

ices provided in Vermillion. "He was very helpful, and he gave us office space and nearly everything else that we asked for."

## Comfort from volunteers

Hospice in Vermillion came to life thanks to a grass-roots effort by Marilyn and other volunteers, who, at the time, traveled to McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls to receive training. "It was amazing ... the community response to hospice was absolutely amazing," Mary said. "I couldn't think of a certain organization or business or anything else that wasn't 100 percent behind us."

Mary and other volunteers who were determined to see hospice services in Vermillion planned their first community meeting in November 1986.

"The administrator at McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls said to us 'to really think about this. We advise people to wait a year in order to deal with their grief.' I said, 'I've dealt with my grief. I want to do this,'" Mary said.

Pioneers of hospice in Vermillion include Mary and Ray, Barb Kronaizl and Marilyn Siecke. "We went to McKennan, took the classes, and then we arranged the classes for Vermillion and both hospitals (Dakota Hospital and McKennan Hospital) agreed to honor the contract that they had had before. They paid for the people from McKennan to come here to give the lessons. By that time, we had professionals established so that they could interview people and determine if they should be volunteers or if they shouldn't."

The concept of hospice was still new and unfamiliar in Vermillion at the time. As Mary and other volunteers planned their first community meeting in late 1986, they created about a dozen pamphlets

to hand out to what they expected would be a very small turnout of interested citizens.

"Sixty people turned up at the door," she said. "We held our first meeting at the university. They allowed us to hold them in the Continuing Education Center.

"So, after that, we assumed if 60 people showed up, there was an interest," Mary said. "It was overwhelming."

LEGACY continued on page 19

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