



# HOSPICE *Happenings*

Building on more than four decades of hospice experience and generous community support, VHOCC provides industry-standard hospice care at no cost to the patient or to government programs. Our services include professional 24-7 nursing availability, grief support, medical equipment lending, and education.

## Hospice Teamwork: A Road to Peace

by David Forrest, Grief Support Volunteer

Astrid called me about a dying man who wanted to talk but wouldn't say about what. As a grief support volunteer, I usually support those left behind, but lately I'd been asked to sit with those nearing the end. I agreed to visit him at home.

When I arrived, his nurse Becca and his longtime caregiver were with him. He was extremely frail, yet mentally sharp, even sharing moments of humor. Beneath it all, though, he carried a quiet anguish no one could name.

A week later, I returned to visit with him one-on-one. He finally shared the source of his distress: unpaid bills. He feared the electricity in their home would be shut off. Embarrassed and worried about upsetting his wife (who was already struggling), he had said nothing. I promised to find help.

Astrid quickly connected us with Penney, an eldercare specialist. When I returned the next day, I encouraged the man to tell his wife. With courage, he did. She was shocked but calm. Soon after, Penney arrived and began working with them. I stepped out, hearing laughter as she gently guided them through next steps. By the time I returned to the bedroom, the man looked visibly relieved. Together, they had addressed the most urgent bills, and his wife began learning how to manage their finances. The emotional shift was immediate and peace had replaced fear.

I saw him one last time on Thanksgiving. Barely conscious, he managed to say, "You're a good man, David." He died hours later, at peace. This experience remains one of the most challenging and rewarding of my time as a hospice volunteer, a powerful reminder of what compassionate teamwork can achieve.

## Sorting Through Your Stuff

### Before You Die Is a Gift to Loved Ones

Most of us gather a lifetime of belongings — furniture, papers, photos, tools, keepsakes — often without noticing how much it adds up.

Thinking about what will happen to it after you're gone can feel heavy, but it can also be an opportunity to care for the people you love. Making choices while you still can helps spare them from having to make hundreds of decisions at the very moment they're missing you most.

If you're not sure where to begin, start small and be kind to yourself. Ask family and friends whether they would truly want certain items, and let their answers guide you — then donate or sell the rest a little at a time.

If there are a few things you feel strongly about, write that down: a simple list in your estate documents can match specific items to specific people and reduce confusion later. For bigger items like cars, boats, RVs, and collections, gather titles, keys, maintenance records, and other details, and make a clear plan: sell now, gift now, or name someone who can handle the sale. This kind of work can take months, and it may bring up memories as you go. That's normal. Little by little, you're taking care of your own business — and that effort can be a quiet, meaningful gift to your survivors.

After your death, loved ones often have to sort what remains into three piles: donate, sell, and trash. While going through your things can also be a way to remember you and begin grieving, the sheer volume can make it feel overwhelming. The more you can decide now, the more room they'll have later for memories, not just logistics.



## PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Second Monday of each Month, 3–4:30pm

Pets are members of our family. When they die, we grieve deeply. Bring a memento, photo, collar, or toy to display during our meeting.

Olympic Peninsula Humane Society's Kitty City  
91 South Boyce Road, Sequim



## 2026 Reach and Row Fundraiser

The Sequim Bay Yacht Club is busy preparing for its annual Reach and Row for Hospice, a fundraiser that since 1991 has generated more than a half-million dollars! Proceeds support our Respite Care Fund, which allows families to take a break by having a paid caregiver from an agency for up to 72 hours. Support VHOCC and join the fun on September 19 and 26! For details, visit [www.sequimbayyacht.club/reach-for-hospice](http://www.sequimbayyacht.club/reach-for-hospice).



## VHOCC Resources & Program Calendar

All programs are free of charge. Registration is required for all except Follow-Up Grief Support Groups. All programs are subject to cancellation. Call 360-452-1511 or email [reception@vhocc.org](mailto:reception@vhocc.org).

### **COMMUNITY ORIENTATIONS**

#### **In-Person: Port Angeles**

First Wednesday of each month, 11 a.m.–noon.  
VHOCC office, 829 E. 8th Street, Port Angeles.

#### **In-Person: Sequim**

First Tuesday of each month, 11 a.m.–noon.  
Location given at time of registration.

### **GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS**

**In-Person: Port Angeles** Grief through Movement.  
Fridays, Sept. 11–Oct. 16, 2–4 p.m.

**In-Person: Sequim** Mondays, July 13–Aug. 10, 1–3 p.m.

#### **FOLLOW-UP GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS**

Drop-in groups open to those who have attended a VHOCC grief support group.

#### **In-Person: Port Angeles**

First Thursday of each month, 4:15–5:15 p.m.

#### **In-Person: Sequim**

Fourth Monday of each month, 1–2 p.m.

