



B A L S A M Q U A R T E R L Y

January - March 2018

Support · Care · Guidance

عناية · احتضان · إرشاد

I N E S S E N C E

Give and Take

Amal Sharif Naamani passed away on February 14, 2018 at the age of 92. She was referred to Balsam in April 2015 for advanced heart failure. Under Balsam's care she was able to maintain her functionality, control her symptoms, avoid hospital admissions and find pleasure in her days. She was under Balsam's care for nearly 3 years. Amal's niece Sana recollects the care she gave to others and the comfort she received from Balsam.



Sana Dabbous cannot remember a time when her late aunt Amal was not on hand to spoil her young nieces and nephews in the 'old fashioned way'. "She cooked our favorite dishes and sweets. She took care of us and of our grandparents," Sana says. "She was simply always there for us."

Sprightly and self-reliant, Amal weathered the loss of her parents to whom she had been devoted. Caring for her extended family became her new devotion, her siblings, and their children who became like her own. Every day into her late seventies she could be seen taking her exercise, walking from her home in Ras al Nabaa to visit her sister and sister in law in Ras Beirut. But as the years passed, her health gradually declined. The shortness of breath became more pronounced and with it an incremental loss of confidence about functioning alone.

"She had been such a strong, independent person but now, in her nineties with her health failing, it was clear that she could not manage alone," Sana explains. After serial hospital visits to monitor and regulate her heart problem it was apparent Amal was in terminal decline.

"You always worry whether you are doing enough and when and how to let go," Sana reflects. "And as my aunt got worse we were in a real dilemma whether and when to take her to hospital, and what to do next. You need proper guidance and you need continuity, which you don't often get in a hospital situation. Then someone suggested Balsam and everything changed.

"When Balsam entered the picture my aunt found peace. It took away the fear and

panic, the running to the doctor, the terror that comes when night approaches. For an old person facing death, the night is terrible. Nurse Alia (El-Tabsh) was a savior. My aunt knew she was in good hands and she could call her at any hour and find comfort.

"And it was the same for us," Sana continues "As a family we have become scattered across many countries. We knew nothing about what was needed – the oxygen machine, the wheelchair, the medical bed. We knew nothing about bedsores and what to do next. And the worst part is worrying about doing the right thing. The last stages are so hard and it is important to understand what steps need to be taken and what to expect. You need proper guidance and we got this from Balsam in a humane and loving way. Balsam is a savior for both the patient and the family."

Amal Sharif Naamani RIP

M Y B A L S A M

The Third Musketeer

Janane Hanna is Balsam's "Third Musketeer" alongside Dr. Hibah Osman and Rebecca El Asmar, the Balsam co-founders. An Advanced Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist, Janane says palliative care chose her rather than the other way round.



Janane's journey into palliative care took off when she was studying for her Masters degree in Nursing, during residency training at Johns Hopkins in the US. "I had become interested in palliative care because I was looking for a more holistic approach to oncology and I was working on my MSN assignment, concept analysis of palliative care," she explains. "I actually caused disruption at Hopkins because I really wanted to get a better feel for palliative care and insisted on spending time in a hospice

which was not in the curriculum."

The rest, as they say, is history. Janane was hooked and was keen to find ways to participate in a palliative care program in Lebanon. Her focus switched to pain management and the fruits of her Master's thesis would later become part of a nascent palliative care program at AUBMC. When Dr. Hibah Osman posited the idea of establishing Balsam in 2010, Janane had no hesitation in joining her. Today, despite having a full time nursing job, academic teaching commitments and a role as a member of Subcommittee on Practice of the Lebanese National Committee for Pain Control and Palliative Care, Janane remains as committed as ever to the NGO.

"Eight years later and it's still as rewarding as ever," Janane says. "Connecting with the patient and the family in their own setting helps you form a deep bond. You become part of the family, and that is something that stays with you for a long time; they become part of your social network. Take the example of a patient who died three years ago," she explains. "Now I still worry about her husband and check on him from time to time."

These days Janane primarily cares for pediatric patients which is demanding in many ways. "You cannot help but become deeply attached and you often need help from another member of the team to be able to cope. You don't just provide medical help. You need to provide psychosocial support to the family and it can be very draining. And when the time comes, you grieve alongside those left behind. But in the end you can say, at least we helped. We did what we could and that is very rewarding. The response of the family is what keeps you going when it gets tough, along with team support."

Janane pauses for a moment to consider the effect of her work on her own family. "My parents were concerned about my choices initially but now they recognize the value of palliative care. You need family support and understanding to be able to function in this field. Their main concern is how I am coping," she says. "I have found that I have become more spiritual with time. It feels like maybe this is my mission and that gives me internal peace. Palliative care teaches you to let go of the small stuff and focus on the bigger picture and at the same time you have be aware of how to achieve personal balance."

With all her commitments one wonders exactly how Janane manages to achieve personal balance. "Hmmm," she says, "It's not easy and I am engaged to be married soon. I showed my fiancé the Balsam video so he has a good understanding of what we do but he does worry about me being drained. I am trying to keep a balance by having more time for myself and doing exercise. In fact my role has become more consultative/or as mentor as we bring new nurses into the Balsam family. My hours on call have decreased, though I am always available. I cannot imagine not being available. Balsam is like my baby. I can't let it go."

