

## HEALING IN THE HOME

*By Joan Durbin*

North Fulton Neighbor Staff Writer

On his 87th birthday, Frank Thiebaut wrote a poem summing up his positive attitude about life and longevity.

Not long after, Thiebaut was diagnosed with an inoperable heart condition and found himself attached to an artificial lung at St. Joseph's Hospital.

His son, Roswell resident Robert Thiebaut, didn't want to subject his father to the continued stress of a hospital environment. When the elder Thiebaut rallied enough to breathe on his own, his son began searching for a place his father could be comfortable.

"I investigated a couple of places, but I chose Hospice Atlanta because of the appeal of the facility and its people. They allowed family to stay in the room, even children and pets. And they had programs that kept patients active and kept their spirits up," said Thiebaut, a real estate investor whose mother's family has a history in Roswell dating to 1784.

A retired attorney, Frank Thiebaut loved to sing and he played 15 different instruments. His family brought three, including a guitar, to his hospice room. There was a non-denominational chapel, a library and garden for Frank to enjoy.

In the two weeks he spent there before he died in October, his father had "the best quality of life possible," Thiebaut said. "It was as close to a home environment as anyone could ask, and yet have medical support staff available."

Hospice Atlanta, a division of Visiting Nurse Health System, is metro Atlanta's oldest and largest nonprofit hospice organization. Its 36-bed residential facility in Buckhead, the first of its kind in Georgia, is a valued resource for families of patients with limited life expectancies.

But the organization also provides in-home care as well as specialized services for children.

According to its volunteers manager, Barbara Moore, 93 percent of Hospice Atlanta's patients receive hospice services in their own homes.

"The whole purpose of Hospice Atlanta is to help people who want to die at home, or if not, have a place they can come to," said Executive Director Catherine Radle.

The nonprofit serves 26 counties. Since 1999, 327 patients from north Fulton have received the hospice services.

Medicare pays costs for most patients, but no one is ever turned away from Hospice Atlanta because of inability to pay, Ms. Radle said. The organization raises \$3 million a year through donations and fund-raising events.

On Saturday, from 4 to 7 p.m., the first fund-raiser outside the Perimeter will be held in Roswell in the gym of the activities building at Roswell Area Park.

Spring into Spring will feature live music, food from Slope's BBQ, and games for kids of all ages.

The Junior Beta Club from Crabapple Middle School and members of the Beta Club and the National

Honor Society at Roswell High School will be manning the booths.

Roswell resident Helen Carlos, a Hospice Atlanta board member, is chairing the event. She has been involved with the organization for 10 years, inspired by her mother-in-law, Eula Carlos, who was one of the moving forces behind the construction of the in-patient facility.

Ms. Carlos' daughters Drew, a Crabapple Middle School student, and Jordan, who's coming home from college early for the fund-raiser, both will be volunteering their time at the event.

"With us, it's truly a family affair," Ms. Carlos said.

Tickets for Spring Into Spring are \$35 for adults, \$15 for children 5 through 13 and free for those 5 and under. Anyone who buys a ticket has a chance to win two AirTran business-class tickets to anywhere in the world.

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