#### **EMPOWER YOURSELF: ADVICE FOR LIVING ALONE**

A practical, 4-week series on Home Maintenance, Cooking for One, Household Finances, and Self-Care. Wednesdays, Sept. 23–Oct. 14, 1–3 p.m. in Sequim. Come to one or all!

#### **HEALING FROM GRIEF WORKSHOP**

6-week series with images, words and sounds.  
Tuesdays, Sept. 1–Oct. 6, 2–4 p.m. in Port Angeles.  
Come to one or all!

### **ONE-ON-ONE GRIEF SUPPORT**

For anyone in the community grieving a loss. Call 360-406-4439 and ask for bereavement support.

### **SOUL CARE**

#### **SPEAKER SERIES**

Offered every other month on the second Wednesday from noon–1:30 p.m. via Zoom.

**Wednesday, July 8:** 'Lower Elwha Cultural Traditions' with Carmen Watson-Charles.

**Wednesday, Sept. 9:** 'Death Readiness' with Jill Mastroianni.

#### **DEATH CAFÉ 'TEA TO DIE FOR'**

Open, casual, freeform discussions relating to end of life, death, and dying.

**Port Angeles:** Third Thursday of each month, 5:30–7 p.m. at Studio Bob, 118½ E. Front Street.

Fourth Wednesday of each month, 4–5:30 p.m., VHOCC Conference Room, 829 E. 8th Street.

**Sequim:** Second Monday of each month, 4–5:30 p.m., at KSQM-FM, 609 Washington Street, #17.

## Continuously Ensuring Excellence

In May, VHOCC's Board, staff, and invited guests gathered for a full-day retreat centered around the theme 'Continuously Ensuring Excellence.' The goal was to reflect on who we are as an organization, and think intentionally about what VHOCC needs to remain strong, relevant, and deeply connected to this community in the years ahead.



We began with an exercise that brought us back to the heart of our work. An empty chair was placed, and each participant was asked to imagine someone in that chair whom they had served or someone in their own life whose journey had been touched by hospice. As stories were shared, a common theme emerged. Many people enter hospice feeling overwhelmed, fearful, uncertain, or alone. Over time, with the support of our team, those same individuals and families often move toward comfort, connection, peace, gratitude, and acceptance. The ideas collected during this exercise were a powerful reminder that while hospice often begins during a time of crisis, it can become a source of stability, dignity, and human connection.

The remainder of the day focused on looking beyond immediate needs and thinking more broadly about VHOCC's future. We discussed how to ensure long-term financial sustainability, strengthen care, increase community awareness, improve communication, expand palliative support, and ensure our board and leadership continue to evolve alongside the needs of our organization and community. The conversations were candid, practical, and forward-looking.

We are deeply grateful to the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe for graciously hosting us at Red Cedar Hall, to Patrick Crumb for sharing his perspective and historical insight, and to Jerry Fine for guiding our retreat with thoughtfulness and authenticity. Their willingness to invest their time, wisdom, and support helped make the day both meaningful and productive.

That spirit of reflection and forward-thinking extends well beyond the retreat. As we continue strengthening VHOCC for the future, we are also making important investments in our internal operations. In early May, Tammy Harris joined VHOCC in our newly created Operations Assistant role. Many already know Tammy through her volunteer service, and we are excited to now have her helping strengthen day-to-day operations, administrative workflows, and organizational support. At the same time, we continue to refine our technology infrastructure, vendor partnerships, and internal processes so that the systems behind our care remain as strong and dependable as the care we provide.

VHOCC has served this community for nearly five decades. Preserving something this unique requires more than honoring our history: It requires a willingness to keep learning, improving, and building thoughtfully for what comes next.

*Priya Jayadev, Executive Director*

## Volunteers of the Month

**APRIL:** We honored our volunteers throughout the month with several activities. In addition to an Appreciation Lunch, volunteers were invited to a screening of the documentary 'The Last Ecstatic Days' and join peaceful walks in nature (see photo at right) to enjoy outdoor art and search for wildflowers. There was something for nearly everyone, and these gatherings also offered opportunities for connection among volunteers.



**MAY:** Decisions near the end of life can be emotional and overwhelming. Thanks to **Vicki Kirchner's** support, several patients were able to put their affairs in order with greater peace of mind. We are grateful for her compassion and dedication to this important work and were pleased to recognize her with a gift certificate to Chestnut Cottage Restaurant.

**JUNE:** Some volunteers go above and beyond, and that's exactly what **Lorraine Brown** did. She learned how to change a patient to help the caregiver who was unable to do it on their own. She visited several times a week, explored caregiving resources and alternative living options, and provided a steady presence as this family faced enormous challenges. And Lorraine says she does this because "... of the connections with the people in hospice — the staff, other volunteers, and the patients and their families. These connections feel real and meaningful, and I carry that with me in the rest of my life. It's what helps me feel human." In recognition of her kindness, Lorraine will enjoy a gift certificate from the Oak Table Café.



**Plus, a special mention to Colleen Brastad**, who stepped in without hesitation for an urgent task that needed immediate attention. She received a gift certificate from Shirley's Café.



