

THE FAMILY & TRADITION ISSUE

*Adorn Your Food*  
**WITH WINE**  
*Six Great Whites*

# CCM

*at the*  
**Chef's**  
**TABLE**

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*Children's Books*  
**& STORYTELLING**

**W**hen Dr. Cicely Saunders began the original Hospice near London in the 1960s, it was a groundbreaking event—the first program ever to focus on easing the pain of the dying for both patients and their loved ones. It was not a physical building or hospital making headlines, but rather a revolutionary concept of caring that soon spread to the U.S. In 1974, Hospice of Santa Barbara became the second such establishment in the country to bring compassion to the homes of those in need. Now, with more than 3,200 programs in the U.S. and nearly 885,000 people cared for in 2002, it is still that fundamental dedication to compassion that continues to set hospice apart from the type of care provided by hospitals and other facilities.

But fortunately for suffering Central Coast residents, a physical manifestation of the concept has also opened its doors like outstretched arms offering those dealing with painful tribulations a place to find help, understanding, friendship, and peace. And there could not have been a building more perfectly designed for its purpose.

Executive Director Gail Rink describes Hospice of Santa Barbara's new 6,500 sq. ft. headquarters as "A place where compassionate care is freely given." A tranquil, welcoming feeling envelops visitors as they enter what looks more like a high-end health spa than a place designed to deal with death and grief—and in many ways it is. "This office is part office, part spa, part chapel," says Rink. With an emphasis on humanistic, rather than medical treatment, the center is focused not just on grief but on healing, and not just on patients, but on their loved ones as well.

Tucked away on a serene hilltop in Santa Barbara's Riviera area, the facility offers a wide array of supportive services—free-of-charge—for people diagnosed with a terminal illness or who are facing the loss of a loved one. Offerings include individual, couples, family, and group counseling; educational programs; health and wellness services such as massage, Reiki, yoga, and meditation;

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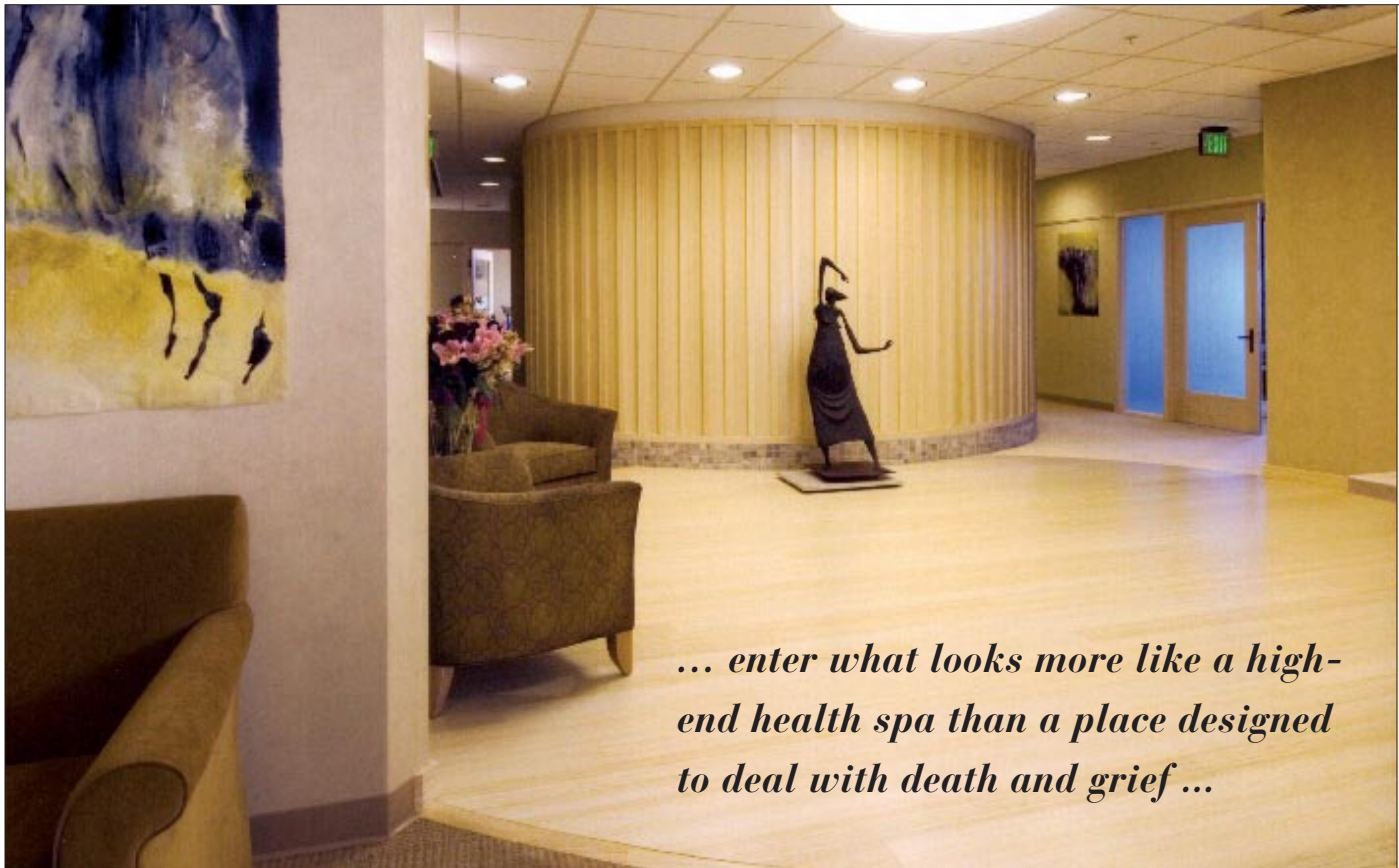




