



**Willamette
Vital Health**

Previously known as Willamette Valley Hospice

journeys

fall 2022



WVH Makes Strides Toward Health Equity

During the pandemic, we as a nation learned a lot about inequities in the healthcare system. Covid vaccines, community education and hospitalizations were less available to communities of color, low-income individuals and those living in rural areas. Consequently, the rates of infections and deaths were much higher in those communities.

The WVH board of directors has brought health equity and social justice to the forefront as an area in which to focus. Last fall, the board and leadership staff held a retreat to discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities for the agency. “We had a Stanford University professor and practice leader on DEI work assisting us in the journey to find sustainable social justice and health equity practices at WVH,” says executive director Iria Nishimura. “The Board Strategic Planning committee continues the work we initiated during the retreat and with the help of fundraising efforts, we are looking at opportunities to provide education and expand services to specific communities that have been underserved.” As part of its efforts, WVH recently contracted with a language services provider for audio and video interpretation that is offered to non-English speaking patients and families.

One of the programs slated for expansion is Grief Care. “During the past two years, the need for grief care in our community has increased dramatically,” says grief

counselor Gary Ellison. “COVID-19 has affected many folks directly and many more indirectly.” The Grief Care team has seen the number of inquiries increase significantly. Particularly, they have found many school counselors seeking guidance in addition to many community members experiencing sudden and traumatic losses.



“While our Grief Care department continues to provide support of the highest quality, we are often asked to provide services beyond our current capacity,” says Gary. “Many requests come from those unable to find help elsewhere due to a lack of financial resources or language barriers.” As a result, a new initiative is being planned, and efforts to fundraise for the project are underway. Through this expansion, outreach to marginalized groups, a robust school counselor training, and individual grief counseling sessions would be added to WVH’s current offerings.

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Experience.
AT YOUR SIDE.



Health Equity

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“Offering support to often marginalized communities is an essential aspect of nurturing a healthy society,” says Gary. “I am truly excited that we are undertaking a bold initiative to expand our community-wide Grief Care services.”

In addition to expanding services, WVH has made a commitment to review all of our processes, policies, and everyday practices to make certain that we serve everyone in the community needing any of our services. “WVH board representatives and staff meet together on a regular basis as an advisory committee to review issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the services we provide,” says Iria.

Of course, there’s always been a strong commitment at WVH to serve all of our neighbors at the end of life, driven by its passionate view that everyone deserves high-quality, end-of-life care. Through the provision of Hospice Care, WVH ensures access to healthcare at the end of life for all, especially to the elderly and disabled, regardless of their ability to pay. Treating patients and families with respect, providing individualized care, and offering unique services to help patients has long been a valued practice at WVH.

Registered nurse Jon Fitzke recognizes that there are many ways WVH staff try to bring health equity into Hospice and Supportive Care services. “The wholistic services include patient advocacy and offering choice and control to patients at a time when patients often lose autonomy,” says Jon. “WVH offers a welcoming ear and provides education so that patients and their families can make informed decisions about their own care goals.” Multidisciplinary teams review and discuss non-medical factors affecting the care WVH



provides. The plan of care for the patient addresses issues such as housing, financial, or transportation issues. “Our social workers work with the patient and family to find resources to help with the issues affecting the care provided,” says Iria.

Jon sees it as a privilege to provide healthcare for a diverse community with diverse needs. “I have had the opportunity and pleasure to care for a diverse group of patients,” says Jon. “I may not be able to speak Russian, Spanish or Marshallese, but I can learn from all patients. Recognizing social differences is key to social justice along with recognition and respect towards other beliefs and customs.”

To learn more about WVH’s work in diversity, equity, and inclusion or to support the expansion of services, contact Theresa Hart, community engagement manager, at 503.588.3600 or theresa.hart@wvh.org.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

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Journeys is a publication of Willamette Vital Health, a non-profit agency, serving our friends and neighbors in the communities of Marion, Polk, Yamhill, Benton, Linn and parts of Clackamas Counties.

