

Aurora House News

The light of a new day...



Fall 2023 Newsletter Volume 16 Issue 3

Patient and families served: 1,470

Age Range: 6 wks - 103yrs

Average Length of Stay: 35 days

Students & Community #: 10,421

Hope for the Holidays



Coping with Grief during the Holiday Season

The warmth and excitement of the holidays are nearing, and although most people are eager to take part in the festivities, many individuals silently struggle with the grief of a lost loved one. Traditionally holidays are spent with family; thus, this season can turn into days of intense sadness, anxiety, loneliness, and despair for those who are grieving. The positive in this is that the emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical battles of grief are a shared experience among many and a reminder that no one is alone in this struggle.

With that said, it cannot be stressed enough how important self-care is! Part of personal care is accepting the pain and loss that you are feeling. It may sound counterintuitive, but being open and honest with yourself and your loved ones about your grief can alleviate any pressure you may feel to participate in the celebrations fully and, more importantly, pave the road to healing. How? This type of sincerity permits you to begin adapting to a new reality and gradually reinvest your emotions into living. Other forms of self-care are eating foods and drinking water that nourish your body, getting a healthy amount of sleep, attending a bereavement group and/or counseling, journaling, and taking up an interest or hobby that one enjoys.

Honoring your lost loved ones during this season can also comfort you, lift your spirits, and keep your connection alive. Many times people feel guilty for celebrating without their loved ones, but there are many things you can do to invite their presence and share the holidays together. Here are some activities/ideas to honor your loved ones

- Set a place at the table for your loved one
- Light a candle for them
- Say a prayer for them
- Reminisce and share memories with family and friends
- Create a holiday scrapbook of pictures and mementos from past holidays
- Make memorial ornaments and/or wreath in their honor
- Cook your loved one's favorite holiday dish

- Watch a holiday movie or TV show they loved
- Make a special toast during a holiday meal in remembrance of your loved one
- Make a donation in your loved one's name to a cause that was important to them
- Volunteer for an organization that was important to your loved one or support a cause that meant something to them

<https://journals.lww.com/nursing/pages/articleviewer.aspx?year=2017&issue=11000&article=Haragutchi>, Written by: Hart. "Dealing with Grief during the Holidays: 28 Ways to Cope." Choosing Therapy, 6 Oct. 2022. www.choosingtherapy.com/grief-during-the-holidays/.
No copyright infringement is intended

Whether you choose to celebrate with friends and family, alone, or opt out of participating, respect your wants and needs and communicate them to people who are going to listen and honor them.

Grieving may be universal, but it is a personal journey that only you can decide how to navigate through.

RGV Death Cafe: Destigmatizing Death with Coffee & Cake



For over 15 years, the Aurora House Foundation has provided compassionate care to individuals and their families as they approach the last stages of life. Our vision is that everyone can approach end of life with peace. This vision includes the person who is dying as well as their loved ones. Aurora House believes it is important to involve our community in the discourse of death by having conversations about death and dying and providing access to the resources and support they may need in their End-of-Life (EOL) journey.



"Two well spent hours of profound conversations, clinical perspectives, cultural considerations, sprinkled with lots of color, delicious pastries, compassion, and coffee!"
-2023 RGV Death Cafe Guest

This was the inspiration behind the RGV Death Cafe. A Death Cafe is a group directed discussion about death and dying over some light snacks and refreshments. There is no agenda, objectives, or themes. It is an open discussion group rather than a grief support or counseling session. RGV Death Cafe is a free program and welcomes anyone interested in deepening their understanding on death and end-of-life. The group setting is casual and informal with the intention of creating a safe environment to ask questions, share stories, and explore all things death related.

Death Cafe is an international social franchise that was developed in 2011 by UK funeral industry advisor Jon Underwood (1973-2017) and psychotherapist Sue Barsky Reid (Jon's mother). Underwood and Reid were inspired by the ideas of Swiss Sociologist and Ethnologist, Bernard Crettaz (1938-2022), to create a series where people can openly talk about death and thus the Death Cafe was (ironically) born. Since its initial inception the movement grew to reach 85 countries across the globe hosting over 16,000 Death Cafe sessions as of 2023. The RGV Death Cafe is the first to be held in the Rio Grande Valley hosted by the Aurora House Foundation.



