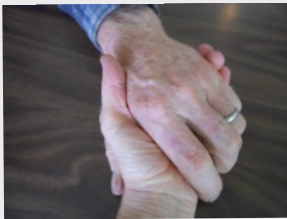


HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

Compassionate care for the terminally ill, their caregivers and their families

Serving our community since 1978

Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County (VHOCC) is a 501c3 non-profit charitable organization, whose service area stretches from Diamond Point to Joyce.



The mission of Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County is to provide physical, emotional and spiritual support to terminally ill patients and their families with free around the clock registered nursing availability and trained volunteers.

This support enables patients to live out their final days as fully and comfortably as possible. Ongoing grief support services are also offered to the families and to anyone in the community who has experienced the death of a loved one.

Since its inception in 1978, all services have been provided free of charge to patients and their families; VHOCC does not bill any government agency for its services.

The Vital Importance of End-of-Life Documents

If you ask a new young lawyer about the purpose of end-of-life planning, the answer will probably be couched in terms of “protecting assets of the estate,” or “the avoidance of probate,” or “giving the kids or grandkids a leg up,” or some other wealth-centered response. Ask a seventy-year-old lawyer, and the answer will be more along the lines of providing for a time of gentle, cared-for, undistracted dying. End-of-life planning should also provide for a time of grieving without the distractions of legal and financial issues. Compared to matters of the heart, asset protection sinks into an abyss of inconsequential nothingness.

In Washington, if a probate estate (the estate of the spouse who has died) is less than \$100,000, probate isn’t even necessary. If assets jointly owned by the couple together with those separately owned by the deceased are automatically transferred into the name of the surviving spouse upon death, then the decedent has no estate, and there is nothing to deal with, and therefore nothing to probate.

Then, of course, with most financial assets such as bank accounts, or investment accounts, the bank or brokerage will often have a document that automatically transfers the asset to the survivor. Fortunately, probate in Washington is much simpler than probate in other states. For an estate valued at less than \$100,000, the entire matter can be taken care of with a simple affidavit prepared by the survivor and sent off to anyone having possession of an asset that was owned by the deceased.

The first step in this entire process is to sit down with your spouse and list your assets, and see how they are owned – in both names? Just one name? Take the time to actually look at the titles or the deed, don’t rely upon your memory.

But, I need to back up for just a moment and talk about dying. We don’t plan our deaths. Death often comes unexpectedly, and occasionally it torturously lingers. I don’t think there is any fate worse for a survivor than to find themselves in a hospital corridor

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Drennan Ford Funeral Home

All Volunteers from the

Delivery Teams

Volunteers of the month

August: Elizabeth Perez

September: Ken Bennett

October: Dr. Penny Burdick

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outside the room where their loved one lingers physically but is gone mentally, being "sustained" by machines and tube-introduced nutrients, or avoiding excruciating agony only through the introduction of debilitating pain medication.

Of all end-of-life planning documents, a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care is absolutely indispensable. The person who signs such a document extends the power to make health care decisions to another, including the decision to discontinue or not commence treatments. In those times when communication is impossible, but excruciating pain lingers, when death is imminent, the time to make the most profound decision of one's life has arrived. The power to make those decisions that will deliver a loved one from prolonged, needless agony must have been arranged long ago.

A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care does two things: First, it empowers someone to give instructions to health care providers when we are no longer able to, and second (and even more important) it forces us to think about these matters and to share them with our loved ones. Most of the Durable Powers of Attorney for Health Care that I prepare conclude with:

I fully appreciate that in the event that my death is imminent as I have defined it above, my attorney-in-fact may well agonize over decisions. For that reason I share the following: I have lived a full, exciting, and very physically active life. Although a great deal of living can be enjoyed without being fully physically capable of mobility, I DO NOT wish to live in circumstances I have outlined above, or similar circumstances. My death is just as much a part of my life as was my birth. I have no intention of hastening my death, but I also have no fear of its arrival. Knowledge of the reality and inevitability of my death has greatly enhanced my ability to cherish my life. I am just as profoundly and eternally grateful to those of you who will help me greet my death as I am to whomever helped me greet this life by encouraging my first breath.

