



HORIZONS

Community Newsletter

Comfort, dignity and compassionate care

WINTER 2024

DEDICATED TO OUR MISSION OF CARING

With the support of our community, Hospice of the Valley has set the standard of excellence for advanced illness and hospice care since 1977. We had the privilege of serving over 24,000 patients and families this past year, providing \$14.4 million in charity care and community services. As a not-for-profit agency, it is an honor to care for all who come to us in need.



Pilar and her nurse, Gloria Curtis.



Stuart and his nursing aide, Grace Sarkisian.



Anita and her nurse, Erica Coronado.



COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE



Debbie Shumway

Thank you for your belief in our mission: *Bringing comfort, dignity and compassionate care to our community.* As we reflect on 2023, we are honored to have cared for more than 24,000 patients and their families.

We continue to expand our programs while focusing on excellent patient care. Hospice of the Valley's patient/family recommendation score of 99% reflects the dedication of our 1,800 employees and 1,700 volunteers. They are committed to providing the highest level of care and support.

2024 will be another year of growth for us. On Dec. 1, Banner Health closed its hospice operations and transitioned its hospice employees and patients to Hospice of the Valley. We are excited to share that we are expanding our care to Tucson and are busy hiring additional employees and developing programs to support Tucson families.

As we begin the new year, we look forward to creating innovative programs to meet healthcare needs in our communities. Many of these programs support people before hospice services are needed and when families need hospice, our teams are honored to provide beautiful care.

As the only nonprofit hospice in Maricopa County, we are honored to be a strong safety net for those in need. We are grateful to all of you for supporting our mission.

Debbie

Debbie Shumway

Executive Director

'CHOOSE YOUR PERSON' LAUNCHES

Hospice of the Valley joins two nonprofits, Mercy Care and Contexture, to encourage Arizonans to choose a healthcare advocate who can ensure their medical wishes are honored. The *Choose Your Person* campaign assists people with completing and registering their advance directives. "We know that families who make these decisions together have peace of mind," Executive Director Debbie Shumway said. For more information, visit: chooseyourperson.org

MOVED TO GIVE BACK



Beth Warne

I felt compelled to join this agency after witnessing my mother's waning months. Hospice care was not available where she lived and that was a confusing and anxious time for our family. I soon realized everyone at Hospice of the Valley has a passion for its mission. I was inspired to become a patient care volunteer, then a board member, serving as treasurer and president.

After 28 years of volunteer service, I'm humbled to be board president again, succeeding Rita Meiser, who has given her heart and soul to our agency for over four decades. Though we have expanded over the years, our patient-centered focus has not wavered. The leadership team is exceptionally talented, resourceful and hardworking. Like them, our skilled employees and compassionate volunteers are fueled by a generosity of spirit that has built an impressive legacy of caring.

Through innovation and collaboration, Hospice of the Valley continues to successfully navigate the ever-changing and challenging healthcare landscape.

With respect for the past, we look forward to a bright future.

Beth

Beth Warne

Board President



Adults, young and old, are urged to choose a healthcare advocate.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES BEFORE HOSPICE CARE IS NEEDED

Our nonprofit mission has flourished since Hospice of the Valley was founded by a small group of volunteers 47 years ago. We have created innovative programs to serve patients at earlier stages of illness, helping them navigate the complex healthcare system. The result is better health outcomes for our community and lower cost of care.

Expanded programs



Lucius and his nurse, Brianna Nagy.

Each day, we serve more than 6,200 patients and their families across all of our programs.

We provide home-based primary care to high-risk patients who are too frail to visit a doctor's office. Our interdisciplinary teams bring comprehensive support to people with all types of advanced illness, with special expertise to help those with cancer, respiratory conditions and diseases like ALS and Parkinson's.

Our dementia programs continue to grow, as more caregivers turn to us for support, resources and education.

Teams of doctors, nurses, nursing aides, social workers and chaplains provide exceptional hospice care in the comfort of a patient's home. Nine inpatient homes offer acute short-term care and respite.

Our clinical teams provide patients and families with after-hours support as needed, managing symptoms, preventing unnecessary hospitalizations and meeting urgent needs on evenings, weekends and holidays. We are privileged to care for all and help bridge gaps in our healthcare system.

In their own words

We are humbled to hear from families who are grateful for the beautiful care they received.

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The whole team is a godsend and we don't know what we'd do without them. They are always just a phone call away and their special talent and knowledge provide a huge level of comfort for me.

All of them stood beside us. Their experience and compassion allowed me to do one fundamental thing — care for my wife as a husband, not as a caretaker. The team took all the time necessary to get to know both of us and provided care in the most dignified manner possible.

The team truly went above and beyond to meet all my mom's needs. They're available 24/7, someone always answers the phone within the first ring and a nurse is on the line within a minute of the call. Hospice of the Valley is a blessing in such a difficult time.

