



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.

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 breathing through a straw. Try breathing with lips tightly closed around a straw for at least five 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 or other end-of-life ailments. Many of our hospice patients experience this symptom 24 hours a day.

Here are some strategies offered by VHOCC nursing staff to ease this discomfort and improve quality of life:

A portable fan moving air across the face can help manage symptoms.

Deep belly breathing helps patients maintain muscular strength to take a fuller breath and stay relaxed.

Pursed-lip breathing helps some patients slow their rate of breathing and open airways to exhale more fully.

Relaxing techniques can help manage anxiety.

Changing position relieves pressure on the diaphragm and lungs. For example, sitting more upright, leaning forward, or elevating the head.

Increasing humidity or lowering the room temperature can relieve shortness of breath.

Reducing irritants such as smoke, dust, and pet dander can ease breathing.

Medications can help relieve shortness of breath.

Conserving energy can also help. Rest before feeling tired, prioritize the most important daily tasks, and keep daily items within easy reach.

Oxygen concentrators can be prescribed by a physician to relieve severe symptoms. Concentrators — which pull in room air, compress the oxygen, remove the nitrogen, and deliver 90–95% purified oxygen — can be borrowed short-term from VHOCC.



2026 Reach and Row for Hospice

The Sequim Bay Yacht Club is again raising funds for VHOCC through their Reach and Row for Hospice annual fundraisers! Come to John Wayne Marina in Sequim to participate or watch and cheer on Saturday, Sept. 19 for the Rowing/Paddling Race and Saturday, Sept. 26 for the Sailing Regatta.

For 35 years now, proceeds have been used through our Respite Care Fund, to allow families to take a break by having a paid caregiver from an agency for up to 72 hours. This can be a tremendous help for family members at risk of burning out. For details, visit sequimbayyacht.club/reach-for-hospice.

Thanks from Grateful Families

"Thank you for walking alongside us in the last weeks and days on earth of my mom. We'd have felt lost and alone without your guidance, support, and tender words."

"Sincere thanks to all of you who supported me and my family through the passing of my family members in recent years. I'm truly blessed by your community commitment, and by your genuine kindness and caring."

"To the Volunteer Hospice team: I've always heard how wonderful this group is, and now I've experienced it myself."



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.

MONTHLY COMMUNITY ORIENTATIONS

In-Person: Port Angeles

First Wednesday, 11 a.m.–noon. VHOCC office, 829 E. 8th Street.

In-Person: Sequim

First Tuesday, 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, Oct. 26–Nov. 23, 1–3 p.m.

MONTHLY 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, 1–2:30 p.m.

In-Person: Sequim Fourth Monday, 1–2:30 p.m.

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!

EMPOWER YOURSELF: ADVICE FOR LIVING ALONE

Details on opposite page. Wednesdays, Sept. 23–Oct. 14, 1–3 p.m. in Sequim. Come to one or all!

MONTHLY PET LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Second Monday, 3–4:30 p.m., Olympic Peninsula Humane Society, 91 S. Boyce Road in Sequim.

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

Wednesday, Oct. 14, noon–1:30 p.m. PT via Zoom:

'End-of-Life Traditional Teachings: A Klallam Perspective' with Carmen Watson-Charles.

Wednesday, Nov. 11: TBA.

MONTHLY DEATH CAFÉ 'TEA TO DIE FOR'

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

Port Angeles: Third Tuesday, 6:30–8 p.m., P.A. Library's Raymond Carver Room, 2210 S. Peabody Street.

Port Angeles: Fourth Wednesday, 4–5:30 p.m., VHOCC Conference Room, 829 E. 8th Street.

Sequim: Second Monday, 4–5:30 p.m., KSQM-FM, 609 Washington Street.

Looking Back, Moving Forward

As I write this, our team has begun conversations about a milestone that once seemed almost unimaginable: VHOCC's 50th anniversary, which we'll celebrate in 2028!

Preparing for the celebration naturally leads to a look back on our history. VHOCC started in 1978. Thirty years later, founder



Rose Crumb reflected on the early days through a series of newsletter articles. She wrote about the beginning, when seven volunteers gathered with no money, no office, and no roadmap — but with a shared vision. They envisioned compassionate end-of-life care without financial barriers, and they made that dream a reality through the creation of what was then known as Hospice of Clallam County. While many changes happened over the first 30 years, one thing remained the same: 'the dedication, hard work, compassion, and loving care' of the people who carried VHOCC's mission forward.

Nearly 20 years have passed since Rose wrote those reflections. Programs have grown, technology has evolved, and our reach has expanded. Today, our nurses provide professional hospice and palliative care supported by electronic medical records and iPads. Almost 200 volunteers support us; they deliver hundreds of pieces of medical equipment each year, facilitate grief support groups, provide respite and companionship, assist caregivers, and help keep our organization running every day. We continue to educate our community about end-of-life care through programs like Death Cafés, Soul Care Speaker Series, and items in the local media.

