Hospice nurse and social worker help patient’s dream come true

What would you do if you had less than a year to live and could have one wish granted? Where would you go? Who would you bring with you?

For Randy, a 53-year-old HealthPartners Hospice patient, the answer was easy. He’d never been to the Black Hills to see Mount Rushmore or Crazy Horse, and he would love nothing more than to take in those monuments with his loved ones at his side.

The good news for Randy was that his hospice team had an idea. His nurse, Alyssa Copley, and social worker, Diane Wiersgalla, submitted an application to the Dream Foundation to get his wish granted.

And they didn’t just wait, cross their fingers, and hope for the best. Alyssa and Diane called the Dream Foundation almost every day to make sure they received the application and check in on the status.

Then, one day in late September, something magical happened.

“The Dream Foundation showed up at his house like he’d won the Publisher’s Clearing House Sweepstakes!” Alyssa says.

They had gas cards to pay for the travel, books, games, and puzzles to entertain the kids in the car and beach towels and noodles for some fun at the hotel pool. A few weeks later, the Fierro family took off for South Dakota, but the red carpet treatment didn’t stop there!

Once Randy, his wife, their daughter and two grandchildren arrived in the Black Hills, the family was surprised with a luxury suite at the hotel, a private laser show at the Crazy Horse memorial and a VIP shuttle to the top of the monument—something very few guests get to do. Other stops along the way included a walk through Rushmore Cave and a haunted house.

“This trip came at exactly the right time,” Randy says. “Being that close to Crazy Horse genuinely lifted me up. There was really something spiritual about it, which my whole family felt. We are all so thankful for this experience—it was so much fun!”

To learn more about hospice and HealthPartners Hospice & Palliative Care contact HospiceCare@healthpartners.com.

About the Dream Foundation

The Dream Foundation makes dreams come true for adults with life-limiting illnesses. In fulfilling the last wishes of dream recipients and their families, they strive to improve the quality of their lives in ways that medicine alone cannot. Through this non-traditional, palliative form of health care, Dream Foundation provides those at the end of life’s journey with a sense of resolution, completion and peace.