

# Making hospital stays brighter

## Jim Ruder volunteers for Brownwood Regional Medical Center Auxiliary

BY ASHLEY FUQUAY

BROWNWOOD BULLETIN

Jim Ruder, 70, pushes the book and magazine cart out of the elevator and onto the second floor and into the maternity wing as a familiar lullaby sounds over the intercom. A baby had just been born. "That's just neat, is it," Ruder said with a smile as he continued his route giving out magazines and books to patients.

Ruder has been a volunteer through Brownwood Region Medical Center's Hospital Auxiliary for four years. As he walks through the hall volunteers and staff alike acknowledge him with a smile and call him by name.

The Hospital Auxiliary is a volunteer program that has been going on at the hospital for over 40 years. The volunteers assist the staff and make sure patients and visitors are well taken care of through a number of services.

Some volunteers help run the information desk, giving directions to visitors and answering phones, some distribute mail and flowers to patients, some monitor waiting rooms and others run the gift shop.

Ruder is the service chairperson of the book cart service. He spends most days running the book and magazine cart. He straightens magazines and books in waiting rooms and distributes reading materials, donated to the hospital, to patients rooms.

"Folks like to have something to do," Ruder said. "You get to meet every person in the hospital if they're not sleepy."

Ruder said he considers it another part of his job to put smiles on faces. He

explained that some of the people in the hospital are feeling on edge.

"We try to relieve some of that tension," Ruder said.

Before Ruder retired in 2000, he worked for 3M. He worked in customer relations, quality assurance and environmental and industrial safety.

"I had a lot of hats," he said.

Ruder said he started volunteering at the hospital in 2007 because when he and his wife retired first they traveled around, but then his wife became heavily involved in Christian Women's Job Corps. Ruder found himself at home all by himself, so he decided to fill his time volunteering as well.

"I enjoy interacting with people," Ruder said. "I have enjoyed being helpful to others."

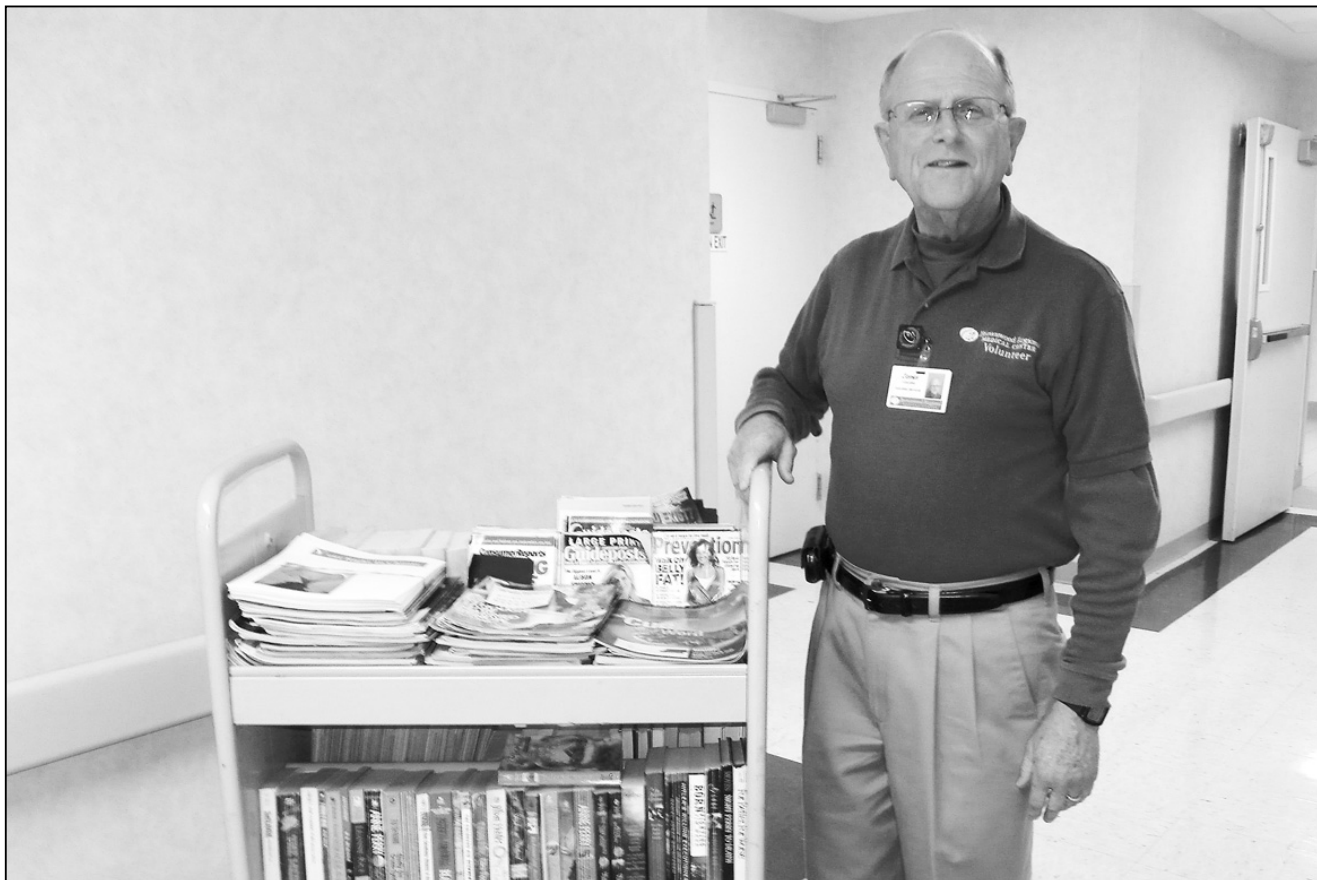
He described himself as a person who needed to have something to do everyday.

When Ruder is not volunteering at the hospital, he is an active member of Coggin Avenue Baptist Church and is the president of New Vision Singers, a singing group consisting of almost 20 seniors.

"I enjoy singing with them," Ruder said.

He said the group does a musical program at a nursing home once a week from September through May.

The Brownwood Region Medical Center Hospital Auxiliary 61 active members and proceeds from the gift shop, run by women in the hospital auxiliary, are given as scholarships to students wanting to pursue a degree in a medical field.



ABOVE: Jim Ruder, Brownwood Regional Medical Center Hospital Auxiliary volunteer, pushes the book and magazine cart, finishing his round through the hospital handing out reading materials to patients and guests.

LEFT: Ruder looks in on waiting room to check on visitors.

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