

Baton Rouge Edition

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# Savvy & Sage

*getting the most  
of midlife  
and beyond*



## **The Carpenter House: Baton Rouge's First Freestanding Inpatient Hospice Facility**

*by Michele Burbank*

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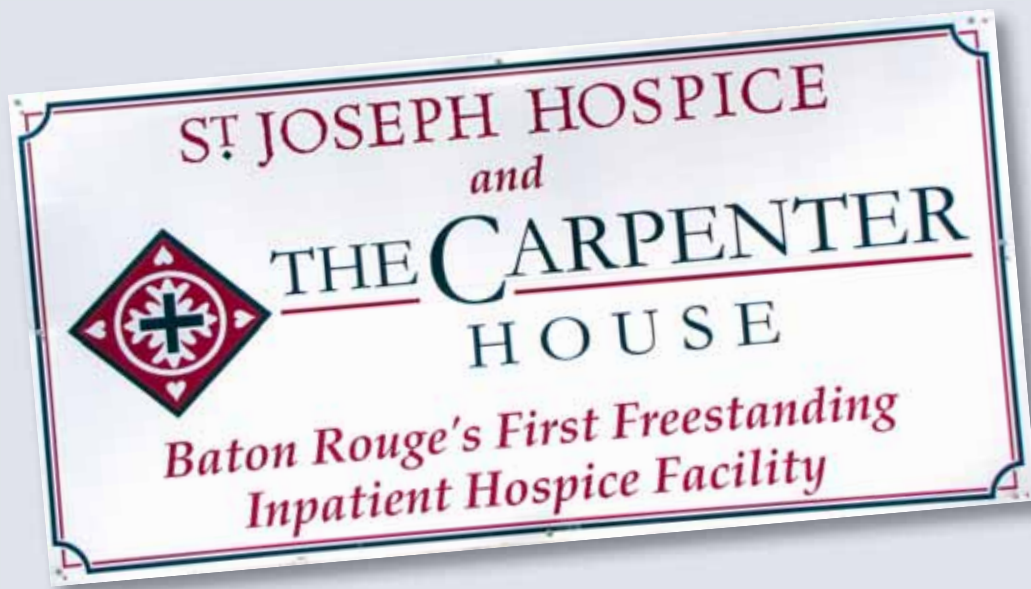
## **Financial Strategies for Married, Single and Widowed Retirees**

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## **Magnolia Honey Jelly: Making the World a Little Bit Sweeter**

*by Sandra Freeman*



# The Carpenter House

As our population ages, innovative health care providers evolve their services to meet changing needs. St. Joseph Hospice, LLC has done just that.

For the first time in Baton Rouge, area hospice patients and their families now have access to a freestanding inpatient facility that is separate and apart from any hospital, assisted living facility or nursing home. On December 22, 2008, The Carpenter House opened its doors at 10615 Jefferson Highway. This warm and state-of-the-art facility allows patients to transition directly from the hospital into the hospice unit as they plan for long-term arrangements at their residence. Also, The Carpenter House will serve as a place of comfort, peace and dignity for terminally ill patients with symptoms not well managed at home.

*...area hospice patients and their families now have access to a freestanding inpatient facility...*

As likeliness of a cure fades, attention should shift to a dying patient's physical, emotional and spiritual comfort. Yes, we do need to cure sometimes, but we need to comfort and care always.

St. Joseph Hospice embraces the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of both the patient and the family facing a terminal illness. Hospice recognizes that meeting the spiritual and emotional needs of the patient and family, as well as providing aggressive comfort measures, allows for a much better quality of life for all involved.

The death of a loved one can actually be a wonderful family-experience that the family can remember forever.

