

Aurora House News

The light of a new day...



Spring 2021
Newsletter Volume 14 Issue 1

Aurora House: Heart & Home



There are many reasons people are inspired to become a caregiver for individuals who are terminal. It may be because a person has cared for someone they love benefit from hospice care. Others may recognize their natural gift is to help people who need a great deal of compassion, support, and care. Becoming a caregiver is a very special group to be a part of, and there are multiple reasons why so many people choose to work in hospice or palliative care and truly enjoy their work.

Aurora House caregivers know that working with dying people is an honor and are completely humbled by the fact that we get to care for people when they are at their very end of their life, and a privilege to come alongside a family at a sacred life passage. Many of the families open themselves up and allow us not only to provide care for their loved one, but also to love the patient and their family. To our staff one of the most heartfelt things is to meet a family who is struggling with a terminal diagnosis for their loved one, and who are so resistant to any comfort measures and any education about what happens at end of life, and to watch them walk the path and see their minds and hearts change and grow in this process.

Aurora House Caregiver, Celina Gonzalez, has been with us for many years and has cared for many members of our community.

Being a part of Aurora House is very rewarding for her. She loves to serve others and works hard to ensure that our residents are as comfortable as possible. But for Celina, Aurora House is a special place that she holds dear to her heart. Her father, Armando Gonzalez Sr., was a resident of Aurora House and was cared for by our staff and his daughter Celina.

Before Mr. Gonzalez came to Aurora House he was a vibrant man that at one time served his country in the United States Army. While serving in the Army Mr. Gonzalez was stationed in the United States and overseas in France and Germany. After serving our country in the armed forces for many years Mr. Gonzalez finally retired to become a husband and a father, and began his career as a H.E.P Recruiter for the University of Houston. There Mr. Gonzalez continued to help his community by helping students from migrant and seasonal farm-worker backgrounds to obtain a GED and, sequentially, getting a job, enroll in post-secondary education, or join the military. In 2005 he received news that no one wants to hear, he had been diagnosed with Cirrhosis and was given a life expectancy of 3 months.

When Mr. Gonzalez came to Aurora House, Celina, became both his daughter and his caregiver. Mr. Gonzalez became part of our Aurora House family and our staff made sure he was comfortable and were there to make sure Celina had support. Celina remembers that when the decision was made to admit her father into Aurora House it was the right choice. He was relaxed for the first time in months. "My sisters even noticed this and felt better. Our whole family was somewhat relieved." She knew that staff at Aurora House would be able to provide the compassion and care her father deserved. In her words "The Aurora House staff that took care of my father were Angels."

As Mr. Gonzalez health declined the family knew they only had a short period of time with him and wanted to cherish every moment. Mr. Gonzalez's daughter Rosemary had one wish, to have her father give her away on her wedding day, and Aurora House was honored to be a part of the ceremony. Judge Gilbert Saenz, a friend of the family, performed the ceremony. Celina remembers the glow in her father's eyes and that he was so happy to be surrounded by those he loved.

Patient and families served: 1,120

Age Range: 6 wks - 103yrs

Average Length of Stay: 35 days

Students #: 3,591

Continued from page one



Celina's father passed away two days later surrounded by peace and love. Aurora House Caregivers provided a home-like place for Mr. Gonzalez, where his family was able to spend his last days with his loved ones. Aurora House was a place of comfort and support for Celina's father and she continues to provide that support to others in our care because she wants families and patients to experience the same love and compassion she and her family felt during her father's last days.

Letter of Gratitude



When our mother, Ruth, was diagnosed with cancer and was placed in hospice care our family rallied together to care for her in her home. After an extended period, we were no longer able to provide her the care she needed at home on our own and we were faced with the task of finding a hospice center where she would be comfortable and well cared for. After searching and considering several options in the Rio Grande Valley, we decided upon Aurora House.

A nursing home was not a good option for her as her condition deteriorated quickly and required constant care, and we knew she would thrive in a place that cares about the "personal touch", which you just can't easily find in a nursing home. Upon moving into the Aurora House, our mother quickly bonded with the caregivers and staff. She was happy, relaxed and was able to let her true spunky spirit shine through each day.

In turn, that made all of us feel secure about our decision to bring her to Aurora House. We were able to spend quality time with our mother during her final days without worry or stress about the care she was being given. The caregivers and staff treated our mom with dignity, respect and genuine kindness the entire time. Our family can not say enough great things of the caregivers and staff members of the Aurora House and would strongly recommend any family looking for hospice care to make the choice to work with Aurora House.

