



The Journey

Care and Support for Patients and Families Dealing with Terminal Illness Volume 17 Issue 2 • Fall 2024

Introducing Lynn Bergman, MD



Dr. Lynn Bergman, MD

As we welcome changes within seasons, we celebrate new additions to our organization. In September, Hospice of Spokane welcomed our new Medical Director, Lynn Bergman, MD.

Dr. Bergman grew up in western Montana, just outside of Missoula. She completed her undergraduate studies at Carroll College in Helena, MT before relocating to Colorado for her doctorate at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. After residency, Dr. Bergman spent six years on active duty in the Navy before beginning her career in the Emergency Department at Providence Holy Family in north Spokane.

Dr. Bergman believes that Hospice of Spokane sets itself apart from other hospice care providers in our region with our longevity, experience, and for the care we provide to remote areas in northeastern Washington. Having her own personal experience with hospice care as a family member, she finds fulfillment in working with patients seeking comfort care in their end-of-life journey. She hopes through our mission and her work, she is able to make the dying process easier for our patients and their family.

When Dr. Bergman is not in the office, she enjoys spending time in the outdoors with her husband. They have discovered a passion for canoe camping, which has brought them to many beautiful areas, including Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota.

Welcome to the team, Dr. Bergman.

The journey
towards the heart
is always a
journey home.

-Jennifer James

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Thoughts on my 20 years here at Hospice of Spokane



Gina Drummond, RN, MSN
Chief Executive Officer

Our mission has always been very clear to me and to us. We exist to serve the community; to serve patients and families experiencing terminal illness. One of the challenges we can face is that people still don't fully understand hospice care. Often we find that people view hospice care as "giving up" and therefore put off our involvement. Hospice care is about life and living: maximizing the quality of time that someone has left. That is why we are always working to help educate the

community about end-of-life issues and hospice care. It is part of our mission to educate and to serve.

There is still a lot of hope and healing at end of life. Our goal is to help people live as well as they can for as long as they are with us; to have the best quality of life that's possible for them and to support their families. We have a lot of great stories and we've shared many special moments with those we've had the honor to serve.

Not too long ago, I admitted a gentleman who was a bit reluctant to consider hospice care but he agreed that he needed the help. He was a very independent man and wasn't sure how he'd feel about having care providers visiting him in his home. We made some adjustments to his medications (in collaboration with his attending physician) and had some equipment delivered to increase his safety in the home. He called me a week after his admission to tell me how appreciative he was of his hospice team. He enjoyed their visits. He also told me that he hadn't felt this good in years! He said he wished he'd called us sooner. We hear this a lot. My hope for everyone is that they not put hospice care off to the last few days.

Meaningful work has always been essential to me and my life— as it has been for the incredible people I've had the honor to work with at Hospice of Spokane. I feel very honored to be part of this organization and to help make a difference in the lives of patients and families every day.

As I near my retirement, I reflect on my time here with much gratitude for the wonderful people I've had the honor to work with and to serve. Hospice of Spokane is a very special organization and we live in a very special community.

— Gina Drummond

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My Bereavement Journey

A little over a year ago my husband passed away. He had several medical issues and was diagnosed with dementia as well. It was a very traumatic experience for both of us. For him, all the illness, pain and confusion prior to his death were devastating. For me, the trauma was from feeling helpless trying to help him through his pain and confusion while dealing with the pain of watching the love of my life suffer and pass from this earth.

Immediately following his death, for the first few months, I kept busy. With the help of our sons, I took care of the myriad things that had to be addressed for his funeral arrangements, change of names on accounts, pensions, and social security accounts to name a few. I was exhausted but I thought I was doing really well and that the grieving process, being individual to each person, was just going to pass me by. Having retired from Hospice, I was somewhat familiar with the trials of illness and passing of a loved one. I knew about the stages of grieving and the things involved with taking on all the responsibilities of life by oneself. At least I thought so. I had it under control! Sure, when I went back over the whole journey of losing him, I would cry. I went through a series of "what if" scenarios in my mind. What if I had done this? What if I had done that? Did I do enough? Could I have done something different or better? It was painful. And yes, I cried. I missed him terribly. I still do.