The heart of VHOCC has never changed. It has always been neighbors caring for neighbors. As our anniversary approaches, we will reflect on the thousands of lives touched: patients cared for with dignity, families who discover they are not alone, volunteers who give their time and hearts, donors who believe this community deserves something extraordinary, and staff who choose this work because they want to make a difference.

The story of VHOCC began with Rose Crumb's vision, and it has been written by thousands of caring hands ever since. At our 50th celebration, we will honor the volunteers, staff, donors, partners, patients, families, and community members who have made that vision a living reality.

Priya Jayadev, Executive Director



Thanks, Port Angeles Moose Lodge #996! Lodge President Herman Murillo (left, who also volunteers on our delivery team) and Administrator Herb 'Leroy' Cabe recently presented a \$700 donation to VHOCC, represented by Astrid and Tammy.

Volunteers of the Month

JULY: The summer months are for vacations, and volunteers — even if professionally retired — take much-needed and well-deserved vacations. Thus, our delivery calendars were in need of substitute volunteers. **Mike Zewe** stepped up! He doubled his time in June and July, taking extra shifts. Mike has been with us for roughly the last six years and has blossomed in his role as a delivery assistant. We were pleased to offer him a gift certificate from Shirley's Café — and we thank both Mike and Shirley's Café for their generosity.



AUGUST: Ten years ago, **Joe Carter** inquired about volunteering with us and he has been driving the Sequim delivery truck ever since. Recently, Joe has been doing double (and even triple) shifts per week. When asked if he wanted to share anything, his reply was "We need more drivers in Sequim!"

Joe is right, we do! As much as we appreciate Joe's generosity, we don't want to overburden him or anyone. Joe is thoughtful, careful, and demonstrates that he will go the extra mile for us. Thanks to Joe, and to Chestnut Cottage Restaurant for their donation of a gift certificate.

SEPTEMBER: **Kathy McGee** is proud to serve in a variety of support roles, working with patients and their families as they walk their final journey home. "It's the greatest honor and privilege of my life to help people have a good death," Kathy says. "I am grateful to be a small part of VHOCC — an organization that is a godsend to our community." Kathy often goes above and beyond, caring deeply for her patients. We are lucky to have such an inspiring and dedicated volunteer among us. She received a gift certificate from Shirley's Café. We thank both Kathy and Shirley's Café.



Special thanks to **Barbara McInnes Edmondson**, whose editing and speedy design skills the past 5 years have made this newsletter as professional as it can be. It's been a pleasure, Barbara!



Thanks to Peninsula Dream Machines Car Club for their generous donation of \$885.10, raised during their Hot Rods & Hot Dogs event on Fathers' Day. From left: Astrid, Shelby, Juanita (with mascot Corky), Patti, Larry, Dusty, Haley, Priya, and Pauline.



Spousal Loss: Workshop & Grief Support

Our twice-yearly 'Empower Yourself' workshop, offered in person in Sequim from Sept. 23 to Oct. 14, is designed for anyone living alone after the death of a spouse or partner. Each weekly session addresses practical day-to-day topics, including household finances, cooking for one, home and auto maintenance, and self-care.

At the end of the year, we also offer an online grief support group focused on spousal loss. The holidays can be an especially tender and difficult time for those who are grieving, and this group offers support around the unique challenges surviving spouses and partners may face. The person who died may have been your best friend, your primary source of support, and the person who cared for and knew you most deeply. Your home may suddenly feel empty, or you may need to move due to financial considerations.

Email office@vhocc.org or call 360-452-1511 to register.

HOSPICE HUGS: Thank You to These Generous VHOCC Supporters!

General Fund

Anonymous (11)
Susan Bott
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Soroptimist International of P.A.
Roseline Tomlin

United Way of Los Angeles
Cynthia L. Vereide
Diane Wernett
Christine Wrobel
John Zey

Community-Sponsored Fundraisers

Louella Gebhardt Memorial Golf Classic
North Olympic Mustang Club
Peninsula Dream Machines Car Club
Port Angeles Moose Lodge #996

Grants

Olympic View Community Foundation

Volunteer of the Month

Chestnut Cottage Restaurant
Shirley's Café

Volunteer Hospice

OF CLALLAM COUNTY

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

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Olympic Mailing
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Shelby, Patient Navigator
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Deanna, RN
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Help us keep our printing and mailing costs low. Get this newsletter via email. Contact us at office@vhocc.org. Thank you!

6 Ways to Help Volunteer Hospice

- Volunteer.
- Donate at volunteerhospice.org.
- Add Volunteer Hospice to your will.
- Donate needed items to the Lending Closet.
- 'Like' our organization Facebook page.
- 'Follow' us on LinkedIn.



A big thanks to the North Olympic Mustang Club! Thirteen beautifully restored and cared-for Ford Mustangs recently rolled into the VHOCC parking area (what a sight!) to present us with a \$4,000 donation, raised during their Show 'n' Shine event in May.