

Aurora House News

The light of a new day...



Fall 2024

Newsletter Volume 17 Issue 3

Patient and families served: 1,574

Age Range: 6 wks - 103yrs

Average Length of Stay: 35 days

Students & Community #: 24,026

Dia De Los Muertos | Day of the Dead

Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a two day Mexican holiday from November 1st - November 2nd where family and friends gather together to honor their deceased loved ones.

Families gather at *panteons* (cemeteries) and light candles, place flowers on burial sites, play music, and enjoy signature Day of the Dead foods together in a communal celebration meant to connect the living and the dead.

Festivities and traditions around the holiday have a rich history dating back over 3,000 years and are deeply rooted in Aztec and other Mesoamerican traditions in Mexico. The Aztecs honored their dead by bringing offerings to their deceased ancestors, making altars, and burning incense in month-long celebration.

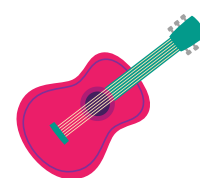


Decorative *ofrendas* (altars with offerings) are a staple for Day of Dead. It is custom to display photos and implement the four natural elements in the altar: earth, air, fire, and water.

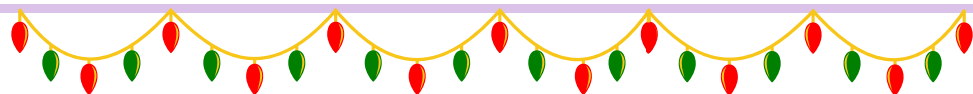
These elements are represented with traditional dishes like *pan de muerto* (bread of the dead) for earth, *pica papel* (decorative tissue paper) for air, candles for fire, and water jugs for water.

Other traditions like marigolds and monarch butterflies are also recognizable elements seen throughout Day of the Dead with the sweet scent of orange flower petals and migration course of the monarch butterflies representing pathways to help guide the spirits of the deceased back to the land of the living.

In honor of Day of the Dead we would like to extend an invitation to our newsletter readers to submit a photo of their loved ones to display on a Community Ofrenda at the Aurora House! Please submit photos and a short biography of your loved one to aurorahousefoundation@yahoo.com



Today, Day of the Dead festivities have held on to tradition while infusing modern day elements and are celebrated worldwide. Throughout human history, there is recorded evidence of special traditions and rituals recognizing death as a natural part of life. Many of which include grand spectacles in honor of the deceased highlighting how the idea of embracing our impermanence and celebrating life is a true act of living. These traditions help us cope through the grief of losing a loved one, honor their memory, and remind us to live in gratitude.



Holiday Grief

The holidays are upon us with many eagerly counting down the days until the festivities. The colorful décor and cheerful spirit of the season can create a despairing opposition to those that may be silently struggling with the grief of a lost loved one. The holidays are traditionally spent with family and this time of the year can turn into days of intense sadness, anxiety, and loneliness for those who are grieving.

Whether it may be the first or 20th year without a loved one, holiday grief is a real experience that can express itself in many different forms. With that said, it cannot be stressed enough how important self-care is especially during this busy time of the year. Part of personal care is accepting the pain and loss that you are feeling. It may sound counterintuitive, but being open and honest with yourself and your loved ones about your grief can alleviate any pressure you may feel to participate in certain celebrations and more importantly, pave the road to healing.

This type of sincerity permits you to begin adapting to a new reality and gradually reinvest your emotions into living. Other forms of self-care are eating foods and drinking water that nourish your body, getting a healthy amount of sleep, attending a bereavement group and/or counseling, journaling, and taking up an interest or hobby that one enjoys. The positive in this is that the emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical battles of grief are a shared experience among many and a reminder that no one is alone in this struggle.



"The holiest of holidays are those kept by ourselves in silence and apart. The secret anniversaries of the heart"

-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



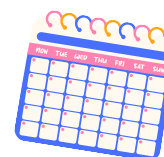
November National Children's Grief Awareness Month



Children's Grief Awareness Month was created in 2008 by the Highmark Caring Place and is observed every year in the month of November. This time of year is a particularly appropriate time to support grieving children because the holiday season is often an especially difficult time after a death. Children's Grief Awareness Month seeks to bring attention to the special way youth grieve and how the appropriate support can make all the difference in the life of a grieving child. It provides an opportunity for all of us to raise awareness of the painful impact that the death of a loved one has in the life of a child, learn about the special way youth grieves, and offers an opportunity to make sure that these children receive the support they need. Check out the following Bereavement Activities for some creative ways to support grieving youth!

