



HORIZONS

Community Newsletter

Comfort, dignity and compassionate care

SUMMER 2025

CELEBRATING 48 YEARS OF CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

With Hospice of the Valley, no one faces serious illness alone. Our programs have expanded to assist families much earlier in their care journey. We are grateful for our 1,860 dedicated employees who provide specialized care and support. We are also thankful for the kindness and compassion of our 1,600 volunteers. As we commemorate our 48th anniversary, our commitment to our nonprofit mission has never been stronger. Your incredible generosity ensures excellent care for all who need us and helps sustain vital community programs. Together, we are improving quality of life.



Social worker Laura Cross is honored to be part of Mildred's care team.



Nurse Kathleen Lewis enjoys caring for her sweet patient, Nancy. See story on Page 2.



Social worker Marcela Vazquez-Bowler provides culturally sensitive support to Jose.



HEARTFELT GRATITUDE FOR YOUR TRUST AND SUPPORT

There is no greater honor than caring for our community. This past year, Hospice of the Valley served over 28,000 patients and their families and provided \$17.7 million in charity care services — ensuring no one is turned away, regardless of circumstance.

Recognizing the growing needs in our community, our role has evolved over the years to support those living with serious illness even before they seek hospice services. We have seen firsthand that focusing on care earlier truly makes a significant difference in patients' quality of life. We also see the positive impact that early interventions can provide their caregiver, reducing stress and improving well-being. Whether that is providing compassionate care, disease-specific education or connecting the patient and family with community resources, we are committed to navigating the healthcare system with those who need it the most.

As the only nonprofit hospice in Maricopa County, it is more important than ever that we continue to

develop innovative programs that address the challenges of chronic illness. We are privileged to have expanded our services in the Tucson area over the past two years and we look forward to growing our community partnerships.

Please know how grateful we are for your generosity. Thanks to our wonderful donors who help support our unique programs, we are able to identify and bridge gaps in our healthcare system. You make it possible to fulfill our mission: *Bringing comfort, dignity and compassionate care to our community.*



Debbie Shumway



Beth Warne

Debbie

Debbie Shumway
Executive Director

Beth

Beth Warne
Board President

In their own words

“Hospice of the Valley cared for my mother in her own home for several years. Her nurse, who was present the morning Mom passed, handled a delicate situation with utmost professionalism. I also want to laud our mother’s nurses and doctor for their long-term excellent and compassionate care. Our chaplain was absolutely faithful to his weekly inspirational visits, and the social worker was an important part of the team. Thank you for providing so many of us with a lifeline.”



Rebecca and Ernest Villicaña visit with nurse Shari Alton (center), who cared for their mom, Hilda.

— Villicaña family

Nurse reflects on ‘the sacred work we do’

Kathleen Lewis was an intensive care unit nurse when she found her calling as a hospice nurse 19 years ago.

“When I take my badge off at the end of the day, I can say that I’ve made a difference for someone,” she says. “Maybe it’s bringing them a chocolate shake they’ve been craving. Maybe they look at you and say, ‘I’m finally pain-free.’ That’s what feeds my soul.”

Over the years, she has come to appreciate the wisdom she has gained from her patients — life lessons. “I remember a patient asking me, ‘Have you reached out to your best friend today to tell her how much she means to you?’ That stuck with me.”

Throughout her day, Kathleen is guided by two words: “compassion” and “presence.”

“This is such sacred work we do, being invited into someone’s home and joining the journey alongside them. One of my most powerful visits was sitting at a patient’s bedside and holding her hand for an hour and a half. That time with her was a beautiful gift to her, but also a gift to me.”

CARE AND SUPPORT THROUGH ALL STAGES OF ILLNESS

We provide compassionate care and support through programs that include:

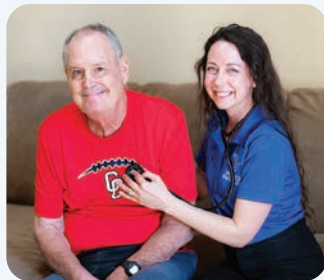
Geriatric Solutions: Comprehensive home-based primary care for home-limited adults who find it difficult to get to a doctor due to advanced illness or limited mobility.

Arizona Supportive Care: In-home care providing disease education, managing pain and symptoms of chronic illness, and coordinating care with specialists.

