

Saying yes: Volunteer Lourdes Orozco offers Gentle Touch therapy

Lourdes Orozco has touched more patients than just about any volunteer at Mission Hospice – literally. A massage therapist, she has been offering Gentle Touch therapy to our patients for nearly seven years, during which time she has reached well over 100 people.

She says she came to this work after realizing that she “had to stop saying

Ostaseski, the founder of Zen Hospice Project and a Buddhist teacher in end-of-life care. Frank shared photos of some of his patients who were at the end of their lives. Lourdes says, “I dreaded seeing the photos, but they were so beautiful and so peaceful.”

Those two ‘yes’ moments were pivotal. For the past seven years,



Lourdes visits Mission House twice a week to offer Gentle Touch therapy to patients.

‘no’ to opportunities.” So when a friend invited her to join her in attending massage school 25 years ago, Lourdes said ‘yes.’

“I didn’t want to touch strangers. But the training was only a month, so I did it, and I’m so grateful – I fell in love with massage.”

The second time Lourdes said ‘yes’ was when she went to hear a talk by Frank

Lourdes has been volunteering with Mission Hospice, offering patients and family members Gentle Touch massage. She uses techniques taught by hospice massage educator Irene Smith – techniques Lourdes and her fellow volunteer Kathy Gaiser are now teaching to other volunteers.

The approach of providing comfort with something as simple as touch,



“Volunteering with Mission Hospice has changed my life. It has helped me find what I was meant to be doing.... and I am so grateful.”

***– Lourdes Orozco,
Gentle Touch volunteer***

Lourdes explains, is about love, kindness, and respect. “We always explain to the patient what we’re going to do, and ask permission first, even if they aren’t conscious. Even patients who are non-responsive can respond to touch.”

Twice a week, Lourdes visits patients at Mission House, our hospice house – in addition to visiting patients in their own homes. She works closely with the staff at the house, and sometimes offers massages to them as well.

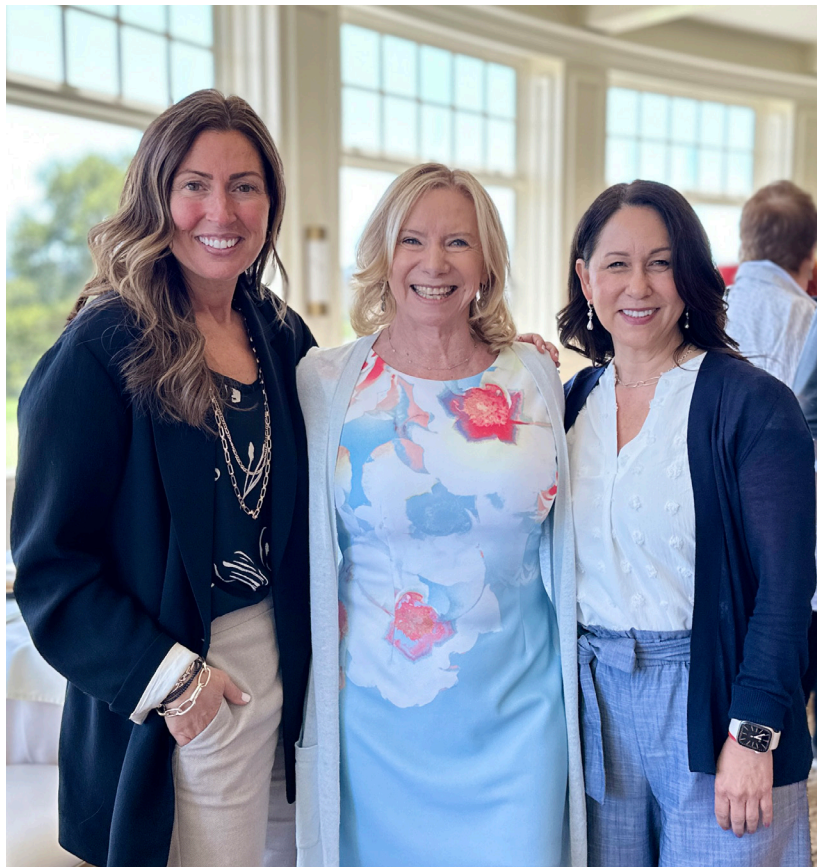
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Merger update: A partnership around the Bay

Last December, Mission Hospice merged with By the Bay Health and Hope Hospice to become the largest independent nonprofit hospice network in northern California. Our organizations share a rich history of serving the Bay Area community; together, we can support even more adults, children, and families with hospice, palliative care, transitional care, and more – including increasing access to the Bay Area’s most vulnerable populations.

Our new larger team is organized into two service areas: North Market and South Market, which includes Mission Hospice’s service area in the Peninsula and South Bay, Hope Hospice in the East Bay, and By the Bay Health’s San Mateo presence.

Mission Hospice CEO Dolores Miller began her well-deserved retirement at the end of May; we thank her for her commitment to our extraordinary standard of care, and for her leadership over the past four years. Our new South Market group is led by SVP Jennifer Hansen, former



CEO Skelly Wingard (L) with outgoing Mission Hospice CEO Dolores Miller and SVP Jennifer Hansen, who is now leading Mission Hospice and the rest of the South Market in our combined organization.

