



# VOICES

A Publication of Hope Hospice, Inc.

**DEMENTIA SERVICES UPDATE**

## Robotic Pets Lower Pandemic Stress

Hope Hospice has seen an immediate positive response from our new donor-backed Robotic Pet Program created to help lessen the impact that pandemic-related isolation has had on our patients living with late-stage dementia.

Joy for All Companion Pets™ by Ageless Innovation are robotic dog and cat toys designed specifically to comfort older adults in need of companionship; early studies charted the benefits for people living with Alzheimer’s Disease and other forms



of cognitive decline. The pets are battery powered and, when stroked, become alert and make lifelike

noises and small movements.

With a generous donation from NorCal Minis car club, Hope purchased 20 Joy For All cats to start. Due to hygiene protocols, especially at this time of heightened concern, the cats are gifted to the family, not expected to be returned for reuse.

“No one expected quarantine orders to have carried on this long,” says Nikki Tildesley, Manager of Volunteer Services at Hope Hospice. “But here we are, a year into this pandemic, and our patients continue to go without the benefit of face-to-face companionship visits from our

See “Dementia” on page 3



## Get Ready to Hike for Hope

Registration is now open for the 2021 Hike for Hope. This important event is our biggest fundraiser of the year and raises support for patient care and community programs, including grief support services, dementia education, and caregiver resources for local families.

For this year’s flexible event, there are two ways to participate. Choose one and ask your friends and family to support you with a donation to Hope Hospice. We’ll award prizes to the top fundraisers and other fun categories.

**YOUR CHOICE**

**Single-Day Hike**

Saturday, June 5

**Week-long Champion Challenge**

Saturday, May 29, through Saturday, June 5

Hike as an individual or team at your favorite local trail, or simply walk in your neighborhood. Our sponsor AllTrails.com has curated a collection of Bay Area trails suited to most fitness levels, and the map is available at TheHikeForHope.com.

Graham-Hitch Mortuary has generously offered to match the money raised by our top fundraiser in the Champion Challenge, whether a team or an individual, up to \$10,000!

It’s never been easier to participate! With the option to hike wherever you’d like, you can even invite friends

Sign up by **April 30** for a T-shirt guarantee! Registration is open through 6/4.

See “Hike” on page 3



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

## A Call for Community Action



When we were preparing this issue of *Voices*, the world hit the 1-year mark of enduring the COVID-19 pandemic. At times, I still feel it's all surreal. Yet spending 12 months in this altered state of life has helped me identify and focus on what's really important to me: friends and family, practicing kindness and generosity, and community.

These three pillars will come together this summer at our Hike for Hope. This important event raises much-needed support for Hope Hospice. It helps us provide end-of-life care to any individual in need, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. It also helps fund programs available to the community at no charge, such as grief support services and family caregiver education. We had to cancel the hike last year when so much about the pandemic was unknown, and we were left with a huge financial deficit. We have a goal of \$100,000 this year to help us get back on track. **Will you help?**

I ask for your help by participating in the hike or by making a donation to support the cause. Since the event has a hike-on-your-own approach this year, it's never been easier to join us. Please register or make a flat donation at [TheHikeForHope.com](http://TheHikeForHope.com). Follow-up emails will cover the details, but you can contact our planning committee with questions or to register by phone. Connect with us at (925) 829-8770 or [info@hopehospice.com](mailto:info@hopehospice.com). ➔

**Jennifer Hansen**  
Chief Executive Officer



(From top) Representatives from the Castlettes golf club presented Hope Hospice with their annual donation. Members from the Oakland Chapter of Pan Am World Wings visited the Hope office to see the patient-comfort items we purchased with their donation.

## Generosity in Challenging Times

Hope Hospice received two donations from local charitable groups despite neither being able to hold their annual holiday events from which funds usually come.

The **Castlettes**, a women's golf club from Castlewood Country Club in Pleasanton, rounded up donations from their members for a \$3,000 gift to Hope.

