

“Don’t just do something.....stand there”\*

One of the greatest things about our Best Buddies volunteer program is that you never know what is going to happen when you walk into your patient’s room. Whether it is your first encounter with your patient and their family, or you have worked with them for months, new experiences greet you every time you open that door. This is also one of the most challenging aspects of the program. We can never be prepared for *everything* that we are going to encounter and what we do encounter can sometimes feel overwhelming.

I believe these moments can be like gems. They are an opportunity to really connect with our patients and families. It is natural to have the urge to say the “right thing” to be afraid we might say the “wrong thing,” or to want to do something to make the moment less difficult. BUT the simple fact that we are there with our patient/family, and can share some of their experiences, is where the opportunity lies. We make a difference by walking through that door, so.... “don’t just do something, stand there.” Being there with our patients when things are difficult is one of the most valuable things we have to offer as volunteers. With some perspective, what is often the hardest part of our volunteer experience can also be the source of great reward for you and your family.

Chad, Best Buddy Volunteer

\*(At a presentation on caring for terminally ill patients, this quote was attributed to a cancer patient who happened to be a former oncologist.)