

Chaplaincy at Spaulding Park in Richland dedicates new building

By Loretto J. Hulse, Tri-City Herald

The Chaplaincy at Spaulding Park in Richland, the organization's new building, was blessed and dedicated Tuesday under bright sunny skies.

"Yesterday we had gale force winds and tomorrow it's supposed to snow; looking at today I feel we have a bit of heaven's blessing shining down on this organization," said Bette Cooper, The Chaplaincy executive director.

The building, which houses the in-home hospice teams, administrative offices and chaplain services cost \$3.13 million.

It was paid through donations.

"Whenever we received a large, undesignated gift we tucked it back for the building fund," she said. The organization also received donations earmarked for the building fund.

The building was designed by Brian Johnson of CKJT Architects and built by J.N. Jacobsen & Son, both of Kennewick.

Jerry Rhoads, a Chaplaincy board member and head of the building committee, said planning for the new building began early in 2009.

"We made the decision to build rather than rent or buy an existing structure because of the unique nature of our mission. We needed a place to house the hospice teams, which are the core of what we are," he said.

The five hospice teams include nurses, social workers and chaplains who go into the community and care for patients in advanced stages of a life-limiting illness.

"That can range from heart disease to cancer, AIDS to Alzheimer's, anything which will eventually be terminal," Cooper said.

At any one time, the teams care for about 120 people in Benton and Franklin counties and in a year will work with 700 to 800 families.

Each of the in-home hospice teams will have their own office where they can meet and interact and that will improve services, said Linda Hall of Sunnyside, a chaplain intern at The Chaplaincy.

"We all care quite a lot for the people we help. Now, with an office dedicated to each team, we can easily talk to each other. So if one person picks up on something going on with a patient they can talk with the others on the team and we can all work towards a solution. We all want to give the best service to our patients we can," Hall said.

The Chaplaincy was established in 1971 to offer non-denominational spiritual support in the community. Chaplains work in hospitals, jails and nursing homes, and give one-on-one support.

In the early 1980s, hospice care was added, and The Chaplaincy built a facility that included offices and a 10-bed Hospice House in Kennewick. The organization also runs Cork's Place, where they offer grief support for children and adults.

Today, The Chaplaincy has 22 chaplains on staff with 135 paid employees and numerous volunteers.

The new two-story building has 12,700 square feet.

"Which gives us plenty of elbow room, plus some extra space for expansion," Cooper said. The Chaplaincy at Spaulding Park includes a large meeting room, which can accommodate 120 people.

"We'll make it available to groups from the Cancer Center, Community Health Assistance and others," Cooper said.

For more information, go to www.tricityschaplaincy.org or call 509-783-7416.

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