



HOSPICE *Happenings*

Providing physical, emotional, and spiritual support to terminally ill patients and their families with free, around-the-clock registered nursing availability and trained volunteers.

Volunteer Spotlight: Christie Dennis

Christie is the Delivery Team Coordinator for VHOCC. A semi-retired engineer, she does everything from changing out the tires on the van for winter to being a driver on Mondays to organizing the monthly schedule of hospital beds and other medical equipment.

Christie loves tinkering and solving mechanical problems. She is currently making a cart for a hospital bed frame that will enable the team to roll the bed into a residence and thereby lighten the load. (Informing the client and caregiver on the operation of the bed is also part of the delivery team assignment.) And recently, she got a lift-gate for the van!

Christie volunteers because she wants to give back. Often, she might be VHOCC's first contact with a family, and she feels rewarded by the deep appreciation for VHOCC expressed by clients and families. She also helps out in the community by volunteering at the food bank and doing trail work. Thank you, Christie, for your time, energy, and dedication!

Clinical Corner: Shortness of Breath

Draw in a deep breath. As you inhale, feel the air move through your nostrils, and slowly expand your rib cage and your belly, filling your lungs with air. After a brief pause, allow the muscles in your chest and abdomen to relax as you slowly release your breath. Breathing is a pleasure and a necessity most of us enjoy 20,000 times every day.

Now imagine you have to breathe through a straw. Try it yourself, breathing with lips tightly closed around a straw for at least 5 minutes if you can. After a few minutes, you may start to feel a growing panic. This is how many patients with dyspnea, or shortness of breath, describe the experience. Dyspnea can be caused by a variety of illnesses including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, cancer, or other end-of-life ailments. Many of our hospice patients experience this symptom 24 hours a day.

One patient's fear of the experience causes her to lie on her couch after the tiresome task of getting up in the morning, eating, and dressing. She no longer visits friends, shops, or even goes to her mailbox. By avoiding activity, she thinks she is 'saving her breath,' but in fact she is compounding her problem: the lack of moderate exercise is deconditioning the muscles required for efficient breathing.

VHOCC nurses offer strategies to ease this discomfort and improve quality of life. These include:

- Using a fan to move air across the face. A portable fan gives patients more control over the breeze and can be a tool to self-manage their symptoms.
- Practicing diaphragmatic or belly breathing helps patients maintain the muscular strength to take a fuller breath and stay relaxed.
- Training in pursed-lip breathing helps some patients. It slows the rate of breathing and helps open the airways to exhale more fully.
- Relaxation techniques help patients manage the anxiety that comes with breathing difficulty.
- Changing position, including sitting more upright in a chair or bed, or elevating the head of the bed to relieve pressure on the diaphragm and lungs.

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REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

A Soul Care Program

offered by Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County

Saturday February 5, 2022 at 2 p.m.
Trinity United Methodist Church
100 South Blake Ave, Sequim



FREE AND OPEN TO ALL

Join us for a candle lighting, sharing, visiting, and honoring loved ones.

All are welcome: families, community members, past and present Hospice volunteers, and employees.

Winter Program Calendar

All in-person programs are contingent on COVID-19 guidelines and are subject to cancellation. Registration is required for all programs except Drop-In Grief Support. Call 360-452-1511 or email reception@vhocc.org.

COMMUNITY ORIENTATIONS

IN-PERSON: PORT ANGELES

First Friday of each month, 10–11 a.m.

ONLINE

First Thursday of each month, 11 a.m.–12 p.m.

GRIEF SUPPORT

IN-PERSON GROUP: PORT ANGELES

Mondays, Jan. 24 to Feb. 28, 1–3 p.m.

Mondays, Mar. 21 to Apr. 25, 1–3 p.m.

IN-PERSON GROUP: SEQUIM

Mondays, Feb. 28 to Mar. 28, 1–3 p.m.

ONLINE GROUP

Mondays, Jan. 31 to Mar. 7, 3–5 p.m.

'Empower Yourself' Group Workshops

This series with online and in-person meetings focuses on practical matters for those who have lost a spouse or partner. Call 360-452-1511 for dates.

