

Planting Seeds of Compassion at Forbes Hospice

Forbes Hospice has become somewhat of an oasis in the city thanks to the generosity and creativity of a local landscape architect.

Mark McKenzie, owner of Landscape Architectural Services, LLC, recently donated more than \$8,000 of professional services to create the Forbes Hospice Compassion Garden. He designed and installed the garden so that Hospice families would have a place to go for a respite from the emotional hardships of having a loved one in hospice care. Mr. McKenzie has a history of similar donations in and around the greater Pittsburgh region and refers to this as his “philanthropy.”

The garden is both functional and aesthetic with ample seating, strategically placed boulders, and shrubs and perennials planted to ensure seasonal interest.

“Before the garden was installed in the fall of 2008, there was no place for people to sit outside,” said Mr. McKenzie. “I wanted to provide a comforting and convenient area outdoors where someone could get away from it all to be quiet and reflect.”



Mark McKenzie enjoys the new Hospice Compassion Garden that he designed.



Mr. McKenzie was personally aware of the need for such a garden. In addition to serving as a volunteer at Forbes Hospice, his father and aunt were both cared for there, and his mother has also been a Hospice volunteer for 28 years.

Although this garden has been in the planning stages for many years, the first step was in spring of 2006 when two of his father's favorite trees were planted in his memory.

“It really is remarkable,” said Maryanne Fello, Director, Forbes Hospice. “It had been a longstanding goal of ours to do something like this, and the Compassion Garden really creates a kind of oasis for families to go when they need a break. Mark has shared how he sees the world with us at Forbes Hospice, and we are very grateful for his vision.”

Mark's vision remains incomplete, however. He added that the garden is an ongoing project and has now taken on a life of its own, which officially qualifies it as living art.

Mr. McKenzie still donates his time and creativity working with local artists and intends to continuously improve the space. “I'm there frequently to do what is needed; be it planting, watering, pruning or promoting the garden to Hospice families,” he said. “It's invariably a source of conversation. I've met so many great people and families working on this project. It's my little spot and it comforts me.”



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