

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 - 103 yrs

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 and consider donating today. Stay tuned for a Ribbon Cutting Announcement in the near future!

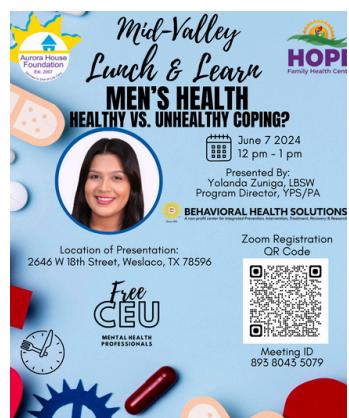
New Educational Programs! CEU's for Mental Health Professionals



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 consist 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@hfcenter.org, Lynette Castillo, lynette@aurorahouse.org



Aurora House News



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 patient’s 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.

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 individual's 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 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>

Gathered in Gratitude



Racial Discrimination and Mental Health

Nearly **17%** of African Americans were uninsured in **2014** as compared to **11%** for white Americans.

Only **53%** of African Americans diagnosed with major depressive disorders received mental health care in **2011** as compared to **73%** for white Americans.

In a study conducted by the American Psychological Association Center for Workforce Studies in **2015**, researchers found that **83.6%** of active psychologists were white Americans.

Hispanics are far less likely to receive treatment for mental illness.

91.7%

of Hispanics 12 years and older with a substance use disorder did not receive treatment.⁴

63.2%

of Hispanic adolescents with a major depressive episode in the past year did not receive treatment.⁵

49.7%

of non-Hispanic White adolescents with a major depressive episode in the past year did not receive treatment.⁶

66.1%

Two-thirds of Hispanics 18 years and older with any mental illness did not receive treatment.⁷

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 & Merrilyn 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
Yadhyra Mendez
Yessica Robledo
Yolanda Salinas
Zefra Mascorro

Aurora House News

In Kind & Memorials

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



Feb 2024 - June 2024

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 Cerdia
 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 Burggraaff
 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
Patricia 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

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

Thank You!

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

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

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

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

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!

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

Thank You!

Pedro E.
McDougal, MD

 Knapp
Medical Center

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AUSTIN - RIO GRANDE VALLEY - SUGAR LAND

 Magic Valley
MVEC
Electric Cooperative

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

Aurora House Events

Upcoming Events

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 Ortez
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

Monserrat Castellanos

Selena Perez

Tanya Mata

Caregivers

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.



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
Sponsorships Available!
Contact Mari for more information, 956- 973-9690

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

the Valley Baptist
LEGACY FOUNDATION™

 **CommunityCare.Today**
KNAPP COMMUNITY CARE FOUNDATION
Caring Today for a Healthier Tomorrow