A HELPING PLACE

*A Healing Space*

*By Leslie Dinaberg*



*... enter what looks more like a high-end health spa than a place designed to deal with death and grief ...*

community meeting spaces; and of course, a well-stocked kitchen and dining room.

“We feed a lot of families,” laughs Rink. She means that in both a literal and figurative sense. It was the generosity of some of the families nourished by hospice services that helped make this new center a reality.

“One of the things that makes us a highly functional board is the fact that everyone involved has either experienced needing hospice services themselves or within their families ... or has someone close to them who has,” says Board President Mary Blair.

The Berkus family was critical to the development of the center. Renowned architect Barry Berkus relied on hospice services when his wife Gail was dying, and designed the building free-of-charge as a testament to her and as a thank you to hospice for the comfort they provided his family. Paired with his daughter-in-law Dana Berkus’s distinctive interior design, a feeling of peaceful healing practically emanates from the walls of the new headquarters.

Walking in the center feels like getting a big warm hug. “What we want to be able to do is be able to embrace people who need security and help them to face their fear and heal their sorrow,” says Rink.

When the organization moved to larger quarters last spring, it had the opportunity to expand some services, like the family and children’s program. Many children were not getting the kind of care they needed during the grieving process. “Children grieve. And adults are awkward when children grieve,” says Rink. “And yet we felt strongly that we needed to start a program that would address the needs especially of grieving children or children who may be anticipating the death of a parent or sibling.”

Starting with support groups for children, hospice then began a mentor program, where children were paired with an adult who had survived a similar experience of losing someone close to them when they were young. Children who “graduated” from the mentor program then formed a mentor associate program so they could help other children who were grieving. The parents of these children also formed a support group just for parents.

“So now our family and children’s program has grown from being a simple support group for grieving children to a more complex program that provides both parents and the children and those who have graduated from the program with things to do to help serve others and help make that relationship stronger. That organic kind of process is very healing,” says Rink.

Hospice recently held its first Children and Family Night, where multiple generations gathered for dinner, then broke into play groups and counseling sessions.

“Think of the reason that they all have in common, the death of a parent, or the death of a sibling or a spouse ... it’s amazing that people would gather for such a sensitive reason—and yet, if you create the environment, they thrive,” says Rink. “What we’ve found is with more space and with such a healing and nourishing location, our business has continued to grow and for us, of course, that’s excellent because we’re reaching more people in the community.”

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