



HopeWest

Volunteer Services



2024 Annual Report

Thank you!

Volunteers founded the hospice movement. Hospice programs were literally built through the vision and selfless commitment of volunteers in communities across our country. Today, those who volunteer at HopeWest define our ability to help each other in life's scariest and toughest times. You make our mission possible through the giving of your time, your talent and your wisdom.

Volunteerism is what makes HopeWest so special.

You are an integral part of our organization, and it is reflected in our mission statement. Together, through creativity, volunteerism and philanthropy, we profoundly change the experiences of aging, illness, and grief – one family at a time.

Volunteers provide support to our patients and their families in so many ways, as mentioned on these pages. We are eternally grateful for your commitment and love of HopeWest.

Volunteers provided 82,276 hours by 1,085 volunteers, which is an equivalent of 40 full-time employees and a \$2.7 million dollar contribution.

Thank you for your dedication.

Lisa Ortner

Lisa Ortner
Director, HopeWest Volunteer Services



2024 Volunteer Impact

1,085
Volunteers

82,276
Volunteer Hours

\$33.49

Value of Volunteer Hour

from 2024 Value of Volunteer Time Report,
Independent Sector

Full Time Employee Equivalent

40

\$2,755,423

Savings
for HopeWest!

Dedicated Volunteers

Delta Grief Support Volunteer

When Karen Gurule retired from the big city executive world, she and her husband moved to the much more peaceful western slope where she took her time acclimating to this new world and lifestyle. It wasn't too long into her retirement that Karen discovered the world of sewing where she quickly went from creating simple sewing items, to repurposing clothing pieces into new things such as making leather jackets into purses, fine wool knits into winter wear, and more.

Having seen her work and the amazing pieces she had created, it was natural to ask her to sew a memory bear for a HopeWest Bereavement client. The first Memory Bear that Karen created she simply used the pattern that was provided and made a very cute bear that is now much loved by the family. Soon, Karen became our go-to for Bereavement Memory Bears. What started as a request from a family has blossomed into Karen now adding little details from the clothing item to each bear, a small pocket, special buttons, a unique tag, something from the clothing item that makes it distinct and extra special for the family.

Karen has also sewn many Memory Pillows, both the style from a loved-one's clothing piece, as well as those that have the Hand-Print Heart quilted into it. When asked about a T-Shirt Memory Quilt, Karen said, "I'll try it." She created two quilts for a family which brought them a great deal of comfort in so many ways.

When it comes to sharing special talents to support HopeWest, Karen and her sewing skills is an example of a community member who volunteers for HopeWest and creates special feelings for our patients' families. Karen may never meet any of the family members for whom she created such special items, but those families will always remember how her creations have made them feel.



Grand Valley Pet Therapy Volunteer

Transforming her retirement into a mission filled with love and wagging tails, Leslie has been a dedicated pet therapy volunteer at HopeWest since 2016.

Together with her beloved dogs; Arnold, Luna, and Toby, Leslie has gifted more than 1,100 hours of pet therapy to our community, visiting patients in assisted living facilities, nursing homes, private homes, hospitals, and even providing a comforting presence to HopeWest team members.

After witnessing the compassionate care her father received through hospice, Leslie had a desire to give back, making the most of her newfound time with her dogs in a meaningful way. What started as a personal tribute to her father's memory has grown into more than 800 patient visits filled with healing and comfort. On average, that's about 115 visits every year, nearly 2 to 3 each week, in addition to the necessary training required for each canine companion.



*Leslie
Pet Therapy Volunteer*

Initially, Leslie was unsure if she and her dogs were making any real impact until she received an urgent call from an assisted living facility she frequently visited. The staff there informed her that a patient was nearing the end and might not survive the night. They asked if Leslie could come for one last visit to possibly comfort her.

Leslie and her dog Luna rushed to the facility. Upon arrival, they found the patient non-responsive and seemingly unaware of their presence. Leslie talked gently to the patient, with Luna quietly by her side. After about 15 minutes, feeling that their presence was unnoticed, Leslie whispered to Luna that they'd better go. Just as they were turning to leave, the patient reached out her hand and gently placed it on Luna's head, then down her arm. Using the last of her energy, the patient showed that she was aware and grateful for their visit. This moment was eye opening for Leslie, highlighting the silent yet powerful communication her dogs could facilitate.

Since that evening, Leslie's confidence has grown, knowing that each visit with her dogs brings joy and a much-needed sense of normalcy to those who can no longer have pets. Leslie understands that these moments of petting a dog or receiving a nuzzle can significantly lighten the heavy load of loneliness.

