

Thank you to Healdsburg

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June DeSilva hasn't cooked a meal since March. It's not because she can't cook, it's just that her friends won't let her.

June attended the annual Kiwanis pancake breakfast at the Villa Chanticleer in March and a friend told her that one side of her face was drooping.

That led to a hurried trip to the doctor, then another and another. The diagnosis was brain cancer. "I've got two golf balls in my brain," said June on Tuesday, a Scottish-born woman who played golf and tennis every week until she got sick.

The tumors are inoperable, so June must wait. While she waits, she's not alone. Friends and family visit and call constantly and her caregivers are always there when she needs them.

June lives in a hospital bed in her home in Healdsburg. Her friends from the Healdsburg Senior Center – where she volunteered for four years – bring food and friendship. So do her neighbors and her extended Healdsburg family of friends.

Her late husband's family calls her from New York almost every day. Eleven family members came from Scotland to visit.

June marvels at the patience and gentleness of her caregivers. "They're up with you all night and all day, making sure you're comfortable," she said.

While June waits she thinks of all the people who have helped her since March. "When you're lying here in the middle of the night you realize how many people you have to thank."

She thinks of her "wonderful husband" of 40 years who died before her and her "wonderful partner," Stan Ziganti, who had five years with June in Healdsburg before he died.

June thanks Velda Park. "I'm one of 12 children but I think Velda must be my 12th sister, she's been such a wonderful friend."

June thanks John and Jan Elmore, Liz Bippart, Bill and Pat Bean, Ron and Arlene Kron, Mary Lou and Jerry Eddinger, Cassie Call, Mary Ann Waters, Bridget Falfey, Connie Patterson, Myra and Leon Dal Colletto, Beverly and Walt Casazza and her friends who gather at the Tuesday concerts in the summer. There are more to thank, but she can't remember them all.

She thanks "those four big men from the fire department who can pick you up so easily when you fall and put you back in bed."

June thinks of and thanks all the people who cooked a special meal, cut her hair, cleaned her house and came to visit.

“I didn’t realize I had so many friends,” June said. “Healdsburg is the best place to be if you have to go through something like this.”

— Ray Holley