

## **The work of the Erzsébet (Elizabeth) Hospice Foundation**

Our foundation, as one of the pioneers of the Hungarian Hospice organization, began the homecare of terminally ill cancer patients in 1994. The professional help provided in the course of our work makes it possible for the patients – if they wish – to remain at their own homes until the last moment of their lives.

The Foundation contributed to the opening of the Erzsébet Hospice in 1995, the inpatient unit for patients confined to bed, and it continuously assists the work of the Hospice by obtaining medical and office equipment, as well as items to assist in the care and comfort of the patients. The winning of Dutch grant support in 1999 made it possible to create a day-care department and to expand the number of beds up to 20. Today more than 400 terminally ill cancer patients receive some kind of care from us every year, which is about 60% of the concerning population of the city. More and more volunteers are also getting involved in the work of patient care, on a charitable basis.

The third important area of our work is education. So far more than 1,500 individuals – doctors, nurses, social workers, students of psychology and mental hygiene, trainee priests and ministers – have participated in our various training courses. The aim of these is partly to pass on professional knowledge, and partly to publicize the humane way of treating the dying. In recognition of our educational work, in 2000 we won the title ‘Educational and Training Centre’ from the Open Society Institute.

The professional work of the service is well-known even beyond the borders of Hungary. The Foundation’s doctor represents Hungary on the Eastern and Central European Palliative Taskforce, as a professional rapporteur. The care-team received the city of Miskolc’s “Nívó” award in 1999, the certificate of recognition of the Minister of Health in 2000; and the head nurse received the Order of the Golden Cross of the Republic of Hungary in 2002.

A significant part of our homecare activity still today takes place on a charitable basis and does not enjoy social security support. We try to provide the material prerequisites for our work through gifts, charity events and grants.

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