The **Oakland Chapter of Pan Am World Wings International** made a cash donation in lieu of the group's annual teddy bear round-up holiday event. To uphold the spirit of the group's gift, Hope used the funds to purchase new plushy pals for our hospice patients. ➔

## Dementia (continued from page 1)



Word of Hope's new robotic pet program spread quickly among local media outlets, including a television segment on ABC News and KCBS Talk Radio.

volunteers, and in many cases, even the patient's own family. They are truly suffering."

Patients with dementia are especially prone to experiencing side effects of long-term social isolation and loneliness. "It's common for care providers to observe increased agitation, confusion, and repetitive behaviors in their patients who are struggling with a change in routine, like what this pandemic has caused," says Gia Barsell, Manager of Dementia Services at Hope Hospice. "At Hope, we teach a lot about unwanted dementia-related behaviors, which can be things like agitation and generally being uncooperative for bathing and other daily activities. As the underlying disease that causes dementia progresses, verbal ability wanes and behaviors become the patient's main form of communication. So, the patient is usually trying to communicate an unmet need in the only way he or she can."

Pharmacological interventions may make an agitated patient easier to care for. But is that what's best for the patient? Barsell explains, "These medicines essentially sedate the person, when it's better long-term to

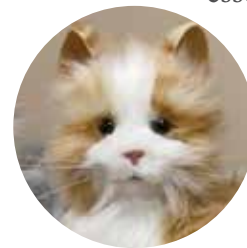


figure out what is causing agitation. Sometimes, it's a simple solution like identifying and treating a urinary tract infection or lowering ambient noise in a sitting room."

Clinical studies conducted with Joy for All Companion Pets have shown positive results in mitigating behavior issues and potentially improving cognitive abilities in older adults. Common findings across the studies showed positive changes including reduced anxiety and agitation, and improved overall well-being, resulting in socialization with others, decreased episodes of delirium, decreased need for psychotropic medications, and reduction in caregiver burden.

Hope Hospice began distributing the cats to dementia patients in December 2020. Grant funding and additional donations have provided for replenished stock and to get lap-size canine models as well. ➔

## Hike (continued from page 1)



The Jamboree After-Party on Zoom will offer live reggae music and an opportunity to enjoy local Italian fare.



and family from out of the area to participate in their own hometowns.

## New Jamboree Party

No matter which path you choose, plan to join fellow participants for our post-hike Jamboree party on June 5 from 4 to 6 p.m. We'll have live music and engaging activities with fellow hikers—all presented through Zoom for safety. The program will run from 4 to 6 p.m. When we break for dinner, enjoy live entertainment from **Cali Conscious**, a contemporary beach-rock and reggae band. The Jamboree requires separate registration; find details at [TheHikeForHope.com](http://TheHikeForHope.com).



We've partnered with **Frankie, Johnnie, & Luigi Too** Italian restaurant in Dublin for this event. If you'd like to participate, phone in your dinner order to (925) 828-9380 for pick up on June 5. Tell them you're with the Hike for Hope group, and the restaurant owners will donate a percentage of your order total to Hope Hospice! The restaurant kindly asks that orders be placed by May 28. ➔



Community-based and non-profit, Hope Hospice is accredited by The Joint Commission, certified by Medicare and Medi-Cal, and is a member of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and National Partnership for Hospice Innovation.



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## Support Your Community Through **Planned Giving**

Including Hope Hospice in your estate planning is a way to support our hospice mission for years beyond your lifetime. While most legacy gifts are monetary, they can also be real property, stocks, or material goods of fiscal value. **Your gift helps us continue to address our patients' needs for care, comfort, and dignity**, and offer support to their families as their loved ones complete their life's journey.

An easy way to make a legacy gift is by designating a portion of your estate to Hope Hospice. You can name Hope as a beneficiary in several ways:

- Your will
- Living trust
- Life insurance plan
- Retirement plan, such as an IRA roll-over, pension, or other program
- Sale of stocks or real estate ➤



For more information, please visit [HopeHospice.com/donate/legacy](https://www.HopeHospice.com/donate/legacy) or call (925) 829-8770. Consult your financial planning professional on the best instrument for your situation and goals.