Bereavement Activities for Children & Teens

- **Memory Jars** - A way to talk about the person who has died and help a child to remember important things about them. Jars can be filled with notes, beads, sand, anything that represents their loved ones
- **Mental First Aid Kit** - This mental health first aid kit reminds a child, teen or young person what they need to look after themselves when they may be feeling overwhelmed or on difficult days. The kit can include anything that brings comfort like a favorite chocolate, a song, writing in a journal, or special item. Write in things that help you and create a kit for the difficult days
- **Feeling Bracelet** - This craft activity can help a child or young person express what they're feeling using colored beads. Each color represents a different emotion (yellow-happy, blue-sad, red-angry, green-gratitude, purple-lonely) and shows how grief is unique and can encompass a wide range of emotions



www.winstonswish.org/activities. No copyright infringement is intended


Donations

ADL Services
Advantage Healthcare Consulting
Andres Noriega
Anthony Ryan Vaughan
B.J. Woodyard
Barbara & Roy Crooks
Barbara Diedrich
Betty Lou Vitek
Brian Humphreys
Carmel Reyna
Carol Kirkpatrick
Christopher & Minerva St. John
David Miller
Debbie McDonald
Dennis Martinus
Dimas or Consuelo Martinez
Elizabeth & Subram Gopal Krishnan, MD
Eric L. Polzin
Eugene R. Vaughan
Frost Bank
Gene Gay
Helga Freese
Henry & Susan Vanderzyden

Hollon Oil Company c/o Steve Wilson
Idalia Kimbro
J & E McConnell
J.D Key
James Chapman
Janice L. Earl
Jessica & Lowry McAllen
Joan McCowan
John Knox Village of the RGV
Johnny Broshears
Julieta Piando
Larry & Gillian McClure
Life Giving Outreach Ministries/
Crossroads
Liz Free
Louis Tyler
Love of Christ Lutheran Church
Magda Escandon
Martha Sequeira
McCaleb Funeral Home
Misty Gay
Mr. & Mrs. Alejandro L. Estrada
Mr. & Mrs. Rhonda & Robert Garza
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald D & Carmen Hicks

Mutiat Adeoye
Navia Hernandez
Nayelli Garcia
Norma Martinez
Oralia Tafolla
P.A.C.E. Health Care, Inc.
P.E. & J.T. McDougal, FLP
Patricia Long
Pete & Jo Peters
Phillis Machen
R.G.V. Adult & Internal Medicine
Specialists
Rebecca Fuller
Robert Antonacci
Roger & Diana Goodwin
San Martin De Porres Church
Sheryl L. Henry
Shirley Knutson-Nelson
Snow to Sun RV Park
Stephen R & Dawn M Jones
The Ramon Montalvo Living Trust
Walmart
William Gillum
Yolanda Salinas

In Loving Memory


Arlys Patterson
Teresa Mize
Betty Jo Crist
Paul & Connie McDaniel
Bill Kornele
James & Sondra Plowman
Bill Summers
Jo Summers
Carolyn Edwards
Patricia & Alan E. Bortnem
Doris Jacobson
John Jacobson
Dr. Melida Perez Gonzalez
Arminda Hinojosa
Mary Salazar
Tania Leskovar
Edgar Puder
Barbara Puder
Donald & Joanne Puder
James & Sondra Plowman
Floyd Edward Klossing
Rita Klossing
Grace Pedraza
Hector Garcia
Rafael Cabaza III
Charles & Christine Warren

Herelin Fuentes
Linda Moore
Israel Garza
Irma & Lauro Saldana
John B. Allen
Ellen Allen
John Leggett
Sally Ross
Joseph Martinez
Rachel Gil
Julie Florence
James & Sondra Plowman
Roger Mackner
Katherine Ray
Paul Ray
David Ray
Diane Zito
Lynn Gallipeau
Robert Gallipeau
Gary & Jeanne Fears
Joan McCowan
William & Constance Roesch
Sallie Escobar
Maria Gomez
Jose & Hilda Gonzalez

