

Volunteer touched by recognition

By **BILL McMILLEN**
THE DAILY NEWS

BULLHEAD CITY — Karen Stetina was the only one in the room who didn't think she was worthy of recognition.

Stetina fought back tears after being named Volunteer of the Year on Friday at the Hospice Compassus volunteer appreciation luncheon at Chaparral Golf & Country Club in Bullhead City.

"I don't know," Stetina said. "There are a lot of people here who do more than I do. They deserve it

► See **HOSPICE**, A3
more than me."

"No they don't," said one volunteer, applauding as Stetina accepted her award from Michelle Spencer, volunteer coordinator for Hospice Compassus' Bullhead City agency.

Stetina has been a volunteer for a little over a year for the agency is involved in end-of-life care for patients and support for caregivers. She has seen the value of hospice care from all sides — as a caregiver, as a volunteer and, now, as a potential patient.

"I have terminal cancer," she said without flinching at her own words. "Having cancer myself, I thought I could probably help them see the brighter side of things. I think it helps them."

Stetina said she became a hospice volunteer after seeing the work done

to comfort her dying husband.

"My husband was in hospice and they were such a great help to me — and him. I just had to give back some of what I got from them," she said.

Stetina's declining health has limited her role as a volunteer in the last month or so.

"Even though she was diagnosed with an illness, she was still there," Spencer said. "She was there to relieve the caregivers for a while, there to talk with patients. Whenever we needed help in the office, she'd come — even though she hated it."

Spencer said she wasn't surprised by Stetina's reaction to Friday's honor.

"She is one of those people who thinks more of others than herself," Spencer said.

Stetina is known for her positive outlook.

"I keep saying somebody's going to beat this and it might as well be us," she said.

She said she'd rather celebrate living than worry about dying.

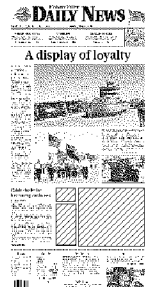
"I enjoy every moment that I'm alive," she said. "Each and every day is a blessing to me. The sunsets. My friends. All the good things. That's what I think about."

Hospice Compassus recognized all of its volunteers at Friday's luncheon.

"If they handed out awards based on having the most volunteers, we wouldn't win a thing," Spencer said. "But if they handed out awards based on having the most dedicated volunteers, our agency would win hands down."

Spencer, while also praising the staff, said the volunteers provide invaluable contributions.

"Noah's ark was built by volunteers," she said. "The Titanic was built by professionals."





BILL McMILLEN/The Daily News

EMOTIONAL MOMENT: Karen Stetina fights back tears after being named Volunteer of the Year for the Bullhead City Hospice Compassus during a luncheon Friday at Chaparral Golf & Country Club. At left is Volunteer Coordinator Michelle Spencer.