So, here is the best legal advice I can give you: Sit down with your partner in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed, and talk about your wishes. List your assets. Discuss what health care you want at the end and what you don't want. Be very specific. Linger, think about it, and make sure you understand your partner's wishes. Then, after spending whatever time is required to do this, make an appointment with a lawyer, and get these documents taken care of. The lesson is simple: Life can only be fully lived if we are fully aware of death and fully prepared for it.

Michael Hatch has practiced law for over forty years, including service as a Marine Corps JAG, corporate counsel, public defender, and a Canadian Legal Aids barrister. He is proudest, however, of his volunteer service with VHOCC.

Resources on End-of-Life Documents

The Conversation Project: dedicated to helping people talk about their wishes for end-of-life care. theconversationproject.org

OK to die: helping people prepare for death and dying to increase awareness for the necessary planning that is needed for your death or the death of a loved one. oktodie.com



We accept the death of leaves...
Why not our own?
Tom Bahti

Grief During the Holidays - The Empty Chair at the Table

There are few days of the year that are more important to families and loved ones than the winter holidays. Holidays mark the passage of time in our lives. They are part of the milestones we share with each other and they generally represent time spent honoring family traditions. But since holidays are for being with those we love the most, how can anyone be expected to cope with them when a loved one has died? For many people, this is the hardest part of grieving, when we miss our loved ones even more than usual. How can you celebrate togetherness when there is none? When you have lost someone special, your world loses its celebratory qualities. Holidays only magnify the loss. The sadness feels sadder and the loneliness goes deeper. Your need for support may be the greatest during the holidays.

Attempting to ignore or minimize the pain you feel only brings more pain. Rather than avoiding the feelings of grief and loss, allow yourself to feel them. Remember to be gentle with yourself and don't commit to more than you can handle. And, most importantly, don't hesitate to ask for help. Call hospice, call a friend, talk to someone who has experienced the death of a loved one, remind yourself (and allow yourself to be reminded) that you're not alone.

Here are some suggestions:

- Find meaningful ways to acknowledge and honor your loved one, like lighting a candle for them, sharing a favorite story or memory, offering a prayer about them before your holiday dinner.
- Take care of yourself in ways you know your loved one would want you to.
- Be honest about how you're feeling, don't try to protect other family members and/or friends from your (or their) feelings of sadness and loss.
- If you feel up to it, ask yourself if there is anything you could do for someone else who is grieving or suffering in some way.

Events

December VHOCC Holiday Annual Business Meeting
December 1-31 Radiant Light Christmas Tree at Office
January 1 Polar Bear Dip - Hollywood Beach Port Angeles

Programs (registration required)

Community Education & Volunteer Training
Fridays, March 17 - April 21, 1:30 - 3:30 pm Sequim
Port Angeles Grief Support Groups
Tuesdays, January 17 - March 7, 2 - 3:30 pm
Mondays, April 24 - May 29, 6:30 - 8 pm
Sequim Grief Support Groups
Mondays, February 6 - March 6, 1:30 - 3 pm
Mondays, June 5 - July 3, 1:30 - 3 pm

For more information go to www.vhocc.org/calendar

Call 360-452-1511 to register to any program above

*Drop-In Grief Support Groups in Sequim & Port Angeles (after completing a Grief Support Group)

*Grief & Bereavement One-on-One Support

*Survivors Workshops twice yearly

*For dates & locations & to register, call 360-452-1511

POLAR BEAR DIP 2017!

HOLLYWOOD BEACH, PORT ANGELES



10 am



UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

January 1st, 2017 marks the 5th consecutive year that Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County (VHOCC) has participated in the Port Angeles New Year's Day Polar Bear Dip at Hollywood Beach. Look for VHOCC's booth where participants and spectators will be welcomed with warm beverages and pastries.

Once again we will offer a "Polar Bear Challenge" to the community! Simply challenge someone (this can be any individual or organization) to take the plunge. If the person or organization challenged agrees and actually takes the dip, the challenger donates the amount that was pledged to VHOCC. Come join the fun!

CLIP COUPON AND MAIL OR DROP IN THE BASKET AT THE VHOCC OFFICE: 540 E. 8TH ST. PORT ANGELES 98362 FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL DAN AT 360-457-8133.

POLAR BEAR DIP CHALLENGE COUPON

I challenge _____ (name of ind. or org.)

If accepted, my donation to VHOCC will be \$ _____

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

ACCEPTED BY (SIGNATURE) _____

DATE _____ (OFFICE) _____