



HORIZONS

Community Newsletter

Comfort, dignity and compassionate care

SUMMER 2026

ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE WITH PERSONALIZED CARE

Hospice of the Valley's focus on compassionate care is the cornerstone of all our programs. We bring patient-centered care to individuals living with chronic illness while supporting their loved ones. It is a privilege to help families navigate every stage of the dementia journey, improving quality of life for both caregivers and patients. When families need hospice care, it is our honor to walk alongside them. We couldn't do this alone. Together, our extraordinary employees, volunteers and donors make it possible to bring loving care to our growing community. We are grateful for your unwavering support.



Chaplain
Leandro Luna
brings spiritual
support to his
patient, Michelle.



Robert looks forward to visits
with nurse Kaycee Criss.



Mary Lou enjoys the care
of nurse Nicolette Bohannon
and Dr. Nisal Samarasekera.



HOSPICE
of the VALLEY

SERVING WITH COMPASSION FOR NEARLY 50 YEARS

As we celebrate our nation's 250th birthday, we are grateful to recognize a milestone of our own: almost five decades of compassionate care to Arizona families.

A small group of volunteers founded our nonprofit agency in 1977. Five years later, Congress authorized the Medicare Hospice Benefit, a resource that millions of families across the nation count on every year.

Today, we are humbled to be the leading hospice provider in Arizona, serving Greater Phoenix and the Tucson area. Our care now extends far beyond hospice services, with innovative programs tailored to earlier stages of illness.

Last year, we served more than 28,000 patients and families in all programs and provided nearly \$19 million in unreimbursed care and community programs. As the only nonprofit hospice in Maricopa County, we are honored to be a trusted safety net, ensuring that financial hardship never stands between a family and the care they deserve.

As our programs continue to grow, we remain committed to providing the highest standard of care while receiving top performance scores from Medicare. It means a great deal to us that families share their gratitude for our care and that a national study of 2,700 hospices ranked us among the top three hospices in the country. That trust reflects the dedication of our care teams, the compassion of our volunteers and the generosity of donors who believe in this important work.

We look ahead to our 50th anniversary next year with excitement and anticipation. Thanks to your support, our mission is stronger than ever: *Bringing comfort, dignity and compassionate care to our community.*



Debbie Shumway



Dan Santy

A handwritten signature of Debbie Shumway in black ink.

Debbie Shumway
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature of Dan Santy in black ink.

Dan Santy
Board President

Positive news about the hospice industry

In our last newsletter, we shared our ongoing work with lawmakers, healthcare partners and Medicare to expose fraudulent hospices in Arizona. We are thrilled to report that the federal government is taking action.

What did the federal government announce?

In May, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued a six-month nationwide ban on opening new hospice and home health agencies. This pause allows federal officials to investigate and remove “bad actors” from the system. Hospice of the Valley fully supports efforts that hold fraudsters accountable.

Why did Medicare put this moratorium in place?

Medicare is responding to widespread concerns about hundreds of fraudulent hospices that have opened in California and then moved into Arizona and other states. These operators provide little or no care, then quickly sell their licenses for profit. This temporary ban prevents new “bad actors” from entering the Medicare program.

Does the moratorium affect our patients?

No. Neither existing nor future patients will experience any interruption to the high quality care and support we provide. Our patients will continue to receive their full Medicare hospice benefits. Our focus will always remain on providing exceptional, compassionate care.

Should families delay hospice care?

No. Hospice care continues to provide important support and comfort to patients and families across the country. Established hospice providers remain fully operational, and families should feel confident having conversations about whether hospice care is the right choice for their loved one.

COMPREHENSIVE CARE AND 24/7 CLINICAL SUPPORT

Hospice of the Valley provides supportive care through home-based primary care services, specialized dementia programs and chronic illness support focused on enhancing quality of life. When hospice care is needed, we are here every step of the way. All programs are supported by after-hours clinical teams.

Outreach Care: A home-based program to help patients manage late-stage chronic illness before they are ready for hospice. Our social workers provide education and assistance with advance directives, connections to community resources and help navigating the healthcare system. Clinical phone and in-home support is also available.

Arizona Supportive Care: A home-based program for people facing advanced illness, such as cancer, heart or lung disease, liver or kidney failure, and Parkinson's disease. An interdisciplinary team works together to manage symptoms, provide education and coordinate care with specialists while patients continue to pursue curative medical treatments.

Pediatric Supportive Care: Our pediatric specialists provide compassionate in-home care to medically fragile children with life-limiting illnesses. Family members also receive education, emotional support and a break from the stress of caregiving with no-cost respite care at our pediatric inpatient unit, Ryan House.



Social worker Pam Ruzi and nurse Diana Haner provide pediatric care and support to Livvy and her family.

Supportive Care for Dementia: A home-based program offered at no charge for people with all types and stages of dementia. Family caregivers receive visits from dementia educators and phone consultations with a physician. Classes, support groups and vital resources also are provided at our Dementia Care and Education Campus.

Geriatric Solutions: A program that provides personalized, in-home primary care for high-risk patients who find it difficult to get to the doctor due to advanced illness or mobility issues. Physicians and nurse practitioners make house calls, allowing patients to remain in the comfort of home while coordinating care with their specialists.