Training each dog for this specialized work required patience and persistence. All three of Leslie's dogs were rescued, each needing specific preparation to ensure they were up for the task. Arnold, Luna, and Toby each passed rigorous behavior, obedience, and temperament tests, traveling multiple times to Montrose for assessments. Leslie's story and the connections her dogs have made are a testament to the impact of pet therapy in hospice care. Her journey continues to inspire a new generation of volunteers, spreading a legacy of compassion and comfort across the HopeWest community.

Meeker Board Member

Throughout Volunteer Appreciation Month in April, we celebrate the remarkable individuals who are the soul of HopeWest Meeker. Their compassion and dedication shine brightly, fueling our mission as they support families navigating the challenges of aging, illness, and grief.

HopeWest Meeker began ten years ago through a county-wide effort to bring palliative care services to the area, helping to ensure that no one faces their journey with serious illness alone. As a non-profit organization, we've been privileged to provide comfort and support to more than 160 families throughout the region, providing pain and symptom management to those facing serious illness and a gentle hand to hold for those experiencing grief.

"Our volunteers are the heart of our programs," says Diana Jones, her voice filled with appreciation. "They offer companionship, a chance for overwhelmed families to breathe, and the emotional support that makes the most difficult moments a little easier to bear."

One such volunteer is Billy Goedert, a valued member of the HopeWest Meeker Advisory Board. Billy's passion for HopeWest was ignited by a simple desire-to help those facing serious illness. When the chance arose to be involved with the development of an equine therapy program for HopeWest Kids, he jumped at it. The result? A beautiful indoor arena where grieving children can find solace and connection through interaction with horses.

Billy's story embodies the spirit that makes HopeWest Meeker so special. It's a spirit fueled by a community that cares deeply. Our team, donors, and volunteers – each play a vital role. Every act of kindness, big or small, ensures that no one in Meeker faces life's toughest challenges alone. As Billy says so eloquently, "If it wasn't for our Meeker community who puts so much into HopeWest, we just couldn't do it."



Plateau Valley Teen Volunteer

At the age of 6 , Hunter was introduced to HopeWest with loving arms and a grief team. HopeWest in return has received a lifelong friend. We've had the pleasure to grow with, laugh with, cry some & all the while learn from each other.

"I was brought to HopeWest right after my mom died. They were extremely supportive of me, helping me learn to cope. Then later into my life I attend Itty Bitty Camp and Camp Good Grief. I also volunteered through FFA and other extracurricular events supporting HopeWest Spring Swing and other events.

I continue volunteering at HopeWest because of the impact they have had on me. At my lowest point, they were there to pick me up. These early experiences have helped me decide that I want to go into the education field after high school. I want to make an impact on kids someday like HopeWest, my coaches, and mentors have made with me. This builds community, when we are all there for each other, just like on a sports team. I aspire to have that in all aspects of my life.

I also like volunteering because of the people I work with. Ashley, the Volunteer Coordinator is amazing. She supports all my events, works around my schedule and supports me unconditionally. Susie Bevan also made an impact on my life from early on. There are so many more who helped along the way! The kindness and phenomenal people that work at HopeWest makes helping people and volunteering so much easier!"

Hunter is one of the active Teen Volunteers in Plateau Valley. It is evident the impact that has been made on him by HopeWest & the gracious people whom he's met along the way. He is determined to share and make an even a bigger impact on the world. We look forward to sharing one more year with him as a Teen Volunteer and cheering him through his senior year of high school.



Montrose Heirlooms Volunteer

A new volunteer to HopeWest, Pat Gunther has picked up extra shifts at the Heirlooms Montrose store to help during the busy Black Friday shopping weekend. Pat enjoys volunteering with us. She loves welcoming customers into the store and helping check out customers at the register. She shared that for her it's all about our customers having a great "experience" here at Heirlooms.

HopeWest is focused on providing each person with the Perfect Visit- we know that people may not remember what we do, but they will remember how we make them feel.

Pat starts with greeting the customer when they come in the door and letting them know the sales Heirlooms is currently running, to engaging them in conversation while they are shopping. Many of our customers are regulars, and we know them by first name. For them, we are friends and may even be the only human connection they have some days.

Pat has a welcoming smile and embodies our HopeWest values. She's a volunteer with a HopeWest heart, and we are so grateful she found us.



