HOSPICE OF SPOKANE

The Journey

Care and Support for Patients and Families Dealing with Terminal Illness *Volume 19 Issue 2 • Fall 2026*

"There are only four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers. Those who are currently caregivers. Those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver."

—Rosalyn Carter

The Importance of Autonomy

By Dr. Lynn Bergman, Hospice of Spokane Medical Director



An important feature of Hospice of Spokane's philosophy as we support individuals and their loved ones in the final stages of life is to honor their control over their life. Autonomy is something we strive to provide in all aspects of care. This can give back a measure of dignity and choice to those who have experienced loss as illness impacts them.

One of the decisions our patients face is whether they are able to continue living in the same setting. Some are fortunate to have robust family support that allows them to safely spend the end of life in the home they have been in for a long time, especially for residents of the more rural parts of our service area: the lifestyle they enjoy, the views they have come to love, the comforts of a familiar environment and maybe even a home they have built themselves can be a priority for them in their last days. We take pride

> It is our privilege to support patients in making the right decisions for their own circumstances, beliefs, and priorities which are unique for each of us."

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A Season of Gratitude



Dear Friends,

As autumn arrives and the days grow shorter, we are reminded of the beauty found in moments of connection—gathering with loved ones, sharing stories, and appreciating the people who make a difference in our lives. After a challenging summer, with multiple fires affecting our community, the change of season feels especially welcome. It offers an opportunity to pause, reflect, and be grateful for the people that make our community strong.

At Hospice of Spokane, we see the power of connection every day. Our patients and families invite our nurses, aides, social workers, chaplains, volunteers, and other team members into some of life's most meaningful moments. Together, we help ensure that people facing a terminal illness can experience comfort, dignity, and compassionate care, surrounded by the people and places that matter most to them.

Your past support has been an important part of making that care possible.

Because of donors like you, we can continue reaching patients and families who need hospice services, offering not only expert clinical care but also emotional, spiritual, and practical support. Your generosity helps us meet people where they are and walk alongside them through an incredibly important chapter of life.

This fall, I want to thank you for being part of our community and for believing in the value of compassionate end-of-life care. Your generosity is more than a gift—it is a reflection of the compassion we share for our neighbors and our commitment to ensuring that no one has to face this journey alone.

Wishing you and your loved ones a peaceful and meaningful autumn.

With gratitude,

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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 Community: SANEWA Brings Spokane Together for Local Seniors

You may have heard Spokane described as a "little big town." In terms of sheer size, Spokane is the second-largest city in Washington State, so we are certainly not small by any measure. Yet, as the primary regional hub for Eastern Washington, our community maintains a relaxed pace of life and deep roots that make it feel a little more like a small town.

That spirit is reflected in the way our community comes together. Local businesses, nonprofits, and service organizations frequently share resources, make connections, and work side by side to address the needs of our neighbors. There is no better example of this collaborative spirit than the Senior Action Network Eastern Washington (SANEWA), pronounced san-wa.

For more than 15 years, SANEWA has brought together professionals and organizations dedicated to supporting older adults throughout the greater Spokane area. As the area's largest senior support network, SANEWA now has more than 70 active members representing home care, assisted living, healthcare, legal, financial, and other senior support services.

Members gather each month to share resources, build relationships, increase awareness of the services available to seniors, and coordinate community events. For Edwina Gilbertson, Outreach Coordinator for Hospice of Spokane and a longtime SANEWA member, these gatherings are about far more than networking, they are about finding ways to make life better for local seniors.

"It is truly amazing what this group can accomplish when we work together. Partnering with community leaders toward one common goal creates a massive, positive impact for the seniors in our area."

That impact can be seen through SANEWA's many hands-on projects. One example is the Beautification Project, where members and volunteers roll up their sleeves for a morning of cleaning, painting, organizing, and revitalizing senior living spaces. While the work may seem simple, its impact is significant. Creating a warm, welcoming environment allows residents to feel proud of their surroundings and gives them a comfortable place to welcome family and friends.



For SANEWA members, it is also an opportunity to step outside their professional roles and work together on something tangible. Rather than simply talking about supporting seniors, they are actively creating positive changes.

The same spirit is at the heart of SANEWA's annual Christmas Wrap & Deliver event. Each holiday season, members, volunteers, and generous donors purchase

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Celebrating 25 Years of the Wilma Engstrom Memorial Golf Scramble



This year marked a special milestone as we celebrated the 25th Annual Wilma Engstrom Memorial Golf Scramble for Hospice of Spokane! Continuing a tradition that has brought our community together for years, the tournament was held at Indian Canyon Golf Course on Friday, July 31. The early shotgun start made for a beautiful morning on the course, and, as always, there was plenty of fun and laughter throughout the day.



Once again, the tournament sold out, bringing together a wonderful mix of returning golfers and new friends and supporters. We always enjoy hearing how new golfers found their way to our tournament. For some, it's because of a personal hospice experience with a loved one. Others joined because a friend invited them, they spotted a flyer at their local golf course, or a business they support became a tournament sponsor. Whatever brought them to the course, one thing was clear: everyone came ready to have fun, support Hospice of Spokane, and make a difference for the patients and families we serve.

