



YOUR LEGACY. YOUR COMFORT.

## Serenity First Hospice Newsletter

March 11, 2022



### Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in Serenity First Hospice. Our new newsletter will provide updates, helpful reminders, and information about upcoming events.

### Letter from the President

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To Everyone!

Let me take a moment to thank you for supporting Serenity First Hospice in our first year. We are proud to be a locally owned and operated hospice and are working diligently to be RVA's best.

We have started a nonprofit, Serenity Saints, and are so excited about this. The purpose of our nonprofit is to grant Bucket List Wishes and supplemental services and assistance to the terminally ill in need. We recently sent a family, the father who has stage IV cancer, to Great Wolf Lodge to make beautiful memories. Serenity Saints is currently seeking Bucket List Wishes for people to help make their last days better! Please call Kristy at 804-562-5777 if you would like to request a wish.

Serenity Saints has opened a small thrift store to help support our bucket list gifts and other services. We welcome any donations you would consider for our thrift store. I and my staff thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you do to help and support us! We love you and are here to help you in any way we can.

Sincerely,

*Debbie Johnston*

President  
Serenity First Hospice

# Happy Social Work Month!

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March is the time to celebrate all the wonderful social workers of the world! Thank you to all the amazing and hard-working social workers who help our patients and their families, and countless patients across the globe. Join us in extending a big “thank you!” to all social workers this month.

## Announcement from the COO

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We are excited to announce that we will be expanding our Serenity First Hospice family. When we accepted our first Richmond patients in April of 2021, we planned to grow our hospice to other areas of Virginia. As our Richmond location continues to grow, we feel that the time is right for us to move to the next Virginia location. We will be opening a Fredericksburg office of Serenity First Hospice around the first of May. We are thrilled to begin offering our services to the patients and families in Fredericksburg and the surrounding area.

In Fredericksburg we will be partnering with hospitals, skilled care communities, assisted living facilities, and doctor’s offices to provide our services to their patients. We have brought new ideas and innovative hospice care to Richmond, and we will offer those same innovative services in Fredericksburg. One of our greatest assets is being a locally-owned hospice, who can focus on the care of our patients with a team able to make quick and effective decisions for the quality care of our patients. Unlike many corporate hospice companies, we aren’t hindered by long authorization and approval processes when our patients need immediate action and quality care.

Our phenomenal Serenity First Hospice team is one with many years of experience in the healthcare and medical field, with previous work in hospitals, psychiatric care, nursing homes, home health, and more. Under the guidance of our owner who has started many successful businesses and non-profit organizations, we are a strong team with a clear vision to be leaders of innovative hospice care in Virginia. As we focus on each patient in our care, we also focus on the many needs of the patient’s family. Supporting a patient’s family in every way we can is part of the all-encompassing comprehensive care we provide. Serenity First Hospice was founded out of a need for quality hospice care in our area, and we strive every day to go above and beyond for our patients and their families.

**Wade Williams-Diggs**  
COO  
Serenity First Hospice

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## Fun Times at Serenity First!

Paige Klase, RN Case Manager, and Jeremy Kellems, NP, getting ready to shoot their Serenity First commercials.

We are rapidly growing and seeking, PRN part-time, and full time RN’s and CNA’s. Come join our fun team!

# Grand Opening: Angel's Attic, a Serenity Saints Thrift Store

Come to our Richmond office at 4915 Fitzhugh Avenue to check out our newly-opened Serenity Saints Thrift Store, Angel's Attic. All proceeds of Angel's Attic will support our terminally ill in need through our Bucket List Wishes program, supplemental services, and more. Additionally, we are currently looking for volunteers and are accepting donations of slightly-used furniture, jewelry, antiques, and decor. If you are interested in helping, call us at (804) 562-5777 or stop by the office during business hours to shop. Follow our Angel's Attic Facebook page for more information and upcoming inventory.



**OPEN FOR BUSINESS!**

## *Angel's Attic*

*A Serenity Saints Thrift Store*

*Monday-Friday | 8:30AM to 5PM  
4915 Fitzhugh Ave, Richmond, VA 23230*

Please support the new **Angel's Attic**, a Serenity Saints Thrift Store! All proceeds go directly to Serenity Saints to assist with Bucket List Wishes, supplemental services, and providing assistance to the terminally ill in need!

