



HORIZONS

Community Newsletter

Comfort, dignity and compassionate care

SPRING 2025

COMMITTED TO QUALITY CARE FOR ALL IN NEED

We are humbled to be recognized as a national leader in compassionate hospice and supportive care. This recognition is a testament to the dedication of our 1,800 skilled employees and the generous support of our community. This past year, we served 28,000 patients and their families in Maricopa and northern Pinal counties and the greater Tucson area — turning no one away for lack of financial resources. This would not be possible without our amazing donors and volunteers. Thank you for your kindness and commitment to our nonprofit mission.



Our care teams are honored to serve the community.



A home visit with social worker Elena Talbot and nurse Laura Horvath.



WALKING WITH FAMILIES IS OUR HIGHEST PRIVILEGE

As we near our 48th anniversary, we are grateful for the incredible support that enables us to serve our growing community.

Since Hospice of the Valley was founded in 1977, we have created innovative programs to help families navigate earlier stages of illness. Our dedicated teams work together to personalize care for those struggling with chronic illnesses, such as dementia, cancer and heart disease.

Throughout our history, one thing hasn't changed: our commitment to providing compassionate care. We are honored that 99% of patients and families are willing to recommend Hospice of the Valley. As the only nonprofit hospice in Maricopa County, we are proud of our ranking among the largest hospices in the country. Our mission has never been stronger: *Bringing comfort, dignity and compassionate care to our community.*

Thanks to your generosity, we are able to bring our specialized care to more families — and serve all in need, regardless of financial circumstances. This past year, we provided over \$17.7 million in charity care and community services.



Debbie Shumway



Beth Warne

You are vital to our legacy of caring. We are excited to build on this legacy in 2025 and beyond.

Debbie Shumway
Executive Director

Beth Warne
Board President

Major study ranks top hospices in the nation

We are thrilled to share that Hospice of the Valley has been ranked third in the U.S. for providing quality care.



A new study published in the *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine* evaluated 2,700 of the largest U.S. hospices. Notably, **the top 10 highest-quality hospices are all nonprofits**, even though for-profit hospices represent 75% of the market. Caregivers expressed higher satisfaction with nonprofits; and nonprofit hospice staff felt a deeper commitment to delivering exceptional care.

The study, "Caregiver and Employee Experience Among Big Hospices," also found that:

- The nonprofit experience reflects a focus on quality of care, versus for-profits prioritizing quantity of patients.
- Caregivers expressed frustration with for-profits for being eager at enrollment but often absent in time of need.
- Newer hospices are much more likely to be profit-motivated players that value profits over patients.

The benefits of choosing hospice care

Some people found it surprising that President Jimmy Carter received hospice care for 22 months, but his experience only illustrates the biggest misconception about hospice: that it is for the final hours, days or even weeks. Hospice focuses on enhancing every moment. It supports caregivers and provides a care plan that honors the patient's goals and wishes. Too many families have shared that their only regret was not choosing hospice care *sooner*.

In fact, receiving hospice care sooner in the disease process can help stabilize health conditions and improve quality of life with personalized nursing care, social support and medical management. In-home care teams treat pain and symptoms, such as shortness of breath or infections. Anxiety is lessened because there is 24/7 access to our healthcare professionals, as well as a nurse who can visit, should there be an urgent need.

It is important to choose a hospice that has the experience, expertise and resources to provide exceptional care. Medicare allows you to choose your own hospice, but if you don't specify a choice, someone will choose for you. Fortunately, all it takes is a phone call to the hospice you prefer, and they can seamlessly transfer you into their care. Not-for-profit Hospice of the Valley is honored to serve all in need.

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT FOR ALL STAGES OF ILLNESS

We know that advanced illness takes a toll on the whole family. Our programs provide a continuum of care to walk alongside patients and their caregivers from diagnosis through hospice care.



Nurse Joe Swafford (right) brings personalized care to our patients and helps improve quality of life.

