



A program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
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We Honor Veterans Newsletter

Summer 2024

FEATURED PARTNER STORY

Partners in Care Celebrate Augie's 100th Birthday!

On April 21, 2024, August "Augie" Souza, a World War II Veteran, achieved his life goal of turning 100 years old. [Partners in Care](#), an Oregon-based Level 5 We Honor Veterans partner, had the privilege of collaborating with staff from CountrySide Living to celebrate this Veteran's century of life!

Augie's Life and Service

Augie, born in 1924 in Taunton, MA, volunteered for the Army when he turned 18 and served in World War II from 1943 to 1945. Augie arrived in Normandy just three days after D-Day, his unit then pushed east, eventually serving in West Germany until the war ended. Augie's daughter, Vickie Nelson, reports that his time in the service was a highly impactful experience in Augie's long life. Augie remains friends with many of the Veterans he served alongside and often reflects on his experience in the Army. As a token of appreciation for his efforts in the war, Augie even received a hand-signed letter from President Harry Truman thanking him for his service to our nation.

Following his time in the Army, Augie worked as a fisherman, married his wife, Madeline, and started a family. "He always wanted to live to be 100," his daughter describes. Souza never smoked or drank and prioritized activity and exercise. Until the age of 97, he did 100 pushups a day to maintain this commitment!

Celebrating 100 years of Life

The celebration honoring Augie's life included attendance from friends, family, fellow Veterans, and hospice and memory care facility staff, as well as a ceremony featuring the Central Oregon Band of Brothers and the Redmond High School JRTOC. The room was filled with photos from Augie's life, including images from his time in France and Germany during World War II. During the celebration, Augie was gifted a certificate, a quilt, and a very well-deserved slice of chocolate cake.



Augie (center) celebrates his 100th birthday surrounded by family and friends, fellow Veterans, and hospice provider and facility staff.

“One of the biggest things about today is just to recognize someone who is a patriot and who gave so much from his life,” describes Maureen Dooley, Veterans outreach coordinator with Partners in Care. Maureen went on to report, “It was truly incredible and heartwarming to be able to celebrate and honor [Augie].”

WHV Hospice Partners in the Community

WHV hospice partners, such as Level 5 partner, Partners in Care, are essential to ensuring that Veterans in their respective communities are celebrated, thanked, and honored during every stage of life.

NEWS FROM WHV

2024 WHV Outstanding Program Award – Application closing July 1!

To celebrate the work of We Honor Veterans (WHV) partners, NHPCO is excited to present the 2024 We Honor Veterans Outstanding Program Award. WHV Level 4 and 5 hospice partners with active NHPCO membership are invited to apply by July 1. [Read the full details and submit your application here!](#)

Hospice Veteran Partnership Roster Updated!

Hospice-Veteran Partnerships (HVP) are community or state-based coalitions of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities, community hospices, State Hospice Organizations, and others working together to ensure that Veterans and their families receive specialized and high-quality care at the end of life. These coalitions provide members with assistance, education, and community connections to improve Veterans' end-of-life care in their service area. All WHV partners are expected to be actively involved in their nearest HVP. [Check out the updated roster HVP roster here!](#)

Are you new to WHV or looking for a refresher?

Check out our [WHV Top 10 Features Guide](#) to get oriented to WHV and learn about the resources and tools available to help your hospice organization earn your next star. This guide is also helpful for current WHV partners looking for a refresher on all that WHV offers.

Level 5 Partners Fall Cohort – Important Dates

Level 5 Reports and Renewal Reports for members of our Fall 2024 cohort are due on October 31. All submitted Fall cohort reports will be reviewed between October 31 and November 30. Reports requiring any additional revisions are due on December 31. More information on WHV's new cohort system is [available here](#). We also encourage you to utilize the tools and resources available on the [Level 5 Requirements page](#) to assist you in completing Level 5.

WHV Survey: Honoring Veterans of Foreign Militaries at End of Life

WHV hospice partners consistently report providing care to Veterans of foreign militaries. The term Veterans of foreign militaries is used to describe individuals who served in a nation, other than the United States, military and now reside in the U.S. (i.e., a service member of the Ukrainian Military who now resides in the U.S.). Please [complete this short survey](#) to help us gather information on WHV partners' current practices and needs for providing care to Veterans of foreign militaries. Responses from this survey will be used to create a guide that synthesizes best practices for honoring Veterans of foreign militaries in their final days.

