

## Former Patient's Wife Turns Gifts Into Giving

Inspiration can be found in many places throughout UAB Hospital, but it's particularly special when patients or family members go out of their way to share some words of encouragement.

Such was the case recently, when Lesa Gibson – the wife of a former UAB patient – along with friends purchased hundreds of pre-packaged snacks and paired each one with a handwritten scripture verse. On Good Friday this year, she delivered several baskets full of the snacks to Rev. Malcolm Marler, UAB Hospital director of Pastoral Care. He loaded up the snacks on a cart and pushed it around the hospital and The Kirklin Clinic, asking patients, visitors, and even employees if they wanted a snack to go with an encouraging Bible verse. The roughly 600 gifts were gone within two hours.



"There was no church name on them, no solicitation, and all of it was completely anonymous to others," Marler says. "Just a word of encouragement."



"It's about praying for that person and giving them a little food for their soul," Lesa adds.

This wasn't her first time to do so. Lesa's husband, Jim, lost his battle with esophageal cancer in February 2012, and when his birthday arrived on Dec. 6 later that year, she felt the calling to offer compassion and hope to other patients and their families at the hospital where he received care. She filled up the baskets with "scripture snacks" and presented them to UAB Infusion Therapy Services, after enlisting help from friends in her Sunday school class to handwrite the scripture verses and attach one to each treat. Over the years she has made several such deliveries to other areas within UAB, including the radiation waiting room.

The baskets she uses hold special significance for Lesa; they were given to her and her family during Jim's illness.

"The best way to heal is to serve somebody else," Lesa says.

Marler expressed his thanks to Lesa for her heartfelt gesture, and he decided that distributing the snacks personally would only add to the spiritual and social nourishment.

"I received plenty of hugs, gratitude, and a few prayers along the way," says Marler of his Good Friday delivery. "Many were also given to employees as I thanked them for their service to our patients and families. This is just one more way we are trying to take pastoral care to the people, like each of our Pastoral Care team does every single day."

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