The time came when the busy stuff was pretty much taken care of. My focus seemed like it had narrowed down to one person! Me! I was alone! Even with the wonderful, loving support of my entire family, the love and support of my friends, my church family, and some people I had never met before, I felt alone! I started painting again (my happy place). I started attending more functions at my church, relying more on my faith, going out to lunches with friends, and keeping busy. It was all good and it helped. I was doing great! I had it under control! Then, one morning, I woke up and had a meltdown. I couldn't stop crying. I cried



over nothing and everything. I realized I wasn't doing as well as I thought. I needed help.

I reached out to the Bereavement Department at Hospice of Spokane and started talking with one of their counselors. I am so glad I did. Talking with someone who didn't know me or my husband, who knew the right questions to ask and who wasn't a part of the circle of those feeling the loss is freeing and healing. I could talk about how I felt, the good and the not so good, without being concerned about how the other person would feel about it. I could talk about our life together without involving the feelings of those who loved him too. I could talk about how he made me feel when he unknowingly, in his pain, hurt my feelings. I could talk about the love we shared and the special times too. I could express my pain, the helplessness, confusion, and the feelings I had in those last days freely without causing pain to another person. The journey of life with another person has its ups and downs and I could talk about all of it with a feeling of freedom. My counselor led me through that journey with tears, laughter, and understanding. I gained a measure of comfort through my sessions with her. She led me to see the whole journey with more clarity. When the counseling sessions were finished, I felt like I had regained a part of myself that had gone missing. There are still empty parts.

The Wilma Engstrom Memorial Golf Scramble for Hospice of Spokane 2024

On Friday, August 2nd, 2024, Hospice of Spokane held the 2024 Wilma Engstrom Memorial Golf Scramble for Hospice of Spokane. This is our annual “Scramble for Hospice” event we have held for the past 22 years but it debuted a new name this year, honoring a long-standing volunteer, mentor, and supporter of Hospice of Spokane- Wilma Engstrom. Wilma, who passed away in April 2023, had a passion for the golf scramble and looked forward to supporting the event each year. We are pleased to honor her legacy in this way.

The sold-out event brought together 144 golfers and 40+ volunteers, all who braved the heat on a blistering 104-degree day at Indian Canyon Golf Course. Despite the temperature, everyone on the course seemed to have enjoyed themselves. This year’s event raised over \$60,000, making this a banner year for our golf fundraiser!



the clubhouse, Marty saw the Hospice of Spokane signage. He politely inquired what the event was and decided to hang around.

Just before 1 pm, the golfers finished their game and made their way to the patio to eat lunch and listen to the awards ceremony. Marty quietly pulled aside a Hospice of Spokane employee, quickly shared his story of his experience with our organization and how much we did for him and his family throughout his wife’s time on our service. Not only was he moved by the community support he was witnessing at the event, but Marty also wanted to contribute to the event and further support our mission. He offered to match donations up to \$500 for those that would donate right then and there. It was well received, unexpected and added to the event!



With each event we host, we find something magical always seems to make a presence. This year, we were introduced to Marty. Marty was at Indian Canyon Golf Course that day to sharpen his golf game, spending time on the putting green and driving range. This is something he did regularly since his wife passed, in February 2024 – at the Hospice House. While making his way through



We would like to thank our generous sponsors, the numerous volunteers, the golfers, Doug and Karla, and staff at Indian Canyon Golf Course, the in-kind donors, and community partners for their support of our event. Your generosity helps provide care and support to the terminally ill patients we serve and their families.