Supportive Care for Dementia: In-home visits with a dementia educator; clinical and emotional support to families caring for a loved one with any type and stage of dementia. Provided at no charge.

Dementia Care and Education Campus: A hub for our Dementia Program, featuring an education center and memory café, adult day program, assisted living and hospice inpatient home.

Hospice Care: Physicians, nurses, social workers, nursing aides and chaplains work as a team to provide personalized comfort care where patients reside. Nine inpatient homes for short-term acute care.



Nurse Michelle Thomas and her patient, Jeff.

Bereavement Services:

Community support groups Valleywide, individual counseling and check-in calls to help those grieving the loss of a loved one.



New Song groups combine fun with nurturing support.

New Song Center for Grieving Children:

Age-specific grief support and activities offered at no charge to any child, teen, young adult and parent in our community.

Keeping patients safe and comfortable at home



Volunteer Sterling Fletcher pays tribute to Joe and his family.

Joe has struggled with COPD and other lung diseases for years. But after a hospitalization last November, his family reached out to Hospice of the Valley for support.

Our care team and Pulmonary Resource Program have helped the 82-year-old regain his energy, mental clarity and appetite. And he hasn't been hospitalized again. One game-changer was fitting Joe with a BiPaP machine.

"It was the first time Dad could take a full breath in forever. His mind was reconnecting with all the things he loves to do," daughter Michelle shared.

Hospice of the Valley is unique in providing specialty programs to keep patients comfortable at home, avoiding unnecessary trips to the ER.

"So often, with advanced COPD, patients are told there is nothing more that can be done to improve their quality of life. Hospice of the Valley believes differently," said Gretchen Stanton, respiratory therapist and educator. "We focus on each patient's needs to help them breathe easier and live more comfortably."

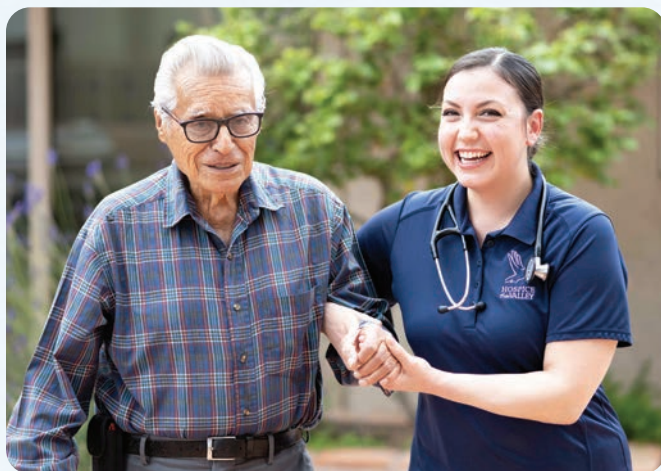
Michelle is thrilled to see her dad smiling again. "Without Hospice of the Valley's support and knowledge, we wouldn't be where we are today."

To learn more about our programs and services, visit hov.org or call (602) 530-6900.

NOVEL APPROACHES TO DEMENTIA CARE

With specialized support, we empower families to navigate the dementia journey starting at diagnosis.

Supportive Care for Dementia program



People living with dementia at home benefit greatly from supportive care.

In the year ahead, we anticipate serving more than 2,100 individuals with in-home visits from trained dementia educators, phone consultations with clinicians and dedicated nurse triage services. This unique Hospice of the Valley program, offered at no charge, has proven to be exceedingly valuable for both participants and their caregivers — whether they live together, in the same city or out of state.

In April, *Sage Journals* published an eye-opening article about the impact of our program, titled “Living Alone with Dementia: Supportive Care for Dementia, a Replicable Model for Support and Lessons Learned.” Researchers found the program had significant benefits for people with dementia, including fewer ER visits and greater use of supportive services and family engagement. Caregiver stress also decreased.

With the growing incidence of dementia among older adults, this report underscores the value of innovative programs that connect this vulnerable population to supportive services.

Visit dementiacampus.org or call (602) 767-8300 to learn about our Dementia Program.

Dementia Care and Education Campus



Creating joy through the magic of music.

Our one-of-a-kind campus is a resource for our entire community. New offerings include **Gather**, a new peer-led support group for people living with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI). Everyone’s journey is different, but coping strategies and supportive environments play a crucial role in adjusting to brain changes. Support groups offer connection and guidance that can make a meaningful difference.

