



GRACE MELTON was the guest of honor at a party held at Hearth

Inc.'s Bishop Street Residence at the end of January, to celebrate her extensive career in helping elders and to say goodbye and job well done to a long time Hearth employee.

Ms. Melton worked as a Homemaker/Personal Care Attendant at the Bishop Street House in Jamaica Plain for fourteen years. This congregate living site was the first residence opened by Hearth, Inc., formerly known as the Committee to End Elder Homelessness, dedicated to housing people formerly homeless. The Bishop Street Residence houses nine women, and the program has expanded to serve 136 individuals throughout Boston.

Site Director of three buildings, Bob Jordan, says "Grace turned a lovely Victorian house into a home." There is no doubt that she has a special skill in adding personal touches to her work that have contributed to the family-style routine and atmosphere at Bishop Street. From decorations to remembering special days for each resident, she has managed to make a

difference in the lives of all who have passed through the Bishop Street program.

How did Ms. Melton get into this field? "Many years ago, when I was living in the South End, on Dartmouth street, I would go up to an elderly Italian man each time I went to the store to ask him if he needed anything at the store too. Pretty soon, I was taking so many grocery lists for others that a friend suggested I do this type of work as a job." Ms. Melton started working for Family Services of Greater Boston in the neighborhoods of Hyde Park, Roslindale, and Dedham. Her clients were living in their own apartments or buildings, and she enjoyed the people she worked with. When a member of the Hearth staff approached her about coming to work for Hearth, she was not sure what to do. "I was hesitant to leave the people I worked with for twenty years, since they were nice and I was attached to them." This characteristic speaks to her commitment and loyalty to serving individuals, who are aging, becoming frail, and need her help so much, as well as to the loyalty she felt to her co-workers. She made the leap to Hearth in 1984 and has served the women at Bishop street for fourteen years.

What are her favorite aspects of the job? "I enjoyed

working with Sue Jones (Program RN for twenty-three years) and all the ladies. They always agreed with what we were trying to do –make a residence more like a family." Ms. Melton, known as "Gracie" to all, brought an energy and creativity to her work in assisting elders with personal needs, and doing so with tact, courtesy and fun.

The celebration brought out representatives from the entire organization. The COO, May Shields, RN, MSH, was right there scooping ice cream for the elegant cake and a good time was had by all.

Everyone at Hearth wishes Grace well as she moves to the next chapter of her life. She will be sharing it with her new, adopted nine-year old rust-colored Pomeranian named Winston, who despite his 63 dog years, is still frisky and engaged in life – a good match for Grace Melton.



Back Row (Left-Right) - Sue Jones, Freda Hardy, Jacke Calixte, Dottie Robinson, Bob Jordan  
Front Row (Left-Right) - Drina Couch, Grace Melton, Ethel Halfrey, Paula Kirsch