



"I think a beautiful death is as important as a beautiful life," said **Linda Pedian**, holding a portrait of her late father **Vahan Pedian**, who died peacefully at home last December.

Planning for the Future

A growing number of people find peace of mind by developing an Advance Care Plan to clearly communicate their medical preferences with loved ones and ensure that their choices will be honored. Download NorthShore's free *Advance Care Planning Guidebook*—available in English, Spanish and Russian. You also can find other resources and watch a video to learn more about the importance of planning ahead at northshore.org/p19.

Comforting Transitions

Hospice Team Provides Caring Expertise at Life's Most Difficult Moments

By Susan J. White

Physicians and nurses know that pain and suffering can occur at all times of the day and night. Hospice caregivers must be particularly in tune with the compassion and responsiveness needed to assist a family with a dying loved one.

Linda Pedian and her family found themselves in that difficult situation late last year. Christmas Eve was nearing as her father Vahan Pedian approached the end of his life. Yet, with the caring expertise of NorthShore hospice nurses—who arrived within an hour of receiving the call—Pedian found that the passing of a loved one can actually be a peaceful experience.

HUMAN TOUCH

"Death doesn't have to be a scary thing," said Pedian, 64, who credits nurses Tony Cordero, RN, BSN, and Mico Tepora, RN, BSN, with enabling the family to be with their father and say their final goodbyes as his condition deteriorated rapidly. The family patriarch died peacefully at his Glenview home with his wife at his side.

"With the help of these hospice nurses, my dad was able to achieve the best possible passing from this life to his place with all the good angels," recalled Pedian. "Even

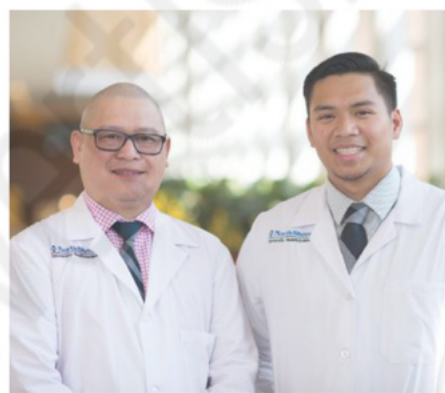
though he passed away on the eve of one of the biggest holidays and over a weekend, NorthShore Hospice completed all the professional steps required, while allowing our family to gather around my dad as he left his home of 46 years."

HIGHER CALLING

Cordero decided to become a hospice nurse after taking care of his own mother who died from Alzheimer's disease. "Every death is different, and every patient is different," said Cordero. "Our job is always to comfort the family and assure them that we're doing everything we can to make their loved one comfortable."

"They look to you for guidance in a part of life that is really a mystery," noted Tepora. "It is an honor to be there, meeting people who have lived long, beautiful lives. We know that we'll be one of the last people who can help them get through a very tough time. It's like running a long challenging race, and we help carry them to the finish line."

Pedian feels so strongly about the value of hospice, she hopes to help others introduce the idea of hospice care earlier in their loved one's journey. "Families are not alone because of hospice," said Pedian. "I think a beautiful death is as important as a beautiful life."



Hospice Nurses **Tony Cordero** (left) and **Mico Tepora**



WE CAN HELP

Go online to learn more about NorthShore's compassionate and dignified approach to hospice care, watch a video and read testimonials at northshore.org/p20, or call for more information at (847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1223).

Saving Santa

Immunotherapy Delivers the Gift of Health to Melanoma Patient

By Susan J. White

When doctors told Fleet Neighbors he likely had only six months to live, he was determined to prove their dire prognosis wrong. So, a confident Neighbors and his wife went ahead and booked a dream cruise ship excursion set to sail six months later.

"After the full life I've lived, I wasn't going to let cancer take me out," recalled Neighbors of Elmhurst. He is known far and wide for becoming Santa Claus each December.

MISSED WARNING SIGN

Neighbors, 51, was not an avid sunscreen user and initially ignored what he thought was a small, harmless pimple on the top of his head. It turned out to be an aggressive form of melanoma that spread to his lungs. Seeking a second opinion, he and his wife turned to NorthShore Kellogg Cancer Center and immediately gained confidence from a team of experts dedicated to saving his life.

Neighbors' treatment began with minimally invasive surgery, removing a small portion of one lung where the cancer had spread. Using personalized medicine techniques, NorthShore's molecular pathology lab quickly performed genetic testing on his lung tumor. While negative for the BRAF gene mutation commonly found in aggressive melanoma, the result gave Neighbors an opportunity to participate in a national clinical trial to receive immunotherapy agents. These biological drugs—known as checkpoint inhibitor immunotherapy—are designed to boost the body's natural ability to fight the cancer.

"This type of immunotherapy is a major advance in treating melanoma and other cancers as it helps the body recognize and attack cancer cells," explained Bruce Brockstein, MD, the Kellogg-Scanlon Chair of Oncology who holds an academic appointment at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine. "Follow-up studies show cure rates of about 40 percent for patients like Fleet who have had checkpoint inhibitor immunotherapy."

BELIEVING IN MIRACLES

Neighbors' lung nodules disappeared and now, two-and-a-half years after that fatal prognosis, he is in complete remission. The

couple's planned cruise went on as scheduled, and they continue to enjoy a full, active life.

An active athlete and professional Santa for decades, Neighbors shares both his positive attitude and new dedication to using sunscreen with everyone he meets. He goes to Kellogg Cancer Center every three weeks for ongoing immunotherapy treatment and his caregivers are like family.

"Everyone at NorthShore has been wonderful," noted his wife Margie. "They make you feel so comfortable, and you know they care. It's a personal touch we didn't receive anywhere else."

Healthcare
for
what's
next.



Kellogg Cancer Center
Medical Director
Dr. Bruce Brockstein



THE POWER WITHIN

Learn how Kellogg Cancer Center specialists are tapping into the body's own immune system to attack cancer cells. Read about the latest immunotherapy treatment options online at northshore.org/p21.

To make an appointment, please call (847) 492-5700 (Ext. 1224).

DECODING IMMUNOTHERAPY

Immunotherapy has shown great promise in the treatment of advanced-stage cancers. Gain a greater understanding about how it works on *Healthy You*, NorthShore's online source for timely health and wellness news, at northshore.org/p22.



Neighbors has been a professional Santa Claus for decades.



"I wasn't going to let cancer take me out," said Fleet Neighbors. After immunotherapy, his aggressive melanoma is in complete remission.

SIMPLIFIED HEALTHCARE ON YOUR WISH LIST?

Patients like Fleet Neighbors rely on the convenience of NorthShoreConnect's mobile app to schedule appointments and check labs on the go. Sign up at northshore.org/p23.