Writing a letter to a patient who does not receive mail enhances the patient's self-worth and lifts the spirit in the knowing that someone cares.
- *SOCIALIZATION* – Volunteers can give patients an emotional uplift by taking them out for a walk around the facility grounds, playing a game, or joining them in a sing a long or musical performance.

Studies show that visitation in nursing homes is at an all time low due to odors, depressive surroundings, the perspective that the aging process is discouraging. We believe that the 'Adopt a Nursing Home Patient' program can bring positive forces to bear: volunteerism, benevolence, and community services brought to the patient. Many families need this assistance due to time constraints and other family obligations.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Why is the program called "Adopt a Nursing Home Patient" Program rather than "Adopt a Nursing Home Resident" Program?**

The elderly who live in a facility are there because they require nursing care; therefore, they are patients, not residents. A patient is any person who receives medical attention, care, or treatment. A resident is a person who maintains a residency in a given place. If nursing home patients did not need skilled nursing care, they wouldn't be there; they would be residing in their own homes. Even in assisted living facilities, the elderly are not able to live on their own. While they may not need the level of continuous nursing care that a nursing home offers, they do need to be cared for.

The following quote exemplifies the great need to implement the "Adopt A Nursing Home Patient" program and restore ELDERPRIDE to our precious elderly:

According to Wikipedia, "the word patient is derived from the Latin word *"patiens"* ... meaning "one who endures" or "one who suffers". In itself the definition of patient doesn't imply suffering or passivity, but the role it describes is often associated with the definitions of the adjective form: "enduring trying circumstances with even temper". Some have argued recently that the term should be dropped, because it underlines the inferior status of recipients of health care."

- **Why is the program targeting nursing home patients?**

The program is targeting Long Term Care patients who are confined to nursing homes and assisted living facilities, which is where the greatest need for restoring Elderpride exists today. 75% of the patients residing in nursing homes could be in assisted living facilities, if they were financially secure. Since these elderly cannot live independently, afford an assisted living facility, or pay privately for nursing care, they are relegated to living in the nursing home as an indigent under the Medicaid government program. This is a hard pill to swallow for a generation of people who took pride in being independent.

- **What is the difference between long term care facilities, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes?**

**Long Term Care (LTC)** facilities are licensed facilities that provide general nursing care to those who are chronically ill or unable to take care of daily living needs. The types of long term care that are available include nursing home facilities, as well as alternate facilities and community care options, such as adult day care and home health care.

**A nursing home** is also called a Long Term Care Facility or Convalescent Care Facility. LTC facilities refer primarily to nursing homes because 90% of the patients who reside in nursing homes will remain there until they expire.

**Assisted living facilities** are residential living arrangements that provide individualized personal care, assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), help with medications, and services such as laundry and housekeeping. These facilities may also provide health and medical care, though care is not as intensive as care offered at a nursing home.

### **What are Long Term Care services?**

Long Term Care, usually given to individuals with severe, chronic impairments, provides a

variety of services and supports to meet physical, mental and social care needs over an extended period of time. Services include medical and non-medical care to people with a chronic illness or disability. Most long term care assists people with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), such as dressing, bathing, and using the bathroom. Long-term care can be provided at home, in the community, or in a facility. For purposes of Medicaid eligibility and payment, long-term care services are those provided to someone requiring a level of care equivalent to that received in a nursing facility.

- **Is the volunteer able to choose the facility?**

Yes, if the volunteer knows of a facility he or she would like to visit, that is acceptable. The Foundation will contact the facility and make the connection.

- **What is the recommended time commitment for the volunteer?**

The main purpose of the program is to provide companionship, some one-on-one interaction, or socialization, for those in need. While we recommend an open-ended, long-term pledge to the program, there are no rules or stipulations on how frequently the volunteer should be visiting the patient. That is up to the volunteer, though we recommend regular visits of 30 minutes to an hour, any time spent is beneficial and appreciated. The graduating student volunteer may want to pass their patient on to an up coming senior class mate for the next school year. This is very nice for the patient that has been enjoying the visits.

- **What are the expectations for volunteers?**

Volunteers are not to toilet, feed, or transport patients, and must always follow the facility requirements and restrictions. Always check with the nurse before bringing food in for the patient, as there may be diet restrictions. Most facilities will give you a sheet regarding their policy for volunteers.

- **Is it permissible for the volunteer to take the patient out of the facility for a function or outing?**

Taking the patient on an outing outside the facility is possible, though not expected. Many people who are generous enough to donate their personal time to this effort may not have the freedom or the time to transport the patient. However, if the circumstances are feasible for the patient and the volunteer, this option is available. Permission must be approved by facility administration.

- **Can a family request that their loved one be placed in the “Adopt a Nursing Home Patient” program?**

Yes, the facility can contact the Foundation on behalf of a family and request that the patient be included in the program.

- **Can a family request through the Foundation that a nursing facility in their area join the “Adopt a Nursing Home Patient” program?**

Yes, once the family has made the request and provided contact information for the desired facility, the Foundation will make the connection to introduce and initiate this program.

- **What is the expected length of the volunteer assignment?**

We prefer an ongoing commitment to the program; however, we realize issues may arise, which could limit your volunteer involvement. Should this occur, please contact the Foundation immediately.

- **What if a volunteer is unable to continue with the program?**

We understand there are variables, such as relocation, leaving for college, or health reason that may arise. The volunteer must notify the foundation, and we will find a replacement volunteer for your patient.

- **What if the patient becomes upset or concerned about a personal matter or a facility concern during the visit with the volunteer?**

If the patient becomes upset or concerned, the volunteer should inform the nurse on duty, as they are trained to handle such circumstances.

- **What if the relationship between the patient and volunteer is not working out?**

We suggest that if the arrangement between the patient and volunteer is not comfortable or is not working out, the volunteer should contact the Foundation immediately.

- **Can a volunteer adopt more than one patient?**

Yes, a volunteer may adopt more than one patient if he or she wishes.

- **Why is it necessary to report our volunteer hours?**

As a non-for profit foundation, we are expected to record all volunteer hours.