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Cottage in the Meadow celebration
Phase one of construction completed

After nearly 10 years of planning and millions of community dollars raised, Cottage in the Meadow -- Central Washington's new home for hospice care -- reaches a milestone in its evolution: celebrating the completion of phase one construction and the opening of its doors to the Yakima Valley and surrounding communities. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Saturday, July 14th. A community open house followed, giving residents their first opportunity to tour this new facility.

Cottage in the Meadow enhances the full spectrum of hospice care available to residents of Yakima and Kittitas counties. The 20,000 square foot in-patient facility will provide 24-hour medical and respite care for patients and families not able to receive hospice care in their homes. The facility will begin serving patients in late July/early August.

Memorial Hospice has provided services to the community since the mid-1990's. Over the years, the numbers of clients served has steadily increased leading to the need for an in-patient hospice care facility outside the confines of the hospital setting.

"Cottage in the Meadow represents the next part of the journey of providing quality hospice services to residents of Kittitas and Yakima counties," said Gail Weaver, Vice President for Memorial Hospital. "The community asked that a hospice home be available at the end of life. Memorial is proud to be a part of making this vision a reality."

Cottage in the Meadow was designed with the entire family in mind—a place of comfort—like home. Phase one of construction includes 12 spacious patient suites that open to semi-private patios, common areas such as a kitchen, laundry facilities, family rooms and a chapel/spiritual room.

The Memorial Foundation faced the Herculean task of raising \$5.3 million to build the facility. A fundraising campaign commenced in 2008 just as the recession began.

"We had faith our community would respond to the call and in a word it's been phenomenal. Nearly 6,500 donors – large and small – contributed to this grassroots fundraising campaign," remarked Anne Caffery, President and CEO of The Memorial Foundation.

The Foundation had help from community leaders and a volunteer steering committee led by local Yakima physician Tim Melhorn, MD.

"It has been one of the greatest honors in my career to be a part of something that will have such a positive impact on how we help patients and their families with end of life issues," said Dr. Melhorn. "We toured other hospice facilities around the state and Cottage in the Meadow is a result of the collective wisdom we gained through careful observation and attentive listening."

Careful attention was paid to details -- small and large. Each patient suite is equipped with oxygen access, a private bathroom, a sleeping sofa, and room for friends, family and visitors to gather. Beds can be rolled out onto the patio so patients can hear the soothing sounds from the terraced water feature.

There is a spa room designed to assist patients with their bathing and therapeutic needs. An on-site laundry room will allow family members to wash personal clothing at their convenience and at no charge.

Although patients will be served meals, a family kitchen will be open 24 hours a day. Families of patients can bring in food to eat and serve.

A family room & library/reading room provides a quiet place where families can relax. And a children's play room provides activities designed to keep young ones busy and entertained while their families are at the Cottage.

Other partners who have contributed to the building of Cottage in the Meadow include Kittitas Valley Home Health & Hospice, Lower Valley Hospice and Palliative Care, and Yakima Regional Home Health and Hospice.

Memorial will provide staffing for Cottage in the Meadow. Phase two of construction includes eight more patient rooms but will not commence until funds become available.

Cottage in the Meadow is located at 1208 South 48th Avenue, south of Nob Hill Boulevard across from Randall Park in Yakima.

Learn more at yakimahospice.org.

Cottage in the Meadow facts at a glance:

- The first and only in-patient home for hospice care in Yakima & Kittitas counties
- Phase one: 16,000 square-foot, 12-bed hospice care facility
- Additional 4,500 square feet and eight beds to be built in Phase Two
- 24-hour patient care and family respite support
- Specially trained physicians, nurses, social workers, pharmacists, chaplains, and care aides working as a team to assist patients and their families
- Affords patients a home-like environment for end-of-life care
- Operated by Memorial Hospice and will serve patients from throughout the region
- Staffing:
 - Patrick Waber, MD – Medical Director
 - Raymalee Wilsey, RN – Facility Director and Nurse Manager
 - Dottie Hidlebrand – Volunteer Coordinator