"Baton Rouge has long needed an inpatient hospice facility to meet the needs of those patients and families needing additional hospice support in an environment of warmth," says Managing



Member Pat Mitchell. “This is not a nursing home.” Actually, St. Joseph Hospice long considered leasing space in a local nursing home to provide inpatient care. “We learned quickly that many people do not want to spend their last days in a nursing home,” said Mitchell. “That is why we assumed the financial risk associated with providing this service. The Carpenter House is allowing us to meet the needs of The Greatest Generation, in the dignified manner which they deserve.”

The Carpenter House offers acute care hospitals the opportunity to better assist terminally ill patients. In addition to 16 private rooms, a welcoming atrium with a beautiful waterfall, patients and families can enjoy the use of a meditation chapel and family rooms for dining and relaxing, a children’s playroom, and computer availability in a furnished library. Each patient room has a full length window allowing for a generous amount of natural light as well as an attractive outside view. Families and friends are encouraged to spend as much time as they would like with their loved ones.

In the modern healthcare system, terminally ill patients that spend their last weeks in an acute-care hospital are experiencing all of the discomforts and inconveniences of constant probing, testing, and other procedures. Instead they should have the opportunity to enjoy comfort, peace and dignity through hospice services at home or at The Carpenter House. The acute-care hospital benefits when terminally ill patients move to The Carpenter House because their patient’s needs are met and hospital beds become available for acute-care patients. The hospice patients now receive the comfort-care they want. “Everyone wins when the terminally ill patient; meeting the criteria for inpatient care, is given the opportunity to transition into The Carpenter House from the acute-care setting,” says Carmel Drago, Administrator and Director of Nursing at St. Joseph Hospice.

Our staff is comprised of a compassionate, experienced well-trained interdisciplinary team of professionals, under the direction of Dr. Susan Nelson, who is a board certified hospice palliative care physician. The hospice team includes registered and licensed practical nurses, medical social workers, chaplains, certified home health aides, bereavement counselors,

trained volunteers, on-call nurses and community educators. St. Joseph Hospice is licensed by the State of Louisiana, certified by Medicare, and JCAHO accredited. St. Joseph Hospice has earned the reputation as the “Gold Standard” for hospice care in Louisiana.

In 2002, when St. Joseph Hospice opened its doors, the name was chosen for Joseph who died in Jesus Christ’s arms and was later named the patron saint of a peaceful death. The name, The Carpenter House, was selected to honor St. Joseph, the Carpenter.

Two of the most intimate events in a person’s life and for a family are birth and death. With this in mind, most people who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness choose to be cared for in the comfort of their own homes surrounded by family and friends. For some patients this may not be an option because they have no caregivers who can take on this huge responsibility. The Carpenter House offers the option for hospice care in a warm home-like atmosphere. Each of the private rooms will provide the comfort, peace, and dignity that would be experienced at home. Friends and families will have the reassurance of knowing that their loved one will not have to spend the last days of their life in a nursing home or a sterile institutional atmosphere.

St. Joseph Hospice does not deny hospice care services based on age, race, nationality, disease, handicap, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Hospice care is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most private and managed care insurance plans. No patient will be turned away because of inability to pay for our services.

St. Joseph Hospice Foundation is a non-profit foundation that supports and enhances the services that St. Joseph Hospice and other hospices provide throughout the state. Some of the services provided by the Foundation include educational and training programs, financial assistance for non-compensated hospice patients, and resources that terminally ill patients may not be able to afford.

For more information, please call 225-769-4810 or visit our website at [www.stjosephhospice.com](http://www.stjosephhospice.com). 📍

*(see photos of Open House on next page)*



Family Room



One of 16 Patient Rooms



Waterfall in Lobby

# Opening Celebration of The Carpenter House December 22, 2008



Baby Grand Piano in the lobby



Children's Playroom



Phil Burt being greeted by Pat Mitchell,  
Managing Partner, St. Joseph Hospice



Susan Nelson, MD, Medical Director of  
St. Joseph Hospice Baton Rouge



Visitors enjoying the event



Members of The Carpenter House staff  
toasting at the ribbon cutting ceremony