

# Aurora House News

*The light of a new day...*



## Summer 2024 Newsletter Volume 17 Issue 2

Patient and families served: 1,550

Age Range: 6 wks - 103yrs

Average Length of Stay: 35 days

Students & Community #: 18,967

## Renovations Underway!



2017 Aurora House 10 year Celebration



2024 Aurora House Under Renovation

The Aurora House Foundation was originally built in the 1980's. Originally a residential home, the Aurora House has gone through many phases and challenges since opening our doors in 2007. From expansions, inclement weather, and a world-wide pandemic this house is a triumph to the testament of time. The Aurora House has given our residents and their families a home away from home, now it's time we give back and restore this facility to continue to provide quality care to our residents. We are so excited to announce the Aurora House is in the process of renovations!

This renovation is more than a fixer-upper project. It is proof of what years worth of effort, a dedicated staff, and commitment from our community can accomplish together. We stand in unison as advocates for compassionate end-of-life care and a dignified death for all. As we embark on the journey of renovating, we honor the past and all the families we have had the privilege to provide care for. May this renovation not only restore its structure but also rekindle the warmth and love that make a house a true home.

As a small nonprofit, projects like this could not happen without the support of our community. A special heartfelt THANK YOU to Noble Texas Builders and South Texas Professional Painters for making this renovation possible. Please support those that support local!

Your contributions make a difference. If you would like to donate to help the Aurora House and contribute to our renovation efforts please visit our website, [www.aurorahouse.org/donations](http://www.aurorahouse.org/donations) and consider donating today. Stay tuned for a Ribbon Cutting Announcement in the near future!



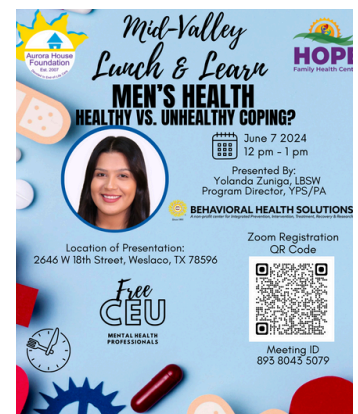
## New Educational Programs! CEU's for Mental Health Professionals



The Aurora House Foundation in collaboration with HOPE Family Health Center have partnered together to bring the Mid-Valley Lunch & Learn Series to Weslaco! This series will offer informative sessions on various mental health topics such as healthy vs. unhealthy coping, self-care plans, healing strategies, and more. Sessions are free and open to the public with CEU accreditation for mental health professionals.

The Mid-Valley Lunch & Learns will be held every one day of the month on Friday's from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm at the Aurora House Education Center. This is a great opportunity for individuals working in the mental health profession to broaden their skillset and network with other professionals in their field. Guest speakers will consists of licensed social workers, counselors, clinicians, and others working within the realm of mental health. The series is offered in person or virtual for participant convenience. Lunch will be provided for those in person. RSVP is required.

For more information, please contact the Aurora House at 956-973-9690 or Yamilex Garcia, [y.garcia@hfhcenter.org](mailto:y.garcia@hfhcenter.org), Lynette Castillo, [lynette@aurorahouse.org](mailto:lynette@aurorahouse.org)



In 2023, Ms. Ramirez was diagnosed with Hypertensive Heart Failure and CKD Stage 4 (Chronic Kidney Disease). After many months of fighting for her health, her condition resulted in needing full-time care. Ms. Ramirez's niece recalled her time volunteering at the Aurora House years ago describing the experience being a home-like atmosphere with genuine caring staff. With time, familial reassurance, and the caregivers' efforts to make her feel welcomed and cared for, she grew comfortable and pleased to be at our end-of-life care facility.

Ms. Ramirez has a strong support system with family visiting regularly including her daughter, Maria, who would be at the Aurora House on a daily basis. Ms. Maria wanted to be of service during her time at the Aurora House and kindly offered her assistance to staff while she was visiting. She soon decided to become an official volunteer.

***“...from a patient’s first arrival to their last day, the caregivers treat them like family”***



Ms. Maria describes her experience volunteering at Aurora House with gratitude as she raves about the quality of care provided by our staff of dedicated caregivers. Volunteering at our facility Ms. Maria witnessed firsthand the warm and loving relationships our caregivers build with our residents commenting, “...from a patient’s first arrival to their last day, the caregivers treat them like family, that takes a special kind of person.”

