



YOUR LEGACY. YOUR COMFORT.

Serenity First Hospice Newsletter

July 23, 2022



Letter from the President

Time flies when you're busy doing important work! It's hard to believe we have been open and accepting patients for 15 months! Starting a hospice took a lot more than we anticipated, but we just kept going and believing we could. As most of you know this dream was inspired by the hospice care I saw my father receive.



It has been our privilege to care for your loved ones and their families in the most challenging time, end-of-life, and we hope to make it the best!

We appreciate your belief in us, and your continued trust and support. We love RVA!

We are pleased to announce our first grief group on July 26 at 6 p.m., and hope families find it helpful to know they are not alone.

Thank you for your support.

Debbie Johnston

President
Serenity First Hospice

Updates from the COO

We are very excited and thankful for the continued support from our local referral sources. Thanks to that support, and the support from all of you, Serenity First is growing and ready to venture in new directions. We will be opening our Fredericksburg office in September and will be looking to open other locations soon after. As we expand to new locations, we are excited to add new staff members to the team. As a locally-owned company, we have the ability to do many things for our community and have the advantage of making decisions immediately. If you or anyone you know is looking for a new position, please contact us or reach out to a team member as we continue to add locations.

If you have questions about hospice care, please reach out to our Serenity First team. We are passionate about educating families on all the ways hospice can help a family member in need of care. We want to inform families and patients of how much hospice care has to offer. Serenity First is ready to be your local choice for the care of your loved one. Contact us today.

Wade Williams-Diggs

COO

Serenity First Hospice

Upcoming Events

Save the Date:

Fall Client Appreciation Event

September, 29, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

This event is by invitation only!

Surprise Entertainment to be announced!!
Watch your email for more details.

Serenity First Hospice Grief Group

For those who are grieving

Join our meeting on Tuesday, July 26 at 6 p.m.

4915 Fitzhugh Ave. Richmond, VA 23230

(804) 562-5777

serenityfirsthospice.com

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



Special Recognition

Our President and CEO, Debbie Johnston, was featured as a 2022 Virginia Business Women in Leadership Award winner in the July issue of Virginia Business Magazine! We are excited to celebrate this great honor for Debbie, and recognition of the important work we are doing here at Serenity First.



DEBORAH JOHNSTON

Owner, Serenity First Hospice, Richmond

Deborah Johnston's father inspired her career path. When she was a child, he encouraged her to pursue a job in nursing for the opportunities it could afford her.

"He said, 'You'll always have a job. You could join the Air Force and travel the world. But no matter what happens, you'll always have a job, always be able to take care of yourself,'" Johnston recalls.

Johnston has worked as a nurse for more than 30 years, starting in the operating room before moving to the recovery room, and it has influenced her entrepreneurial ventures. In 1988, she founded home health care company Care Advantage Inc. and sold it in 2017. In 2013, she was featured on an episode of ABC's "Secret Millionaire" TV show.

By the time her father needed hospice care in his old age, Johnston decided to create her own hospice company — Serenity First Hospice — in 2021. Choosing to put her father into hospice care was "difficult," she says, but she eventually realized the positive impact the care had on him.

"I loved the things they did. They were good for him, and I said, 'This is what I want to do. I want to help other people like people have helped my dad.'"

Johnston, who serves on the board of Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority, worries about nursing job retention and the well-being of nurses amid the stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To reverse the "shrinking" trend, she adds, "health care workers need more accolades or acknowledgement" to help sustain them and the nursing field.

Serenity Saints

Serenity Saints, the non-profit foundation for Serenity First, continues to seek people in need of end-of-life Bucket List Wishes. If you know of anyone with an end-of-life wish, please contact us.

Through Serenity Saints, we are also offering extra services such as massage, music therapy, and pet therapy, which are not covered by Medicare.

If you would like to make a donation please visit <https://serenityfirsthospice.com/donate/>.

Letter from our Clinical Director

Serenity First Hospice Family is growing! We are excited to have Emily Sorenson RN, Angie Tremmer LPN, and Monique Mortin, CNA joining our team. All come to us with a wealth of knowledge. It is amazing what we can learn from each other and we are pleased to have them with us. All three are in their orientation phase and we are getting them out in the community to meet our patients, families and facility staff. Please join me in welcoming them.