Death Literacy: Understanding End-of-Life Care



Having open and honest conversations about death is difficult, but it won't kill us. Throughout the majority of our human history, death was not the taboo it is today. Before modern day funeral services, families were in charge of handling all aspects after the death of a loved one. From the burial of the physical body, the ceremony/ritual honoring their memory, to the emotional and spiritual parting of the person they loved. Death was a part of life. Now we have establishments in place that specialize in death and have in turn become disconnected from one of the universal truths, death will happen to each of us. Understanding and normalizing this shared human experience can help better prepare us for the inevitable.



Death Literacy is a set of knowledge and skills that make it possible to gain access and understand how to make informed choices about end-of-life care.

As our communities age and the proportions of our elderly population continue to increase, the need for more education on end-of-life care will arise. Talking about dying and normalizing death, allows us to be more comfortable and can change how we experience loss and grief for the better. Through community programs like our Conversation Series and RGV Death Cafe, we hope to create a culture where being informed about death and dying is seen as important and death can be embraced as a celebration of life.

Donations

ADL Services
 Alexis De Sela
 Andres Noriega
 Anonymous
 Anthony (Ryan) Vaughan
 Aymara Ortez
 Barbara Diedrich
 Carmel Reyna
 Carol Ann Rosiere
 Carol Kirkpatrick
 Cassandra Garza
 Christopher & Minerva St. John
 Cole & Linda Nixon
 Dennis Martinus
 Dimas or Consuelo Martinez
 Elara Caring
 Eugene R. Vaughan
 Facebook Payments Inc.
 Fanny & Buddy Ross
 Gene Gay

Glenda Starnes
 Helga Freese
 Henry & Susan Vanderzyden
 Hollon Oil Company c/o Steve Wilson
 Iglesia Bautista Las Palmas
 James Chapman
 James Fuller
 Johnny Broshears
 Judy Anderson
 Knapp Community Care Foundation
 Larry & Gillian McClure
 Life Giving Outreach Ministries/Crossroads
 Liz Free
 Lori Guzman
 Mariver Bacalso-Munoz
 Martha Sequeira
 Mary Free
 Misty Gay
 Mr. & Mrs. Rhonda & Robert Garza
 Mutiat Adeoye

Norma Martinez
 Oralia Tafolla
 Pablo Palacios
 Patricia Leon
 Patricia Long
 Pete & Jo Peters
 Robert Antonacci
 Sandra Flores
 Sheryl L. Henry
 Shirley Knutson-Nelson
 Stanley Bevelle
 Starbucks Foundation Neighborhood Grants
 Stephen R & Dawn M Jones
 Tammy Sposeto
 Timothy Rosencrantz
 Vaughan Decker Goldsmith
 Vernon & Cindy Cooley
 Vernon & Judith Lund
 William Bruining
 Yolanda Salinas

In Loving Memory

Al Smith
 Anna Smith

Arene Doerfleuer & Ellen Moth
 John & Ellen Allen

Arlys Patterson
 Teresa Mize

Betty Weissinger
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Reed

Billie Vanderveer
 Brian Humphreys
 James Wilt
 Mary Brundige
 Mr. & Mrs. Harold Zurlo
 Tom & Lynn Carter