WHV Partners at Hospice Action Week

Earlier this month, 37 WHV Level 4 and 5 partners were invited to attend specialized in-person Veteran-centric programming as an add-on offering of the [Hospice Action Network's](#) Hospice Action Week. As a WHV attendee, these partners came together to share ideas for improving Veterans' end-of-life care and had the opportunity to engage as first-time advocates on the Hill! Interested in becoming a hospice advocate? [Learn more here!](#)



FAQ: My organization has multiple sites, do we need a separate WHV account for each location?

Yes! WHV requires that each location operate a separate WHV account. Because each site consists of different staff, volunteers, and patients, we require that each location progress through the WHV levels independently. Additionally, all locations are displayed in our partner directory by city. Therefore, having separate accounts is helpful when families, patients, or VA staff are looking for providers, as they can search our directory by location and WHV level.

Although you are required to maintain a separate account for each location, you are welcome to collaborate on the activities required to achieve each level. If you are collaborating, we ask that you ensure the data you report for your activities (i.e., number of staff in a training, veterans pinned, etc.) only reflects the data for that particular location.

WHV EVENTS

Upcoming WHV Webinar: Identifying Clinically Meaningful Moral Injury Among Veterans at End of Life

Join the WHV team on July 16 at 3 p.m. ET in welcoming Dr. Brandon Griffin, Clinical Psychologist and Investigator with the Center for Mental Healthcare and Outcomes Research (CeMHOR) at Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System. Dr. Griffin will present his study, “Using the Moral Injury and Distress Scale to Identify Clinically Meaningful Moral Injury,” discuss the necessity of identifying clinically meaningful moral injury, an introduction of the Moral Injury and Distress Scale, a presentation of findings, and a discussion of implications for practice with Veterans at the end of life. [Register to attend this webinar.](#)

WHV Office Hours

Join us for WHV Office Hours – ask a question, meet fellow WHV partners, and learn more about the amazing impact WHV is having across the nation! All partner levels are welcome. Sign up via the [WHV Events Calendar!](#)

Upcoming Webinars and Partner Events

Want to ensure you never miss another WHV event again? Bookmark the [WHV Events Calendar](#) to register for upcoming webinars and learn about community partner events.

UPDATES FROM THE VA

- [As of June 10, families of deceased and cremated Veterans now have the option to apply to receive commemorative plaques or urns from the VA](#)
- [Veteran trust in VA has reached an all-time high of 80.4% — up from 55% when the survey began in 2016.](#)
- [VA to grant 1 millionth benefit claim for Veterans and their survivors under the PACT Act](#)
- [Through 2027, Veterans no longer need to pay copays for their first three outpatient mental health care visits of each year](#)
- [VA to expand health care coverage to Veteran family members and caregivers through CHAMPVA](#)
- [VA to host PACT Act events in all 50 states this summer to encourage Veterans and survivors to apply for health care and benefits](#)

MORE PARTNER NEWS

Honoring Veterans & Impacting Countless Family Members

In an emotional WHV recognition ceremony, [Mercy Hospice](#) had the honor of presenting a pin and certificate to a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran hospice patient. The touching ceremony also included a presentation of a handmade quilt crafted specifically for this Veteran patient. This Veteran was surrounded by family, including his wife of 65 years, throughout the ceremony. The family was overwhelmed with emotion as Mercy Hospice’s team conducted this final ceremony of recognition. The Veteran patient took his final breath the next day. His family was so grateful for this final ceremony of recognition that they called and sent letters, thanking Mercy Hospice for recognizing their loved one’s service to our country.

Pinning ceremonies are a powerful celebration of gratitude for a Veteran’s service that provides Veterans with a sense of meaning and purpose at the end of life while simultaneously offering comfort

and closure to family and friends. Conduct your next pinning ceremony using [WHV's Pinning Ceremony Guide](#).

Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association Honors Veterans at End of Life

WHV hospice partners establish countless impactful relationships within their community to provide care and appreciation to the Veteran patients they serve. [Guiding Light Hospice](#), a Level 4 WHV partner, collaborated with San Antonio's Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association to host an Honor Ride dedicated to the Veterans residing at the Army Residence Community in San Antonio, TX. Over 60 motorcyclists participated in this event and honored their fellow Veterans. The Veteran patients, their families, and the facility and hospice providers who care for them were thrilled to attend this exciting event!



