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Community Foundation of Greater Sun City Center awards \$100,000 Challenge Grant for LifePath Hospice Residence

SUN CITY CENTER, FLA. – The Community Foundation of Greater Sun City Center has awarded LifePath Hospice a challenge grant to help generate support for its innovative residential hospice program. Under terms of the grant, the Foundation will match the first \$100,000 of donations made or pledged to this program by other donors and are secured by February 2009.

A formal announcement was made at a 10 a.m. ceremony at the LifePath Hospice Residence on March 26, with representatives of LifePath Hospice and the Community Foundation in attendance.

The LifePath Hospice Residence was established in November 2006 following the opening of the new 24-bed Sun City Center Hospice House that same month. It operates in the eight-bed facility located adjacent to Plaza West on the campus of Freedom Plaza in Sun City Center and was opened in 2001 as LifePath Hospice's original Hospice House. It was also the organization's first inpatient facility serving all of Hillsborough County. The residential program provides the ability to serve patients who are suffering from life-limiting illness, but who do not require the more acute level of care provided in the Hospice House setting. This also gives patients and families more options when the patient has no suitable place to live, or is unable to receive adequate care at home.

"This program is unique in the hospice movement and currently does not get reimbursed by traditional payment sources, to the extent that inpatient care in the Hospice House does" said Donna Badgero, R.N., LifePath Hospice Residence clinical team leader. "The Residence provides a wonderful option for many of our patients, and donations from the community are needed to help defray the costs."

To illustrate the community needs that are being served, while the inpatient Hospice House has had a 91 percent occupancy rate since opening, the Residence has had an even higher rate at 93 percent. The program served 141 patients in 2007, its first full year of operation, and indications are that that number will increase in subsequent years.

The Community Foundation of Greater Sun City Center has been a strong supporter of LifePath Hospice and its mission to help the terminally ill and the grieving. This is the foundation's second such grant to the agency, the first being a \$75,000 challenge grant in 2006, which helped build the 24-bed Sun City Center inpatient facility. "We at the Community Foundation of Greater Sun City Center are proud to support many worthy causes that improve the quality of life for Sun City Center and South Shore residents" said Evelyn Lunsford, chairman of the Community Foundation. "With this grant and the publicity it will generate, we hope to educate the community about this valuable program provided by LifePath Hospice and certainly hope to generate community support to help its operation."

"LifePath Hospice is tremendously thankful for our friends at the Community Foundation and all of the donors in Sun City Center and throughout Hillsborough County" said John Wilbur, LifePath Hospice major gifts officer. "The total funds raised to qualify for the grant, when added to the grant itself, will represent about two-thirds of the un-reimbursed care that LifePath Hospice provides each year through the Residence. We are very happy to be able to provide this treatment option to the community, and we know that our terrific supporters will help us qualify for this matching grant well before February 2009."

LifePath Hospice serves more than 1,600 patients each year and in 2008 will celebrate its 25th year of providing compassionate care to patients and families in Hillsborough County. LifePath Hospice welcomes all supporters interested in making cash donations, pledges or planned gifts (including bequests, trusts, gift annuities or beneficiary designations) to help the program qualify for the challenge grant. Contact John Wilbur at (813) 871-8089, or wilburj@lifepath-hospice.org.

LifePath Hospice embraces its mission to make the most of life by relieving the suffering of patients and their families affected by life-limiting illnesses or end-of-life issues. LifePath Hospice is a Joint Commission accredited, community-based, not-for-profit hospice that serves Hillsborough, Polk, Hardee and Highlands counties in central Florida. For more information, visit the LifePath Hospice website at www.lifepath-hospice.org

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