HEIRLOOMS
— FOR HOSPICE —

By The Numbers

Statistics	2024	2023	Difference	% Increase
New Volunteers	181	194	-13	-7%
Volunteers	1,085	1,077	8	1%
Hours	82,276	77,158	5,118	7%
Delta	13,296	10,759	2,537	24%
Grand Junction	50,902	48,152	2,750	6%
Meeker	2,590	2,424	166	7%
Montrose	14,694	14,510	184	1%
Plateau Valley	794	1,313	- 519	-40%
Medicare Match	12%	12%	0	0
Volunteer Hours	17,368	17,857	- 489	-3%
Staff Hours	150,831	148,578	2,253	2%
Patient Care	8,512	10,044	-1,532	-15%
Admin	6,271	6,008	263	4%
HopeWest Kids	1,814	1,834	-20	-1%
Bereavement	771	543	228	42%
Patient Care Including Palliative Care & PACE	12,048	11,706	342	3%
Delta	936	727	209	29%
Grand Junction	9,188	8,455	733	9%
Meeker	581	304	227	91%
Montrose	997	1,368	-371	-27%
Plateau Valley	346	852	-506	-146%
Heirlooms	44,232	40,013	4,219	11%
Special Events	4,888	4,906	-18	0
Tanglewood	2,381	2,441	- 60	-2%
Teens	1,078	292	786	269%
Training	1,428	1,340	88	7%

Meeting the requirement for 5% match of volunteer hours to staff hours for Medicare in the hospice program:

Location	Staff Hours	Volunteer Hours	Medicare Match
Delta	11,299	1,943	17%
Grand Valley	119,687	13,437	11%
Montrose	16,970	1,637	10%
Plateau Valley	2,875	351	12%
Total for All Sites	150,831	17,368	12%

2024 Volunteer Satisfaction

Across the organization, our volunteers are very satisfied with their work at HopeWest. The surveys sent are on a scale of 1-5 with 97.5% being “most satisfied.”

Our mean score in 2024 was 4.87 for volunteer satisfaction and 4.93 for volunteer willing to recommend HopeWest as a place to volunteer.

431 surveys were completed. Heirlooms and Administrative roles have the highest percent return.

We have identified the following opportunities for the coming year:

- **Focus on re-engagement of volunteers**
- **Recruit and train additional volunteers to help fill in the gaps**
- **Work closely with volunteers to show how their work impacts the organization as a whole**
- **Ensure adequate general orientation and site-specific training for all positions**
- **Ensure training sessions are easily accessible**
- **Communicate the needs of the organization and how volunteers can help**

Question	2024	2023	2022
I am satisfied with my volunteer experience	4.85	4.85	n/a
I was adequately trained for my volunteer role.	4.81	4.82	n/a
I feel appreciated for the work I do.	4.91	4.92	n/a
I receive adequate communication from HopeWest Volunteer Coordinator.	4.87	4.9	n/a
I would recommend HopeWest as a place to volunteer.	4.90	4.93	4.9
Overall Satisfaction	4.87	4.88	4.8
Survey Responses	431	423	363

Volunteer Roles

One of the greatest gifts you can give is your time, and we are so grateful to our volunteers who do just that. It is only with their help that we have the resources to provide the type of care we all want for our family, friends and neighbors. Volunteers change the lives of those they help and, in turn, their lives are changed as well.

PATIENT & FAMILY SUPPORT

Companionship, Respite, Provide Transportation, Read and Write Letters, Play Board & Card Games Arts and Crafts with Patients, Spiritual Support, Help with Pets

LIFE STORIES PROJECT

Record a Patient's Life Story via audio, video, or writing

HEIRLOOMS FOR HOSPICE

Greet Customers, Helping Shoppers, Sort Items Cashier, Display & Merchandising, Repurpose Items with Creativity or Chalk Paint

HOPEWEST KIDS

Weekend or Day Camp Buddy, Equine Therapy, Support Activities

VIGIL CARE PROGRAM

Comfort and support hospice patients who are in their final hours of life and have no family or friends present. Vigil care volunteers are highly trained and provide a reassuring presence at the bedside to dying patients.

TEEN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Special Events. Administrative and Office, Beauty Queens (Doing Patient Make-up or Nails), Assist with Equine Program, Babysit During Grief Groups, Help with Patient Pets

THERAPIES BY LICENSED PROFESSIONALS

Certified Pet Therapy Volunteers, Hair Stylists and Barbers, Massage Therapists, Music Therapists, Yoga, Acupuncture

SPECIAL PROJECTS: BAKING, COOKING, SEWING

Bake Birthday Cakes for Patients, Meal Prep, Provide Baked Goods for Meetings, Events or Patients, Sew Memory Bears, Veteran Quilts and Memory Pillows

TANGLEWOOD GARDENS AND SUITE BEE FLORAL

Garden at Ferris Care Center Campus. Create Floral Displays for Patients

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE SUPPORT

Answer Phones, Data Entry, File, Reception Support

SPECIAL EVENTS

Event Set-up, Create Props and Decorations Work Events

VETERANS SUPPORT

Make Visits and Phone Calls, Sew Veteran Quilts

ADULT BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Assist with Grief Groups, Assist with One-on-One Support Through Visits and Phone Calls

SERVING ON A HOPEWEST BOARD

Volunteer Time and Leadership by Serving on a HopeWest Board

We're always growing our team and would love to have your friends join us, too. Be sure to share how great it is to volunteer at HopeWest.