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An ALS patient, John counts on his hospice team to support his respiratory needs: (from left) nurse Lisa Dempsey, respiratory therapist Gretchen Stanton and social worker Allison Ward.

Horizons Editor

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WE PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE DEMENTIA CARE

About 6.7 million Americans ages 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease, and Arizona has the highest growth rate in the country. Hospice of the Valley is focused on being at the forefront of exceptional dementia care and caregiver support.

Supportive Care for Dementia



Charles' wife, Mereada, is grateful for the dementia education, support and resources she received as a family caregiver.

When family members suddenly find themselves in the caregiver role, Hospice of the Valley can help. Our Supportive Care for Dementia program provides in-home support to improve quality of life for people living with all stages and types of dementia, as well as their caregivers. Thanks to community generosity and grants, it's offered to families at no cost.

Our experienced dementia team makes home visits to educate caregivers about the disease. They also provide resources and respite options. Clinical phone support is available 24/7 should an urgent need arise. Our outreach extends to people with dementia who live alone, are homeless or developmentally disabled.

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When we met our dementia educator, I went from total ignorance to having expert-level knowledge just a call or text away. Her wisdom is encyclopedic, and her caring demeanor and helpful attitude allowed me to go from “deer in the headlights” to “I got this.” I can't thank her enough for her advice, direction and care. — *Family caregiver*

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Dementia Care and Education Campus



Intergenerational enrichment benefits both generations.

This one-of-a-kind campus is supporting a growing number of families in our community. We share best practices with health professionals and empower caregivers with the knowledge to make meaningful connections with their loved ones.

At our intergenerational Adult Day Club, people living with dementia enjoy socialization and fun activities that engage the senses. When round-the-clock care is needed, an Assisted Living Center and Hospice Inpatient Home provide the highest level of clinical expertise.

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The arduous journey of caring for someone you love suffering from Alzheimer's is heartbreaking. However, this sacred campus brought us so many moments of healing and joy and provided the gift of a lifetime: the most tender care for our dad. — *Patient's daughter*

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Learn more about our Dementia Program at dementiacampus.org or call (602) 767-8300

ENHANCING WELL-BEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The foundation of our care is our strong cultural beliefs, from setting the standard of clinical excellence to exceeding the expectations of the families we serve. On a daily basis, our caring staff go the extra mile to realize patients' dreams, create joyful memories and lift spirits.

Adopting families

Teams across our agency came together to bring holiday cheer to patients facing hardship. Social worker Kim Deck and her Arizona Supportive Care colleagues dropped off gifts to seven families, including Ellen, who is raising two grandchildren while managing chronic illness. The 63-year-old fought back tears as her care team unloaded a truckload of presents, including scooters for the grandchildren, ages 4 and 10. "I love this team so much," Ellen said. "It makes me want to cry because I appreciate all they have done."



Ellen's grandkids got every gift on their wish list!

Gonzo surprises superfan

When the Arizona Diamondbacks made history last fall, one of our patients rallied for the World Series because he loves this team so much. Tom was too weak to attend a game, so social worker Lisa Maddock reached out for some memorabilia and was astonished when D-Backs legend Luis Gonzalez sent back a heartfelt video message. "I know you've been cheering for us, now it's our time to cheer for you. You're a true champion," Gonzo told Tom, who was deeply touched and watched the video over and over again. "There was not a dry eye in the room," Lisa said.



Tom's social worker, Lisa (far right), surprised him and his family with a personal video from Gonzo.

Gorilla busts out the moves

It was a slam dunk surprise for a senior community when the Phoenix Suns Gorilla popped in with arms full of team swag for our patient Lee, a devoted fan. "Lee has been struggling with health challenges and we wanted to bring him a little joy," social worker Renee Adams said. "I genuinely haven't seen him this happy ever!" The team mascot wowed Lee and fellow residents with high fives, backflips and dance moves. Lee's daughter Kim couldn't believe her eyes. "I thought, 'No way — not during the basketball season!' This is so incredible!"



Social worker Renee (behind Lee) planned the Gorilla's visit.

Yappy Hour brings laughs

Social worker Jennifer Zwolak noticed her patient Joe growing depressed as he struggled with Alzheimer's and hearing loss. "He is lonely and bored because he can't hear his wife and didn't have activities to keep him engaged." Jennifer asked dementia activities coordinator Gail Higginbotham to make a special visit. She brought along a robotic dog that wildly entertained both Joe and the real pooch sitting next to him! "Joe took a real liking to the mechanical dog. He laughed so much and thanked Gail many times," Jennifer said.



Joe and the real dog are captivated by the robotic dog that visited them with our dementia activities coordinator, Gail.