The Aurora House is a wonderful, loving, caring Hospice facility that our family was grateful to be a part of. Thanks again for everything you do!

- Ruth Kennedy's Family (Brenda Mercier, Brad Kennedy and Bridget Kennedy)

Community Partners



Aurora House and AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) provides opportunities for both community service and work-based training with the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Our AARP resident, Pedro Vasquez, who is part of the program, is getting on the job-training as he beautifies and maintains our memorial gardens. He has become part of the Aurora House family and we are so grateful for his dedication.



Thank you!

On behalf of the Aurora House Foundation Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers we would like to extend a heart-felt THANK YOU to our generous contributors whose generosity and continued support truly makes a difference for those in our care.

MONTALVO INSURANCE AGENCY



the Valley Baptist LEGACY FOUNDATION™



A Passion for Hospice



Leesandra Torres, RN

Director of Nursing at Contigo Hospice LLC.

For over 47 years, Hospice has played a vital role in establishing a form of care, which focuses on end-of-life. This type of care allows an individual to remain within their home or in a living environment, such as a facility, of their or their families choosing; when the individual is no longer able to make decisions of their own. Throughout these many years, there have been many misconceptions of what hospice is and what it is that can be provided. Many individuals associate hospice with only providing care for death and dying, not realizing, or understanding the true goal of hospice; is to improve the quality of life of a patient in their last days, weeks, months, and even years.

As a nurse of 11 years, I have worked in many different areas of nursing, hospice being one of them. In March of 2019, I decided to return to school to pursue a degree as a Registered Nurse. I ultimately thought I would complete my program and venture into a hospital setting. However, the first semester into my RN program, my grandfather passed away, while in hospice care. I had previously worked as a hospice nurse in San Antonio, Tx.

After the devastating loss of my grandfather, I reminded myself of how it was to be a hospice nurse and reflected on how helpful my grandfather's nurses were with his end-of-life care. Upon completion of my RN program, I knew the area of nursing I wanted to work in; my heart was set on Hospice Nursing .

In my opinion, nursing is a work of heart, no matter what area of nursing is chosen. However, hospice care is completely different from the lifesaving and health stabilizing care that is usually provided by nurses. It takes a special heart to be able to do what we do. A hospice nurse meets their patients and their families at a very emotional and vulnerable state in their lives. When an individual chooses hospice, or a family makes the difficult decision to place their loved one under hospice care; they each share the same realization; they are no longer seeking curative measures and death is imminent. When hearing the words hospice; it is so important to know and understand that it is no longer just about death and dying. Hospice care emphasizes the needs for comfort, dignity, and support, while providing the best end of life care. As a hospice nurse, I believe it is our responsibility to demonstrate love, compassion, and empathy towards all those we care for. We must advocate for the patient, while also keeping in mind that the family will also need education, guidance, and support through the end-of-life process.

Since partnering with Aurora House, I have had the opportunity to observe the care and support provided from all staff to the patients currently in their care. The caregivers respond to the patients calls and needs promptly and document in a timely manner. If there is ever any issue, concern, or medication that is needed; the caregivers contact myself or my nursing staff accordingly and are receptive towards any education provided to them by the nursing staff. In discussing the environment of Aurora House with a current patient and family; they have expressed how pleased they are with the facility, as well as to how blessed they feel in knowing that their loved one is comfortable and well cared for. It is my hope that Aurora House will continue to demonstrate the compassionate and supportive care towards all patients and their families in the years to come.

Thank You To Our Volunteers!



Thank you to Roberto Garza for volunteering his time to help Aurora House maintain our grounds. He frequently stops by to see what might need fixing. Mr. Garza's grandfather, Roberto Cruz, was a resident at Aurora House and Mr. Garza donates his time in memory of his grandfather.



A huge thank to Lou Vitek ,The Crafty Crew, and everyone at John Knox Village and Love of Christ Lutheran Church ELCA for their amazing in kind and monetary donations from their annual Aurora House Shower!

We are thankful for each and every volunteer who has ever supported us and we look forward to those who feel inspired to join us in support of our mission to serve the needs of our community.

Aurora House News

Memorials & Honorariums

In Loving Memory



Al Smith
Anna Smith

Americo De La Paz Jr.
Americo De La Paz III

Arene Doerfler
John Allen

Betty L. Veale
Mark Veale

Bill Summers
Mr. & Mrs. Bill and Sally Roach
Jo Summers

Cruz Morales
Eddie Trevino

Derek Heilman
Mr. & Ms. Bill and Sally Roach

Felipe Garcia
Mr. Faustino Villanueva Jr.

