



# The Journey

Care and Support for Patients and Families Dealing with Terminal Illness Volume 18 Issue 1 • Spring 2025

## Introducing April Hansen

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

— Leo Buscaglia



April Hansen, Chief Executive Officer

As we entered 2025, Hospice of Spokane welcomed new leadership at the helm as April Hansen settled into her new role as Chief Executive Officer. Although new to this role, April is not new to the organization. Over 20 years ago April started her career at Hospice of Spokane as a Case Managing Nurse and set goals to move into a leadership role early in her tenure.

For the last 18 years, April supported and steered our clinical teams as the Director of Performance Improvement. Working cross functionally with all departments, April has truly become the expert in all things hospice. Her deep-rooted knowledge of best

practices, policy, wound care, nursing, pain management, volunteer requirements, payor sources and many more, has paved her path to succeed in her new role as CEO.

Born and raised in Maine, April was raised in a rural community where she cared for aging family members and often looked after younger nieces and nephews. Compassion and care were a part of her upbringing, which spearheaded April's decision to go into the medical field. She completed her nursing degree, with the expectations to take her career path towards labor and delivery.

Twenty-one years ago, April and her husband, Troy, made the move from Maine to Spokane, WA and April's career in hospice began.

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Left to right: Logan, April and Coleton

Although vastly different from maternity care and labor and delivery, April found end of life care just as fulfilling and meaningful. More recently, April made the decision to further her education, earning a master's degree in business administration.

In this new role, April brings expertise in nursing, healthcare administration, policy and compliance management, and a proven commitment to providing quality care. She is excited to continue growing her professional relationships with community partners, donors, volunteers and Hospice of Spokane staff.

For the last two decades, April and Troy have loved living in the pacific northwest raising their three sons. April enjoys watching her kids play basketball, often traveling to support their teams. She also finds joy in quilting and spending time at the family lake cabin in north Idaho.

*I am loving my new role with Hospice of Spokane and enjoy working with the community we serve. We have such an incredible agency and team, and I am excited to continue that work with our team and community partners to fulfill our mission."*

*— April Hansen*

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THE JOURNEY is a publication of Hospice of Spokane, located in Spokane, Washington. Hospice of Spokane is northeast Washington's longstanding nonprofit, community-based hospice, providing care and support to people nearing the end of life, their families and the grieving. Patient-centered care is provided by interdisciplinary teams comprised of physicians, nurses, social workers, nurse aides, volunteers, chaplains, bereavement counselors and other professionals.



# The Power of Donating Time

## 2024 Stats from the Volunteer Department:

- Total volunteer hours in 2024 were **8,921**
- We received an average of 6 referrals per week for volunteers, totaling **316** referrals for the year
- We had a total of **801** non-Hospice House visits
- We had **61** active Hospice House volunteers.
- Volunteers drove a total of **62,044** miles to serve Hospice of Spokane patients



The Volunteer Department is managed by Volunteer Coordinator Karice Scott.

As our community's longstanding nonprofit hospice provider, one portion of our business that doesn't get enough spotlight is our amazing group of volunteers! Although the group is constantly evolving, one thing that always remains consistent is the compassion, care, and support our volunteers deliver for our patients and their loved ones.

In 2024, Hospice of Spokane had 219 volunteers with 165 of them active throughout the year. In line with our mission statement of serving patients of all ages, our volunteers also range in age from their 20's into their 80's. Last year we hosted three volunteer training sessions, welcoming 32 new community members to our list of volunteers.



Paws for Comfort dog: Sophia, Owner: Teresa Reynolds

There are several different opportunities for volunteer work throughout our organization including shifts at the Hospice House, "in-home" support- which is wherever the patient is currently residing, in the office, or out in the community for outreach events or Hospice of Spokane fundraising events. Over half of the hours donated each year by our volunteers is spent in the Hospice House, which totaled over 4,500 hours from 1600 shifts filled in 2024.



Volunteer: Marguerite Busch and Volunteer Coordinator: Karice Scott

Volunteer hours at the Hospice House are often filled by providing companionship to patients, cooking, completing various housekeeping tasks, providing music for enjoyment and giving tours. When visiting patients in their home, volunteers still provide companionship but also help with light housekeeping or chores and provide respite care. We also offer companionship visits with our Paws for Comfort program, which provides our

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*"This quote sums up a true belief of mine: 'Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you want to become.' I have always been a helper, caregiver, helpful in my life with family and had a 40-year career as a registered nurse. So, in my retirement I continue to do what I believe is good. Being a hospice volunteer is good for my soul, and I believe on the receiving side, good for their soul. It's just such a blessing to spend time with someone you don't even know but love doing it anyway."*

-MAUREEN KOHLER, VOLUNTEER SINCE 2023



# Celebrating A Successful Taste of Life 2025

On February 28th, 2025, Hospice of Spokane held our 20th annual fundraising gala, Taste of Life, at the Historic Davenport Hotel. This well attended evening was a sold-out event and we welcomed many new attendees and partners to the celebration this year.