“People can thrive with MCI when they connect with others who truly understand their experience,” says Maribeth Gallagher, Dementia Program director. “Having a safe space to openly discuss all parts of their journey and receive validation from peers can be incredibly beneficial. MCI support groups remind them they are not alone and inspire hope and motivation to keep living their best life, despite the diagnosis.”

Also new is **Helping Hands**, a way for people living with dementia to take part in volunteer activities geared to their interests and abilities.

Our weekly classes are open to anyone in the community, such as **Joyful Jams**, led by our music therapist. Our occupational therapist, Calli Carlson, teaches workshops on mobility to boost safety, reduce risk of falls and “help with functional things like getting out of bed or standing from a chair,” she explains.

ENHANCING CARE THROUGH EDUCATION & PARTNERSHIPS

We are committed to sharing best practices in hospice and dementia care. Here are some innovative collaborations with our community partners.

Palliative Education Consortium

To help train the next generation of hospice and palliative care physicians, we created an educational consortium for palliative and geriatric fellowships with



Dr. Ned Stolzberg oversees training for hospice and palliative care fellows.

Banner Heath, Dignity Health, HonorHealth, Mayo Clinic and Phoenix Children's.

"We bring together all the fellows from different programs to educate them all at once. It builds community and helps us recruit the best of the best," Executive Medical Director Ned Stolzberg says. Fellows also gain experience by rotating with Hospice of the Valley for a year — in our inpatient units and with home teams.

"Very practical topics, world-class leaders, an environment of fun and learning at the same time," one fellow shares. "It's the best training I ever had, very important and helpful," another says. "Really felt part of a family and I am very lucky to be involved."

Building vital connections

Hospice of the Valley's community liaisons presented 22 educational sessions to 248 Scottsdale Fire Department personnel from April through June. In addition to learning about our programs, first responders discussed real-life scenarios and how to partner with our care teams to best meet patients' needs. "We're so appreciative of the relationship we have built with Hospice of the Valley," fire Capt. Nick Pajic said.

Training for TSA officers

Our Dementia Team is leading a national model for TSA training, equipping agents with tools to recognize and support passengers living with dementia.

In June, we conducted two days of groundbreaking

training for TSA officers at Phoenix Sky Harbor.

Transportation security leaders hope to replicate this program at other airports.



TSA officers take part in our "Dementia Moments" simulation.

Comprehensive dementia caregiver training



Former Hospice of the Valley employees Kathy Melamed (left) and Rebekah Wilson role-play realistic scenarios.

All Arizona facilities offering memory care must now provide specialized training to their staff. Hospice of the Valley is one of a few state-approved agencies providing this extensive training. "This is absolutely critical as dementia becomes more prevalent every year. There is so much we can share to help families," says Dr. Gill Hamilton, medical director for our Supportive Care for Dementia program.

We produced 10 hours of video education for caregivers for all professional settings, demonstrating effective techniques to support and connect with people living with dementia. We will provide this training at no charge, including written materials and skills testing.

Horizons Editor

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MAKING EVERY MOMENT MATTER

Our wonderful care teams go above and beyond to honor every patient.

Celebrating a hospice pioneer

The Arizona Nurse Honor Guard paid a touching tribute to Mary-Audrey Mellor, who co-founded Hospice of the Valley in 1977. The 92-year-old dedicated half of her life to serving our mission, and we are now privileged to honor her.



Mary-Audrey enjoys her tribute.

Surrounded by friends and family, the former nurse received a Florence Nightingale coin symbolizing comfort, courage and devotion, along with a handmade quilt “to cover you with our love and gratitude and to recognize all those patients you covered in kindness.”

“I am just flattered and overwhelmed,” Mary-Audrey said. “Hospice of the Valley has always had my heart.”

Compassion and kindness drive care team



Enrique rides in a Ferrari.

Nurses Ted Johnson and Renee Culbertson have cared for Enrique for a year, and with his 17th birthday approaching, they created an unforgettable experience. Knowing his love for Formula One and stock cars, they planned a field trip that included a joy ride in a sleek McLaren supercar at McLaren Scottsdale, a visit to the Penske Racing Museum and a ride in a \$750,000 Ferrari at Scottsdale Ferrari.

“Ted has built a beautiful relationship with Enrique,” Renee said. “By looking beyond Enrique’s physical needs and making his joy a priority, he created a day Enrique and his family will remember forever!”