MENDING HEARTS WITH LOVE AND KINDNESS

The grief experience is different for everyone. Our tailored programs help kids, adults and families cope with loss and work toward healing. All services and special events are provided at no cost.

New Song Center for Grieving Children



At New Song Center, families grieving the death of a loved one find healing and community.

New Song is Arizona's first and largest child and family grief support program, serving children of all ages, young adults, parents and grandparents. Fun activities and outings are offered year-round. Our pediatric bereavement counselors assist families caring for a child who has a life-limiting illness. Siblings of children with complex medical needs make new friends at workshops and day camps planned just for them.

Bereavement support

We provide 13 months of bereavement support after the death of a loved one cared by Hospice of the Valley. Our professional counselors also facilitate more than 20 community grief support groups. We have expanded our groups this past year to meet the unique needs of veterans and their families.

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The grieving process is not easy, but the more support you have and the more people you can talk to and grieve openly and honestly with, the closer you get to healing. — **Bereaved mother**

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Community remembrance

Dia De Los Muertos

Hospice of the Valley and New Song Center invited all bereaved families to celebrate a traditional holiday in the Mexican culture that allows them to honor their loved ones through an altar and ofrenda gifts. More than 200 people attended our inaugural event, featuring a Spanish-radio personality, mariachi band, taco food truck and hands-on activities for children.



Families celebrated their loved ones on Dia De Los Muertos.

Family remembrance event

New Song, Ryan House and Phoenix Children's held their annual gathering for families just before Thanksgiving. After taking part in creative and meaningful activities that honored their grief journey, families joined hands in a large circle to recite the names of their loved ones.

Light Up a Life

In November, our annual community remembrance, on AZTV-Channel 7, featured two songs performed by the talented ASU Gospel Choir and a beautiful montage of 1,000 photos. The program is available to view or share. Visit: aztv.com/lightupalife

GRATEFUL FOR OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

Hospice of the Valley volunteers provide invaluable support to our patients, families and community. Serving in over 20 programs, they make a beautiful difference in countless lives.

Saluting Our Veterans



A Rustic Ranch resident salutes fellow veteran volunteer Denny Bash and chaplain Stephen Gardner.

The trust that exists among veterans makes our tribute visits especially meaningful. Our specially trained veteran volunteers spend quality time with military patients and families, sharing stories and thanking them for their service. They also participate in Veterans Day celebrations from Wickenburg to Mesa.

College Partners Program

Student volunteers provide companionship and socialization for our Supportive Care for Dementia patients — giving family members a much-needed break from caregiving. Our families are thankful for the dedication of students from Maricopa Community Colleges, Arizona State University, University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University, Midwestern University and Case Western Reserve University.

Culturally enhanced care

Jewish volunteers offer beautiful Shabbat blessings at the bedside of our Jewish patients. Our commitment to honoring Jewish customs and traditions at end of life continues to earn Hospice of the Valley accreditation as an official Jewish Hospice.

White Dove Thrift Shoppes



Shoppers love finding great deals on designer brands.

A team of dynamic volunteers greet customers, process donations for sale and create inviting displays at our four stores. Every location raises funds for our charity care and often provides bed linens, medical equipment and other essentials to patients in need. In naming the White Dove the best thrift store in the Valley in 2023, the *Phoenix New Times* said all locations are “full of treasures and finds... you’re guaranteed to find some hidden gems, sometimes even designer or brand-new.”

Acts of kindness

Volunteers work closely with our clinical teams to create moments of joy for patients. They go above and beyond — playing the piano in group homes, sorting belongings when patients move to assisted living, and grocery shopping for those who live alone. One volunteer even created a painting to preserve a dementia patient’s poignant childhood memory. Volunteers feel tremendous reward in giving back.

We’d love to have you join our wonderful volunteer family! Learn more at: hov.org/volunteer



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Special *Events*



We are excited to host our signature fundraiser on **April 27** at the JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn.

Join us for auctions of collectible art, exceptional trips, fabulous wines and one-of-a-kind experiences! Enjoy fine dining and dancing with Nate Nathan & the MacDaddy-Os! Proceeds support our charity care programs. Reserve your seat at: **hov.org/aaha**

Hospice of the Valley Pro-Am Golf Tournament

The 26th Annual Hospice of the Valley Pro-Am Golf Tournament, presented by Cigna Healthcare, returns to Grayhawk Golf Club's scenic Raptor Course on **March 28**. Our generous sponsors have helped us raise over \$1 million to support those in need since 1998.



Pet Connections Calendar

Our 2024 calendar features 14 of our lovable therapy pets that visit patients and families with their human best friends to provide cuddles and comfort. A limited supply of the popular calendars are available for purchase at Hospice of the Valley's Administrative offices for \$8.



Jasmine and Noel.



More info: hov.org/events