

Pawtucket

GEORGE EASTWOOD, 62, of Vine Street, head of a customer-returns department at Hasbro for many years before he retired in 1995, died Thursday at Oakhill Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

A lifelong Pawtucket resident, he was a son of the late Yvonne M. and George A. Eastwood.

Mr. Eastwood was a member of Temple Beth-El of Providence, and its Brotherhood. He was a member of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and the South Providence Hebrew Free Loan Association.

He was a member of the Jewish Home for the Aged of Rhode Island and Friends of NORCAP. He was also a member of the Rhode Island Jewish Community Center and its Singles Club.

There are no survivors.

The funeral service will be held tomorrow at 2 p.m. at Temple Beth-El, Orchard and Butler Avenues, Providence. Burial will be in Temple Beth-El Cemetery, Providence.

EASTWOOD,
George

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March 19, 1998. Resident of Vine St., Pawtucket. Funeral service 2 p.m. Sunday at TEMPLE BETH-EL Orchard at Butler Aves. Relatives and friends are invited. Memorial observance to be private. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to R.I. Central Service Committee of A.A.; 410 North Broadway, East Providence, R.I. 02914. Arrangements by MOUNT SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL.

FRIDAY,
APRIL 3, 1998

For some people, the best medicine comes with paws

When Comet turned the corner and saw George, he did a four-paw sprint to the wheelchair and jumped into George's lap.

It was the treatment George needed. His life got better with the airborne arrival of 15 pounds of dog.

At the Oak Hill Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, in Pawtucket, the staff members did a nice thing back in the middle of February, when George Eastwood arrived. They decided there was nothing that could do for George what



**BOB
KERR**

Comet could do for George.

"When he was asked if he had any next of kin, he said, 'Yes, Comet,'" says Jane Rego, the community-relations coordinator at Oak Hill.

George and Comet lived in a small house in Pawtucket not far from the Hasbro toy factory, where George worked for 30 years before he was laid off. George had no close family.

He just had the little white Shih Tzu he had rescued from an animal shelter after its previous owner had died.

George came to Oak Hill on a referral from Miriam Hospital, in Providence, where he was being treated for cancer.

"I went and met with him," says Rego. "He was a very gentle, a very gracious man."

When he arrived at Oak Hill, he put a picture of Comet next to his bed. He would get tears in his eyes when he talked about his dog.

He said he doubted he would ever see the dog again.

So a nurse went to Tony Sousa, the Oak Hill administrator, and asked about bringing Comet in for a visit.

"What helped is that Comet is a little Shih Tzu, and I have one at home," says Sousa.

for by a neighbor, arrived at Oak Hill. The reunion was something to see. George didn't know his friend was coming. There was a very long hug in the wheelchair.

The look on George's face told everyone that Comet had to stay.

Comet slept at the foot of George's bed. Nurses took the dog for walks. George started getting out of bed, which he hadn't been doing much before. He gave Comet rides in his wheelchair.

"It was amazing to see the change — emotional, physical, spiritual," says Mike Spearin, the director of therapeutic recreation at Oak Hill.

When TV reporter Pat Mastors heard about George and Comet, she saw the kind of story she loves to cover.

"I work closely with animal-rights advocates," says Mastors, of Channel 12. "And I heard from a friend that there was this nursing home that was bending the rules a little to help one of its patients."

She went to Oak Hill and met George. She found him engaging. He told her on camera that he was a man who used to make mountains out of molehills, but that now, with his dog, he was at peace.

"We all know what pets can do for people," says Mastors.

The story aired at the end of Channel 12's 6-o'clock newscast two weeks ago. George, who during the day had been alerting everyone to the promotional spots for the story, watched it with other patients at Oak Hill. Comet was at a veterinarian's for treatment of some eye problems.

George said he was very glad he had seen his and Comet's story.

He went back to his room, and a few minutes later he died. He was 62.

Pat Mastors says her jaw "dropped to the floor" when she heard the news.

"He was a really neat guy," she says. "I met him only once, but it was obvious he had things in good perspective."

Comet has moved into someone else's life. Tina Smith, whose daughter Sue is the nurse who originally pitched the idea of bringing Comet to Oak Hill, adopted him. He takes the place of her golden retriever, who died recently.

"He's just wonderful," she says. "I take him to work with me."

Comet fills the void yet again.

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