Fran Soletcher
Mr. & Mrs. James and Linda Williams

Gene Henry
Sheryl Henry

Gregoria Rodriguez
Mr. Faustino Villanueva Jr.

Lla Sandy Shankster
Chris Yates

J. R. Wade
Lauro and Irma Saldana

Jack Dyer
Margo Dittburner-Sutherland
Mr. & Ms. Robert & Jodi Janik
William Gillum

Janie Garza Whitehouse
Whitehouse Family

Janis Ramsey
Camille Jones
Curtis & Brenda Haley, Jr.
Dr. & Mrs. Raymond Mensing
George Ramsey and Children-
Dolly, Buddy, Bella
Mary Ellen Gatton
Mr. & Mrs Michael Zink
Patsy Robb
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Vaughan
Scott Jenkins

Jesus Covacevich
Anthony Covacevich

Joseph Martinez
Rachel Gil

Juan Silva
Maria C. Silva

Judy Lackey
Martin C. & Beth Masso

June Hick
Judy Lea Griffin

Leandro Martinez
Lupita Martinez

Lloyd D. May
Deborah May

Mary Jo Alexander
Alexander Family

Marvin Heilman
Mr. & Mrs. Bill and Sally Roach

Mike Der Manuel
Mr. & Mrs. James and Sondra Plowman

Mildred B. Fulfer
Mr. & Mrs. Gordon and Barbara Lee Joyner

Nell S. Hester
Anne Flowers

Patricia Kenedy
Buenrostro Family

Patricio Briones
David Briones

Pragedis Samudio
Mr. & Mrs. Felix and Maria S. Hernandez

Ramon Vasquez
Blanca Perez

Rex Noland
Mr. & Mrs. James and Sondra Plowman

Robert James Bob Rektorik
Jennifer Rektorik

Ruby Clabough
Delores Nelson

Rob Peterson
Andy Scott
Barry Dickerson
Camille Jones
Don McDaniel
Greg Alperin
James Wilt
Jeremy Alperin
Margo Dittburner-Sunderland
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald D and Carmen Hicks
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Vaughan
Mr. & Mrs. Robert and Margaret McAllen
Mr. & Mrs. Tom and Lynn Carter

Shirley Farrell
Don McDaniel

Sue Peterson
Andy Scott
Camille Jones
Peterson Family
Marc Montelongo
Margo Dittburner Sunderland
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Vaughan
Mr. & Mrs. Robert and Margaret McAllen
Mr. & Mrs. Tom and Lynn Carter

Ted Long
Patricia Long

Vangie Martinez
Atanacio Jr, Hinojosa
Javier Martines

Virgilio Torres
Virgilio Torres Family

In Kind

Ramon Vasquez
Blanca Perez

Virgilio Torres
Virgilio Torres Family

Janie Garza Whitehouse
Whitehouse Family

October 2020 - January 2021

Sue Peterson
Peterson Family

Patricia Kenedy
Buenrostro Family

In Honor of

Flo and Jerry Lasater
Randall Summers

Health Workers
Elizabeth & Gopal Limited Partnership

Jo Davis
Randall Summers

Jose M. Quiroz
Yolanda Quiroz

Larry and Patty Dittburner
Margo Dittburner Sunderland
(Villa De Cortez)

Lincoln Talbert
Cheryl Strong

Mari and Kevin Bloomquist
Randall Summers

Donations

Mutiati Adeoye
ADL Services
Advantage Healthcare Consulting
Patricia Alexander
Tony & Alma Rosa Antonacci
Mariver Bacalso-Munoz
Ofelia Barron
Carey Boleach
Patricia & Alan E. Bortnem
Mary Brundige
Araceli Cantu
Catholic Daughters of the American Court-Donna
Catholic Daughters of the Americas - Mercedes
James Chapman

Memorial Gifts

Friends and family members of a hospice patient remember a loved one in various ways: sometimes with flowers, a card, and sometimes it is with a more lasting tribute in the form of a memorial gift.

Through memorial gift-giving you remember your loved one in a very meaningful way and at the same time you help other hospice patients in need.

To make a donation visit <https://aurorahouse.org/donations/> or use the envelope provided with the newsletter.