### **DONATIONS NEEDED!**

We are currently taking donations of items to increase our inventory! Stop by the store or call our office to donate furniture, jewelry, antiques, china, or décor that is slightly used and in good condition.

### **VOLUNTEERS WANTED!**

We are looking for volunteers to assist with donation pick-up, sorting of items, pricing and inventory display. Call us today or visit our website to learn more about volunteering with Serenity First.

[WWW.SERENITYFIRSTHOSPICE.COM](http://WWW.SERENITYFIRSTHOSPICE.COM) | (804) 562-5777, EXT. 2



## Upcoming Events

Lost a loved one? Join us every first and third Tuesday of the month for our Grief Support Group, because no one should ever have to grieve alone. Our next session is Tuesday, March 15 at 3 p.m. and all are welcome either in-person at 4915 Fitzhugh Avenue, or online via Zoom. RSVP to Greg Jones at [gjones@sfhospice.com](mailto:gjones@sfhospice.com) or (804) 584-6964.

### Grieving with Serenity

*No one should ever have to grieve alone.*



## Serenity First Hospice Grief Support

### FOR THOSE WHO ARE GRIEVING

**When:** 1st & 3rd Tuesday of every month

**Time:** 3 PM – 4 PM

**Where:** 4915 Fitzhugh Ave  
Richmond, VA 23230  
(804) 562-5777

**Join via Zoom:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6899051932>  
Meeting ID: 689 905 1932

*Come and bring a friend to listen, share or learn.*

“The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not ‘get over’ the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.”

— ELISABETH KUBLER-ROSS

*I will never leave you, nor forsake you. - Hebrews 13:5*

RSVP TO GREG JONES AT [GJONES@SFHOSPICE.COM](mailto:gjones@sfhospice.com) OR 804-584-6964

## Letter from our Community Liaison

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We are going to answer the question, “What is a Hospice Community Liaison and How does this person impact our business”?

The Community Liaison’s sole purpose is to educate Families, Physicians, Facilities and Senior Living Communities, as to how we provide quality hospice care and services. In turn, living out our better and different story.

Our story begins, with our name Serenity First Hospice. Serenity is another word for peace, something we all long to have. Where does peace come from? Peace comes from trust. Establishing trust with our patients and families, is our number one, top priority. Our seasoned team of professionals has a tremendous responsibility to comfort and encourage them. Above all, permit them to talk about their loved one, which is for them a tremendous release.

Sometimes there is pain and discomfort and perhaps even confusion and depression, but there is almost always fear of the future. At the same time, as much as our attention is on the patient, we must not forget the family. There are parents and children, brothers and sisters, and other relatives to consider. They may courageously hold back emotions when around Mom or Dad, but once alone, tears are apt to flow. It’s my responsibility, as the Community Liaison, to share real life examples of personalized comfort care offered by an interdisciplinary team, wherever the patient lives. Sharing from the aspect and educating families on how we will help them through the caregiving and grieving processes. All the while, focusing on how we provide Quality of Life, to those we serve, as we hope for peace within ourselves, with our family, friends and spiritual experience.

Tradition is something that is a very important part of our lives. It is who we are and where we’re from. Tradition is what makes us unique from one another. Tradition is the thing that also makes us like each other. Tradition is something that must be respected by your chosen hospice provider. Traditions may be different, but people are still the same. They still hurt, sob and ache from the feeling of loss. They are reaching for a word of encouragement and assurance that someone can make sense of all of this. They need a hospice company, like Serenity First, that lives out in action, their better and different story. We honor the traditions of families and remain flexible, realizing and respecting, each family is different. Rest assured that you will have the peace of mind in knowing, that you can trust in our compassionate, caring team approach which will make all the difference, in dealing with the difficult days ahead. Our team will be with you every step of the way, providing care without fear, without pain, with peace, and encouraging the people you love beside them, ready to say goodbye.

Serenity First Hospice, is not known for doing standard things. We are engaged in doing very distinctive things, with a designed purpose in mind. One great example of this is our Bucket List Wishes, provided in part by our Foundation, Serenity Saints. We grant wishes to those we serve, in so many unique and wonderful ways. Compassionate creativity realized, with each granted wish. Everyone reading this today, can be a Community Liaison. Join in our efforts of each one reach one, with our message from the heart. If you are troubled, Seek Peace. Serenity First Hospice, the number one trusted choice, for so many families today! May the story continue....