Hospice Care: A skilled team of physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, social workers and chaplains focuses on meeting patients' physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs, while supporting their families. Medications and medical equipment are delivered to the home. Special programs include pulmonary, cardiology and pediatrics.

Inpatient Care Homes: Nine inpatient units are available for short-term stays when patients require symptom management and round-the-clock clinical care. In addition, our homelike units can offer occasional respite stays when families need a break from caregiving.

Grief Support: Our bereavement experts provided nearly 20,000 counseling sessions and held almost 500 in-person and virtual grief support groups last year. We also launched a support group in Tucson, as we continue to expand in the area. A wealth of resources is available, including videos created to support those grieving the loss of a loved one.

New Song Center for Grieving Children: This no-cost program is tailored to the unique needs of children and families. Staff and specially trained volunteers offer age-appropriate activities and support groups for children, teens and young adults, as well as parents who have lost a child.

Learn more: (602) 530-6900 or hov.org

GROWING KNOWLEDGE TODAY AND INTO THE FUTURE

Hospice of the Valley is honored to train the next generation of hospice, supportive care and dementia care providers. During the 2025–26 academic year, we welcomed a record 725 learners. Some highlights:

- 458 students, residents and fellows completed medical education rotations in hospice and dementia care.
- Nearly 200 students completed nursing clinicals, one-on-one or in group settings at the Dementia Care and Education Campus. (Another 200-plus nursing students received dementia and hospice education onsite or virtually.)
- Hospice of the Valley supported a record 18 hospice and palliative medicine fellows this year: 15 physicians, two nurse practitioners and one physician assistant from all major hospital systems.
- 13 social work students completed internships: 10 focused on hospice and dementia care, and three served with New Song Center for Grieving Children.

“

I've learned how meeting patients in an environment where they feel comfortable allows them to open up. I've seen how important it is to build rapport, create a safe space for them and make every interaction meaningful.

— *Social work intern*

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Classes taught by Hospice of the Valley

- We teach classes on hospice and palliative care, pain management and dementia music therapy at Arizona State University, University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University, A.T. Still University, Grand Canyon University, East Valley Institute of Technology, West-MEC, Gateway Community College and Phoenix College.
- We offer a dementia internship at our Dementia Care and Education Campus.
- Fourth-year medical students at University of Arizona can elect a course on hospice and palliative care medicine.
- Fourth-year Creighton University and University of Arizona medical students can take a humanities elective that explores meaning at the end of life.



Hospice of the Valley's executive medical director, Dr. Ned Stolzberg, helps lead fellowship training.

Workplace excellence

AZ Big Media has recognized Hospice of the Valley as one of the **10 Best Places to Work in Arizona Healthcare**. This honor reflects the experiences of employees, patients, families, peers and community members who value the compassionate care we provide.



Our Pulmonary Resource Program ensures all nurses are highly skilled in respiratory care.

Staff development

Hospice of the Valley fosters the professional growth of our staff through ongoing education, skills training and unique scholarships. We are proud to have the largest number of employees certified in hospice and palliative care in Arizona.

ADVANCING DEMENTIA CARE AND SUPPORT

Through innovative partnerships throughout our community, Hospice of the Valley is expanding dementia support and resources for healthcare professionals, caregivers and families.

Preparing frontline clinicians



Dementia occupational therapist Calli Carlson provides memory care training to community caregivers.

Hospice of the Valley has partnered with Mayo Clinic, HonorHealth, Barrow Neurological Institute and Banner Alzheimer's Institute to launch a new educational video course that helps primary care providers diagnose and manage dementia. Funded by a Maricopa County BOLD Project grant, this resource addresses the critical shortage of specialists. The lifetime risk of dementia after age 55 is 42%, yet only about 600 cognitive neurologists practice nationwide.

"Primary care providers must be equipped to diagnose and manage dementia, just like heart and lung disease," says Dr. Gill Hamilton, medical director of Hospice of the Valley's Supportive Care for Dementia program. Taught by leading dementia care specialists, the course gives clinicians essential tools to guide families through the dementia journey.

Learn more:

(602) 767-8300 or dementiacampus.org

Elevating dementia care in Arizona

Over the past year, our dementia experts have provided free, state-approved training to more than 4,500 memory care staff across Arizona. As the only agency offering this community service at no cost, Hospice of the Valley is raising the bar and establishing Arizona as a leader in compassionate dementia care.

Supporting dementia caregivers



ASU student Emily-Jane says her interactions with Bud have given her a deeper understanding of dementia.

— “

We adore the ASU student we have been matched with. It gives me time to sleep, put my feet up and take care of myself. Wonderful program, great for the patient and student.

— **Family caregiver**

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We know dementia caregivers rarely get a break, even though self-care is critical. That's why we partnered with Arizona State University to launch RISE — Respite In Student Engagement. The innovative program connects trained students with families to provide affordable (\$20 per hour) respite, companionship and meaningful engagement for people living with dementia, at home or in care facilities. RISE is funded through a generous Mercy C.A.R.E.S. grant.