Supportive Care: In-home assistance managing chronic illness to improve quality of life. The team provides care coordination, in-home education and referrals to community resources. Programs include **Arizona Supportive Care** and **Geriatric Solutions**, our home-based primary care practice for frail, home-limited patients. **Your Health Connection** is our telehealth mobile practice, bringing medical services to home-limited children and adults who cannot access care easily.

Dementia Support: Education plus clinical and emotional support to reduce caregiver stress and enhance quality of life for those living with all types and stages of dementia. Our **Supportive Care for Dementia** program and **Dementia Care and Education Campus** help families in our community *live well with dementia*.

Hospice Care: Skilled, compassionate hospice care for adult and pediatric patients, provided in the home setting or in our inpatient units. Care teams are comprised of doctors, nurses, social workers, nursing aides and chaplains. Hospice of the Valley is proud to have the highest number of employees in the state who are certified in hospice and palliative care.

All programs are supported by our after-hours clinical team 24/7. Learn more at hov.org or call (602) 530-6900.

What sets Hospice of the Valley apart?

Executive Medical Director Ned Stolzberg explains the great benefits of receiving supportive care early on.

Why offer programs before hospice care are needed?

Dr. Stolzberg: Patients with advanced or chronic illness are not one-size-fits-all. There's a huge spectrum of needs, goals of care and interventions. Having many programs allows us to focus on what an individual patient needs most.

How does this also help support caregivers?

Dr. Stolzberg: Having continuum-of-care choices also allows caregivers to receive the types of services that best fit their needs, as well as those of their loved ones. Some situations need a little more doctor time. In others, the social worker or nursing aide might be the key to success. Utilizing the best parts of different programs allows Hospice of the Valley to provide customized care that best serves our patients.

Is this a standard approach across all hospices?

Dr. Stolzberg: No. Hospice of the Valley is unique in Arizona in the breadth and depth of programs that we are able to offer to support patients and families at every stage of illness.

Why is sharing knowledge important?

Dr. Stolzberg: During my medical school training, there was no mention of hospice care. I only discovered it during my residency in Phoenix when I did a short rotation with Hospice of the Valley. The experience was transformative. We feel that all medical learners should have a basic understanding of hospice services and learn to have meaningful conversations about end-of-life choices. We're proud to train over 400 medical students and residents a year.



Drs. Shawn Abreu (far left) and Ned Stolzberg (far right) lead educational programming for our Palliative Care Fellows.

MEETING NEEDS THROUGH INNOVATION & QUALITY CARE

We continue to grow our Dementia Program and broaden connections in our community.

National model of care

Hospice of the Valley's Supportive Care for Dementia program was selected to take part in a new Medicare model designed to help more people living with dementia — providing support in the home, reducing strain on caregivers and identifying additional community resources. We will continue to expand our dementia care services under this new GUIDE Model (Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience).

To learn more, call *Supportive Care for Dementia* at (602) 636-6363.



Adult Day Club members enjoy gardening with preschoolers.

Bridging generations

The intergenerational program at our Dementia Care and Education Campus continues to flourish with the opening of the YMCA's Y-Academy next to the Adult Day Club. Preschoolers and Club members enjoy storytime, doing puzzles, drawing and playing games together. These moments boost social skills and create fun learning opportunities. For older adults, the interactions nourish physical and emotional wellness.



I see new members come into the Club not knowing what to expect, only to be welcomed with open arms by others who truly understand them and help them feel a sense of belonging.

— *Sara Meins, Club manager*



Educational videos



Volunteer "actors" play caregiver and patient in our new dementia education videos.

Visit dementiacampus.org for an array of resources to support anyone caring for a loved one with dementia. You'll find 11 videos that depict real-life scenarios and show personalized approaches to improve quality of life for caregivers and their person with dementia. In addition, six educational videos are produced in Spanish. Our goal is to empower families with knowledge and strategies to successfully cope with challenges and reduce stress.

Community outreach

We are excited to share our programs in communities around the Valley. We are building partnerships to care for all, including vulnerable populations like people with dementia who live alone or are homeless. We are prioritizing community outreach, ensuring all underserved groups are supported with the best care and equipped with education and resources.

