



Brother Bernard & Brother Tom

Volunteer Service Honored

Two volunteers and our Volunteer Services Manager were selected for prestigious awards. Here are their stories:

No Living Hero Left Behind: The Robert Leibrand Story

Patient volunteer and “SAMBassador” Robert Leibrand, a twice-wounded WWII POW, was awarded the 2008 Father Edward J. Walsh Volunteer of the Year Award from the Community Planning and Advocacy Council (CPAC). After caring for his late wife with Samaritan’s help, Bob volunteered to help other patients and their caregivers. He has especially enjoyed serving veteran hospice patients. “As soldiers, we protected each other...Now another enemy – illness– has invaded our buddies who need our help in their most trying time of life,” says Bob, adding, “When you give of yourself, it will be returned tenfold. I speak from experience.”

Pictured: Robert Leibrand (right) with his son Bob at the CPAC award dinner.

Giving Back: The Brother Thomas Osorio, O.H. Story

Brother Thomas Osorio of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God has championed hospice and palliative care as a caregiver, author, volunteer, educator, advocate and conference sponsor. His service was honored with the 2008 Spirit of Hospice Community Leader Award from the New Jersey Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

When Brother Bernard Farrell, a member of Brother Tom’s religious order, developed Alzheimer’s Disease, his Religious Superiors called the failing Brother home to the Order’s headquarters in Ireland. Brother Tom felt this would be too disorienting for his colleague who had spent 40 years teaching in America. He received permission to take on the role of caregiver in addition to his full-time duties. The role proved more challenging than expected. While Brother Tom regarded himself as Brother Bernard’s “family,” the medical community did not, raising medical privacy issues to plough through. Brother Bernard’s illness also required changes in daily life at his monastery. He called Samaritan and was grateful for our help through Brother Bernard’s final months.

Brother Tom’s experiences prompted him to write a 16-page booklet titled *Journey of Love* as a helpful guide for other religious communities. He also trained to become a patient volunteer and serves as incoming chair of the Via Lucis Advisory Committee, Samaritan’s Ministry for Catholic Patients and Families. In 2008, his Order hosted the committee’s educational conference, providing dinner for 150 attendees as a thank-you on behalf of Brother Bernard.

In his book acknowledgements, Brother Tom thanked, “Our Angels from Samaritan Hospice, who from the moment I called, provided such care, love, and compassion... The care that you gave each day provided us all with peace and hope. Truly, it could be said that you reminded us that we were on a *Journey of Love*.”

