



As a musician, Timothy Holley, DMA, has always considered performing for the community to be an act of service. So it isn't surprising that Tim, an associate professor of music at North Carolina Central University, shares the gift of his cello music each week with patients, families, and staff members at Duke HomeCare and Hospice's Hock Family Pavilion.

"Musicians are expected to have the dedication to do three things: perform, practice, and rehearse," he says. "Playing at the Hock Family Pavilion fits into a fourth category which some people would call ministry. When I play, the music fills the space that it's occupying just like water fills a container. But unlike water filling a container, the sound of music transforms the space but doesn't stay there eternally; only the memory of what was played will be there. The music facilitates some unforgettable moments."

Tim, who has dedicated more than 45 years of his life to the cello, shares his gift of music room-to-room at the Hock Family Pavilion. "If it looks like I won't be disturbing, I'll sit down and play very quietly," he says. "I don't play for too long and I'm very careful not to play anything that's too intricate or involved."

At the inpatient facility, there is a ritual when a deceased patient is taken out of the building: a bell is rung and all staff members not working directly with a patient or family member line the hallways to pay respect to the deceased. During one such ritual, Tim played the spiritual "Deep River" which was a moving tribute shared by everyone present.

Tim says that he opens himself to being profoundly transformed each time he volunteers. "I think that I sometimes get more therapy than the patients," he says. "As we give, we get much more than we anticipated."

Cello music is just one element of Duke HomeCare and Hospice's Complementary Therapy Program, which offers non-pharmacological support for patients. "Our focus is on interventions that can be provided by volunteers to bring comfort and to help manage symptoms," says Carolyn Colsher, DHCH's Volunteer Supervisor. Pets at Duke brings in teams comprised of a dog and a handler, also accompanied by a DHCH volunteer, to offer pet therapy. Reiki—a touch therapy—is offered as is hospice massage therapy, which is more gentle traditional massage.

Currently, live music is offered at the patient's bedside by a cellist, a mandolin player, a vocalist, a hammered dulcimer player, and a Native American flutist. In addition, music echoes through the hallways thanks to volunteers who play the piano in the building.

"These volunteers bring tremendous comfort by relaxing and distracting patients," says Colsher. "Patients are able to enjoy something that was important to them, whether that is classical music or the good memories of their beloved pets."

But patients aren't the only ones who benefit. The music provided by volunteers often starts conversations among visitors or in family groups. The staff members enjoy having a brief shoulder massage or getting to pet a dog. "Staff will tell me that they are so thrilled to work on Monday evening because that's when Timothy will be performing with his cello," says Carolyn.