

# Raggedy Adventures

The Newsletter for Adventures in Caring Foundation Volunteers • April 2001



## Raggedy Magic



On entering a lady patient's room, her first words to me were, "Oh you must be the angel I've been praying for." Somewhat at a loss for words I told her she must be an angel herself, to which she replied, "Actually I've been a devil most of the time - getting into all sorts of trouble." So, as if to atone for her mischief, she made me promise that I would continue my acts of kindness. With a twinkle in her eye she added, "and I'll be checking up on you from time to time." After two weeks at Cottage Hospital she passed away, but the memory of our conversations will always remind me of how significant a caring heart can be." - Tyler Leigh, Santa Barbara

The more time I spend working in the Adventures In Caring Program the more I feel that each person can really help to make a difference in the lives of people who are in need. Every day that I visit the hospital I feel enriched by the possibility that I have made someone's day a little brighter. It makes me feel very content. - Karen Holst, Santa Barbara, CA

On one of my visits to Cottage Hospital a patient's family member came up to me and asked me if we (Raggedy Ann & Andy) are trained to do this job. And I told her that all of us have had at least 30 hours of training. I asked her why she was interested in knowing if we are trained. She said "Because of your smiles. You guys smile in a way that I thought you must be trained how to smile." I told her the smile comes from our hearts, that is why it is so special.

- Ali Ghodosizadeh - Santa Barbara, CA

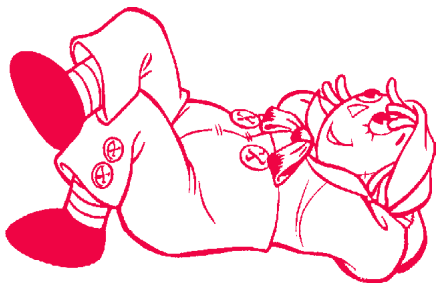
The patients are more talkative now - letting me through their protective shields. They go through so much with their treatments. It is almost as if they are afraid to let down their guard and get close to anyone. Now they tell me to be sure and wake them so they can talk.

- Edith Moyer, Reading, PA

## Can't Stay Away Too Long

It has been two weeks since I visited, and it felt a lot like coming home after a long absence. I really love these people... Mikey was the most amazing today. He clearly was trying to speak to me. No sounds would come out and he had trouble even approximating forming the words but it seemed clear to me that he was saying "I love you". Mikey is completely paralyzed except for his face and even that is not working well. But he always smiles and laughs at my jokes. I think he understands me and seemed even more excited and happy than usual when I translated his attempts to communicate by saying "I got it. I love you too." He smiled so big that tears started to form in his eyes.

- Tom Kubat, Santa Barbara, CA



My week seems incomplete when I have to miss my Raggedy visits, as has occurred several times recently because of family needs. But when I go back, the joy of reunion reminds me how blessed I am by those whom I visit. I surely receive as much as I give.

Two special visits were precipitated by opposites: a 98th birthday in one case and the news of having cancer in the other. It touched my heart and humbled my being to share in these two events. And the spirit of Raggedy prevailed, allowing me to be the soft absorbant Rag Doll to one lovely woman and the delighted enthusiastic Rag Doll to the other.

- Ker Massengale, Reading, PA

Today was my first day back at the hospital in a month. Things have been keeping me so insanely busy I haven't been able to focus on my Raggedy work. I think I've been feeling a bit down as a result of not volunteering. There's something about giving up just a little bit of precious time a week that makes the remaining hours so much sweeter and well-lived. I find I maintain a better perspective on the rest of my life when I devote those few hours to bringing smiles to people less fortunate than I am. I met some interesting people and felt great as I left the hospital. I have been missing that feeling.

- Meagan Littlepage, Santa Barbara, CA

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## A Hospital?

I had just finished working my way through a wing of Cottage Hospital when I spotted a woman staring out of the window near the elevator. As I approached, she must have seen me out of the corner of her eye and she turned and began talking with me.