THE WILMA ENGSTROM MEMORIAL GOLF
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Local Community Fundraiser Highlights

Hospice of Spokane

On September 28th, Hospice of Spokane had the honor of being one of eleven local nonprofit organizations that were highlighted at Manito Country Club's annual barbeque fundraiser where 100% of the proceeds were donated back to the respective organizations. With sunny weather on a gorgeous golf course, the event drew hundreds of people in attendance. Everyone had the opportunity to sample barbequed meats from multiple teams competing for first place in the food categories of chicken, ribs, pork, and brisket. As attendees walked around the event to sample different items, they had the opportunity to learn about different nonprofits and their mission, including Hospice of Spokane!

In addition to the barbeque competition, the event included a silent and live auction. Hospice of Spokane was selected to participate this year by Nelou Fennessy and her family, who very recently lost their beloved father and husband, Ahmad Haghighi. When asked why they chose Hospice of Spokane, the family stated, "Our dad has battled cancer and had several times where he ended up in the hospital and we thought we were going to lose him but didn't want it to be in a hospital room. That's where Hospice provides an enormous service to families by allowing them to have their loved ones at home. Though our dad did not make it for this year's competition, and we lost him recently, Hospice gave us the strength to know we could help his end of life care be with dignity."

One of the most memorable activities of the event was indeed the live auction. For Hospice of Spokane's live auction item, Nelou's family generously offered a catered, take-home dinner for ten people, courtesy of Fery Haghighi of Fery's Catering. Nelou's parents, Fery and Ahmad,

first opened Fery's Catering in 1995. Fery's Catering exclusively offers Persian food and was previously named one of the top ten restaurants in Spokane. Although Fery and Ahmad wed and raised their children in Tehran, Iran, they fled to America in 1980 during the Iranian revolution. They sought political asylum in Spokane and have remained since, creating a name for themselves after starting over in a new and unfamiliar country with nothing. Prior to the bidding, the auctioneers asked for everyone to partake in a moment of silence for Ahmad and at once, the lively crowd fell silent, which is a testimony to how loved and well respected he was within the Spokane community. Although our live auction item originally sold for \$25,000, the auctioneers were determined to raise more and began a second bid starting at \$25,000. In the end, it sold for \$45,000! The crowd roared into applause after the bidding concluded.

It was incredibly moving to witness the support Hospice of Spokane received at this event and serves as a reminder that the services we provide to patients and their loved ones are appreciated by many. Overall, the day was a major success, and we would like to again thank Nelou and her family for choosing to support Hospice of Spokane.



Building Cultural Proficiency

Hospice of Spokane is committed to cultural competency and creating educational opportunities for our staff and volunteers to learn about various cultures, their values and beliefs. This allows our organization to better serve diverse populations in our community, keep open communication channels and best serve all cultures during end-of-life care.

In 2024 Hospice of Spokane has been fortunate to have had two presentations from community members, giving clinical and support staff and volunteers the opportunity to learn about the



Matilda (left) with the Shuswap Tribe and Nora (right) with the Spokane Tribe.



Paella, a Spanish dish, prepared by Steve Olvera.



Sam, presenting on the Chinese culture.

Native American and Chinese cultures. We also hosted an employee led cultural potluck, highlighting dishes and flavors from around the world.

Hospice of Spokane's Cultural Diversity Committee continues to connect with community members in our region to bring more educational opportunities to our staff and volunteers. We continue to celebrate inclusivity within our

region and workforce, honoring the dignity and worth of every person, whether they are patients, family, team members or community members.

"Journey" continued from pg 3

After all, we were married for 51 years. There are still firsts. First shopping trips, adventures, birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays without him. Honestly, getting through them is still hard. Overall, however, I feel more whole and more accepting of what happened, of how everything worked out. I feel more peace about it, where I am in my life and my ability to move forward on my own. Bereavement counseling is truly life changing. I would highly recommend it to anyone who has suffered the loss of a loved one.

I am so grateful for the counseling I received and Hospice of Spokane's Bereavement Department for being there when I needed them. Thank you!

For all those who are grieving, May God bless you and grant you peace and comfort.

A.J. Shea

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