

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.

LIVING IN THE FACE OF UNCERTAINTY

The clouds above us join and separate.

The breeze in the courtyard leaves and returns.

Life is like that, so why not relax?

Who can stop us from celebrating?

Lu Yu

Scanning all the violent events of recent months, hurricanes, mass shootings, fires, it is no wonder many people live in constant fear and anxiety. There are those who are even afraid to go anywhere for fear of what might happen. There are others already living with the anxiety of a life-limiting illness, this can be an added stressor. How do we continue to move forward despite the fear and anxiety generated by threats to our safety and security?

Psychology defines the difference between fear and anxiety as follows: fear is our response to a clear and present danger; anxiety is the response we feel to an anticipated event, or one not present. In our world of rapid communication, many people experience anxiety in response to the constant bombardment of perceived threats from natural disasters, like hurricanes, fires, or storms. Others are dealing with anticipated or chronic life threatening illnesses or recent personal losses. Whatever our personal current life circumstances, we are heading into a season of multiple holidays which, though joyful, can also be a source of multiple demands and increased stress. It is not unusual to experience feeling overwhelmed.

In Benjamin Hoff's delightful book, *The Tao of Pooh*, he recommends an important first step to **continue on page 2**



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All Delivery Teams Volunteers

Volunteers of the month

July: JP Persall

August: Connie West

September: Paul Robertson

October: Walt Blendermann

November: Rob Feller

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becoming calm and clearing one's mind: simply step outside and enjoy the sounds of the birds. Focusing on the sights and sounds of nature helps diminish the effects of stressful circumstances. When you breathe deeply, all the way to your toes, you will feel your anxiety start to release and then you can move forward. Life is filled with uncertainty—that cannot be changed. However, each person can choose how to respond to the uncertainty. Courage, compassion, patience, and acceptance—these things help create the foundation of healthy coping. Where do we find them?

For many people, especially those who are dealing with illness, loss, or grief, this time of year can be an emotional roller coaster. Those feelings and experiences can make it difficult to participate in the holiday season. Yet the next few weeks are filled with traditions and expectations that all seem to demand we socialize, be happy and live as if all is normal. How are you supposed to get through all of this when your life is definitely NOT “normal” right now?

The most important thing you can do is to give yourself permission to do what feels right for you and not let others dictate that for you. Just as there is no one right way to grieve, there is no one right way to handle the upcoming season. Stay connected with yourself and be gentle with yourself. No matter how good your coping skills, you might feel especially vulnerable at any given time, so ask for help. Don't be afraid to say no, while not isolating yourself. Take breaks when you need them. And, sometimes a little push beyond your comfort level can bring wonderful results.

Many times in their lifetime, each person faces times of danger, and also the concurrent opportunities for personal transformation. For many, the anxiety is still there long after the event or the threat passes. For many, it is the not knowing that is the hardest. With the support and compassion of a loving community — family, friends, even strangers — frightened, grieving people can gradually become confident enough to hope for and face the future. When we care for one another we can begin to live more in calmness and peace, to experience a change in spirit. We can learn to love more deeply, appreciate and bask in the sun more fully and yes, become less afraid, more free and let our spirits dance with joyful abandon.

By Sally Featherstone, bereavement volunteer & grief group facilitator

30 YEARS OF DIPPING

The Port Angeles Polar Bear Dip will be “breaking the ice” on January 1st, at 10 am at Hollywood Beach: **30 years** of dipping! For VHOCC, 2018 marks **40 years** of serving the community, and 6 years of participating in the Polar Bear Dip. Can you think of a better way of starting off a year of celebration than to jump into the icy waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca on New Year’s Day morning? I think not!

Here’s how you can show your support:

1. Take the plunge, and get the craziest thing you will do in 2018 out of the way on the first day!
2. Come as a spectator and support the dippers and the efforts of VHOCC at the beach.
3. Challenge someone else to dip in the water. Pledge any \$ amount of your choosing that you will donate to VHOCC if the person challenged comes and actually gets wet. Challenge forms at the VHOCC office.

VHOCC will offer hot beverages and pastries to the chilled dippers and spectators. To celebrate 2018 as a milestone year for VHOCC and the Polar Bear Dip, we will have tee shirts for sale, with proceeds going to VHOCC.

Join us and support VHOCC!

Information: Dan Welden, 360-477-2586

An expanded version of this newsletter is available to electronic subscribers to our newsletter. In particular, “Living in the Face of Uncertainty” includes tips for dealing with the holidays, and “30 years of Dipping” includes a registration form for the Polar Bear Challenge. You can become an electronic subscriber to the newsletter by going online to:

<http://vhocc.org/at-a-glance/newsletters/>

40 YEARS OF SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Recently I attended a celebration of life for a hospice patient with whom I had sat weekly for one and one half years. I felt a little out of place at the reception and stationed myself in a corner to wait for an appropriate moment to speak with the family. From across the room the patient’s wife saw me, navigated the room and we hugged and cried in each other’s arms. Her heartfelt thanks for what our hospice had done for her family touched me at a level I had never experienced before. I realized how deeply through the years our unique little hospice has been there for many thousands of patients and their loved ones.

The history of VHOCC is a beautiful story made more beautiful by the extraordinary vision and foresight of its founder, Rose Crumb. In this increasingly for-profit, depersonalized world, VHOCC is one of the few volunteer hospices in the nation that offers nursing care without billing the patient’s insurance. In carrying out Rose’s vision, VHOCC has become a beloved and vital part of the local community for the care it provides to patients and families at most challenging times. VHOCC and Rose were recently featured in a news article about the hospice’s history. It is nicely written with beautiful photos of Rose, staff, and family members. The article was reprinted in the Seattle Times and can be viewed on Facebook (VHOCC Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County).

2018 marks VHOCC’s 40th anniversary. A time to celebrate all that has been accomplished. A time to look to the future and to do everything possible to ensure that VHOCC remains a vibrant force of good and love in our community.

Honor yourself for your part in this incredible journey. Thank you all for all you do.

By David James, respite volunteer, board member



VOLUNTEER HOSPICE OF CLALLAM COUNTY

Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County
540 E. 8th St.
Port Angeles, WA 98362

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1978-2018

**40 years of serving
the community**

**Volunteer Hospice of
Clallam County**

Events

- December 12 - VHOCC Holiday Annual General Meeting
- December 1-31 - Radiant Light Christmas Tree
Volunteer Hospice Office, Port Angeles
- January 1 - Polar Bear Dip - 30th anniversary
Hollywood Beach, Port Angeles
- 2018 - VHOCC's 40th Anniversary

Programs (registration required: call 360-452-1511)

- Community Education & Volunteer Training Series
 - Fridays, March 16 - April 20, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, Sequim
 - Wednesdays, Sept. 19 - Oct. 24, 6 - 8 pm, Port Angeles
- Port Angeles Grief Support Groups
 - Tuesdays, January 23 - March 13, 2 - 3:30 pm
 - Tuesdays, May 22 - July 10, 2 - 3:30 pm
- Sequim Grief Support Groups
 - Mondays, March 12 - April 9, 1 - 3 pm
 - Mondays, July 9 - August 6, 1 - 3 pm

- * Drop-In Support Groups in Sequim and Port Angeles (after having completed one of the Grief Support Groups above)
- * Bereavement One-on-One Support
- * "Living Alone Now" Workshops
- * **For dates & locations, call 360-452-1511**