THINKING YES AND DELIVERING WOW

From milestone celebrations to moments of need, our teams show compassion through everyday acts of kindness. We are grateful for the dedication, heart and skill of our 2,000 employees.

One more “I do”



Michael and Karen say “I do.”

As our patient Michael and his wife, Karen, approached their 57th wedding anniversary, their Hospice of the Valley care team rallied to create a vow renewal ceremony in the couple’s home, giving the family a precious memory to cherish. Chaplain David Walker led the service, while Michael kept everyone smiling with his humor. “I can’t believe she has put up with me for all these years,” he joked. The team also surprised the couple with a hand-casting kit as a lasting keepsake of their love.

Keeping the lights on

When an elderly patient became seriously ill, her grandson and his partner put their lives on hold to care for her at home. The grandson could not continue working as a long-haul truck driver, and his partner became a full-time caregiver, creating mounting financial stress. When she died, the couple was left grieving while facing unpaid utility bills and the threat of service shutoffs. Hospice of the Valley stepped in with a lifeline. Through our **Helping Hands Fund**, we paid the couple’s electric and water bills, allowing them to remain safe in their home while getting back on their feet.

Horizons Editor

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Saluting our veterans



Charles and Roberta honor Donald's lifetime of service.

Social worker Roberta Fellows was struck to learn that Donald had survived multiple shoot-downs in Vietnam and later served as an Air Force One pilot for President Ronald Reagan. “I kept trying to convince him that there should be some recognition for that,” she said, but Donald insisted he had just done his job.

He finally accepted a Salutes tribute from volunteer Charles Simmons, who had served as Reagan’s operating room nurse during the president’s 1985 cancer surgery. Sharing memories of their military service was “an experience I wouldn’t trade for the world,” Charles said.

In their own words

What have your patients taught you?

“That everyone’s journey is different, and the honor is being able to walk with them and support them along the way. I am humbled by what they allow me to witness. The honest answer is I have received so much more from them than I have given, and it is a blessing.” — Terry Woodbeck, MD, Hospice of the Valley



What guides your approach to care?

“Hospice of the Valley’s core values align with mine, and that means always putting the needs of the patient above all else. Caring for patients and their families during one of the most vulnerable, emotional and challenging times in their lives is a true privilege. I have found much joy and fulfillment in my role here and I’m often reminded of why I chose this profession.”



— Samantha Ramsey, NP, Hospice of the Valley

OUR VOLUNTEERS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Our volunteer family is 1,850 strong! Each and every volunteer plays a vital role in Hospice of the Valley's legacy of caring through 20-plus programs. Here are just a few of them.



Volunteer Appreciation Events

This spring, we held three joyous events to thank our extraordinary volunteers for their priceless gift of time. We laughed and cried (happy tears) together, and celebrated those marking milestone anniversaries of 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years of service. We could not fulfill our mission without their support.

College Grief Support Program



Children connect, play and heal together at New Song.

New Song Center for Grieving Children pairs college volunteers with children ages 5 and older in a safe, supportive environment. Healing happens through art, play and other age-appropriate activities, always at no cost to families. Students receive specialized training

to co-facilitate support groups, mentorship, gas cards and scholarship opportunities. This innovative program is supported by the philanthropic investment of The New York Life Foundation.

Pet Therapy

Hospice of the Valley has 55 pet therapy teams — mostly dogs, but cats and bunny rabbits, too. Those certified animals (and their humans) are a phenomenal comfort to patients of all ages, always eager to offer companionship.



Veronica finds comfort with Nancy Casey's pup, Lucy.

White Dove Thrift Shoppes

Our four White Dove Thrift Shoppes raised a record \$2.6 million last year to support our charity care and community programs, so every purchase and donation truly makes a difference. That's quite an amazing feat, given many items are sold for just a few dollars. All four stores also have a dedicated volunteer force waiting on customers, creating displays and handling donations.



Volunteers are the ♥ of the Dove!

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Volunteering for the White Dove has been the most rewarding experience. I have made friends for life and I know I'm supporting Hospice of the Valley. They served me in my time of need and I cherish my opportunity to give back.

— Volunteer

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Special *Events*

A lively crowd of 500 gathered to support Hospice of the Valley's compassionate care and community programs, resulting in a record \$1.2 million raised at our 2026 charity gala. The JW Marriott Camelback Inn buzzed with excitement as guests admired stunning tablescapes, enjoyed the music of Nate Nathan and the MacDaddy-Os, and explored an array of fine art, jewelry and travel packages in our silent and live auctions. With premier auctioneer Letitia Frye at the helm, bidding reached a fever pitch as guests competed for sensational bucket list adventures.



Hospice of the Valley Pro-Am Golf Tournament

The 28th annual event, presented by Cigna Healthcare, welcomed 27 threesomes and 27 pros to scenic Grayhawk Golf Course for a fun day of golf and philanthropy. This year's tournament raised more than \$45,000, contributing to an impressive total of over \$1.1 million since its founding by volunteer chairman Jay Hoselton in 1998. We are humbled by the generosity of every player and sponsor. Your support ensures that patients and families in need receive high-quality care regardless of their financial situation.



View photos at hov.org/events