While we talked about her father who was suffering from cancer, one by one, more family members joined the conversation. I had visited the woman's father an hour prior to meeting the rest of the family. They were incredibly grateful after hearing him speak so excitedly about me.

Among the family was a 4 or 5 year old girl who immediately fell in love with Raggedy Ann. She patiently waited for a pause in the conversation and proceeded to ask me if I knew what she wanted to be when she grew up. I told her I would love to find out and she exclaimed, "I want to be a hospital!" "Why do you want to be a hospital?" I asked. She replied with an answer that warmed my heart for the rest of the day. "Because I want to help people and make them feel better just like you do!"

It was great to see that someone so young could see why I was there. She appreciated that I had brought a smile to her grandpa's face, and although she did not yet know the word to describe it, wanted to do the same for others.

Valerie Canham  
Santa Barbara, CA

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**It's So Wonderful!**

I had begun to see one particular male patient regularly. Every week, when I went onto his unit, I would ask the nurses which patients I shouldn't visit. They would say, "the usuals, but 'Sixteen' would really like a visit, even though it seems like he doesn't."

I would go in and stay for a while. The man always seemed to be in his own world, asking me to clean the room, get the nurses, or tell the nurses something. I would play along or try to talk about something that might interest him, but I always walked away feeling so helpless.

The last time I saw him I went in with another Raggedy. When we walked in the man said, "Oh it's you guys," and acted the same as usual. Finally as we began to say goodbye the man grabbed my hand and said, "I love you. You make me so happy when you come to see me. God bless you." It was so wonderful. I had no idea that our visits meant that much to him.

I continue to discover how much our visits are appreciated, whether we realize it or not. This week another man told me that we were the most wonderful assets that Santa Barbara has to offer!

- Aimee Grush  
Santa Barbara, CA

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## So Long Raggedy Ann

One of our Pennsylvania Raggedys has moved on to "Grad School." Connie Brubaker passed away on March 16, 2001. She was a special lady, and a very dedicated Raggedy Ann. We will miss you, Connie. Our love, prayers, and support reach out to Connie's loving husband, Charlie Brubaker.

## Class of 2001

Congratulations to all our volunteers who are graduating from UCSB in June. **Please call us with regard to your new address and future plans.** Best of luck to all of you!



This past weekend, one of my best friends went through the Raggedy Training. So we talked a lot about the people that we are visiting and the new experiences she was having. It really pumped me up for the visits that I had today. I felt like I was starting all over again. I think it is a really good idea to take time every once in a while to reflect on what you are doing and why you are doing it.

- Karin Finger, Santa Barbara, CA

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Wow! Two whole years in Bib Overalls!  
- Raggedy Mike Katz, Santa Barbara, CA

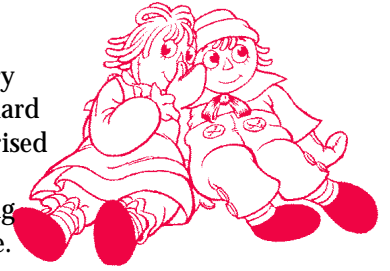
I look forward to my visits and see them as a way to recalibrate my emotions and my view of reality.

- Sarah Delaney-Santa Barbara, CA

*"Hearing is one of  
the body's five senses.  
But listening is an art."*

- Frank Tyger

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In the January training Richard Hoover surprised us all with a beautiful song that he wrote.



We want to share it with all of you and invite you, as Richard did, to create more verses. Here are the words and all of you put on your creative thinking caps and send us more verses.

"Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy"  
*Chorus:*

Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy  
We've got...  
red and white socks  
like peppermint candy  
We've got...  
worn out old clothes  
but our heart only knows,  
to smile and say "I love you".

*1st Verse:*

Can we share a smile?  
Can we talk for a while?  
Can we slow down the pace  
of this fast human race?  
Can we thank Raggedy Karen  
for startin' the sharin'?  
With a smile that says "I Love You".

*f*

*This grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere: the dew is never all dried at once: a shower is forever falling, vapor is ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal sunset, eternal dawn and gloaming, on sea and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls.*

- John Muir. Sent to us by Irma Cohen.



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