*As part of Volunteer Appreciation Month in April, several of our dedicated volunteers enjoyed a nature walk and outdoor art in Webster Woods. Shown here, from left, are Cecile M., Grace M., Pauline W., Diane R., and Gale E.*

### A Grateful Family Says Thank You

"We feel at a loss for words to express our gratitude for the kind and loving support, knowledge, and help you gave our family and Mom in the last months of her life. We want to name each of you, but for fear of leaving someone out we won't. We know there are many workers behind the scenes, too. What you gave us is a gift beyond measure that we are deeply grateful for! May God richly bless you as you lovingly work to help others through the hard goodbyes and leaving this world. We are in awe of each of you!"

## HOSPICE HUGS: Thank You to These Generous VHOCC Supporters!

### General Fund

Anonymous (7)  
Mary C. Blizzardkelly  
Kent & Rosemary Brauningner  
Dr. Penny Burdick  
Ross & Vee Canning  
Shirley & Steve Clark  
Ron Coles  
Janice Cook  
Janet Culver  
Lauretta Ehling  
David Eldredge  
First Presbyterian Church of P.A.  
Jan & Mark Fischer  
Rose Forbes Estate  
Jeffrey Forrest Estate  
Stanley J. Forsell  
Alan Frank  
Fraternal Order of Eagles Ladies'  
Auxiliary #483  
Arthur 'Sandy' & Nancy Goldstien

Dona Hair  
Susan & Tom Hamman  
Deborah Ann Hannevig  
Ali Harrington  
Deborah Anne Harrison  
Jadie Henton  
David Hoglund  
Diane Holth  
Dr. Ed & Phyllis Hopfner  
Anne Hornor  
Jay Howard  
Carol & Gary Huard  
James Michael Johnson  
Kathryn & Marc Kalla  
Margie Kedish  
Adele Kelly & Pat Baar  
Louise Kendall Estate  
Dow Lambert  
Patty Lavelly  
Suzanne Lockwood  
Brian Menkal

Eckart Mildenstein  
Grant Munro  
Terry Ann Norberg  
Clayton Earl Oakes  
Dr. Roger Oakes  
Shauna O'Connor  
Debra Patterson  
Bruce Patton  
Bob & Sherry Phillips  
Queen of Angels Catholic Church  
Judy Raynor  
Susie Reaume  
Sequim Sunrise Rotary Club  
Daniel J. & Wendy L. Shea  
Jill Simon  
Robert J. Tomczak  
Jacquelyn & Mark Witte  
Women of St. Joseph

### Community-Sponsored Fundraisers

Esprit Conference  
North Olympic Mustang Club

### Grants

1st Security Bank  
Olympic View Cmty. Foundation

### Volunteer of the Month

Chestnut Cottage Restaurant  
Oak Table Café  
Shirley's Café

### In-Kind Donations

Patrick Crumb  
Jerry Fine  
Grocery Outlet  
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe  
Pizza Hut  
Sunbonnet Sue Quilt Club  
Carmen Watson-Charles

# Volunteer Hospice

OF CLALLAM COUNTY

829 E. 8th Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362

Nonprofit Org  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Olympic Mailing  
& Printing Services

## Clinical Staff

Haley, RN, BSN, Clinical Team Manager

Lynn, RN, BSN, MS, Lead Nurse

Shelby, Patient Navigator

Ashley, CNA

Becca W, RN, BSN

Deanna, RN

Deb, RN

Ellen, RN, BSN

Jeanette, CNA

Joe, RN

Mary, DNP, FNP-C

Molly, RN, BSN

Stephanie, RN

## Mission Support Staff

Priya Jayadev, Executive Director

Astrid Raffinpeyloz, Volunteer Services Manager

Tammy Harris, Operations Assistant

Myrna Schaaf, Administrative Assistant

## Board of Directors

Roger Oakes, President

Loriann Hamilton Ridgeway, Vice President

Karen McCormick, Secretary

Stuart Koop, Treasurer

Wendy Brown

Marca Davies

Thom Hightower

Suzanne Lockwood

Mike Milward

Tyrrell Prosser

Peter Raiswell

Ted Ripley

Sandra Tatro

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## Esprit & VHOCC: A Deep Friendship

This year celebrates 32 years of Esprit's commitment to Volunteer Hospice! Since 1994, the organization has raised funds for us during their annual weeklong conference held in May, and through the talent show proceeds. We are so grateful to have them as supporters and friends! Shown above are VHOCC's Astrid with some of this year's Esprit conference attendees. Learn more about this generous organization at [www.espritgala.org](http://www.espritgala.org).



## 6 Ways to Help Volunteer Hospice

- Volunteer.
- Donate at [volunteerhospice.org](http://volunteerhospice.org).
- Add Volunteer Hospice to your will.
- Donate needed items to the Lending Closet.
- 'Like' our organization Facebook page.
- 'Follow' us on LinkedIn.