Aurora House News

Donations

Donations

Stephen Charlton
Community Foundation- Lyster Family
Foundation Fund
Anthony Covacevich
Rosemary De Leon
DeVita Weslaco Renal Center
Elizabeth Eckles
Magda Escandon
Alejandro L. Estrada
Gloria Fitch
Liz Free
Maria Garcia
Alma Garza
Alyssa Belen Garza
Mr. & Mrs. Rhonda and Robert Garza
Gerald Gieseke
Diana Gonzalez
Melida Gonzalez
Linda Graham
Ramona Harrington
Hollon Oil Company
Eugene Hufford
J.R. Produce Supply
Jacobson Rev Living Trust- John & Doris
Jacobson
John Knox Village/ Patio Homes IV Ladies
Jones, Galligan, Key & Lozano, L.L.P.
Stephen R & Dawn M Jones
J.D Key
Knapp Medical Center
Knights of Columbus Council 3098- Weslaco

L.J. & J Family Limited Partnership LLP
Helen Lavin
Patricia Leon
Life Giving Outreach Ministries/Crossroads
William E. & Betty Locke
Love of Christ Lutheran Church
Norma Martinez
Mr. & Mrs. Carl & Linda Meiners
Verda Nelson
Mr. & Mrs. David D. and Sandra Norlin
Mr. & Mrs. James and Sondra Plowman
R.G.V. Adult & Internal Medicine Specialists
Melanie Riley
Rio Grande Valley Educational Secretary Assoc.
Dr. Rafael Rodriguez
Mr. & Mrs. Fanny and Buddy Ross
Sally Ross
Esther Rubio
Jane Ryan
Yolanda Salinas
Seven Cities Foundation
Karen Smith
Southern Comfort R.V. Park
Sandi Sparrow
Christopher and Minerva St. John
Francis M. and Amy Grohs Stroschein
Oralia Tafolla
Transform KM LLC
Trinity Benefits Group, LLC
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, Inc,
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony (Ryan) and Jode Vaughan
Betty Lou Vitek
Robert Waters
Weslaco Economic Development Corporation

October 2020 - January 2021

Weslaco Vision Source
Craig Wiegand
Jeanne Wiegand, MD
Mark Williams
Zurlo's All Electric

In Kind

Adrian Farias
Alma Garza
Amparo Willingham
Andy Scott
Becky Contreras
Community Development Institute Headstart (Mercedes)
Community Development Institute Headstart (Weslaco # 1)
Community Development Institute Headstart (Weslaco # 2)
Community Development Institute Headstart (Donna)
Marisela and Eloy Gonzalez
Family of Madrigal
Gayle Mead
Genevieve Vallejo (Genevieve's HOPE Foundation)
George Ramsey
Kathy & Eugene Damalas
Mark McCaleb
Mercedes Lions Club
Monica Vanderveer
Monterrey Cafe
Robert Garza
Rosa Espinoza
Thomas and Sharon Newcomer
Trails End RV Park
T-Ghost BBQ
Weslaco Lions Club

Your Donations Make a Difference



Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, a matching gift of up to \$150,000 will be donated to Aurora House to help us continue to provide compassionate care for those in our community who need it most.

They will match up to \$150,000 donations from individual donors. We are challenging our friends, family, and supporters, to help us do something amazing and reach our goal! We cherish every donation* and work hard to ensure every dollar is put to work providing compassionate care to our residents. But we need your help!

It all begins TODAY! (Matching ends December 2021) Every dollar you donate will be matched dollar-for-dollar, doubling your donation and doing twice as much good! If you donate \$10 your donation instantly becomes \$20! If you donate \$500 your donation will become \$1,000!!

Your commitment through monthly or annual giving is vital to Aurora House's ability to continue to serve our community and ensures that our residents spend their last days surrounded by compassion, dignity, comfort, and peace.

Give Online

- Visit www.aurorahouse.org/donations and click on MONTHLY with your credit or debit card. One time donations are greatly appreciated.

Donate by Check

- You can also write a check to Aurora House and specify Annual Giving in the memo line. Check can be mailed to P.O Box 976, Weslaco, Texas 78599

*Did you know? The CARES Act allows for up to \$300 per taxpayer (\$600 for a married couple) in an above-the-line deduction for charitable gifts made in 2020 and claimed on taxes in 2021 and each year thereafter (this is not limited to only 2020). Please talk with your accountant to learn more.

Aurora House Events

Upcoming Events*

Help us continue our mission to serve those in our community who need us! Thanks to some wonderful community donors we have some GREAT prizes! What a wonderful way to support Aurora House than to buy A TICKET or TWO, and have a chance to WIN!

