

Alison Goral Chambers

For 25 years, Duke Community Hospice Services (formally Triangle Hospice) has been providing quality care to terminally ill patients and their loved ones.

Founded in November 1979 by a group of volunteers dedicated to the care of terminally ill patients, the Hospice staff has made a difference to thousands of patients and their families. Though the time the staff spends with patients may be fleeting, the bonds created are long and enduring.

Take Alison Chambers, who died more than six years ago, surrounded by her family and hospice workers who had grown fond of her during the last five-and-a-half weeks of her life.

When Chambers' mother, Violet LaRivere, considered how to honor the legacy of her daughter, she thought of hospice, the haven for Chambers and her family.

J.J. Chambers, Alison's son, spent every night at Hospice at The Meadowlands with his mother. "When Grandma was looking at where to make a gift to honor my mom, we all knew hospice would have to be at the top of the list," he says. "I can't imagine going through what we did without hospice. It would be a cruel and cold world doing that on your own."

Now Meadowlands has a new children's bereavement room, a haven for young people who have suffered the loss of a family member. Given by Mrs. LaRivere to honor the memory of Alison, it is a place where children can find respite and perhaps even have some fun.

"We were all so depressed when Alison died, but there was also so much kindness and goodness, and we wanted to give something back to acknowledge that," says LaRivere.

Though Alison Chambers was a unique individual, her family realizes their experience isn't unique. "Illnesses like Alison's strike many, many families," says Janet Goral, Allison's sister from Durham, who nursed her at home with hospice's help for as long as she could. "I think we were lucky to have had so many wonderful people helping us care for her. I believe no one is promised a tomorrow, so it behooves you to be kind today. Hospice workers certainly embodied that kindness for us."

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