

Easing End of Life

You can help bring loving, end-of-life care to hospice patients — many of whom are unable to pay for the assistance they need. With help from our philanthropic partners like you, Coming Home Hospice can continue to offer compassionate, personal care to those in need and their families, regardless of their ability to pay.

How to Give

For more information or to make a gift, please contact

CPMC Foundation
2015 Steiner Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
415-600-4400
cpmc.org/giving

Coming Home Hospice
115 Diamond Street
San Francisco, CA 94114
415-861-1110
cpmc.org/services/chh



Coming Home Hospice

On an unusually warm and sunny summer afternoon on Diamond Street in San Francisco, seven families gathered whose loved ones had recently passed at Coming Home Hospice.

They had come to allow us to photograph them for this booklet, but they left with so much more.

There were tears upon entering the great room where so many had sat, slept, and waited. There were shouts of joy and giant hugs as beloved nurses greeted the families. There was recognition (and relief, we sensed) between families of their shared experience and grieving process. And very soon we realized we were not only creating images to tell their stories to others, we were creating images that each family will cherish for their lifetimes.

Most profoundly perhaps, was the family whose mother had passed through Coming Home Hospice just a year ago. One of the daughters had such a caring experience that when she learned of her own late stage cancer just a few weeks prior said, "I am going to live my last days at Coming Home." She was at the photo shoot in her wheelchair smiling for the camera, surrounded by her sister, brothers, son and grandson.

What began as a simple occasion evolved into an important opportunity for closure — to remember, as Coming Home Hospice Director Richard Nasca says, "the life so present in death."

We invite you to view these tender images and read these thoughtful stories. May they serve as a sweet reminder of what and whom we cherish, every day.

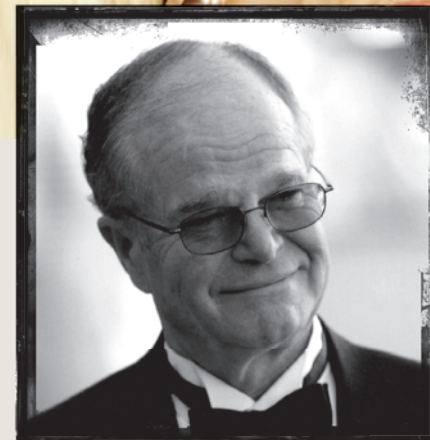
The Pritchards

“When he became too sick for us to care for him at home, we didn’t know where to turn. After a thorough tour of local care options, we chose Coming Home Hospice – because it’s real, not lofty.

“In our lives together, we had traveled the globe and discovered the history and beauty of our world. We sensed history and beauty here – we felt like we were coming home.

“There is a lived-in kind of love here, a vibrancy, a family who lives life fully on a day-to-day basis. And though our family was not the patient, they treated us as if we were. They fed us, consoled us, enlightened us, and took care of us. It was hospice for us, too.”

— LINA, SEAN AND BRIAN PRITCHARD



LINA PRITCHARD WITH SONS SEAN AND BRIAN

ROBERT PRITCHARD (1940 – 2012)

The Fiore-Falsetto-Mapps

“My grandmother's time at Coming Home Hospice was a profound experience. The care team made her smile and laugh all the time. When she was getting close to transitioning, they let us know. They did not sugarcoat it, they kept it real.

“Many people pass through here; it's touching to see the staff stay so present. To them, it's not just a job. When my grandmother passed, we were all with her. The hospice staff and nurses cried with us. This meant a lot to our family.

“I came to know the nurses as people. I know their kids' names. One of the nurses still checks in with me to see how I'm doing. To them, we aren't just patients. We've shared very powerful moments in our lives. I'll always hold that close to my heart.”

— MICHAEL FALSETTO-MAPP



MILENA FIORE AND JERRY MAPP WITH SON MICHAEL FALSETTO-MAPP
AND COMING HOME HOSPICE STAFF

RUTH FALSETTO (1923 - 2011)

The Lucchesis

“Choosing where my mother should spend the final days of her life was not an easy decision. She had been in assisted living for awhile and in and out of the hospital, so we were unsure of what to do. Then we were referred to Coming Home Hospice.

“The staff was so gentle and caring that it didn’t take long to realize this was the best place for her. Even though my mom could no longer communicate very well, I sensed that she was comfortable and content. I visited every day and always felt welcome and part of the community.

“The great food here was also an important part of the quality of life Coming Home Hospice offered my mom. I would come by every day to help her eat her lunch and it was a special part of the day we shared together. For that, and the comfort and peace she experienced here, I will always be deeply thankful.”

