The History of the Spirit Mountain Hospice House

A hospice house for the Big Horn Basin had long been the dream of former Spirit Mountain Hospice Director Linda Harbron. In 2005, a needs assessment and business plan confirmed the financial feasibility and need for a hospice house for the Big Horn Basin.

With the support of the West Park Hospital District Board of Trustees, Administration and a large group of community volunteers, the “Closer to Home” community capital campaign to raise the $4 million (at the time) needed to complete the house and start a “hospice cares” endowment for those who can’t afford hospice care was kicked off in February 2008. The first phase of the capital campaign, the “family campaign” brought in more than $600,000 in pledges from West Park Hospital staff, volunteers, physicians and other providers.

The announcement of the C.E. “Bud” Webster and Lucille M. Webster lead gift of $500,000 in March 2009 moved the campaign into the public phase of fundraising, the “Fund A Foot” campaign, which asked supporters to fund a square foot of the house. The “Fund A Foot” campaign resulted in donations large and small from community organizations, individuals, grants and other private sources. The response drew donations nationwide, but the majority came from generous sources within Park County.

Spirit Mountain Hospice and West Park Hospital staff and capital campaign volunteers continued to educate community groups and individuals about the need for a local hospice for another year, and support – monetary, in-kind, volunteer and otherwise – continued to grow, until in March 2010, decreasing construction costs allowed the estimated price of the hospice house to be lowered to $3.2 million, including money for the “hospice cares” fund.

The Closer to Home Capital Campaign’s final pledge came in April 2010 with a $500,000 grant from the State Loan and Investments Board.

That allowed West Park Hospital to break ground on the house in October 2010, and construction began in December 2010.

The house was completed and certified for occupancy less than a year later, in October 2011, and the first patient was admitted in November 2011.