Our Mission

We are a community owned, not-for-profit organization providing innovative, personalized, and compassionate care to patients and families facing serious illness.

Wishlist

WVH is in need of some specific supplies to help Veteran patients and those at the Tokarski Home. You can help by purchasing one of these items or any item on our Amazon Wishlist, found at <https://bit.ly/WVHWishlist>. It’s easy and the items come directly to us after you order. Be sure to include your name in the note, so we can thank you! Amazon doesn’t automatically tell us who it’s from.

You can make even more of an impact by starting your purchases from AmazonSmile.com. Amazon will donate a portion of your purchase price to the charity of your choice.



upsimples 8.5x11 Picture Frame Certificate Document Frame with High Definition Glass ,5 Pack Diploma Frames for Wall and Tabletop,Black

★★★★☆ ~ 2,731
\$24.99 ✓prime FREE One-Day
Color : Black
3 Used & New from \$22.49



Guardmax Mattress Cover Twin XL College Dorm - Waterproof, Fitted, Healthy and Noiseless, Ideal for Hospital Beds (Twin XL/Split King 39x80)

★★★★☆ ~ 1,222
\$19.97 ✓prime FREE One-Day
Size : Twin XL



Utopia Towels Beige Towel Set, 2 Bath Towels, 2 Hand Towels, and 4 Washcloths, 600 GSM Ring Spun Cotton Highly Absorbent Towels for Bathroom, Shower Towel, (Pack of 8)

★★★★☆ ~ 49,631
\$30.95 ✓prime FREE One-Day
Color : Beige

Leaving a Legacy for Future Patients & Families

The Dave Moss Endowment Fund was started by then-president of the WVH board of directors. "He used his own money to start it," says Patricia Moss, Dave's wife. "It was very important to David," she says. The fund was re-named in honor of Dave after his death.

Dave's dream was to provide funding forever for special programs and initiatives that are not covered by insurance. He had a particular fondness for the Music Therapy program. While Medicare, Medicaid and other insurances support WVH's general hospice services, *Hospice Plus* programs, such as music therapy, pet therapy, and community grief care are not covered.

Dave's goal was to raise \$12 million so that these programs could go on in perpetuity. Donations deposited into the Dave Moss Endowment Funds are carefully invested. Over time, the principle has grown to the point where a percentage of the interest earned may be used to support innovative projects. Last year, the board used a portion of this distribution to support a special language interpretation service, helping to make hospice care more available to non-English speaking patients and promoting health equity to those communities.

Potential future projects include aromatherapy and virtual reality glasses for the treatment and relief of patients'

physical and emotional pain. Other options could include an expansion of the Music Therapy program and creation of a video library of resources for family caregivers.

Donors can support this fund and leave a legacy by making unrestricted donations of \$10,000 or more from their IRA accounts, stock transfers or in their will or trust for any amount. Contact Theresa Hart for more information about how to ensure that programs and services like music therapy, massage therapy, and veteran services are available for future patients.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more information about any of the events listed below, call 503.588.3600.

For a complete list of calendar and bereavement events, visit wvh.org.

Hablando a los Niños Acerca de Temas Difíciles: Enfermedades Serias, Muerte y El Penar

Padres, educadores, y cuidadores están invitados a esta presentación gratis para aprender más acerca de cómo hablar y dar apoyo a los niños que están enfrentando la enfermedad seria o la muerte de un ser amado.

October 21 • 10:00-11:15 AM

Northwest Human Service's West Salem Clinic, Cascade Room

Coping with Grief at the Holidays Workshop

November 5 • 9:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Presentation and discussion for adults and crafts for kids. Enjoy a family holiday craft of remembrance. Registration is required for this free event. Please call to register.

Untangling the Challenges of Aging

November 2, 9, & 16 • 12:00-1:00 PM

Free online & in-person educational series on a variety of topics. Register for one or all three sessions at wvh.org/news-events.

