



# The Journey

Care and Support for Patients and Families Dealing with Terminal Illness Volume 18 Issue 2 • Fall 2025

Compassion. It's  
not just a word.  
It's a way of  
living. It's not a  
concept. It's love  
in action.  
-Jeff Brown

## From Caregiver to Advocate

Hospice of Spokane was introduced to Melinda Mullet when she became a volunteer in July 2024. After caring for an ill family member, she was inspired to further explore her newfound passion for healthcare access and public health policy. While completing her degree at Whitworth University, Melinda received the honor of being one of three recipients of the Hatfield Prize, which included an award for students to conduct a research project on a social policy that impacts the community.



Melinda Mullet at the Honors Capstone Exhibition at Whitworth University.

For the research project, Melinda chose to focus on hospice care access, the barriers people face in receiving care and the misconceptions about what hospice care is. In her research, she discovered that only about fifty percent of the population that qualifies for hospice care uses their benefits. For Eastern Washington, Melinda noted the gaps in benefit use could be due to limited access in rural communities and lack of knowledge and/or a misunderstanding of what hospice care is.

Hospice of Spokane was honored to have Melinda as an active volunteer in the last half of her schooling in Spokane. Our community will undoubtedly benefit from her and others in younger generations continued drive to better the care of our aging population. Melinda's complete research project is available to read by visiting: <https://cpjustice.org/flipbook/2025-hatfield-prize-reports/>.

# Message From The Chief Executive Officer



April Hansen, Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends,

This past year has been a time of change and growth for Hospice of Spokane. After 20 years of leadership, our CEO, Gina Drummond, retired at the end of 2024. We also welcomed our new Medical Director, Dr. Lynn Bergman, in September of 2024, and are so grateful for the energy and expertise she brings to our team.

As new hospice providers come to the Spokane area, our focus remains the same—serving our community with compassion, dignity, and the very best end-of-life care possible. Our mission continues to guide everything we do, and it's what connects us to the families we serve and to one another.

Through changes in leadership, growing competition, and the shifts within healthcare, our commitment to our patients, their loved ones, and our community remains the same. We're so thankful for your ongoing support and for partnering with us as we continue this meaningful work together.

April Hansen  
Chief Executive Officer

Thank you so much for the excellent care and loving hearts during such a difficult time with the loss of my husband."

—Patient's Spouse

Hospice of Spokane  
121 South Arthur  
PO Box 2215  
Spokane, WA 99210  
Phone: 509-456-0438  
Toll free: 888-459-0438  
Fax: 509-458-0359  
info@hospiceofspokane.org  
www.hospiceofspokane.org

## HOSPICE OF SPOKANE 2025 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Officers

Mike Payne, JD - Chair  
Adriane Leithauser - Vice Chair  
Mark Bray - Treasurer  
Ken Fry - Secretary

### Members

Scott Baumgartner, MD  
Joyce Cameron  
Rochelle Crollard -  
Immediate Past Chair  
Robert Hawley  
Mike Lopez, BSN  
Becky Nappi

### Emeritus

Johnny Cox, PhD

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.

# Is Hospice Care a Calling?

When people hear that someone works in hospice care, the response is often the same: *“I don’t know how you do what you do.”* What many don’t realize is that hospice is not only about loss—it’s about love, connection, and honoring a life well lived. End of life can be a time of celebration, of sharing stories, of passing down memories, and of simply being present as a parent, child, grandchild, or friend.

There are many reasons why our staff choose to dedicate themselves to this work. For some, the decision is deeply personal. For others, it is the mission, the people, and the fulfillment they discover once they work in hospice care. For Heidi Turner, one of our case-managing nurses, the inspiration came from her own family. When her grandfather—“her hero”—was diagnosed with lung cancer, Heidi became his primary caregiver. As his illness progressed, hospice stepped in. She remembers his hospice team being *“so great, helpful, and caring during an extremely difficult time.”* That experience lit a spark in Heidi and inspired her to pursue a career in hospice care. Today, she says she is truly living her dream.