Congratulations to our partners that achieved Level 5 as part of our Spring 2024 Cohort

Please join us in congratulating our new Level 5 partners!

Caris Healthcare, L.P.-Columbia, SC
Agape Hospice of Clarke County
Hospice in the Pines, Inc.
Partners In Care
Assured Home Health and Hospice
SouthernCare Hospice- Uniontown, OH
Vitas Healthcare – Florida
Heartland Home Health Care and Hospice
Valiant Hospice and Palliative Care
Caris Healthcare – Tennessee
Elite Hospice – Springdale
Gentiva Hospice – Arlington Heights IL
Alabama Hospice Care of Birmingham
Community Hospice of South Alabama
St. Joseph Hospice
Hospice of Yuma



Congratulations to our partners that renewed their Level 5 status as part of the Spring 2024 cohort

Please join us in congratulating our committed Level 5 partners!

Brookhaven Hospice – Massachusetts; Gentiva Hospice – Casa Grande, AZ; Lightways Hospice and Serious Illness Care; Caris Healthcare – Sevierville; VITAS Healthcare; Residential Hospice – Illinois; Hospice of Western and Central MA; Hospice of Marion County; Heartland Hospice; Idaho Home Health & Hospice, Inc.; Heart of Hospice- Fort Smith; Heart of Hospice; VITAS Healthcare of Atlanta; Bethesda Health Group, Inc. DBA; Bethesda HospiceCare; Infinity Hospice Care; Saint Mary's Hospice; Geisinger Hospice; Mesilla Valley Hospice, Inc.; Community Hospice; Caris Healthcare; Gentiva Hospice – Kingsport, TN; Hospice of Northeast; Georgia Medical Center; Cornerstone VNA and Hospice; Geisinger Hospice, NRU; Geisinger Hospice, LWS; Snowline Hospice; Smoky Mountain HH & Hospice – Greenville; Hospice at Home; Smoky Mountain Home; Health and Hospice – Kingsport; CentraCare; Heart of Hospice Valdosta; Caris HealthCare; Heartland Hospice; CHRISTUS Hospice St. Frances Cabrini; Sutter Care At Home; The Denver Hospice; Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice; Heart to Heart Hospice of SW Indiana; Traditions Health/Hospice Lawrenceville, GA; Suncrest Hospice; Hospice of Chenango County Dba Hospice and Palliative Care of Chenango County; Heart to Heart Hospice of Evansville; Sutter Care at Home – Alameda; Christus VNA Hospice San Antonio and Palliative Care

Do You Have a Photo or Story to Share?

We want YOU to send us any highlights of your WHV program and events or noteworthy volunteer and patient stories. [Share your story here!](#) If you need assistance, please contact veterans@nhpco.org.

NHPCO UPDATES AND EVENTS

Press Room and Alerts

- [Joint NAHC-NHPCO Statement on Signing of Affiliation Agreement](#)
- [Advocates Rally in DC for the Future of Hospice: NHPCO and HAN Amplify Provider Voices on Capitol Hill](#)
- [NHPCO and NAHC Joint Statement: CMS Revises Guidance on Implementation of Hospice Certifying Physician Enrollment Requirement](#)
- [NHPCO's CaringInfo Program Launches New Consumer Blog, Insights](#)

Upcoming Events

- July 9: MyNHPCO Development/PR/Marketing Community Chat - [Marketing Multiple Service Lines: How to Brand and Market Multiple Service Offerings to Fuel Growth](#) +
- July 12: [Membership Orientation Call](#)
- July 15: EOL Doulas Chat - [Vigil Planning](#) +
- July 17: MyNHPCO Volunteer Management Community Chat - [We Honor Veterans](#) +
- July 18: Webinar - [Scaling Up: Strategies for Growing and Expanding Your Palliative Care Program](#) *

* Indicates accredited education with CE/CME credit available to live attendees.

+ MyNHPCO Chats are regular webinars developed by members for members. They are produced by the discipline-based MyNHPCO Steering Committees, participation is open to employees and volunteers of all NHPCO member organizations.

VA Support Resources

VA Crisis Line: 988 Select 1 if a Veteran | VA Caregiver Support Line: 855-260-3274 | VA Health Benefits Line: 877-222-8387 | [Find VA Locations](#)

If you need help finding the right contact to connect with VA telehealth resources, please contact veterans@nhpco.org.



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