All proceeds from this raffle goes to provide dignity, comfort, and peace for those we care for and their families. Tickets can be purchased in the following ways:

Please add "Raffle", your First & Last name, and Phone number in description.

- PayPal: www.paypal.me/aurorahouse2646
- Venmo: @Aurora-House-1
- Cash App: \$AuroraHouse
- Zelle: Aurorahousefoundation@yahoo.com
- Cash/Check can be dropped off at
- Aurora House 2646 West 18th Street Weslaco, Texas 78596
- Call 956.973.9690

Tickets Only \$10.00!
Raffle Live on Facebook
@Aurorahousefoundation
April 17th at 2pm



SPRING RAFFLE
TICKETS \$10.00 EACH

CONSUELA BONITA CLASSIC large tote- Lionet's Western Wear
KENDRA SCOTT JEWELRY
KNAPP GIFT SHOP BASKET
Gourmet CHOCOLATE Basket - Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory
WINE SET BASKET - TEXAS REGIONAL BANK
...and more chances to win fun prizes

DRAWING WILL BE HELD ON FACEBOOK LIVE
@AURORAHOUSEFOUNDATION
SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2021 AT 2PM

All proceeds from this raffle goes to provide dignity, comfort, and peace for those we care for and their families.

Tickets can be purchased in the following ways:
Please add "Raffle", your First & Last name, and Phone number in description
PayPal: www.paypal.me/aurorahouse2646
Venmo: @Aurora-House-1
Cash App: \$AuroraHouse
Zelle: Aurorahousefoundation@yahoo.com
Cash/Check can be dropped off at Aurora House
2646 West 18th Street Weslaco, Texas 78596
956.973.9690




shop for good online!
Kendra Scott

You're Invited to Kendra Scott Event with Aurora House!
April 17-18th
Kendra Scott @ La Plaza Mall
2200 S. 10th, C11 McAllen, Texas 78503
Shopping online? Checkout with Code GIVEBACK-1415 (capital Letter I).
Call 956 331.2270 to make a phone order!



5K PAINT RUN
1 MILE FUN RUN
eighties
RETRO
Glow Run
Vol. 5
MAY 15TH
- 80'S COSTUME CONTEST - ZUMBA PRIOR - PHOTO BOOTH - CHIP TIME
- PAINT FREE OPTION - FEE \$25*

REGISTER ON:
@RIVTHEMORNS
RGV
TREMBLE JUNG

LOCATION:
MAYOR PABLO PEÑA PARK
WESLACO, TX @ 6:30PM
1 MILE RUN 7:00PM
5K RUN 7:30PM

BENEFITTING
AURORA HOUSE FOUNDATION

Contact: Sarah Cardenas-956 975 5033-retroglowrun@gmail.com

80's Retro Glow Run Vol. 5
May 15, 2021
We're back for Volume 5!!

Location: Mayor Pablo Peña Park
Cost: Proceeds to benefit Aurora House Foundation
Sponsorships Available! Contact Mari, 956- 973-9690

Come out and join us for the 80's Retro Glow Run Vol. 5 offering 5K Run/Walk, virtual run options, and a 1 mile Fun Run. Dress up in your 80's best, take advantage of some great photo opportunities, enjoy all the great music, and most importantly have a great run!



Administrative Professional's Day VIP Pre-view Party & Luncheon
August 11 & 12th, 2021
Celebrate with us!

Location: Knapp Medical Center, 1401 E 8th St, Weslaco, TX 78596
All proceeds benefit Aurora House Foundation
Sponsorships Available! Contact Mari, 956- 973-9690

Each year, Aurora House is honored to host the Annual Administrative Professional's Day Luncheon. Show your administrative staff how much they mean to you and your business by treating them to a delicious lunch and entertainment!

*Please note that Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) some events may be rescheduled or cancelled.

Aurora House Foundation Board of Directors

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- Melanie Riley**
Vice President
- Stephen Charlton**
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- Rhonda Garza**
Treasurer
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Administrative Assistant/
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- Becky Contreras**
House and Grounds Supervisor
- Araceli Cantu**
Caregiver Supervisor
- Alma Garza**
- Jessica Aguiniga**
- Celina Gonzalez**
- Elizabeth Salinas- Gutierrez**
- Jackie Moreno**
Caregivers

OUR MISSION

Aurora House recognizes dying as part of the normal process of living and focuses on respect and compassion in preparation for death. Our mission is to provide care for persons in the last phase of incurable disease, so they can approach death with dignity, comfort and peace.

