



Hospice Care: A Family Affair

GROWING UP AS THE YOUNGEST of seven children, Lilia witnessed the hard work and sacrifices her parents made for their family, having immigrated from Mexico to make a life in Santa Cruz County. “My dad worked very hard to provide for his family. I think that was the most important thing for him and my mother. He was my mom’s pillar,” Lilia reflects. Her father, Guadalupe, affectionately known as Lupe, was a reserved and loving man who worked in the fields and later spent 26 years at the historic Salz Tannery.

“My mom is the opposite of my dad. She’s the speedboat, and he was the anchor. She’s always joking and singing, making friends wherever she goes. She kept my dad going,” Lilia shared. They’re proud to have raised a close-knit family that has grown to nearly 50 members.

In 2022, when Lupe’s health began to decline, things changed. His chronic condition worsened, and he was in and out of the hospital regularly. “Dad wasn’t doing well. He was in a lot of pain, and you could tell he wasn’t okay. He didn’t want to keep going to the doctor or the hospital,” Lilia says. With support from his primary care doctor, it became time to consider hospice care.

“At first, it was shocking. It became very real knowing he wouldn’t be cured,” Lilia recalls. Her father’s primary

“The social workers, nurses, and aides made conversations about care and the transition feel natural. It helped us feel more comfortable about what was happening” – Lilia

language was Spanish, and receiving help from outside the family was not the norm, so how and when the conversation happened was especially important.

“Some of my siblings weren’t sure. They thought, ‘What are you talking about? He’s fine, we just talked to him!’ But his body was shutting down. We needed help to have the conversation,” she shares. They reached out to Hospice of Santa Cruz County to learn more about what type of help is available to address their growing list of questions.

Lilia’s siblings, who had always trusted her, relied on her to guide them through this challenging transition. “When hospice came to speak with us, they were so easy about it. Inviting us to discuss it with the entire family and to let them know how and if we wanted to proceed,” Lilia says. They came to understand that hospice is about comfort care and allowing their father to live the rest of his days the way he wants.

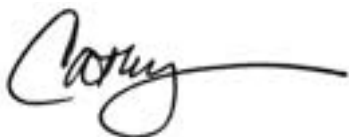
A Message from Our CEO

AT HOSPICE OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, our care is more than just a service. It is a promise to walk alongside families with clinical expertise, kindness, and compassion. Every day, we witness the strength of patients and their loved ones, the dedication of our care teams, and the simple yet profound moments that bring comfort at life's end. It is in these moments that hospice reveals its true purpose: to preserve dignity, foster connection, and ensure that no one faces this journey alone.

The stories in this issue reflect what we know to be true. Hospice care is built on trust, love, and the belief that every person deserves to live and die with dignity. Lilia's journey is a beautiful testament to how hospice brings comfort, compassion, and guidance during life's most tender moments.

Thank you for partnering with us on this mission. Your support ensures that the compassionate care we provide – from serious illness through grief support – remains accessible to all who need it.

With gratitude,



Cathy Conway, CEO



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Photo: Bob Bailey and his dog Hal (Pet Companion Volunteer)

Volunteer Visitor Training Spring 2025

Are you interested in becoming a Volunteer Visitor or Pet Companion Visitor? Our next Volunteer training starts Tuesday, April 29 and is scheduled for every Tuesday through May 27 from 6–9 pm via Zoom. Attendance at all sessions is required.

Applications due April 15

To apply, go to hospicesantacruz.org or call Forbes Ellis at 831.430.3045 for more information.

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Hospice care meant he didn't need to go back to the hospital, be poked, or endure invasive treatments. Whatever he needed could be brought to him. "Hospice gave him the option to stay home and manage his pain. And that to accept hospice care or not was his choice," Lilia explains. Her father found comfort in this. "He said, 'That sounds good. I don't have to go back to the hospital. Let's give it a try.'"