Hospice of Spokane’s Medical Director, Dr. Lynn Bergman, made the transition from emergency medicine to end-of-life care in 2024. Unlike the patients she saw in the ER, she says that *“the patients we serve understand that they are nearing end of life and desire support to manage their symptoms and make whatever time they have left the best quality possible. This feels like a task that is manageable, rewarding, and free of some of the challenges that affect many areas of healthcare in the U.S. these days.”*

Like Heidi, many of our nurses see this work as a privilege and a calling. Longstanding nurse Christina Kush describes her role this way: *“My work is ensuring that each of our clients die as beautifully and peacefully as possible, on their terms. Reminiscing with clients and their families about their unique adventures and the sorrows life has offered is not only captivating, but sacred... Everyone is valuable, beautiful, and important.”*

The lessons flow both ways. As we care for patients and families, we also grow ourselves. Social worker, Mary Bug-Smith, reflects: *“I have learned so much about how to live life to the fullest, to not take anything for granted and how to live a life that will lead to a peaceful completion of my life. I am so grateful to be allowed into their lives where I can help make this difficult time of life a little bit easier for those I serve.”*

Not all who are called to hospice work provide direct clinical care. In our Development Department, Camille Jacome has the unique privilege of connecting with families after their loved one’s passing. She often hears heartfelt stories of gratitude, sharing that families frequently tell her their loved one *“was at peace when they passed.”* Camille says these moments remind her daily of the impact Hospice of Spokane has on the community.

At Hospice of Spokane, every staff member brings their own story, their own lessons, and their own heart to this work. Together, we ensure that every patient and family experiences dignity, compassion, and peace at life’s end. This is what makes the decision about working for Hospice of Spokane easy. Realizing the positive impact you can have on the patient and their family in one of life’s most difficult chapters is why we stay.



# The Wilma Engstrom Memorial Golf Scramble for Hospice of Spokane 2025

On Friday, August 1st, Hospice of Spokane held the 2025 Wilma Engstrom Memorial Golf Scramble for Hospice of Spokane. This marks our second year displaying the new name of the event, which honors Wilma Engstrom's legacy as a long-standing volunteer, supporter, and friend to our organization.

Unlike last year, Mother Nature treated us kindly with a much cooler day out on the course and even presented a few light rain showers. This year's Scramble was a sold-out event with 144 golfers, which included several new players along with many familiar ones. Players and volunteers had the chance to bid on 26 silent auction baskets, which included Gonzaga University basketball tickets, lift tickets to Mt. Spokane Ski & Snowboard Park, and a party bus rental, just to name a few.

The standout fundraiser of the day was enhancement sales! While enhancement purchases are not new to the Scramble, this year they changed the game, allowing our winning teams to have scores of 25, 43 and 44. For comparison, a typical round of golf at Indian Canyon Golf Course, a score in the 80's is considered good for most amateurs! This is where the enhancements, or "cheats," come into play!



Everyone had the opportunity to purchase string and compassion cards. The cards included the opportunity to take a mulligan, a kick, and a throw, in addition to teeing off from the women's tee (for men) or to use a second mulligan, kick, or throw (for women). The string could be used once, in measurements of 12 inches, but you could use multiple pieces of string per hole. In fact, prior to the shotgun start, we discovered that we completely sold out of one of our enhancements and someone had to run back to the office to retrieve more!



After the teams wrapped up their round of golf on the course, players and volunteers gathered for a delicious lunch on the patio and our awards ceremony.

This year's event raised over \$56,000—another incredible success for our annual golf fundraiser! We extend our heartfelt thanks to our generous sponsors, community partners, in-kind donors, volunteers, golfers, and the team at Indian Canyon Golf Course for making it all possible. We are continually amazed and deeply grateful for the outpouring of support we receive year after year!