The Aurora House prides itself in having an open and inviting atmosphere for loved ones to feel comfortable and welcomed in our home. Volunteering is one of the many ways individuals can give back to their community and engage in opportunities that make a positive impact. We commend our volunteers for donating their time and our caregivers level of compassion and patience to recognize a patients needs and actualize how to best care for the individual in a way that aligns with their wishes. Together we can help create a new era of End-of-Life Care so every person in their last chapters of life can approach a peaceful death with comfort and dignity .

## Gathered in Gratitude

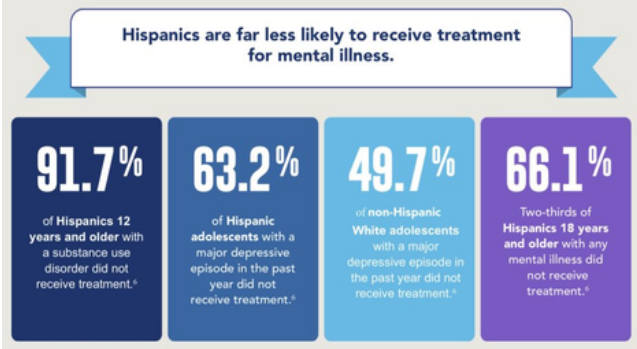
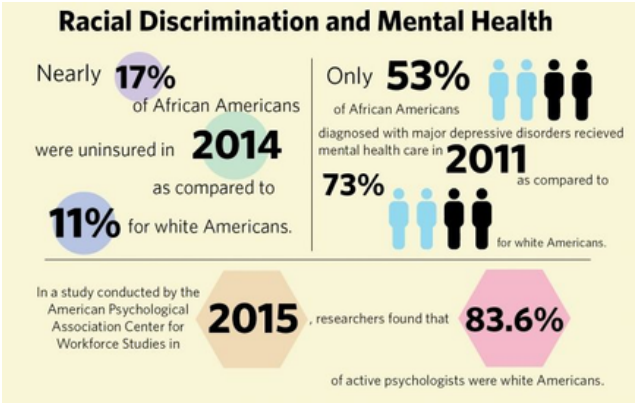


## National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month! This annual observance brings awareness to the unique challenges that affect the mental health of racial and ethnic minorities . The theme for 2024 is **Be the Source for Better Health: Improving Health Outcomes Through Our Cultures, Communities, and Connections.**

Mental health includes the psychological, emotional, and social well-being that affect how people feel, think, and act. Many factors play a role in the quality of an individuals mental health such as biological factors (sleep, diet, physical activity level) and social factors (relationships, employment, education). Racial and ethnic minority populations experience numerous mental health disparities including higher rates of attempted suicide, higher rates of poor health, lower treatment rates for mental disorders, susceptibility to poverty, unemployment, incarceration, and other indicators that can have long term negative impacts on overall health.

How can we help make a difference? In line with the theme, we can all play a role in the improvement of personal mental health and and our communities overall mental health. On an individual level we can make small adjustments to our daily lives that encourage and facilitate self-care practices like mindfulness or meditation. As a unit, we can help by being open to talk about mental health and destigmatize taking a proactive role in caring for our mental health. Minorities seek out and receive less treatment compared to non-minorities. An honest conversation about mental health can be the first step to helping each other provide the support we need. For more information on National Minority Mental Health Awareness, please visit <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/national-minority-mental-health-awareness-month-2024>