The hospice team became like family. Lilia remembers how her dad, who didn't want to be a burden, grew to love the personal care provided by the hospice aides. "They were magical. They were amazing. Belen taught us how to make him comfortable in bed and help him with things we didn't know how to do. It made all the difference," she says. Her father's care brought him physical comfort and emotional peace. "He felt better after his showers, more relaxed, and slept better at night."

The hospice team also helped Lupe's family reclaim moments that were lost in the caregiving process. "Once we understood the care, we could just come in and be with him. I didn't have to worry. We could sit with our dad to talk about the world and memories," Lilia shares. The bilingual social workers supported her mom, who had been Lupe's caregiver for so long. "It was so helpful for her to have someone to talk to—someone who wasn't her kids or her husband."

"Pick up the phone. You don't have to commit to anything. Just ask questions. Hospice is here for everyone, no matter your income, religion, background, or community." – Lilia

Despite initial concerns, the family quickly built a trusting relationship with the hospice team. "The social workers, nurses, and aides made conversations about care and the transition feel natural. It helped us feel more comfortable about what was happening," Lilia says.

As her father's condition continued to decline, the hospice team provided gentle guidance, explaining what to expect in the final days and weeks. "They encouraged us to keep talking to him, even if he wasn't responding as he did before," Lilia says. In the end, her father died at home with his wife of 68 years by his side.

Reflecting on the experience, Lilia says, "Pick up the phone. You don't have to commit to anything. Just ask questions. Hospice is here for everyone, no matter your income, religion, background, or community."

Lilia is forever grateful for the care provided by Hospice of Santa Cruz County. "You don't have to go through this alone. Hospice will support you the entire way. They helped us give my dad the peace and the transition he wanted and deserved."

Friends & Family

MEET BARBARA MILLER, a long-time Friends of Hospice member, and her granddaughter-in-law, Hospice of Santa Cruz County's Lead Admissions Nurse Jenifer Miller.

Barbara was introduced to us through Ginny Clark at the Friends of Hospice's Oktoberfest silent auction where her grandsons sold pretzels as children. Through volunteering, Barbara gives back to the community she calls her "forever home." And she encouraged Jenifer to become a nurse with Hospice of Santa Cruz County.

"As the family's matriarch, the way Barbara cares for us has a big influence on my life," says Jenifer. Having worked in many nursing settings, Jenifer is grateful that Barbara led her to Hospice of Santa Cruz County. "Here, I have the great honor of engaging one-to-one with patients. I get to care for them beyond their symptoms and illness, to treat them as whole people, and to support their family, too."

Barbara and Jenifer's relationship is grounded in love, service, and the importance of being there for family and community. In their own ways, they help provide comfort and peace of mind for people facing serious illness or end-of-life. We're grateful that they're part of our circle of care.

Learn more about our services and volunteering at [hospicesantacruz.org](https://www.hospicesantacruz.org)



Photo: Jenifer Miller and Barbara Miller



 **FAIRWAYS**
FOR **KIDS** GOLF
TOURNAMENT



Where You'll Find Us

FAIRWAYS FOR KIDS GOLF TOURNAMENT FUNDRAISER

Friday, May 9 | 11:30am–8pm

Seascape Golf Club

610 Clubhouse Drive, Aptos

Enjoy a round of golf, plus lunch and dinner or simply join us for dinner while supporting Hospice of Santa Cruz County's children's grief support program.

Activities also include a live auction. **Register now at:** hospicesantacruz.org/golf or call **831.430.3084** for more information.

REDWOOD GROVE MEMORIAL WALL RECEPTION

Saturday, May 17 | 2–3:30pm

Hospice of Santa Cruz County

940 Disc Drive, Scotts Valley

Join us as we gather, remember, and celebrate those named on the Redwood Grove Memorial Wall. A family-friendly activity and refreshments are followed by a ceremony and placing of the flowers at 2:30. This event is held outdoors. **Please RSVP: 831.430.3084**