Thank You to Our Major Sponsors for Fall Events

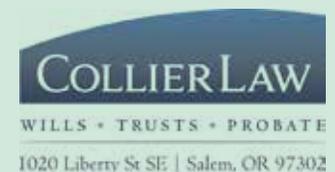
Reflections on the River



Walk-n-Wag



Untangling the Challenges of Aging



A host of community sponsors has made it possible for WVH to offer important events like *Reflections on the River*, *Walk-n-Wag*, and *Untangling the Challenges of Aging*. We could not put on these engaging and impactful community events without community support, and we appreciate the local businesses that use their generosity to positively impact their neighbors.

Monthly Giving Circles

Join our monthly giving programs for \$5 or more per month. You can help hospice patients and their families and receive these benefits:

Each month members receive program updates sent to their email boxes from our board-certified music therapists. Read heartwarming stories about how music therapy is making a difference in the lives of hospice patients sent directly to your email address.

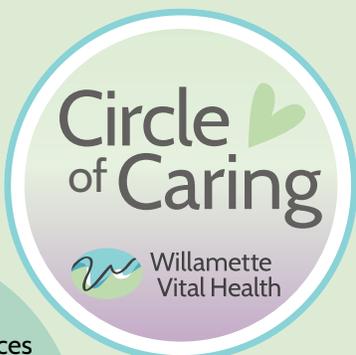
Members of our *Music Patron Circle* help provide more frequent music therapy services to patients in need.

To become a member of a giving circle, visit wvh.org/donate and click the circle you'd like to join.

Each month members receive an update with stories about how your gift is making a difference.

Support services like Pet Peace of Mind®, Grief Care, the Tokarski Home, and Veterans' Services. Members also receive special invitations, sneak peaks on upcoming projects and holiday cards.

Become a member by completing the form on the enclosed envelope and mail it today or join online by going to wvh.org/donate.



Students Seeking Healthcare Careers Gain Experience at WVH

During this time of healthcare worker shortages, it's particularly inspiring to provide experience for those seeking careers in healthcare. WVH has long had a thriving student volunteer program, where high school and college students interested in serving their community can help hospice patients after being trained by our expert staff. It's always bittersweet when these student volunteers graduate and move away for more schooling or career opportunities, but we couldn't be more excited for our student volunteers that are using their hospice experience in their chosen career fields.

Sean Webster started volunteering in May 2021, after graduating from Linfield University in three years. He wanted to use the last year to gain some experience before furthering his education. "I didn't have a lot of experience, but I knew that I could provide comfort," says Sean. He started visiting hospice patients, providing respite care and company. One of his assigned patients was a choir director, and he sang with her. Another patient loved to play chess, so they'd play at every visit. Sean stopped volunteering this June to go to medical school at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia. "I grew up in West Salem and I hope to come back to Oregon for residency and to practice medicine here," he says.



Sean Webster

Eleanor McDonough volunteered at WVH during her senior year of college, studied biology at Willamette University, and graduated in May. "I really enjoyed interacting with patients and their families, whether it was in person during a patient support visit or over the phone, calling to make sure they had everything they needed," says Eleanor. "It was wonderful to connect with patients and hear their stories." Eleanor is currently pursuing her master's in physician assistant studies at Ithaca College in New York. "Volunteering with WVH showed me that no matter the level, you can always have an impact by ensuring that a patient is receiving the best possible care and support," reflects Eleanor. "I believe everyone should have access to equitable healthcare, no matter where they live, so after I graduate PA school, I am planning to work in family medicine in an underserved rural area."



Eleanor McDonough

While each student volunteer takes away their own life lessons from their time volunteering with WVH, they all agree that it's an impactful life experience. "In hospice, you realize that you are there in a person's most vulnerable state," says Sean. "I learned that we are able to play a significant part in that person's life story. The patient wants to be as comfortable as possible, and we have the ability to help provide that. It's an incredibly rewarding experience, more than any other volunteer experience I've participated in."