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FEATURED

Governor visits future hospice house

By Greg Hitchcock | The Sidney Herald
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Martha Nugent greets Gov. Greg Gianforte
Samantha Black



Gov. Greg Gianforte toured the future of elder care when he walked through Martha's Place in Sidney during his 56 county tour of Montana.

"We need options," Gov. Gianforte said. "You are filling that need."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the number of deaths occurring at home increased from 22.7 percent to 31.7 percent from 2000 to 2018. The numbers have decreased from hospital deaths in the same period from 48 percent to 35.1 percent. Those who died in long-term care facilities also rose slightly from 22.9 percent to 26.8 percent.

Gov. Gianforte said his mother in law died at 93 and she died in home hospice.

“Sometimes people need acute care, but the trend is to age and die gracefully so what you are doing is valuable,” he said.

Martha Nugent is the President of Martha’s Place, a nonprofit organization with a mission to provide personalized care and comfort to those with terminal illnesses and their families, regardless of their ability to pay or their social status.

Martha’s Place is a location where people will come to live out their final days gracefully and with dignity. It is located off the truck route in Sidney. The nonprofit is in the process of converting the house into a residential hospice house. The whole project will cost \$2 million. It is 7,100 sq. ft and sits on 5.6 acres.

“As a nurse practitioner, I help alleviate the pain,” she told Gov. Gianforte.

Asked what qualifications she seeks in employees, Nugent said those with heart.

“You must be a caring person. I depend on you if we have no other resources especially for people with dementia. We need good hearts,” she said.

Nugent said rather than live by restrictive hospital rules for the dying where diabetics are not given desserts, Martha's Place will cater to their needs.

“We go through stages and the memory of their last days live with you forever,” Nugent said.

Joe Simard's parents' last days were spent at home cared after by Nugent's other caregiving business, Thy Neighbor LLC, a personalized home care business for seniors.

"It's hard for people who care about old people. Martha cares about older people. She goes to any length to make them happy. She truly cares about them," Simard said.

"There is a lack of resources for the dying," he said. "They passed away in their homes with dignity. This community needs people like them."

Nugent said she feels the need for hospice care throughout eastern Montana and eventually she plans on expanding her operations to Glendive and Scobey.

But, for now Sidney is where she is starting out, raising money for a dream.

"We are not leaving Montana. This is our mission," Nugent said.

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