FRIENDS OF HOSPICE PRESENTS

AN EVENING WITH *Friends*

ADVANCE HEALTHCARE DIRECTIVES WORKSHOP

Thursday, May 22 | 10–11:30am

Aptos Library Community Room
7695 Soquel Drive, Aptos

Complete your Advance Healthcare Directive with support from us. An Advance Healthcare Directive outlines your personal and medical healthcare choices and names an advocate to speak for you when you can't speak for yourself. **Email lnknipe@hospicesantacruz.org to register.**

DEATH CAFÉ

Thursday, May 29 | 10–11:30am

Aptos Library Community Room
7695 Soquel Drive, Aptos

Come gather and enjoy a pastry and a coffee, while we discuss death and dying in small groups. A Death Café is a group-supported discussion with no agenda, objectives or themes. It is not a grief support group or counseling session, just some folks getting together to talk about death and dying. **Learn more at deathcafe.com. Email lnknipe@hospicesantacruz.org to register.**



AN EVENING WITH FRIENDS FUNDRAISER

Sunday, September 21 | 3–7pm

Lester Estate Wines
2000 Pleasant Valley Road, Aptos

Friends of Hospice is thrilled to host this year's fundraising event in this exquisite outdoor setting, featuring award-winning Lester wines and locally sourced food prepared by HOME. ***If you're interested in sponsoring the event or learning more, contact Sigfrid Garman at 831.430.3084 or sgarman@hospicesantacruz.org.***



**Scan to View
Event Calendar**

Grief Support Groups and Workshops

GRIEF SUPPORT IS AT THE HEART OF OUR CARE FOR FAMILIES.

Finding your way through the changes and often painful emotions that arise during the days, weeks, and months that follow a death can be difficult. You don't have to do it alone.

MEMORY PILLOW WORKSHOP

Saturday, May 3 | 10am–12pm

Memories of our loved ones are triggered in many ways, such as the feel of a favorite shirt, or the scent of aftershave, cologne, or perfume. Our senses come alive when we connect with these belongings and our memories. In this class, grief support staff and sewing experts help you turn a loved one's shirt into a cherished memory pillow.

WALKING THROUGH HEALING GROUP

4-week group | Wednesdays | May 7–28 | 5:30–7pm

Walk with us in the serenity of a forest path as we explore the many faces of grief after the death of a loved one. The location chosen is lush and beautiful, our pace gentle, our conversations mingled with periods of contemplation and silence.

Weekly Drop-in Group

Fridays at Noon
Hospice of Santa Cruz County
940 Disc Drive, Scotts Valley

Gather with others experiencing the loss of a loved one in a nurturing and safe environment. In this convenient Friday group, participants are encouraged to speak about their grief and learn ways to lessen the emotional and physical symptoms of loss. The group is always drop-in; therefore, the number of participants varies. **No registration required.**



Advance registration is required for all sessions except Weekly Drop-In Group

For more information, or to register, call:

831.430.3000 Ext 338

or email us at:

griefsupport@hospicesantacruz.org



Five Practical Tips for Advance Care Planning

Take a moment this spring to ensure your wishes are clear and your documents are in order:

1. Review your Advance Healthcare Directive

Update it to reflect any recent life changes and share copies with loved ones.

2. Organize your documents

Keep all paperwork in one place. Keep digital copies with trusted individuals.

3. Check your doctors' records

Ensure your healthcare provider has a copy of your most recent Advance Healthcare Directive on file.

4. Talk to your loved ones

Discuss your wishes with your family to ensure they understand what matters most to you.

5. Use free tools like FreeWill to create a will, trust and Advance Healthcare Directive

Visit freewill.com/hospicesantacruz to get started.

Thanks

To Our Annual Partners

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING ENSURES HOSPICE OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS that enrich the patient and family experience like Music Therapy, Camp Erin, Grief Support and Pet Companions. Annual Partnership contributions are a great opportunity for community businesses and organizations to support the much-needed presence of a not-for-profit hospice.



Let's get this done.



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If you're interested
in learning more
about becoming an
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contact Liz Dasher
at 831.430.3082 or

ldasher@hospicesantacruz.org

Ways to Give

For information about giving, contact:

Liz Dasher, ldasher@hospicesantacruz.org



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