Days later, when Ted visited, the teen was more upbeat. As they embraced, Enrique told Ted, “You have been a good friend — I love you for that.”

Toasting our centenarians

Birthday parties are extra special when the birthday boy turns 101! Our care team was thrilled to help Pops celebrate this milestone. “We love the way he always shares inspiring stories with us,” social worker Joy Martin said. Digging into a homemade chocolate cake, the centenarian joked that he finally feels “old.”



Make a wish, Pops!

How fitting that Buzz, a proud Army veteran, turned 100 on Memorial Day. His care team threw a fabulous surprise birthday party. “Buzz was loving all the attention. He makes a point at every visit to tell us we’re his angels,” social worker Jeri Reid said.



Happy 100th b-day, Buzz!

Suns shine for superfan



Teda's Suns-themed surprise.

Teda’s care team knew nothing would make her happier than a day in the Sun — that is, her beloved Phoenix Suns. Imagine her shock when they showed her a sweet video message recorded by player Damion Lee: “We just want to send you so much love, so much strength as you go through your journey.” The Suns also sent her some awesome memorabilia, including a sparkly necklace that made the 99-year-old declare: “Every girl needs a nice piece of jewelry!”

BRINGING JOY TO OUR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

Hospice of the Valley volunteers from all generations have one thing in common: a desire to make a difference in someone's life. Here are just a few of the compassionate ways they serve our mission.

Veteran and first responder recognition

Our **Saluting Our Veterans and Honoring First Responders** volunteers make personal visits and bring a spirit of gratitude to the brave men and women who have protected our freedoms and communities — veterans like Dolly, 102, who served in the women's branch of the Naval Reserve during World War II.



Dolly is all smiles at her tribute visit. She was just 20 when she enlisted.

Pet Therapy program



Bill (right) looks forward to seeing Ed and his therapy dog. "Huck is beautiful," he says. "Makes me feel wonderful."

Hospice of the Valley's pet therapy teams are specially trained to visit both pediatric and adult patients. At our Dementia Care and Education Campus, volunteers like Ed Gersten and Huck, a cuddly Corgi, always delight our Adult Day Club members, Assisted Living residents and even preschoolers in the Child Center. "I get as much out of it as we give when I see smiles on their faces," Ed says. "It's pretty magical."

White Dove Thrift Shoppes



Donna is the quintessential Midtown White Dove volunteer: "This place is special. Every volunteer is here because they want to be."

Volunteers are the heart and soul of our four White Dove stores, which support our charity care programs. Donna Venteicher shares her love for working the register: "It's pure gratitude — and so rewarding." Sue Livengood researches collectibles and fine art while Shannon Edwards sorts and prices china, glassware and other treasures. Like all our amazing volunteers, these former nurses find great joy in giving back to Hospice of the Valley.

Paying it forward

When Shabbat Blessings volunteer Jeff Lewis was undergoing cancer treatment, he met fellow patients in dire financial need, forced to choose between food and medicine. He began buying grocery gift cards



Jeff and Kim work together to ensure there is food on the table for patients in need.

for them. That was seven years ago. In March, Jeff handed out his 10,000th card through his nonprofit, The Froth and Bubble Foundation for Food Assistance. Over 2,000 of these cards have helped Hospice of the Valley patients. Social workers like Kim Deck identify those most in need: "Jeff is a lifeline, we know that he will help any patient."



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Special *Events*

What a spectacular evening showcasing our community's generosity at Hospice of the Valley's 2025 art auction!

Thanks to you, we raised a record \$800,000 to ensure care for those in need, including \$300,000 to help families receiving support from our New Song Center for Grieving Children. Nearly 500 guests filled the ballroom at the JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn, eager to bid on fabulous items presented by auctioneer Letitia Frye. Once again, Nate Nathan and the MacDaddy-Os rocked the dance floor, crowning an evening filled with joy and heartfelt giving.



27th Annual Hospice of the Valley Pro-Am Golf Tournament

Our 2025 tournament raised \$50,000 for Hospice of the Valley's charity care programs. Since volunteer tournament chairman Jay Hoselton started the event in 1998, more than \$1 million has been raised to provide compassionate care for patients and families in need. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the dedication of title sponsor Cigna Healthcare and the many players and sponsors who champion this annual tradition at Grayhawk Golf Club.



View photos at hov.org/events

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