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Steve Jacobsen: New Year Brings New and Increased Understanding

Hospice of Santa Barbara continues to expand its presence in helping the community heal from grief and loss

By Steve Jacobsen | Published on 01.16.2012



Entering a new year has particular resonance at [Hospice of Santa Barbara](#) and to our clients and patients as well.

We all seek to live another day, another year and beyond. Most of us assume that we will — particularly when we are young and healthy. For the elderly and those dealing with a terminal illness, however, time is not something that is taken for granted. Each day is a milestone and a gift.

For those who are grieving the death of a loved one, the new year may be both painful and a relief. Most of us use time as a healer, and the passage into a new year may help someone move on in a symbolic way.

At the same time, each day that goes by is another day without that someone we love. It's a bittersweet transition.

As for Hospice of Santa Barbara, we look to the new year with renewed purpose and a sense of fulfillment. While 2011 did not go

by without its share of death and loss, it also marked an important period in our growth to serve the dying and those who love them.

More of our friends and neighbors in Santa Barbara are coming to Hospice of Santa Barbara to confront their fears, deal with their grief and sorrow, and move toward a new day of hope and renewal. We are seeing more than 500 adult clients a month, and 132 children. More friends in our community volunteered and made financial donations to help us accomplish our work.

The conversation and expressions about death, as a part of life, continue to expand. For example, we have increased our presence to include high schools in the greater Santa Barbara area, and we have a growing Latino and Spanish-speaking presence (traditionally a community not as comfortable talking about these issues) seeking our services. We are also utilizing creative and expressive means, including our art exhibitions, to talk about these important issues in new ways.

As always, I'm humbled to be part of an organization whose mission is to provide free programs and services that help our community heal from grief and loss so that we may all look to a brighter 2012 — and life marches on. Happy New Year!

— *Steve Jacobsen is executive director of [Hospice of Santa Barbara](#). Call Hospice of Santa Barbara at 805.563.8820 for a schedule of adult and children's groups, or to make a donation. Connect with [Hospice of Santa Barbara on Facebook](#).*