### Donations

ADL Services  
Adrian Farias  
Adrian Gonzalez  
Aledia Rangel Baez  
Alexis De Sela  
Amanda Saenz  
Amedisys  
Andres Rios  
Andy Scott  
Angel Wings Hospice  
Anonymous  
Anthony Vaughan  
Audrey Eoff  
Axel Kakuschke  
B.J. Woodyard  
Barbara & Alfred DeLange  
Benavides Law Firm  
Betty Lou Vitek  
Bobbie Soto  
Bonnie Houger  
Brian Humphreys  
Burton Companies LLC  
Carmen Trujillo Gonzalez  
Carol Goedken  
Catholic Daughters of the Americas  
Cecilia Longoria  
Charles & Lucille Richardson  
Charles & Martha Precourt  
Charming Pediatrics  
Cheyanne Conner Zink  
Christina Perez  
Christopher & Minerva St. John  
Cielo Strategy Group  
Claudia Barbosa  
Country Sunshine RV Park  
Daniel & Beverly Selky  
Davis Equity Realty  
Debbie McDonald  
Dennis & Linda Linn  
Dennis L. & Sharon M. Sejkora  
Dennis Martinus  
Development Corporation of Mercedes  
Diana Casares  
Diana Gonzalez  
Diana Lozano, MD PA  
Dimas or Consuelo Martinez  
Donna Lions Club # 1297 District 2-A3  
Donna Medical Clinic  
Donna Rothman  
EB Merit Construction  
Edward & Marilyn Massey  
Elizabeth & Subram Gopal Krishnan, MD  
Elizabeth Barron  
Elsa Civic & Study Club  
Enrique Torres  
Esteban Hernandez  
Eugene R. Vaughan  
Fanny & Buddy Ross  
Fidencio Alvarado  
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Frances Tovar  
Gastroenterology Consultants of South  
Texas, PPL  
Gentiva Hospice  
George McCaleb  
Gloria Fitch  
Heather Wolfenbarger  
Helga Freese

Henry & Barb Fisher  
Hollon Oil Company  
HUB International  
Idalia Kimbro  
J & E McConnell  
James & Sondra Plowman  
James Wilt  
Janice L. Earl  
Jean Adams  
Jeffrey Stowe  
Jennifer McCaleb  
Jerry L. & Diana L. Bottomley  
JoAnna Ybarra  
Jocelyn Barrera  
John & Penny Berry  
Johnny Broshears  
Jose Ramos  
Julieta Piando  
Karen Schroeder  
Kathleen Fisher  
Kendra Scott Design  
Kirk Bloomquist  
Knapp Community Care Foundation  
Knapp Medical Center  
Knights of Columbus Council 3098  
Lali Dena  
Laura Lopez  
Lesley Barron  
Life Giving Outreach Ministries/Crossroads  
Lilly Garcia  
Linda Graham  
Linda Lopez  
Linda Rodriguez  
Llano Grande Lake Park Church  
Louis Tyler  
Love of Christ Lutheran Church  
Magda Escandon  
Magic Valley Electric Coop  
Marco Flores  
Marco Garcia  
Maria Gomez  
Marissa Borrego  
Martin Ziegler  
Marvin & Lorna Glesne  
Mary Free  
McAfee Insurance Agency  
Meghan Reid  
Melanie Riley  
Melecia Fuentes M.D.  
Melissa Neuhaus  
Michael & Karen Myers  
Michelle Garcia  
Mid Valley Senior Softball League  
Mindy Rivera  
Mitzi & Dana Pederson  
Montalvo Insurance Agency  
Mr. & Mrs. Alejandro L. Estrada  
Mr. & Mrs. Rhonda & Robert Garza  
Mutiat Adeoye  
Myrna Ochoa  
Nancy Fratzke  
Norma Martinez  
Norma Olvera  
Oralia Tafolla  
P.E. & J.T. McDougal, FLP  
Paradise South Church & RV Park  
Patricia & Alan E. Bortnem  
Patricia Alexander

Patricia Barrera  
Patricia Bremer  
Patricia Long  
Patty Saenz  
Paul & Deborah Skouge  
Peggy James & Josie Zepeda  
Pete & Jo Peters  
Priscilla Hinojosa  
Rafael Rodriguez  
Raquel Menchaca  
Renee Zachman  
RGV ACO Health Providers, LLC  
Rhiannon Mann  
Robert & Joanne Degener  
Robert & Margaret McAllen  
Robert Antonacci  
Robert Donalson  
Robert Gallipeau  
Roberta Malone  
Roberto Rodriguez  
Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory of the RGV  
Rosie Molina  
Rosita Jones  
Sally Vela  
San Jose Hospice  
San Martin De Porres Church  
Scott Vaughan  
Sharon Sadusky  
Shepard & Walton Employee Benefits  
Sheryl L. Henry  
Shirley Knutson-Nelson  
Siesta Village Worship Hour  
SJ Hospice Services LLC.  
Smith Security & Fire  
Snow to Sun RV Park  
South Texas Electric Cooperative, INC  
Southern Comfort Park  
Stephen R & Dawn M Jones  
Sylvia Fortain  
Texas Regional Bank  
Thelma Lopez  
Theodore & Barbara Wire  
Theresa Aceve  
Thomas and Sharon Newcomer  
Trails End Community Church  
Tu Vida Medical Transport, Inc  
Vantage Bank Texas  
Vaughan Decker Goldsmith  
Violanda Cantu Abrego  
Walmart  
Wellsential Health  
Weslaco Economic Development Corporation  
Weslaco Elks Lodge 2057  
Weslaco Rotary Club  
Yadhya Mendez  
Yessica Robledo  
Yolanda Salinas  
Zefra Mascorro