**Daphne Marshall**  
CDP- Community Liaison  
Serenity First Hospice

## Letter from our Medical Social Worker

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Admitting your loved one to hospice is a major decision that comes with many different emotions, often all at once. While many think that grief begins when a patient passes, the reality is that family members grieve long before a patient's final moments. Grief is not simple, nor linear in its progression. Just like life, it can ebb and flow over time. As hospice professionals, our goal is to assist the patient and family in addressing challenges that can overburden families trying to make sense of the inevitable loss of their loved one.

Even without the trigger of an ailing family member, uncertainty can bring stress and anxiety in most individuals. Hospice patients are admitted for many different diagnoses. Hospice care is often linked to significant changes in the brain but not all terminal illnesses impact a patient's cognitive functioning. However, as a patient deals with the disease progression, they often become withdrawn and, eventually, potentially unresponsive. Thus, they may not have an opportunity to discuss their final wishes and achieve closure at their end-of-life. In many instances, honoring our patients means helping them plan in advance and provide clearer instructions for those they leave behind.

There is a wide range to the extent of pre-planning when patients are admitted to hospice. Many made advance plans with a spouse (former or living) years prior via the purchase of cemetery plots. Perhaps they have already ordered headstones and planned a funeral. While that does happen, it is less common in today's era. Over time, more families are choosing cremation, which is very different from a burial and a funeral service. There are different price points to consider, and ideally the patient has life insurance that will make that cost more affordable. A growing expansion of end-of-life options is a positive development from a market standpoint. However, the unintended consequence can be confusion for families because they lack direction or clarity about the best fit for their loved one. It is hard to present a situation where planning in advance is not more beneficial for everyone.

In the short-term, the key variable is whether the patient has a life insurance policy. The advantage to life insurance is that the funeral home or cremation organization will apply the value of the policy to the costs of final plans. This prevents a family member from having to pay out of pocket when the patient passes. A living relative/next of kin provides the life insurance materials and the service provider handles the rest. If there is no life insurance policy then the costs must be paid up front. If this is the case, start looking as soon as possible. We stress to families that coming to a decision in the midst of the health crisis can be emotionally damaging for everyone, which the patient would not want. In our next newsletter, we will discuss a Letter of Instruction, a helpful tool when the patient can be a more active participant in long-term planning.

The hospice journey is about compassionate care, with the greatest emphasis on a prolonged quality of life for the patient. Families also have a journey as well and, at Serenity First, we are committed to providing all of the resources and support for everyone involved.

### **Jennifer Jones**

Medical Social Worker  
Serenity First Hospice

# Hospice FAQs from our Clinical Director

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## What is hospice?

- Hospice is a comprehensive, holistic program of care and support for terminally ill patients and their families. Hospice care changes the focus to comfort care (palliative care) for pain relief and symptom management instead of care to cure the patient's illness.
- Hospice care is a benefit provided under Medicare, Medicaid, and most types of private insurance

## Who is qualified for hospice care?

- To qualify for hospice care, a hospice doctor and your doctor must certify that you're terminally ill, meaning you have a life expectancy of 6 months or less. When you agree to hospice care, you're agreeing to comfort care (palliative care) instead of care to cure your illness.

Examples of illnesses that are eligible for hospice include:

- Alzheimer's, dementia, and other neurological disorders (Parkinson's disease, ALS, MS)
- COPD and other chronic respiratory disease
- Heart failure
- End-stage liver and/or kidney disease
- Cancer

## What does hospice care cover?

- All items and services needed for pain relief and symptom management
- Medical, nursing, and social services
- Medication related to the hospice diagnosis
- Durable medical equipment such as hospital bed, oxygen, shower chair, and bedside commode
- Aide and homemaker services
- Other covered services you need to manage your pain and other symptoms, as well as spiritual and grief counseling for you and your family.
- Your care will be provided by a team of caring professionals, including a Medical Director, Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse, LPN, Home Hospice Aide, Medical Social Worker, Chaplain, and volunteers.

Support Services include:

- Music Therapy
- Massage Therapy
- Pet Therapy

## Leslie Hobson

Clinical Director

Serenity First Hospice