Charles Hill
 Alma Tisher

Craig & Stan Wiegand
 Jeanne Wiegand, MD

Craig Wiegand
 Barbara & Roy Crooks

Daniel "Danny" E. Arnold
 Emmett L Bills

Dionicia De La Paz
 Pablo Palacios

Doris Jacobson
 John & Doris Jacobson

Howard Bloomquist
 Ronald D & Carmen Hicks



Jim Greenwood
 Anna Smith
 Don & Rebecca McDaniel

Joe Ritchie
 Joe & Janet Ritchie

Jose Hernandez
 Robert & Jodi Janik

Lee Roy Veland
 Mary Brundige
 Robert & Jodi Janik

Lloyd D. May
 Deborah May

Lucio Tovar Sr.
 Frances Tovar

Myra Belcher
 Barry Dickerson

Paige Prickett
 Kelly & Trava Baker

Pragedis Samudio
 Felix & Maria Hernandez

Robert Garza
 Atanacio Jr. Hinojosa

Santos "Tita" Limon
 Mayra Traughber

T Champion & J Stewart
 Rafael Cabaza III

Ted Long
 Patricia Long

Vangie Martinez
 Atanacio Jr. Hinojosa



In Honor

Concepcion Vallejo
 Francisco Vallejo

Holga Tyler
 Louis Tyler

Monica Cabrera
 Sulema Gaughran

Thank You!

TO ALL OUR COMPASSIONATE GEMS

- ADL Services, Inc.
- Eugene Vaughan
- Hollon Oil Company
- Jo Peters
- Mutiat Adeoye
- Oralia Tafolla
- Rhonda Garza
- Robert Antonacci
- Ryan & Jode Vaughan
- Sheryl Henry
- Yolanda Salinas

Giving Made Easy

Your commitment through monthly or quarterly 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.



An Easy Way to Give Your Support

You can schedule monthly or quarterly gifts through ACH (Automated Clearing House) debits.

ACH debit allows you to make your donation electronically. It is a more efficient, cost-effective program for both you and Aurora House.

For more information, please contact
 Marisela Gonzalez
 956-973-9690 or aurorahousefoundation@yahoo.com

In Kind

Angel Wings Hospice
Angelica Olivo
Anonymous
Aymara Ortez
Christina Perez
First Baptist Church
Genesis Hernandez
Gentiva Hospice
Gloria Handy
Jan Dauphin
Jayda Loy
Joe Carreon
Josie Trevino
Juanita Espinoza
Little Miss Texas Galaxy
Lynette Castillo
Marisela Lopez
Mark McCaleb
Ministerio Hispano El Valle
District UMC
Miracle Medical Equipment
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald D & Carmen Hicks
Snow to Sun RV Park
St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church
St. Pius X Catholic Church
Tom J. Weigel



In Loving Memory

David Gomez
Veronica Gomez
Fran Billman
John Billman
Francis Stroschein
Amy Grohs Stroschein
Gustavo Medellin
Janelle Medellin
Maria E. Martinez
Anonymous



In Honor of

Concepcion Vallejo
Francisco Vallejo
Ruben Vallejo
Denise Harter
Jan Dauphin
Kristin & Megan Harter
Monica C. de Aldape
Francisco Aldape
Theresa Ross
Sam & Lizette Garza
The Other Guys Pharmacy
Sylvia Rios
Sylvia Rios Family
Santos T Limon
Elisa Limon

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.



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

How You Can Help

Become a Sponsor

By choosing to become a sponsor for Aurora House you'll be allowing us to continue providing compassionate end-of-life care for those in need in our community.

Contact Marisela Gonzalez at (956) 973-9690 or (512) 865-8085 or email mari@aurorahouse.org

Corporate & Business Partnership

Get your company involved to raise funds for Aurora House by sponsoring an event.

Contact Marisela Gonzalez at (956) 973-9690 or (512) 865-8085 or email mari@aurorahouse.org

Monetary Donations

Aurora House does not receive any government aid or funding from national or state humane societies and relies entirely on private donations to fund our program. To donate, visit

www.aurorahouse.org/donate

Planned Gifts & Legacy Requests

Including Aurora House in your will or trust can create a lasting legacy to help the community for years to come.