Horizons Editor

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REMEMBRANCE EVENTS SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

Our bereavement programs and support groups are a powerful source of healing and compassion for grieving families. We hosted several special events to bring our community together. While grief is a personal journey, it is also a shared experience.

Healing from Loss Bereavement Retreat

Our bereavement counselors facilitated a daylong adult community retreat in October at the Franciscan Renewal Center. The inaugural event provided a safe space to explore the complexities of grief, share stories of loss, and embark on a path toward healing. We hope to offer another retreat in the fall.

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Very healing and amazing to be in the company of others who are on this journey.— *Retreat participant*

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Community Day of Remembrance



Families enjoyed activities to honor loved ones.

Our New Song Center for Grieving Children held a family-friendly event at Steele Indian School Park in November. Families created mosaic photo frames and holiday dove ornaments to commemorate deep loss in their lives — a child, a parent, a sibling. Later, they formed a circle for a beautiful reading and, one by one, named the loved ones they were honoring. Thanks to our co-hosts, Ryan House and Phoenix Children’s.

— “

Being with other families makes us realize we’re not alone in our loss. — *Event participant*

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Dia de los Muertos



Over 250 guests attended our Dia de los Muertos event.

Our New Song Center program hosted a traditional Dia de los Muertos celebration in early November. Families wore authentic costumes, displayed photos on the ofrenda, and sent heartfelt messages through a marigold path — a symbolic bridge from life to death. A mariachi band entertained the crowd as nearly 50 volunteers helped create an unforgettable night of love and community.

Bereavement videos

People who are grieving are often overwhelmed by sadness and powerless to help themselves feel better. Healing starts with understanding what grief is and how it affects us. Thanks to a grant from Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, we created a series of videos to support our community. Topics include sudden death, coping with multiple losses, adult child loss, anticipatory loss, dementia and partner loss.

You can view our videos in English or Spanish on hov.org (search “adult grief resources”).

MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

On a daily basis, our caring staff and volunteers nurture what is most meaningful to our patients and families, creating special moments and lasting memories.

Lovebirds say 'I do'

When Jovani was admitted to Ryan House, he and fiancée Kaylie envisioned a small gathering to celebrate their unconditional love. In just a few days, our team rallied to pull off the wedding of their dreams. Hospice of the Valley's Helping Hand Fund arranged a catered dinner. Flowers, dessert, wedding bands, a bridal gown and a tuxedo shirt were all donated. Ryan House's sanctuary was turned into a cozy chapel for the ceremony, conducted in Spanish by one of our chaplains. The 20-year-olds were blown away: "They got us everything! I wasn't expecting this," Kaylie said, while Jovani felt like "the happiest man on Earth."



Hospice of the Valley and Ryan House came together to realize the couple's dream of getting married.

Honoring a former nurse

What could be more special to a nurse than to be honored by other nurses who share a passion for her profession? Margaret's care team felt strongly that their 99-year-old patient deserved a tribute visit from the Arizona Nurse Honor Guard and reached out to the volunteer organization. Margaret was presented with a quilt and a Nightingale coin, in remembrance of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. "She was beaming the entire time!" said her social worker, Laura Cross.



The Arizona Nurse Honor Guard recognized Margaret for her lifelong dedication to nursing.

Joyride of a lifetime

At 95, Don had one thing left on his bucket list: ride in a driverless car. His wish was fulfilled when his care team arranged a cruise via Waymo. The retired teacher sat in the passenger's seat and giddily pushed the "Start Ride" button. The excitement ramped up when the Waymo pulled safely to the right to let a firetruck pass before he and his nurse, Monisha Roe, arrived at Biltmore Fashion Park for lunch. "We were all terrified initially, except for Don, but it was a smooth ride. He loved it!" she said.



Don is all smiles riding in a Waymo for the first time.