Our guests stunned in their “glitz and glam” attire for the evening, while sipping on tastes from local wineries, cideries and breweries and dining on an array of hors d’oeuvres prepared by the Davenport’s culinary team. The ballroom was filled with music from the Zonky Jazz Band. Fundraising activities were led by emcee, Robyn Nance, and auctioneer, Rose Backs of Elite Auctions, and included a jewelry raffle, mystery boxes, a silent and live auction, a paddle raise and ended with an exciting bout of Battle of the Bottle.



These families shared stories of their journey about their child’s diagnosis, the support received from Hospice of Spokane, the kindness and compassion shown by our employees and volunteers and celebrated where they are today and the years they have been given to love on their precious children. Hospice of Spokane recognizes the importance of serving all ages and we are proud to be a part of these families’ stories. We are honored they allowed and trusted us to share their stories with our village of supporters, community partners and donors.



One of the highlights of this event is that we get the opportunity to share stories that have helped build our organization and truly exemplify the works of our mission. This year, we introduced two families, both of whom have utilized our Pediatric Palliative and Hospice Program for the past several years. Hospice of Spokane has always served all ages, but we most often serve adult and senior patients, which is what most people associate with palliative and hospice care.





We would like to thank our sponsors for allowing this evening to happen and for the numerous volunteers who supported the event behind the scenes and/or working at the event. We are grateful for the support and ticket sales that this community gave us by attending the event. The generosity of all involved is very much appreciated and commended. Thank you, until next year!



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# Cultivating Cultural Connections

As we reflect on the last six months at Hospice of Spokane and our commitment to cultural competence, we are proud to report that we have continued to deepen our knowledge and exposure to the staff within our organization.

In October, we had the pleasure of welcoming speaker, Seniorita Margarita Plascencia-Janes, who also built an altar to highlight one of the holiday's most popular traditions. Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a holiday widely observed in Mexico that involves loved ones gathering to pay respects and remember those who have passed. An altar, or ofrenda, is built to encourage visits from the deceased loved one. They are typically decorated with marigolds, perforated paper, photos and memorabilia, and the decedent's favorite foods and beverages. For one week, staff and volunteers had the opportunity to contribute to the altar if they wished to remember a loved one. At the heart of this holiday, it serves as a reminder that death is inevitable, but it can be celebrated.



In the new year, we held an employee potluck to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Employees were encouraged to bring in their versions of popular Chinese dishes, such as spring rolls and fried rice, to share with the group. This new year's celebration is connected to the Chinese lunar calendar, which began on January 29th and concluded on February 4th. This year is the Year of the Snake, which is the sixth animal in the Chinese zodiac cycle. The event had an amazing showing in participation

and attendance and concluded with everyone cracking open a delicious fortune cookie.

Most recently, we welcomed Christina Kamkosi Chery who gave a wonderful presentation about the culture of Malawi, Africa. Originally from Malawi, Christina moved to the U.S. over a decade ago and is currently a program manager of Community Health Investments at Providence Inland Northwest. For lunch, staff and volunteers were invited to dine on an African inspired homemade stew, a chicken curry dish with white rice, and African banana bread. Christina's presentation discussed Malawi's history, end of life beliefs, spiritual practices, and the grieving process. In Malawian culture, death is viewed as a transition of life rather than the end. Grieving rituals differ based on their religious practices; however, a memorial service does not happen until 40 days have passed. Through personal anecdotes about her life growing up and her life in America, everyone in attendance was captivated by Christina's wit and sense of humor.

These presentations have served as wonderful educational opportunities that allow Hospice of Spokane to better serve diverse populations and support our mission.



patients the option to have a visit from a vetted and trained service dog to love on and play with. Our volunteers provide our patients with such an important piece of our service and offer a level of care that truly is invaluable to the patient, their caretaker and their loved ones. It takes a special person to donate their time and kindness to ensure

people they do not know have their needs met in their final days. We are so appreciative and grateful that these 219 special people have chosen Hospice of Spokane as a venue of service to volunteer at and share their time and talents with.

*"It's easy to underestimate our influence. The small acts of kindness we provide can be so meaningful to the clients and families."*

—RANDY OTTERHOLT, VOLUNTEER SINCE 2011



Volunteer: Randy Otterholt

*"I have continued to be a HOS volunteer since 2002 as I am drawn to the intimacy, sacredness and reminder of what is most important in my life that each encounter provides. I derive great satisfaction from being of service to the clients/family and helping to give them some respite, support and presence at this birth into what comes next for us all."*

—JULIE ZINK, VOLUNTEER SINCE 2002

*"Volunteering isn't always easy, but it always is meaningful to the patient, their family, and to me. The daughter of one patient told me that 'the way to get on my mom's bad side is to interrupt her visit with you.' I've found that clients appreciate the chance to talk about their lives, families, memories of favorite music, movies, etc. It's a pleasure for me to hear about their lives, and to do small things for them that can have a positive impact on their day. It is truly an honor to do what I can to help them and their families during very difficult times."*

—DON CUTLER, VOLUNTEER SINCE 2024



Volunteer: Kim Predisik

## Thank you to our donors

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous donors and community partners who invest in Hospice of Spokane and help sustain our mission. Your support means the world to us, and we are deeply appreciative of your contributions.

To view the full list of donors who supported Hospice of Spokane from July 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, please visit [www.hospiceofspokane.org](http://www.hospiceofspokane.org)





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