### *In Kind*

Amigos Del Valle Home Health Care  
Antonio Romero  
Aurora Martinez  
Brenda Rodriguez  
Carmen Flores  
Central Middle School  
Charles & Martha Precourt  
Christina Perez-Caregiver  
Country Sunshine RV Park  
Elsa Civic & Study Club  
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Fred Cheney  
Gail Wanner  
Iglesia Bautista Southside  
Kathy Damalas  
Love of Christ Lutheran Church  
Lucy Moses  
Maria Sanchez  
Mark McCaleb  
Ministerio Hispano El Valle District UMC  
Mt. Sinai Hospice  
Petra Garza  
Rebecca Fuller  
Rio Valley Estates Worship Service  
San Jose Hospice  
Siesta Retirement Village  
Siesta Village Worship Hour  
Snow to Sun RV Park  
Southern Comfort Park  
Suspiro's Cakes  
The Other Guys Pharmacy  
Trails End RV Park  
Trinity Solis  
United Migrant Opportunity Services Inc.  
Valley Nature Center



### *In Loving Memory*

**Concepcion Vallejo**  
Francisco Vallejo  
**Herman De La Cerda**  
Herman De La Cerda Jr.  
**James Fuller**  
Rebecca Fuller  
**Maria Medelez**  
Trinity Solis  
**Ricardo Hernandez Melchor**  
Jafet Heredia

### *In Honor of*

<b>Aurora Montemayor</b> Elisa Montemayor	<b>Katherine Ray</b> Irma Cantu
<b>Benvenuto Castellanos</b> Maria Castellanos	<b>Lynn Gallipeau</b> Robert Gallipeau
<b>Clotilde Cantu</b> Cenoida De Hoyos	<b>Margarita Castaneda</b> Sylvia Ochoa
<b>Luisa Zamaniego</b>	<b>Maria De Valdez</b> Maria Sanchez
<b>Ernesto Salinas</b> Salinas Family	

### *In Loving Memory*

**Al Smith**  
Anna Smith  
**Antonia De Garza**  
Marcelo & Josefina Guzman  
**Bessie Olson**  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald D & Carmen Hicks  
**Betty Jo Crist**  
Brian Humphreys  
Eugene R. Vaughan  
**Beverly Benfer**  
Liselotte Pinkerton  
**Bill Austin**  
James & Sondra Plowman  
Lois Tryggestad  
**Bill Butler**  
Robert Gallipeau  
**Billie Vanderveer**  
Brian Humphreys  
**Carolyn Edwards**  
Carol & Howard Lyon  
Clarice A. Fodness Nystrup  
Dale & Shirley Peters  
Joseph & Margaret Vaughan  
Laura & Dave May  
Lynn & Connie Finders  
Maynard Edwards  
Timothy & Sue Bauscher  
Wilfred Kelley  
**Daniel "Danny" E. Arnold**  
Emmett L Bills  
**Daniel Wiskom**  
Lois Tryggestad  
**Doris Jacobson**  
John Jacobson  
**Dr. Melida Perez Gonzalez**  
Catalina Berry  
Christine & Michael Hummer  
Erika Alvarez  
Janis Bryant  
Joanna Wolaver  
Joseph Raia  
Lois & John FitzSimon  
Paula De La Cruz  
Robyn & Riley Smith  
Sandra Esparza Guerrero  
Tiffany Carreon  
Tom Blair  
**Elida Hinojosa**  
Carlota Reigner  
**Elodia Garza**  
Norma De La Rosa  
**Eugene Polzin**  
Eric L. Polzin  
**Herman De La Cerda**  
Irma Obregon  
J. & L. & E. Ruelas  
**James Fuller**  
Axel Kakuschke  
Barbara Diedrich  
Diana Engesser  
Enola Rosencrantz  
Florence Lasater  
Gary & Jeanne Fears  
Larry & Gillian McClure  
Linda & David Burggraff  
Lynette Straite  
Mary Kasella  
Rebecca Fuller



