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IN TOUCH

Volunteer Newsletter

Volunteer Department (602) 636-6336 or hov.org


Summer 2023

Dear volunteers,

Summer is in full swing and we know it's hot out there, but you continue to make an impact in the lives of our patients, families and community.

Thank you for your commitment!

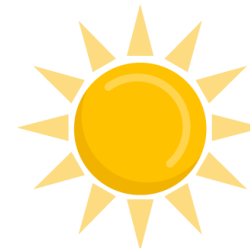


 This spring, we had the opportunity to acknowledge your contributions during our Volunteer Appreciation Events. We share highlights, quotes from our leadership, and a special video starring some of you in this edition of *Volunteer In Touch*.

Plus, learn about the experiences of a College Partners Program volunteer from Ghana; meet our Teen Scholarship recipients; and hear what's happening at New Song Center for Grieving Children.

Be sure to read our "In Appreciation" column for just a small sample of our amazing volunteers in action.

From our hearts to yours, thanks for all you graciously give each and every day.



Stacia Ortega

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Director of Volunteer and Bereavement Services



Shining a light on HOV volunteers



In-person events gave us an opportunity to recognize our incredible volunteers.

A small group of volunteers created Hospice of the Valley in 1977. Today, 1,700 volunteers continue to enrich our beautiful care. We were honored to welcome

you to our **2023 Volunteer Appreciation Events** and recognize your ongoing dedication to our patients, families and programs.

“You are our foundation and help sustain our mission. We rely on you, and you make it happen on a daily basis,” Executive Director **Debbie Shumway** said.

“Thank you for the love and care, and for being ambassadors who share the good work of HOV.”

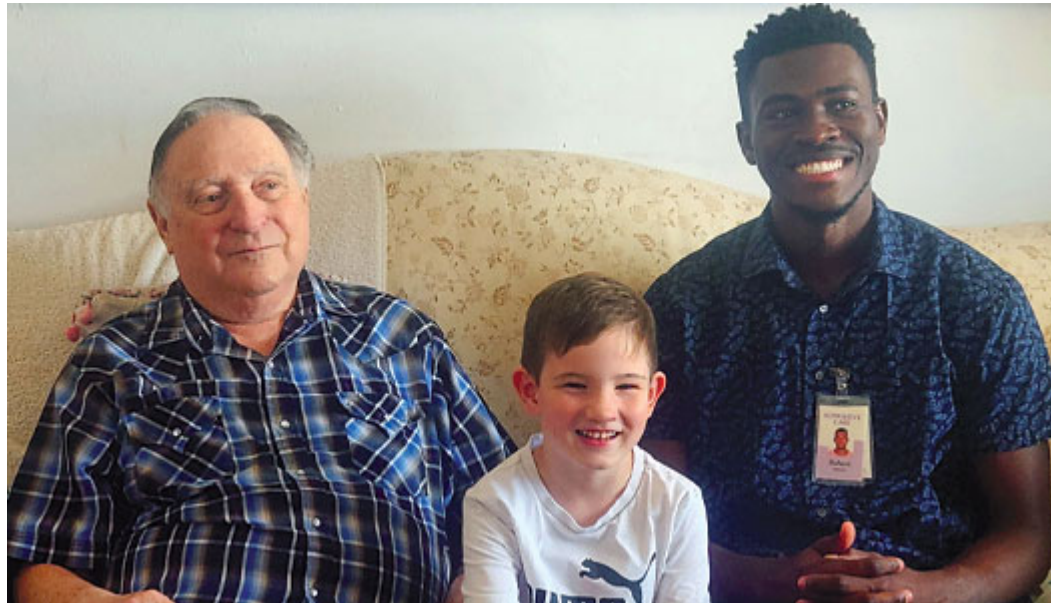
Board President **Rita Meiser** has volunteered for 43 years. She said all volunteers experience a “miracle moment” — when they realize the powerful impact they've made in someone's life. Hers happened when a mother still remembered Rita's compassionate visits to her little boy 20 years later. “I'm convinced HOV has a soul, and a huge part of that soul is our volunteers.”

Nearly 400 volunteers gathered at three events. At each, those marking 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and even 45 years of service received a special shout-out.

“I tell everyone how wonderful HOV is,” said **Elizabeth Teitel**, a 30-year volunteer. “It makes me feel good to be part of this organization. I'm grateful.”

Watch 2023 Volunteer Appreciation Video

College Partners are changing lives



From left: Bill and his grandson, David, always cherished their time with Buhari.

As a foreign-exchange student at Mesa Community College, **Buhari Abdulai** jumped at the opportunity to make a difference through HOV's College Partners Program, which pairs student volunteers with people living with mild to moderate dementia.

For two semesters, four hours a week, the 24-year-old provided socialization and companionship to Bill until he returned to his native Ghana.

"Buhari truly represents the best of what a person can be," said Bill's wife, Myra. "For the past seven months, my husband and I have been blessed to have visits with such a caring young man and eagerly anticipated them. He connected with our entire family and brought laughter and joy into our home. He shared stories about Ghana and his adventures in the U.S. He sampled new foods with us, conversed with my husband and played games with my grandson. He became part of our extended family."

Before going home, we asked Buhari to share his volunteer experience.

Q: What inspired you to spend time with a family touched by dementia?

A: When I arrived in the States last fall, right before classes started, I was at a math bootcamp class at MCC when we were invited to participate in a workshop hosted by HOV. I found the vision of hospice so intriguing, and I wanted to be part of such a great team that provides care and companionship to people living with dementia. There is nothing like that in my country. This has always been what I wanted to do. I have always wanted to be helpful to people as much as I can.

Q: What have you appreciated about volunteering with Bill?

A: My experience with Bill, Myra and their family was amazing. Bill had a hard time hearing clearly, but he had a lot to talk about! He always shared stories about his life as much as he could remember. I tried my best never to miss a single visit because there was always a new wisdom to learn. This family taught me a lot and has changed my whole perspective about life, humanity and even my future.

Q: Do you have a favorite memory from hanging out with Bill?

A: Bill is funny and makes me laugh uncontrollably! He always talked about “shoveling the sunlight” in Arizona because he does not like snow. He also enjoyed talking about his childhood in New Mexico and how prisoners were allowed to go to church every Sunday.

Q: What will you take away with you that you might share in Ghana?

A: After learning about the complexities of dementia, I realized that there may be dementia cases in rural areas that have been wrongly associated with spiritual causes or mental illnesses due to a lack of proper medical care. I plan to advocate for dementia and educate people in my community to seek medical care and obtain accurate diagnoses. People living with dementia are not mentally ill, but they require optimal care, love and support.