One-on-One Grief Support

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

Drop-In Grief Support Groups

Open to those who have attended a VHOCC grief support group; no registration needed.

IN-PERSON GROUP: PORT ANGELES

First Thursday of each month, 6:30–8 p.m.

IN-PERSON GROUP: SEQUIM

Fourth Monday of each month, 1–2 p.m.

Volunteer Recognition

August: **Carolyn Depperschmidt** for her steadfastness in the Donation Team.

September: **Jamie Hill** for going to visit patients where others might hesitate.

October: **Burt Foote and Tom Herber** for their unrelenting dedication to the Delivery Team.

November: **Christie Dennis** for her insight and initiative in improving the equipment delivery process.

December: **Sue Crews** for her respite work, and for organizing the nursing supply room in Sequim and sometimes in Port Angeles.

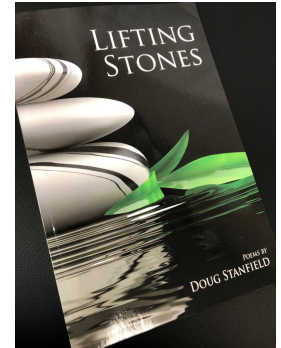
MEMORY

Memory is the dusty, not-quite-living museum of our lives. You're not condemned to remain what you already are.

You may change, grow, and split the hardened carapace of a self that no longer fits, and like the seven-year locust, climb high into a tree and claim your rebirth.

But first comes bare courage and risk.

From *Lifting Stones*, a book of poems by Doug Stanfield. Doug volunteered with VHOCC last year after the death of his wife. Writing poetry is how he processes his grief.



Why I Volunteer for VHOCC

"Before retirement I was employed at a long-term care facility. There I had my first encounter with Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County. I was deeply touched by the care given the clients and their families. After retirement, I knew I had a 'calling' to be part of the VHOCC organization."

John Matson, Delivery Helper

> *Clinical Corner, continued from front page*

- Increasing humidity or lowering the room temperature can relieve dyspnea.
- Reducing irritants such as smoke, dust, and pet dander.
- Using medications to relieve shortness of breath.
- Oxygen therapy, including the use of concentrators, which pull in room air, compress the oxygen, remove the nitrogen and deliver 90–95% purified oxygen.

Thanks to the generosity of donors and local foundations, we purchase oxygen concentrators and other supplies for our patients who need it.

It's a privilege to immediately deliver these much-needed supplies without having to wait for local vendors to obtain insurance permission, or to set up visit times.

OXYGEN THERAPY

at Volunteer Hospice

Patient census on a daily average

120

25

Oxygen concentrators available to us

Patients with a primary or secondary diagnosis needing oxygen therapy

56

\$800

AVERAGE COST OF A CONCENTRATOR

Essential Help from Three Foundations

VHOCC thanks these foundations for their generous support, which allows us to provide services and programs to our community.

The **Albert Haller Foundation** donated toward our need for hospital bed mattresses and oxygen concentrators. The deterioration of mattresses is ongoing, and getting new ones is essential to our patients' comfort. Pulmonary diseases are increasingly common among hospice patients who require oxygen therapy for comfort care; new concentrators can improve their quality of life.

The **Rayonier Community Fund** grant award will help purchase a specific topical cream for preventing bedsores. Nurses are grateful to be able to offer this simple and essential comfort measure.

With the **Albert and Helen Mangan Fund** award, VHOCC will develop and implement a Soul Care Program, geared to hospice patients for wrap-around end-of-life care and to the community with an educational series around the topics of death and dying.

Why Donate?

"VHOCC has evolved amazingly in recent years. There's a new level of maturity with systems in place to organize resources. There's been a huge evolution, from management to medical support to services offered."

*Frank Finney,
Delivery Driver and Surplus Program Coordinator*

Sending Hospice Hugs

Thank you to **Swain's, Oak Table Café, and Chestnut Cottage Restaurant** for supporting VHOCC's Volunteer of the Month Program.

Thank you to **Ceal Moran**, who donated to the volunteer program in honor of respite volunteer John Temple. Ceal explains: "He was the one with my husband. He also gave me permission to talk freely and not try to fix things. It was so beneficial to have someone listening and walking with you through the pain."