Reunited after 40 years

When music therapist Tammy Reiver first met Nancy, she thought there was something very familiar about her. Tammy soon realized she was sitting face-to-face with her junior high music teacher from four decades ago. Both were elated! On her next visits, Tammy brought in old class photos and they took a trip down memory lane. The music therapy sessions motivated our 77-year-old patient to play her violin again. "Nancy reconnected to an old version of herself," her social worker, Allison Wecks, observed. "Suddenly, she became energized and vibrant!" Tammy will never forget this experience: "This is life coming full circle. I'm honored and blessed beyond measure."



Tammy and Nancy play some favorite songs.

'We're two peas in a pod'

Mary Kistler was a nurse for 34 years because she loved caring for people. After retiring, she became a Hospice of the Valley volunteer so she could continue supporting others, but in a way that is more fulfilling than she ever imagined. For the last 12 years, she has been providing socialization and companionship to hospice patients like Phoebe. The two fill their time together with hobbies like making pretty greeting cards that Phoebe designs. "Mary is a friend and a blessing. I can't wait for her to come," confides Phoebe, adding, "We're two peas in a pod, born just four days apart — we'll both be 80 in May!" Mary enjoys visit days as much as our patient, sharing, "We'd both be lonesome without each other."



Mary (left) enjoys making handmade cards with Phoebe.

New 'leash' on life

Marian Wallace traded a successful career in financial services for the rewards of volunteering: "My checkbook was full, but my soul was empty." Now, Marian feels great about giving back to Hospice of the Valley, which cared for several close family members. She is part of our pet therapy program, along with three of her six Labradors! Marian's true passion is working with pediatric patients: "It's that child-animal interaction that I find so incredible," she said. Her pooches give "pawtographs," count to eight, play hockey table and crawl like babies. "Labs are easy to train and kids love them!"



Marian and her friendly therapy dogs: Mattie, Harper and Richey.

Tribute to our heroes

Hospice of the Valley's Saluting Our Veterans program launched in 2011 to thank military veterans in hospice care for their service. Since then, more than 4,000 veterans have been honored by veteran volunteers from every branch of the armed services. They delight in bringing well-deserved recognition to our veteran patients and families. Many times, tears are shed as the veteran shares memories long forgotten. We hear time and time again how our volunteers feel privileged to listen to such remarkable stories of courage. "Every one of these people has a story," Salutes volunteer Fred Selinsky said. "It's a privilege to hear about their lives and what they've gone through. It's living history."



Julius, 100, proudly wears his World War II hat during his visit with volunteer Craig Artrip, a fellow Army veteran.

Students make an impact

College Partners volunteers bring immense comfort and joy to patients living with dementia. This innovative program inspires college students to pursue careers in dementia care. Student volunteers provide socialization to people living with dementia and a much-needed break to family caregivers. We launched College Partners in 2021 with a grant from Community Care Corps and have trained 125 students. Now, the volunteer program is funded by Hospice of the Valley and community donations. "Going into nursing, I feel like developing patience and empathy is paramount," volunteer Merle Tamondong said. "I wish I had known more about this program when I was taking care of my own parents."



As a volunteer, Merle discovered that her visits with Micheline bring joy to both.



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Special *Events*

Save the date for our signature fundraiser... and a night to remember! Join us on **April 5** at JW Marriott Scottsdale



Camelback Inn for silent and live auctions of collectible art, exciting trips and a variety of wines, plus fabulous raffle prizes. Enjoy fine dining and dancing to local favorites Nate Nathan & the MacDaddy-Os. Proceeds help Hospice of the Valley provide compassionate care to patients and families in need. Reservations: hov.org/aaha

Hospice of the Valley Pro-Am Golf Tournament

Golfers will tee it up at Grayhawk Golf Club on **April 17** for our 27th annual tournament, presented by Cigna Healthcare. Generous sponsors and players have raised more than a \$1 million for our charity care programs since 1998.



Light Up a Life



Thanks to the ASU Gospel Choir for another stunning performance.

Our Annual Community Remembrance program aired on Nov. 24 on CW7 Arizona and featured over 1,000 photos of loved ones who will always live in our hearts. Visit cw7az.com/LightUpaLife to watch and share the tribute, including a special performance by the talented ASU Gospel Choir.

Details: hov.org/events