We wish Janane all the best for her upcoming marriage.

RECENTLY

ESSENTIALS OF PALLIATIVE CARE

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Balsam is offering a multidisciplinary course targeting physicians, nurses, social workers and mental health professionals from all fields of practice who are interested in exploring a comprehensive patient and family-centered approach to people living with serious illness. The course will cover basics in symptom management, communication skills, and other challenges commonly seen in advanced illness. The curriculum is based on the Palliative Care International Curriculum developed at OhioHealth and Ohio State University. Continuing education credit from the Lebanese Order of Physicians and the Order of Nursing in Lebanon is pending.

FACULTY:
Faculty will include physicians, nurses and other health professionals with extensive experience in providing palliative care in the Lebanese setting. All course faculty are skilled trainers with prior experience in teaching palliative care in different settings.

COURSE DETAILS:
This course is organized by Balsam - Lebanese Center for Palliative Care and will be delivered in their offices on Saturday mornings from 9 am - 1 pm over 7 weeks.

DATE:
Start date: April 14
End date: May 26

LOCATION:
Hezlie Building, 2nd floor,
Sourati street, Hamra, Beirut

FEES: 250\$

COURSE OUTLINE:

	WEEK 1 APR 14, 2018	WEEK 2 APR 21, 2018	WEEK 3 APR 28, 2018	WEEK 4 MAY 5, 2018	WEEK 5 MAY 12, 2018	WEEK 6 MAY 19, 2018	WEEK 7 MAY 26, 2018
9:00-9:30	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care
9:30-10:00	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care
10:00-10:30	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care
10:30-11:00	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care
11:00-11:30	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care
11:30-12:00	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care
12:00-12:30	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care
12:30-1:00	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care	Dr. Chidiac: Introduction to Palliative Care

You can register online on the following link <http://balsam-lb.org/news/>
Registration must be completed by March 15, 2018.
Payment will be accepted at Balsam's offices in the form of cash or cheques made to the order of Balsam - Lebanese Center for Palliative Care.
No refunds will be given after March 15, 2018.
For inquiries please call 01/748574 or email us at info@balsam-lb.org

Spreading Knowledge and Changing Practice

Balsam's Spring course - Essentials of Palliative Care - will take place between April 14 - May 26, 2018. The course is based on the Palliative Care International Curriculum developed by Ohio Health and Ohio State University, and examines symptom management, communication skills and other challenges associated with advanced illness. It is open to physicians, nurses, social workers and mental health professionals from all fields of practice and explores a comprehensive patient and family centered approach to people living

with serious illness. We have structured to the course to make it accessible to people who work full time. It will be delivered on Saturday mornings and will extend over 7 weeks.

Welcome on Board

Balsam is pleased to announce four new nursing staff members. Maya Abdul Rahman, Joelle Bassila, Najla Moufarrej, and Fatima Salloum joined the Balsam family on a part time basis in March and will help us expand our geographic reach and bring palliative care to more patients.

Inclusivity

On March 19, Balsam hosted an LGBT Palliative Care Workshop in collaboration with LebMASH as part of Lebanon's LGBT Health Week 2018. Presented by Claude Chidiac, Lecturer in Palliative Care, St. Francis Hospice UK, with guest speaker Professor Kathryn

LEBMASH

LGBT Health Week 2018

شخص. منش. تشخيص.

Meeting the palliative and end of life care needs of gender and sexual minorities Workshop

March 19th - 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM - Balsam, Clemenceau

Presented by:
Claude Chidiac, MSc, CNS, FHE
Lecturer in Palliative Care, Saint Francis Hospice, UK
Programme Director Palliative & End of Life Care, London South Bank University

Guest Speaker:
Prof. Kathryn Almack
Health and Family Lives, School of Health and Social Work,
University of Hertfordshire, UK

Free Registration at
<https://www.lebmash.org/lgbt-health-week-2018>

balsam



Almac from the University of Hertfordshire, UK, the workshop explored the needs and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people with serious illness. It also provided opportunities to reflect on and identify ways of providing culturally

competent care for LGBT people and their families and partners within a palliative care context.

From the US with Thanks

Last year Balsam announced a new tax-exempt donation mechanism through Act for Lebanon for supporters in America. We are pleased to announce that we were able to raise \$11,877 by reaching out to friends and supporters over the holiday season in 2017. Thank you to all our supporters!

For those interested in making a donation go to the Act for Lebanon web page at <http://www.actforlebanonusa.org/donate-balsam-palliative-care/>

Cakes Galore

Thanks to IC student Jad Soubra (12th grade) Balsam recently acquired a whole new set of equipment for the nursing team. These included new nursing bags, stethoscopes, blood pressure machines and pulse oximeters used to check blood oxygen levels. Jad organised a bake sale as part of his community service activity and raised an impressive \$1,200 for Balsam. The Balsam team is very grateful to Jad and the IC community for their support!





Social Entrepreneurship Conference - ImpACT Beirut

On the 27th of February, Balsam exhibited at the Social Entrepreneurship Conference ImpACT Beirut organised by AUB Entrepreneurship Club in collaboration with impACT at the American University of Beirut (AUB). This is their third event after Berlin and Kabul. The conference was a good opportunity for Balsam to spread awareness, gain insights, extend networks and get inspired.

B A L S A M Q U A R T E R L Y

Thank you