This year, we added several new activities and fundraising opportunities, and the response was fantastic. Our Mystery Bags were an immediate hit, selling out within the first hour of registration check-in. With many golfers asking if we could offer more next year, it's safe to say this new addition will be back! We also added additional raffle items, which caught the attention of golfers and volunteers alike and helped increase participation throughout the day.

Another new favorite was our team name contest. Each team submitted a creative name, and golfers had the opportunity to vote for their favorite at Hole 10. Many teams had fun incorporating puns related to their professions. Tracy Jewelers, for example, came ready to play as "Diamonds in the Rough." But the winner, by a landslide, was the women's team from Heritage Funeral & Cremation with "Six Feet Under Par." Other favorites included Putter Late Than Never, Fairway to Heaven, Living on a Par, and Til Death Do Us Par.



The day wrapped up with lunch and a short awards ceremony on the patio, emceed by Ian Cull of KXLY News 4.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our golfers, sponsors, volunteers, donors, and community partners, this year's tournament raised nearly $58,000 to support Hospice of Spokane's mission. What a wonderful way to celebrate 25 years of this special event!



We are incredibly grateful to everyone who helps make the golf scramble possible year after year. A special thank-you goes to Indian Canyon Golf Course for welcoming us back and providing such a wonderful setting for the tournament.

Here's to 25 years of golf, friendship, community, and compassionate support for Hospice of Spokane. Thank you for making this milestone year one to remember!





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Continued from front cover.

in serving the far reaches of our four-county service area to facilitate those who choose to continue in their home until the end of life. Likewise, there are folks who do not want to die in their home for a variety of reasons. If they want to find a new and supportive environment to allow family to remain in the family role rather than meeting caregiving needs, we can suggest resources and provide support in that effort. For some, our Hospice House is the ideal environment for the last days of life.



There are a number of decisions large and small that those we serve face. Am I comfortable taking medications to alleviate my symptoms? Is it okay to not encourage my loved one to eat when they don't seem to want to? How involved do I want my family to be in the rituals at the immediate time of death? How can I reach out to those I feel called to communicate with at this stage of life? Do I want to allow hospice staff, including bath aides, to meet my most intimate personal needs? It is our privilege to support patients in making the right decisions for their own circumstances, beliefs, and priorities which are unique for each of us.

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 January 1, 2026, to June 30, 2026, please visit our website:
www.hospiceofspokane.org

DATA POINTS 2025

Patients Served: 1,731
Average Daily Census: 205
Days of Care: 74,917
Average Length of Stay: ..... 55.5 days
Median Length of Stay: ..... 17 days

WE SERVE PATIENTS IN WHATEVER SETTING THEY CALL HOME.

We served a total of **497** patients at our hospice house.

Our team drove **613,857** miles to serve patients.

We served **184** Veterans and paid special tribute to them with a certificate honoring their service.

We had **159** volunteers who generously donated 9,503 hours and drove 50,479 donated miles to serve our patients and their families.

Our Chaplains provided **1,035** visits to patients and their loved ones of all faiths and spiritual backgrounds.

Our Bereavement Counselors provided grief counseling and support to **1,546** family members and close friends of those who had been served by Hospice of Spokane in 2025.

Our Nurses provided a total of **19,659** visits to patients, ensuring the patients' needs were addressed and provided education and training to family/friends/caregivers.

Our Home Nurse Aides provided **17,775** visits to patients to assist with their care.

Our Social Workers had **9,132** visits to patients, providing emotional, social, and care planning to the patient and their loved ones.

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and wrap hundreds of gifts and gift cards for under-resourced seniors.

In partnership with American Medical Response (AMR), the group then delivers those gifts directly to senior communities, accompanied by a volunteer dressed as St. Nick. The deliveries bring smiles, laughter, and sometimes tears—but perhaps most importantly, they bring a reminder that no one is forgotten during the holidays.

The gifts themselves are meaningful, but the messages behind them may be even more important: you are remembered, you are valued, and you are part of this community.

SANEWA's strength comes from the diversity of its members. A senior may need help with healthcare, housing, financial planning, legal questions, in-home support, or simply knowing where to turn when a new challenge arises. By bringing professionals together, SANEWA creates connections that make it easier for seniors and their families to find the right resources.

It is a powerful reminder that community support does not always come from one organization or one large initiative. Sometimes, it is created through dozens of people contributing their time, knowledge, resources, and compassion.

Spokane continues to grow, but organizations like SANEWA demonstrate that growth does not have to come at the expense of connection. In fact, these relationships may be part of what allows our community to maintain the small-town spirit that makes it special.

Through every meeting, project, volunteer opportunity, and holiday delivery, SANEWA members are demonstrating what can happen when people work together toward a common goal.

In a city with a big heart, they are helping ensure that Spokane's seniors are seen, valued, supported—and never forgotten.

HOSPICE
OF SPOKANE

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