“Great things in business are never done by one person. They’re done by a team of people.”
— Steve Jobs

Leslie Hobson
Clinical Director
Serenity First Hospice

Letter from our Medical Social Worker

Hospice Myths and Realities

Many of us have preconceived ideas about topics with which we are not familiar. If we have not experienced something we may speculate or listen to the advice or observations of others. Hospice is new for most families joining this process with their loved one. We spend a lot of time referring to the patient’s “journey” in hospice care. However, the families have a journey as well. From the beginning, our clinicians, social worker, and chaplain work to educate families and dispel myths that may make them afraid of the experience. For the family, there may be feelings of guilt or that they are “giving up” on the patient. It is a complicated set of emotions. As hospice staff, it is rewarding to help dispel myths about hospice care so that families are less anxious about future events and changes. The Hospice Foundation has assembled a list of common myths versus the realities of hospice care at <https://hospicefoundation.org/Hospice-Care/Dispelling-Hospice-Myths>.

Jennifer Jones
Medical Social Worker
Serenity First Hospice

Poem shared by our Office Coordinator

I never left you

*I watch you every day, I am always very near
I know deep in your heart you realize I am here.
I watch you when sleep, I hear you when you speak.
Love your life and live it, don't waste a single day!*

Remember me in your heart

**Remember that
I am always near.**

Norma I. Santiago

Office Coordinator

Serenity First Hospice

Letter from our Chaplain

Families coping with grief and one another.

When a family member is grieving the passing of a loved one there can be a struggle with other family members through the grieving process. Grief can bring out the conflict between families, even where there was none before. Below are a few points to consider when dealing with other family member after a loss.

While we are grieving, it is helpful to remember that other family members are grieving as well. We are not the only ones grieving. There are times that grief seems selfish. I am the only one hurting this loss. I am the only one suffering this loss, etc... We are not alone in grief. Other family members grieve also.

It is also helpful to be reminded that not everyone grieves in the same way. Everyone grieves differently. Just because you express your grief through emotions and the other family member is not expressing much if any, emotional grief, does not mean they aren't grieving.

Consider how they are dealing with their loved one dying. The confrontational, depressive, challenging, and or avoidance reactions that you see in your family member might be their way of grieving the loss of a family member.

It's ok to be angry with God but not one another. God is big and strong enough to handle our anger with Him. Because He is God there's not much we can do to Him. But to be angry with your family members can have long term affect. It's best to reconcile with family members as soon as possible (as much as it has to do with you).

Lastly, something we can do is to help other family members grieve. Ask the other family member how they are. Have open conversations, be sympathetic toward their method of grieving. It can be a sacrifice but in so doing, it will help us as well in the grieving process. There is strength in numbers even with those that are grieving.

When it's all said and done, family is all we have no matter how the family is comprised.

Greg Jones

Chaplain

Serenity First Hospice

Letter from our Community Liaison

Deciding on Hospice Care for my loved one, when NOW or LATER?

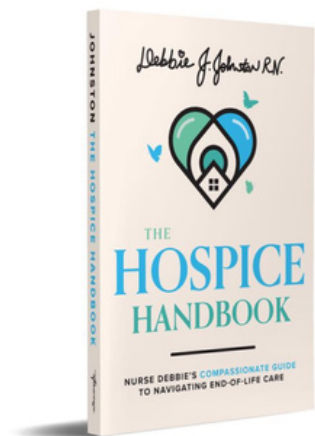
There comes a time when every family faces the question, Do I elect Hospice Care for my loved one NOW or LATER? It can be extremely challenging to decide whether your loved one is ready for hospice. Many people, however, do not fully understand hospice care, and may struggle with misconceptions. Just because you and your loved one choose hospice doesn't mean that the person has to give up on life. Hospice Care is intended to help people enrich and savor their last stage of life. The sole focus shifts to end of life goals, and creating a holistic and supportive end of life experience.

Making this decision sooner rather than later adds to your loved one's overall quality of life. With a plan in place, all involved are able to relax a bit, and make the experience as positive as possible. If you and your family feel that you have not exhausted all of the available treatment options for a cure, hospice may not be the right choice for you. Determining whether hospice care is right for you and your loved one may be tough, but knowledge is power! Our team at Serenity First Hospice welcomes the opportunity to explain our services in greater detail. Our goal is to clarify choices, and ultimately allow for a more peaceful decision making process.

Daphne Marshall
CDP- Community Liaison
Serenity First Hospice

Book Release Announcement

Announcing the new release of Debbie Johnston's book, The Hospice Handbook! This is a must-read book for all, and will empower patients, families, and other caregivers with the tools they need to navigate the complicated world of hospice care. Order yours today from Barnes & Noble, Amazon, Target, or anywhere books are sold.



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