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Illuminate

Your Donor Dollars At Work

APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER

Your Generosity is Making a Difference Through the COVID-19 Crisis

As we adapt to the new reality of COVID-19, one thing is clear-- we would not be able to keep helping our community without you. Right now, many things at Hospice of Santa Barbara are changing. Our office is closed for in-person visits, and all staff are working from home. We changed to a telehealth model whereby clients receive grief counseling via phone or video chat services like Zoom. While this model is fairly easy for adults and even teens to adapt to, it will take some time to determine what will work for younger children who are in need of grief counseling. As our community faces the possibility of more deaths due to COVID-19, there is no doubt that many children and teens will be impacted by grief.

Our Patient Care Services program, which provides non-medical support to those with a life-threatening illness and their families, has been impacted by COVID-19 as well. About two-thirds of our patients and their families are low-income, and many have lost their jobs and are struggling to make ends meet.

There is a much greater demand for help with basic needs, like groceries.

For example, we are helping a young woman with cancer who just recently moved here for a new job. She lost her job when the coronavirus hit and has no family in the area. We are helping her find resources for employment, transportation, and food to meet her immediate needs. We have also started providing bereavement care and anticipatory grief counseling for three families who are impacted by COVID-19. This is just the beginning of what could be an overwhelming need in the coming months.

We can't see our patients face-to-face anymore, but our staff is as busy as ever, helping patients navigate their medical care over the phone. This includes supporting them on the phone (and providing translation as needed) while they are at medical appointments. Taking patients to and from appointments is usually a big part of how we help. We can no longer do this, so we are paying for transportation services for our clients if they cannot afford other means.



Staff and volunteers help patients from a safe distance.

So far we have spent over \$22,000 to set up our 42 staff to work from home. We anticipate spending even more (mostly in IT support) over the next couple of months. In addition to these new expenses, we had to cancel our Carpinteria lunch event The Light Shines Ahead and our community education event with Dr. Sunita Puri. Together these events would have brought in over \$50,000 for HSB's services. As we face additional potential loss of revenue from key funding streams, we are grateful for generous partners like you, who enable us to keep supporting people through grief and illness. We would not be here without you!

Thanks to your kindness, HSB is Here for People During the COVID-19 Crisis



As I reflect on the COVID-19 crisis, one thing remains clear: your generosity is what enables HSB to keep helping those in our community who need us. I realize these are scary times. All of us—as individuals, as members of local communities, and citizens—will be affected by the response to this disease, and maybe by the disease itself. At Hospice of Santa Barbara, we recognize that no matter what your individual circumstance is, and however you can respond, that you have been there and are still there for us.

Thanks to you, our ability to remain creative and nimble allows us to continue our critical work in the face of COVID-19, as you will read in this issue of *Illuminate*.

The people we serve are facing their final days and fighting diseases. Families are dealing with grief and loss. None of this slows down or changes during this crisis. The COVID-19 crisis is only enhancing their struggle and forcing separation between loved ones.

We are currently preparing for what could very well be a major crisis with respect to loss of life and grief in our Santa Barbara Communities. We are also preparing to serve seniors and Spanish-speaking populations who have unique needs during this time.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for your part in helping make this happen.

**With gratitude,
David Selberg, CEO**

Beloved Bear Volunteer Jill Kitnick Turns to Making Masks

“I feel like I want to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. That’s what feels so good.”

Jill Kitnick has been a volunteer for Hospice of Santa Barbara for about fifteen years. She is part of our Beloved Bear team, which makes teddy bears for family members out of the garments of a loved one who has passed away.

Due to the new recommendations that everyone in public wear masks, Jill and several other Beloved Bear volunteers have decided to put their sewing skills to use in a new way: making masks! So far, these generous volunteers have made 180 masks! In addition to Jill, this team includes Mary Vickers, Carole Ruppel, Monica Bartos, Frankie Martinez, and one volunteer who prefers to remain anonymous.

Fifty of the handmade masks have been donated to Cottage Hospital for employees who are not directly interacting with patients. The remaining masks are for HSB’s Patient Care Services staff and volunteers who are out grocery shopping and running errands for patients. Jill is also happily giving away masks to her book club friends and neighbors. She drops them off as she takes her poodle for a walk in her neighborhood.

Jill says she was hesitant to start making masks at first. “In the beginning I was reluctant because it seemed complicated. But now that I have the hang of it, it only takes me about 10 minutes per mask.” Jill says she thinks that having nice looking masks is going to be important moving forward, since we will likely be wearing masks for a long time.

Jill is also a Patient Care Services volunteer, and works with a 94-year-old woman who beat cancer and a number of other health challenges over the years. This Easter, Jill put together a sweet Easter basket—with warm hot cross buns from D’Angelos—and dropped it off for her. The basket also included one of her stylish masks. This surprise so uplifted Jill’s friend that she went out for a walk in the neighborhood and got lots of compliments on her mask!

Jill and the other volunteers are still making Beloved Bears whenever they get a request. But for now, Jill says it feels right to be making masks.

“There’s nothing else I’d rather be doing right now.”



Jill Kitnick sews COVID-19 masks.



Masks made for Cottage Health and HSB volunteers.

Because of Our Donors, Staff Can Keep Helping

“We recently were able to help the family of our 3-year-old patient with leukemia get financial assistance. Two weeks ago, the dad had lost his job due to COVID-19 and the family was starting to struggle emotionally and financially. Our team walked the family through the financial assistance application process with our partner Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation, which gave them a significant award. We also helped by making sure the parents knew when online school was starting and had all the information to help make that happen for their older children.”



**Fernanda Friden
PCS Care Coordinator**



**Amara Maliszewski
PCS Care Manager**

“My clients have been able to apply for unemployment and other forms of financial support, but it is taking time for those funds to come through and there are immediate needs. Many of my clients still haven’t gotten their first unemployment check or any other funding they applied for through programs like United Way. So, the gas, grocery, and other gift cards from HSB have helped them get through this initial period while waiting for other funding.”

“Clients, even new clients, respond extremely well to Zoom sessions. This is a very difficult time for everyone and being able to have support and see a face and have eye contact and hear the supportive voice of someone with whom you have an already established relationship is highly beneficial. If you are a new client, forming a bond with a counselor online can also offer a greater sense of safety and often deepens the rapport more quickly than it might in a face to face session. It has surprised me.”



**Noelle Clearwater
Bereavement Counselor**

During this uncertain time, you may feel pulled to get your financial affairs in order. HSB can help.

Now might feel like a good time to sort out your will or estate plan. An estate plan is helpful for everyone, but it can be confusing to know how to begin. Hospice of Santa Barbara’s own Judy Goodbody can help you get started.

Judy is a registered Tax Preparer who has been helping people with tax and estate planning for 25 years. This free service is available to all HSB volunteers, clients, donors, staff, or anyone in the community who needs help.

In observance of social distancing practices, Judy will be available over the phone or through the secure video chat service Zoom. Contact Judy Goodbody for your free and confidential assistance at 805-770-7119 or jgoodbody@hospiceofsb.org.



**Judy Goodbody,
CFRE, CRTP
Planned Giving Officer
www.hsbgift.org**