**James Williams**  
Camille Jones  
George Ramsey  
Robert & Jodi Janik  
**Jane Ryan**  
Tina R. Hansen  
**Janis Ramsey**  
George Ramsey  
**Jim Thalacker**  
Delores Nelson  
Siesta Village Worship Hour  
**Jimmie Williams**  
Brian Humphreys  
**John B. Allen**  
Eugene R. Vaughan  
**Margarita Castaneda**  
David Castaneda, SR  
**Maria Gomez**  
Jose & Hilda Gonzalez  
**Maria R. Hernandez**  
Navia Hernandez  
**Pat Gaddis**  
Janice L. Earl  
**Patricio Briones**  
David Briones  
**Peggy Eisman**  
Geni Friend  
**Phyllis Hartwig**  
Garry & Shirley Rhoades  
Germaine & Larry Plett  
James & Sondra Plowman  
Joseph & Margaret Vaughan  
LaRae Webet  
Lois Tryggestad  
Marguerite Wiegand  
Roger Mackner  
Roy Heinlen  
**Ron Woodman**  
Paul & Connie McDaniel  
**Ted Long**  
Patricia Long  
**Vangie Martinez**  
Javier Martinez  
**Walter Thompson**  
Mr. & Mrs. Art Beckwith  
**Wayne Liska**  
George Ramsey

### *In Honor of*

**Agustin Lopez**  
Manuela Gomez  
**Aurora Montemayor**  
Elisa Montemayor  
**Janice Earl**  
George Ramsey  
**Katherine Ray**  
David Ray  
**Lou Vitek**  
Jacqueline Galloway  
John Knox Village

# Thank You!

# Aurora House Events

## How You Can Help

### Become a Sponsor

By choosing to become a sponsor for Aurora House you'll be allowing us to continue providing compassionate end-of-life care for those in need in our community.

Contact Marisela Gonzalez at  
(956) 973-9690 or (512) 865-8085  
or email [mari@aurorahouse.org](mailto:mari@aurorahouse.org)

### In-Kind Donations

To help reduce costs, our program is always in need of items to support our activities - from blankets and wipes for the patients to office supplies. Visit our Wish List to see what you can help with.

[www.aurorahouse.org/wishlist](http://www.aurorahouse.org/wishlist)

### Monetary Donations

Aurora House does not receive any government aid or funding from national or state humane societies and relies entirely on private donations to fund our program. To donate, visit

[www.aurorahouse.org/donate](http://www.aurorahouse.org/donate)

### Planned Gifts & Legacy Requests

Including Aurora House in your will or trust can create a lasting legacy to help the community for years to come.

Contact Marisela Gonzalez at  
(956) 973-9690 or (512) 865-8085  
or email [mari@aurorahouse.org](mailto:mari@aurorahouse.org)

## Community with a Purpose

With over \$40,000.00 raised, our annual Administrative Professionals' Day brought our community together to help Aurora House continue our mission to provide compassionate end-of-life care. Our "Denim & Diamonds" themed two-day event was largely made possible by a team of volunteers made up of our Aurora House Board & staff, business owners, and community members.

They devoted many hours of their time in preparation, including set-up of the event and style show, donations to the silent auction and raffle, hand-made centerpieces and other decor, raffle ticket sales, and our community leader beverage servers. Our Texas Style Luncheon was prepared especially for Aurora House by Chef Roberto Torres.

Their hard work is a testament to the level of community support required to bring an event like Denim & Diamonds to fruition. A huge thank you to our Masters of Ceremony, Kirk Bloomquist and Ryan Vaughan, who kept the guests engaged, and the Weslaco Royal Court for their help selling raffle tickets. On behalf of the Aurora House Foundation, thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to make our event a success and deepest appreciation goes out to the sponsors, donors, and attendees whose generosity enabled us to continue to serve our community.