CEO of Hope Hospice, who is committed to continuing our long history of compassionate care for our community. The entire organization is led by CEO Skelly Wingard, RN, PHN, MSN, who has worked in both clinical and administrative leadership roles in a variety of organizations.

The By the Bay Health board now includes former Mission Hospice board members Mukund Acharya, Stacy Blanchard, Jeff Gerard, and Kate Jamentz, who are working alongside former Hope Hospice board members to lead this larger combined organization.

Our entire staff, board, and volunteer team remains committed to

providing personalized, compassionate care to patients and families around the Bay. Please know that your donations given in the name of Mission Hospice will be used to support patients and families throughout the San Francisco Peninsula and South Bay, and will continue to provide comfort, dignity, and peace to those facing life-limiting illness right here at home. 🏡

Volunteer Lourdes Orozco ... continued from front

“When people hear about what I do, they think it is hard. It is hard many times, but it is so beautiful, so peaceful. I learn so much from our patients. What an incredible gift they are giving me.”

When Lourdes isn’t working as a massage therapist or volunteering with Mission Hospice, she loves to read or hang out at the beach, which she finds a peaceful place to sit and thank her patients who have passed.

“Volunteering with Mission Hospice has changed my life. It has helped me find what I was meant to be doing. It is a beautiful gift, and I am so grateful.” 🏡

The Mission Hospice Auxiliary invites you to the **2024 Fall Gala**

Save the Date!
Saturday, November 2

A festive evening featuring your favorite soft rock classics from the '70s and '80s

Supporting care for our community

Ceramic artist Gary Roth continues to create beauty

Gary Roth is an artist with both food and clay. For many years, he was a presence as the Executive Chef at the Los Altos Country Club. He loved

couple's wedding guests.

Gary finds joy in continuing to make art; his vases, plates, cups, and platters fill their neat, light-filled home. "His art is



Gary finds joy in creating beautiful ceramic pieces even while he's on hospice care.

that work because of its variety; club members enjoyed a huge range of cuisines and dishes.

After he retired from the kitchen, Gary returned to his other artistic passion. He started creating in ceramics when he was a teenager living in west LA. Modest about his work, Gary says working with clay "corresponds to the kitchen" in the way he works with his hands to shape something beautiful.

Now 70, Gary lives in Redwood City with his wife Sabine and their rescue dog Finny. He also lives with a brain tumor, and while this has slowed him down physically, it has not stopped his creativity.

Gary works in Halo Pottery Studio in Los Altos once a week, creating beautiful, partially glazed pieces in muted colors. As a wedding gift for their son, he created eight place settings of dishes, in addition to 130 small vases – one for each of the

so beautiful," says Tracie Pyers, Gary's social worker, "and it's something really special that he's still able to do."

After Gary's cancer diagnosis in November 2022 and subsequent treatment, Gary's doctor referred them to Mission Hospice, and he started hospice care in February 2024.

Now he and Sabine are supported by his Mission Hospice team members – nurse Julie Richardson, social worker Tracie, spiritual counselor Rachel Rosenberg, home health aide Cris Pratt, and volunteer Arman Mousavi.

Cris helps Gary take showers, something that is physically difficult for Sabine. Logistical help from Mission Hospice is also very welcome. Mission Hospice has all of Gary's medications delivered to their home as soon as they are needed. Sabine says this is a huge help, explaining, "I literally lived at Rite-Aid before!"

Sabine says that she was initially a little scared about his entering hospice, because she wasn't sure what to expect. But just three days after his team came on board, Gary fell at night. Sabine called Mission Hospice, thinking "what if nobody picks up?" but says the nurse was at their home in 30 minutes to help. "I'm just amazed at the care," she says. "The whole team is so nice, and they're really only a phone call away 24/7."

This additional support lets Gary and Sabine make the most of their time together and with their family. They visit his mom, who lives nearby; their children and young grandchild join them regularly for family meals.

Sabine says they are so impressed by the extra steps their team takes. For example, Gary typically uses a walker for support, but that works well only for limited distances. When the couple had a last-minute idea to go to Half Moon Bay to celebrate their anniversary, Mission Hospice arranged the loan of a wheelchair to make their trip possible.

"We feel so well taken care of by Mission Hospice," says Sabine. "As a caregiver, I don't feel so alone anymore." 🐾



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Mission Hospice & Home Care serves patients and families in the San Francisco Peninsula and South Bay with personalized, compassionate end-of-life care and education. Founded in 1979, our local, independent nonprofit has supported thousands of patients and their families through illness and bereavement. Donations from the community support our exceptional care and educational programs, and help us serve people regardless of their medical coverage or ability to pay.

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INSIDE: Volunteer Lourdes Orozco offers Gentle Touch therapy Merger update: A partnership around the Bay Ceramic artist Gary Roth continues to create beauty



POKER NIGHT



Our Benefit Poker Night last month at the Foster City Rec Center was fun and successful!

Thanks to the players, Mission Hospice Auxiliary volunteers, and our event sponsors, the event raised close to \$17,000 to support patients and families.



Congratulations to our tournament winners, who went home with great prizes!