



*“You made me laugh,
and I haven’t
done that in years...”*

Hospice community nurse Kevin Kramer says that when he asks new patients what they know about Hospice, they often say, “‘You’re here because I’m dying.’ I tell them, ‘I’m here because you’ve got some living left to do, and when that dying part comes, I’ll be there for that too.’” Kevin works closely with the Hospice social worker and chaplain, caring for patients in their homes. “We’re there to give them the most quality in the days they have left. If that means managing their pain so they can go for a walk or sit by the lake, we’ll do it.”

A former oncology nurse who has been with Hospice of Mercy for five years, Kevin says people often ask him why he likes working for Hospice. “I see it as an honor and a blessing,” he explains. “You see God’s grace in these people every day, and it’s a very powerful thing. My days can be just as hectic and stressful as they are for somebody in an office, but at the end of the day, what I witness between patients and families are graces from God. What I get from our patients and families is far more than I give.”

When he meets with families, Kevin says, “I always tell the patient that they are driving the boat, their spouse is the first mate, and I’m the second mate.” He promises patients that he will focus on them, but also watch out for their spouse and children – an assurance that brings great relief to people who are worried about being a burden to their loved ones. Families frequently thank him for his compassionate presence – and especially for his sense of humor. “It’s okay for dying people to laugh,” he says, remembering a patient who thanked him profusely for the time he spent with her. “She said, ‘You made me laugh, and I haven’t laughed in six months.’”

KEVIN KRAMER, HOSPICE COMMUNITY NURSE

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