Maria Hernandez
Navia Hernandez
Miriam Namken
Marguerite Wiegand
Karen Heilman
Myra Belcher
Barry Dickerson
Phyllis Hartwig
Mitzi & Dana Pederson
Roger Timko
Nancy & J Craig Fratzke
Rolando Moreno
Anna Smith
Shelly McDonald
Mr. & Mrs. Art Beckwith
Silverio Galaviz
Margarita Galavis
T.C. Gilliam
Nancy La Duke
Ted Long
Patricia Long
Therman Eoff
Audrey Eoff
Vangie Martinez
Javier Martinez



In Honor of

Antonia Rico
Mary Ramirez
Katherine Ray
Mr. & Mrs. Art Beckwith
Marguerite Wiegand
Jeanne Wiegand, MD



In Kind

A Healing Touch Hospice GRPP, LLC DBA
Angel Wings Hospice
Cecelia "Sissy" Vaughan
Christina Perez
Gentiva Hospice
Iglesia Bautista Southside
Janelle Medellin
Janie Garza Whitehouse's Family
La Mision Palliative Care & Hospice
Lynncare Hospice Services
Martha Rodriguez
Mt. Sinai Hospice
OpusCare Hospice
P.E. & J.T. McDougal, FLP
Residents' Assoc. of John Knox Village of the RGV
Richard Connik
Siesta Village Worship Hour
Sister Act
Snow to Sun RV Park
Tony & Alma Rosa Antonacci
Valley Nature Center
Weslaco Lions Club

thanks
for your
support

In Honor of

Antonia Rico
Marcelo & Josefina Guzman
Apolonio Yzaguirre
Alberto & Ana Echorte
Eleuterio Hernandez
Victor Hernandez
Ernesto Flores
Jose Villegas
Guadalupe Moreno
Arturo Moreno
Maria De Valdez
Maria Sanchez
Mary Elizondo
Highway District 21 Federal Credit Union
Modesta Alfaro
Jona Alfaro



In Loving Memory

Robert Arthur Hulteen
Peggy Hulteen
Roberto Cruz & Josefina Alaniz
Becky Contreras
Roberto Cruz
Roberto Garza
Katherine Ray
David Ray
Concepcion Vallejo
Francisco Vallejo
Alvaro Zuniga
Sonia Zuniga

Thank You!

TO ALL OUR COMPASSIONATE
GEMS

- ADL Services, Inc.
- 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

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 Conversation Series



Nov 1, 2024

6:00pm-7:30pm

“Dead Authors Ofrenda”

Ante Books & Creative Studio

1713 Hackberry Ave Ste B

McAllen, TX



Nov 13, 2024

12:00pm-1:00pm

“Supporting Grieving Children”

presented by Children’s

Bereavement Center

2646 W. 18th Street

Weslaco, TX



Adult Bereavement Support Group

Nov 22, 2024

6:30pm-8:00pm

“Coping with Holiday Grief”

Aurora House Foundation

2646 W. 18th Street

Weslaco, TX

Volunteer Opportunities!

Volunteers are an essential part of sustaining a nonprofit. Individuals who give their time to those in need are operating in philanthropy without even knowing it. Aurora House offers direct and indirect volunteering opportunities with patients, house operations, special events, and more. Volunteering not only helps uphold the mission of our organization, but is also a great way to build self-confidence and self-esteem, and can help you find your purpose. Giving your time to a cause you are passionate about can provide you with a new direction and a sense of pride and self-identity. **To volunteer at Aurora House, contact Aymara Ortez, 956-973-9690 or email at aymara@aurorahouse.org.**



Community Donation Drive

Please consider helping the Aurora House by donating some much needed household items! Donations of supplies are just one way you can help support Aurora House continue to provide our service to our community. Dropping off is made easy by driving up to the front of our house and having our staff come to you! We are currently in need of the following:

- Paper towels
- Detergent (HE-high efficiency)
- Hand soap
- Trash bags (13 gal/30 gal)
- Plastic spoons
- Plastic/paper cups
- Multi-surface cleaner
- Disinfecting wipes



- Staff mops 4-6/day = 1-2 gallons of Pinesol/week
- Washes sheets, towels, clothing/daily = 49-70 loads of laundry/week
- Disinfects rooms/surfaces daily = 1-2 gallons of Clorox/week

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 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

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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TICKETS OR SPONSORSHIP,
PLEASE CALL (956) 973-9690 OR EMAIL MARI@AURORAHOUSE.ORG

Thank you!

TO OUR FUNDERS