Contact Marisela Gonzalez at (956) 973-9690 or (512) 865-8085 or email mari@aurorahouse.org

In-Kind Donations

To help reduce costs, our program is always in need of items to support our activities - from blankets and wipes for the patients to office supplies. Visit our Wish List to see what you can help with.

www.aurorahouse.org/wishlist

Volunteer

Our work depends entirely on the support of our dedicated volunteers. Many opportunities are available for youth, adult and groups in our program and for events. www.aurorahouse.org/volunteer

Contact Aymara Ortez at (956) 973-9690 or email aymara@aurorahouse.org

Thank you!

Aurora House Events

Upcoming Events

Help Us Restock Our Pantry

Household

- Plastic Cups
- Paper Plates
- Disposable Utensils
- Foam Cups 8 oz.
- Antibacterial hand soap
- Laundry Detergent (HE Only)
- Foil Paper
- Parchment Paper
- Plastic wrap
- Coffee filters
- Garbage bags- 13-gal/ 30 gallons
- Freezer bags gallon sizes
- Ziplocs 1 gallon & 1 quart
- Paper Towels
- Toilet Tissue
- Air Freshener (sprays)
- Kleenex
- Windex
- Disinfectant wipes
- Adult size wipes
- Clorox
- Floor Cleaners (Fabuloso/Pine Sol)
- Powder Cleaner (Ajax)
- Napkins
- Dish Soap
- Bath Towels

Groceries

- Fresh Fruits/Seasonal Fruits
- Fresh Vegetables
- Meats - Chicken/Beef
- Frozen Juices
- Butter/ Margarine
- Milk
- Eggs
- Instant Tea (sweet & unsweetened)
- Tea bags
- Coffee mate
- Coffee: regular & decaf
- Soft Drinks: all flavors
- Lemonade Mix
- Bread
- Lunch meat
- Artificial Sweetener
- Sugar
- Oatmeal
- Potatoes
- Rice
- Pinto Beans/ Lentils
- Olive Oil
- Vegetable Oil
- Cooking Spray
- Garlic Powder/Garlic Salt
- Crackers: Ritz, Saltine, Club
- Flour
- Cake Mix/Frostings
- Mayonnaise
- Pancake Mix/Pancake Syrup
- Honey
- Peanut Butter/Jam/Jelly
- Fruit snack cups
- Apple sauce
- Pudding Cups

Our Most Needed Items

Gift Cards to HEB, Walmart, & Home Depot Are Appreciated.

Donations and supplies are just one way you can help Aurora House continue to provide our services to our community.

As you do your grocery shopping, please consider picking up a few items for Aurora House.

Dropping off is made easy by driving up to the front of our house and having our staff come to you!

Your donations are greatly appreciated!



You are welcome to stop by during our open hours and/or if you would prefer to have it shipped directly to us our shipping address is 2646 W 18th Street, Weslaco, Texas 78596

Aurora House Events

Upcoming Events

AURORA HOUSE FOUNDATION HOLIDAY GALA

All is Bright

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2023
PALACIO DE DESTINEE EVENT CENTER
1502 N BORDER AVE, WESLACO, TX 78596

JOIN US!

For more information on tickets or sponsorships,
please call (956) 973-9690 or email Mari@Aurorahouse.org

Aurora House Foundation Board of Directors

Mark McCaleb
President

Patricia Barrera
Vice President

Laura Lopez
Treasurer

Rhonda Garza
Secretary

Yoli Salinas
Member at Large

Mitty Reyna
Dr. Rafael Rodriguez
Kevin Bloomquist
Oralia Tafola
Annette Rios- Barrera
Adrian Farias

Marisela Gonzalez
Executive Director

Aymara Ortez
Administrative
Coordinator

Lynette Castillo
Educational Outreach & Development
Program Coordinator

Araceli Cantu
Caregiver Supervisor

Becky Contreras
House & Grounds Supervisor

Alma Garza
Josie Trevino
Gloria Handy
Christina Perez
Brittany Hernandez
Linda Gonzalez
Chris Martinez
Tanya Mata
Juanita Espinoza
Caregivers

OUR FUNDERS

Thank you!



OUR MISSION

To provide compassionate care for persons in the last chapter of life, in a home-like setting, so they can approach a peaceful death with comfort and dignity.