# Thank You!

*Pedro E.  
McDougal, MD*

 Knapp  
Medical Center

 McAfee  
AGENCY  
INSURANCE  
Since 1935

 amedisys  
HOSPICE

 SWEB  
SHEPARD & WALTON EMPLOYEE BENEFITS  
AUSTIN • RIO GRANDE VALLEY • SUGAR LAND

 Magic Valley  
MVEC  
Electric Cooperative

 SJ Hospice Services LLC  
Excellence in End of Life Care and Comfort

# Thank You!

TO ALL OUR COMPASSIONATE  
GEMS

- ADL Services, Inc.
- Brian Humphries
- Eugene Vaughan
- Hollon Oil Company
- Idalia Kimbro
- Janice Earl
- Jo Peters
- Mutiat Adeoye
- Oralia Tafolla
- Rhonda Garza
- Robert Antonacci
- Ryan & Jode Vaughan
- Sheryl Henry
- Yolanda Salinas

### Giving Made Easy

Your commitment through monthly or quarterly giving is vital to Aurora House's ability to continue to serve our community and ensures that our residents spend their last days surrounded by compassion, dignity, comfort, and peace.



### An Easy Way to Give Your Support

You can schedule monthly or quarterly gifts through ACH (Automated Clearing House) debits.

ACH debit allows you to make your donation electronically. It is a more efficient, cost-effective program for both you and Aurora House.

For more information, please contact  
Marisela Gonzalez  
956-973-9690 or  
[aurorahousefoundation@yahoo.com](mailto:aurorahousefoundation@yahoo.com)



# Aurora House Events

## Upcoming Events

### Aurora House Foundation

Cordially Invites You  
To Our Holiday Gala

## All Is Bright

DECEMBER | 13 | AT 7:00 PM

*Live Music, Auction, Dinner*

The Event Center at Llano Grande  
2215 E. W. Blvd. Mercedes, TX  
78570

For more information on tickets or sponsorships,  
please call (956) 973-9690 or email [Mari@aurorahouse.org](mailto:Mari@aurorahouse.org)  
Sponsorships Available!  
Contact Mari for more information, 956- 973-9690

### Aurora House Foundation Board of Directors

**Mark McCaleb**  
President

**Patricia Barrera**  
Vice President

**Laura Lopez**  
Treasurer

**Rhonda Garza**  
Secretary

**Yoli Salinas**  
Member at Large

**Mitty Reyna**  
**Dr. Rafael Rodriguez**  
**Kevin Bloomquist**  
**Oralia Tafolla**  
**Annette Rios - Barrera**  
**Adrian Farias**  
**Jean Pena**

**Marisela Gonzalez**  
Executive Director

**Aymara Ortiz**  
Administrative  
Coordinator

**Lynette Castillo**  
Educational Outreach & Development  
Program Coordinator

**Araceli Cantu**  
Caregiver Supervisor

**Becky Contreras**  
House & Grounds Supervisor

**Brittany Hernandez**  
**Chris Martinez**  
**Christina Perez**  
**Gloria Handy**  
**Juanita Espinoza**  
**Maria Solis**  
**Martha Rodriguez**  
**Monserat Castellanos**  
**Selena Perez**  
**Tanya Mata**  
Caregivers

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION SERIES CALENDAR

Aurora House Foundation | 2646 W. 18th St Weslaco, TX 78596 | (956) 973-9690

### July 2024

#### Lunch & Learn!

Friday July 26, 2024  
12:00pm-1:00pm

*"Healthy Eating: Disease  
Prevention"*

Unidos Contra La Diabetes

#### RGV Death Café:

Thursday July 18, 2024  
6:00pm-8:00pm  
*"Death & Donuts"*

El Duelo: Grupo de Apoyo/  
Adult Bereavement Group:  
Thursday July 25, 2024  
6:30pm-8:00pm

### August 2024

#### Lunch & Learn!

Friday August 16, 2024  
12:00pm-1:30pm

*"Navigating Hospice: Medicaid vs  
Medicare"*

#### RGV Death Café:

Thursday August 22, 2024  
6:00pm-8:00pm  
*"Death Over Dinner"*

El Duelo: Grupo de Apoyo/  
Adult Bereavement Group:  
Thursday August 29, 2024  
6:30pm-8:00pm

### September 2024

#### Lunch & Learn!

Friday September 6, 2024  
12:00pm-1:30pm

*"Understanding Will's, POA's, and  
Texas Transfer on Death Deed"*  
Benavidez Law Firm

#### RGV Death Café:

Thursday September 19, 2024  
6:00pm-8:00pm  
*"Dear Death"*

El Duelo: Grupo de Apoyo/  
Adult Bereavement Group:  
Thursday September 26, 2024  
6:30pm-8:00pm

# Thank you!

TO OUR FUNDERS



## OUR MISSION

To provide compassionate care for persons in the last chapter of life, in a home-like setting, so they can approach a peaceful death with comfort and dignity.