THE WILMA ENGSTROM MEMORIAL GOLF

# Scramble

FOR  
**HOSPICE**  
OF SPOKANE

## THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS

### TITLE SPONSORS

Heritage Funeral & Cremation  
The Kalispel Tribe of Indians and  
Northern Quest Resort & Casino

### LUNCH SPONSORS

Bellevue Healthcare  
Lydig

### DOUBLE EAGLE SPONSORS

Dupree Building Specialties  
Riverview Retirement Community  
US Bank Private Wealth Management

### EAGLE SPONSORS

Hanna Advertising  
Randall & Hurley

### BIRDIE SPONSOR

D. A. Davidson

### HOLE SPONSORS

DZA  
Hunter Elder Law  
KR Creative Strategies  
Walt's Mailing Service

### GOLDEN TICKET RAFFLE SPONSOR

The Kalispel Tribe of Indians and  
Northern Quest Resort & Casino

### MEDIA SPONSOR

KXLY News 4

### PRINT SPONSOR

Minuteman Press Spokane Valley

### HOLE-IN-ONE SPONSOR

Lithia Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram FIAT of Spokane

# 2024 in Review

## Our Mission

Hospice of Spokane embraces its role as a model for excellence in end-of-life care. We are a nonprofit, nondenominational, community-based organization that:

- Affirms life and intends to neither hasten nor prolong death
- Honors the dignity of the terminally ill
- Strives to alleviate suffering – physical, emotional, social and spiritual
- Provides comprehensive hospice care and services
- Educates the community about hospice services and end-of-life issues
- Offers bereavement counseling services and support
- Embraces all cultures

---

## Data Points 2024

Patients Served:  
**2006**

Average Daily Census:  
**254**

Days of Care:  
**93,124**

Average Length of Stay:  
**54.3 DAYS**

Median Length of Stay:  
**16 DAYS**

## Our Philosophy

The final stages of life are as important as all other stages, deserving presence, respect and dignity, as well as freedom of choice. We provide care which emphasizes:

- Principles of death with dignity and grace
- Palliative care (comfort care)
- Individual's control over life
- Alleviation of fears of dying alone
- Support for family and loved ones before, during and following death

---

*We serve patients in whatever setting they call home.*

We served a total of **509** patients at our hospice house.

We served **242** Veterans and paid special tribute to them with a certificate honoring their service.

We had **165** volunteers who generously donated 8,921 hours and drive 62,044 donated miles to serve our patients and their families.

Our Chaplains provided **1,579** visits to patients and their loved ones of all faiths and spiritual backgrounds.

Our Bereavement Counselors provided grief counseling and support to **1,872** family members and close friends of those who had been served by Hospice of Spokane in 2024.

Our Nurses provided a total of **21,752** visits to patients, ensuring the patients' needs were addressed and provided education and training to family/friends/caregivers.

Our Home Nurse Aides provided **17,527** visits to patients to assist with their care.

Our Social Workers had **8,928** visits to patients, providing emotional, social, and care planning to the patient and their loved ones.

Our team drove **663,947** miles to serve patients.

# A Legacy of Kindness, Care and Service

Earlier this year, the Hospice of Spokane Board of Directors honored our former CEO of the previous 20 years, Gina Drummond, with the unveiling of a custom garden bench! Gina retired from our organization on December 31, 2024.

The brass plaque articulates the gratitude of the Board of Directors for Gina, noting that her *“commitment, compassion and vision have made a lasting impact on our organization and the community, leaving a legacy of kindness, care and service.”*

The beautiful bench resides in the memorial garden at the Hospice House and highlights the mission style architectural details of the building. Just like the plaque reads about Gina, it is our hope that this bench will also leave a lasting impact for the families that visit the Hospice House. While navigating the difficult times of saying goodbye to a family member or friend, we hope this bench serves as a place of solitude, reflection, and peace to those that need it.



*Pictured: Gina Drummond*

## Thank you to our Donors

As we close in on almost 50 years of service, we are even more grateful for the amazing community that has helped sustain our mission and the patients we serve. Thank you for your support, the monetary donations, the in-kind donations, and the volunteer hours. We are so appreciative of our community!

To see a full list of donors that supported Hospice of Spokane January 1-June 30, 2025, please visit: [hospiceofspokane.org](http://hospiceofspokane.org)



PO Box 2215  
Spokane, WA 99210-2215

**Address Service Requested**

- Please remove my name from mailing list
- Note address correction
- I am receiving duplicate newsletters  
(Please send your printed address)

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 681  
Spokane WA

*Please Join Us For An Enchanted Evening*



SAVE  
THE  
DATE

FRIDAY  
FEB 27  
2026

THE HISTORIC DAVENPORT