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Dear Editor:

Recently, parents of a pediatric patient hoped to make plans for a much needed weekend away and asked if we could provide respite care for their child. Our Volunteer Department sent out a call and within a matter of hours 13 people signed up to take shifts so that the child would never be alone during the 48 hours his parents were rejuvenating.

This is remarkable not because it is rare but because it is what we have come to expect from the volunteers who help us do what we do. We are not alone. Across the nation, more than 430,000 trained volunteers gave more than 19 million hours of service to hospices.

April 23 to 29 is National Volunteer Week and every single volunteer deserves our appreciation and grateful acknowledgement.

Hundreds of trained Hospice of the Chesapeake volunteers are working right here in the Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties, giving selflessly to help people live as fully as possible, even at the end of life. Our community is a better, more compassionate place because of these volunteers.

Even when you're dying, there can be a lot of living to do. Hospice volunteers make more special moments possible for the patients and families they serve every day. Besides serving as patient care volunteers, we have a cadre of volunteers who serve in other capacities. They work at one of our signature events, help us with paper work, make quilts to be given to one of our Veteran patients at an Honor Salute, offer rides for critical staff in foul weather and in many other ways.

We salute our volunteers, and thank them for the kindness and passion they share with our patients and our staff.

Find out more about our volunteers and the work they do by visiting www.hospicechesapeake.org.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Marcantonio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ben Marcantonio
President and CEO
Hospice of the Chesapeake