A shout-out to a longtime volunteer, now retired, **Bruce Bush**, whose donation allowed the purchase of a new sign for our Sequim delivery truck.

YOU CAN HELP VHOCC SAVE MONEY!

Would you like to receive this newsletter by email?
Just send a note to editor@vhocc.org.

Thank You, Sequim Dungeness Hospital Guild!



We thank the Sequim Dungeness Hospital Guild for its generous donation for a lift-gate to improve the Port Angeles delivery van, plus outdoor signage for the building. Operating since 1980, the Guild has given \$2.4 million for the community's medical needs, including nursing scholarships and funds for the Fire Department, Free Clinic, Olympic Medical Center, and VHOCC.

The Guild's thrift store on Bell Street in downtown Sequim contains gorgeous treasures of excellent quality. Merchandise is beautifully displayed, and proceeds benefit the entire medical community. The store is currently closed for cleaning and restocking, but be sure to check it out in early March when it's due to reopen.

Suzi Schmidt serves as vice president of the Guild, and is also an office volunteer for VHOCC. She says, "Volunteer Hospice is a very important aspect of Sequim ... many community members have had VHOCC involved in the last days and weeks of life. They took care of my mother her last four days. Her breathing was getting shallow and a VHOCC nurse was there within 20 minutes. They can declare death, and that was such a relief. It was the most smooth transition imaginable. It's amazing that there is such compassion and kindness. It's a gift."

Gratitude for Retired Board Members

A big thank you to three long-term board members — Nancy Bargar, David Gilbert, and Ed Hopfner — who retired at the end of 2021. Each of these people dedicated lots of time to VHOCC: almost 14,000 hours combined over 10 years! Their respective skills ensured VHOCC's continued growth through major changes, from setting up our first computerized system to overseeing the move to our current location and construction of the Lending Closet. They developed systems and operational procedures, maintained financial stability with careful and astute stewardship, and pursued strategic goals to ensure a steady flow of donations. VHOCC would not be in the position it is now without their enormous contributions. The current board, staff, and volunteers extend their deepest gratitude!

The Sequim Bay Yacht Club raised over \$27,000 in 2021. THANK YOU!

Sail! Row! Paddle! Pledge!
Sept. 2021



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

Betsy Wharton, RN, BSN,
Nurse Team Manager
Haley Blackburn-Jacobs, RN, BSN
Trish Buckingham, RN
Jenn Constable, RN
Marca Davies, RN, MS
Tammy Dedmore, CNA
Cristina Eppers, RN
Anne L'Heureux, RN, BSN
Elizabeth Perez, RN, MSN
Gary Schneider, RN, BSN, CHPN
Molly Wallace, RN, BSN

Mission Support Staff

JooRi Jun, ND, Executive Director
Astrid Raffinpeyloz,
Volunteer Services Manager
Anita Chilton, Administrative Manager
Donna Jordan, Administrative Assistant

Board of Directors

Peter Raiswell, President
Michael Bucierka, Vice President
Stuart Koop, Treasurer
Karen Affeld
Wendy Brown, RN
Sally Featherstone, BSN
Tyrrell Prosser
Loriann Hamilton Ridgeway
Ted Ripley

How Is VHOCC Different From Other Hospices?

Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County is a local, independent nonprofit, serving the population of Clallam County at no charge. VHOCC does not bill any insurance company or government agency for services. We rely on community support.

Please donate at vhocc.org.

Can You Lend a Hand?

Volunteer Positions Open

We're looking for Lending Closet Assistants, Delivery Drivers and Delivery Helpers. All positions are in Port Angeles.

Right now, the VHOCC Lending Closet is closed some afternoons because there are not enough volunteers to keep it open five days a week. And people needing hospital beds installed may have to wait an extra day because there are not enough volunteers to make deliveries five days a week.

As soon as all shifts are covered, we will be able to open the Lending Closet five days a week to the public and deliver five days a week to our Port Angeles community.

The requirements for these positions are simple: pass a background check, be available one half-day a week, be able to follow directions and communicate clearly, and commit for at least 6 months.

Delivery positions require being able to lift 40 lbs., and drivers must have a clean driving record. Interested? Call us at 360-452-1511!



VOLUNTEER