— ROMANDO LUCCHESI



ROMANDO LUCCHESI

ROBERTA LUCCHESI (1923 – 2011)

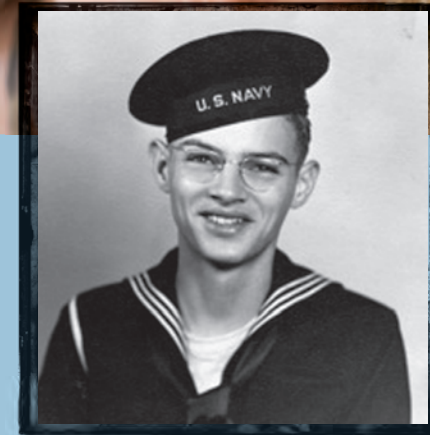
The Snyders

“Dad had been receiving home hospice care for 2½ years in a fancy retirement home. His needs eventually evolved to 24-hour care and a place he could afford to stay, as his retirement savings were running out. We hired a geriatric care consultant who helped us identify a dozen places. After visiting all the places on our list, my sister and I felt sure that Coming Home Hospice was uniquely able to provide everything we wanted for Dad, but he made the choice to come to Coming Home. When we brought him here, he said, 'I think this is the place for me.'”

“He had been living in Millbrae and my sister and I both live in San Francisco. It was a gift to have him closer. In his last few years in the retirement home Dad was isolated in his own apartment. I think coming here he felt more in the center of a community.”

“This place was a FIND! I am totally grateful for it, and I know Dad felt great comfort here. Dying here is very much a part of living.”

— MARGERY SNYDER



MARGERY SNYDER

WILLIAM SNYDER (1925 – 2012)

The Jolivettes

“Our mother had Alzheimer’s for 19 years, but one day our brother Charlie knew something was up, that something was different. And that it was time to bring her to Coming Home Hospice. We agreed. She died 10 days later. These people do a wonderful job here – they treat you just like family.”

— KEN JOLIVETTE, GRETA CONWAY
AND KAREN STOCKTON

“I knew what was coming, and it was hard because my brother and sisters did not want to hear it. I try to tell the truth in a way that is not offensive, but is clean and direct and educational.

“Even though I work here, I had to step back and give over our mother’s care to my fellow nurses. Rich, our director, had the toughest role to play in asking me to do so. They were all just great.”

— CHARLIE JOLIVETTE, LVN, COMING HOME HOSPICE



KEN AND CHARLIE JOLIVETTE WITH SISTER GRETA CONWAY
(SISTER KAREN STOCKTON NOT PICTURED)

GERTIE WILSON (1928 – 2012)

The Hagers

“We were all playing on a field of such kindness; it was the first real island in my stress and fear for 11 years. The compassion of the caregivers was monumental and enough to reach back into the long ago past of many lives. The caregivers planted, watered and grew smiles from the most withered of faces.

“I have never seen this much love and respect condensed into one place. There was a density of love; it was a fog that wrapped you up like a friend’s arms. I called it ‘love life-support’.

“Most hospices are mobile services that come to your home, if you have one. This hospice was a place – a holy hot spot energy vortex called ‘Coming Home Hospice’. And it was, too, like coming home. Its care and staff saved my life and provided a place to graciously allow my mother’s to end.”

— FROM ELEESA HAGER’S FORTHCOMING BOOK,
*GIRLQUANTUM: A TIME TRAVELING MEMOIR OF A
BETTER REMEMBERING (A CARE GIVER’S PRIMER)*



ELEESA HAGER

ELIZABETH HAGER (1922 – 2011)

The Nakanishis

“This is not a fancy place. What struck us after a thorough search for care providers for our mother – and now our sister – is that the care here is genuine, really from the heart. This is what is most important to us.

“It is also a place that allows us to process all the emotions of grief – denial, depression, anger, sadness. Nothing is left unsaid.

“Coming Home Hospice is a jewel in the city for this kind of care. To work here, one must have an appreciation, an enjoyment, of life. Like when we were born – natural and loving to everything. The people here still have those qualities – goodness, sincerity, and a giving attitude. We are amazed there is still a place like this in today’s world. They help make the last days enjoyable, for the patients and their families.”

— ROD AND STUART NAKANISHI



MIKI, CYNTHIA AND ROD NAKANISHI
WITH CYNTHIA'S SON ERIK LEUNG AND GRANDSON ELIJAH
(BROTHER STUART NAKANISHI NOT PICTURED)

SACHIKO NAKANISHI (1923 – 2011)

CYNTHIA PASSED AWAY PEACEFULLY A FEW WEEKS AFTER
THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN.

It All Began with AIDS

The scene that birthed Coming Home Hospice circa 1985 was grim: men dying in the homes and on the streets of the Castro District in San Francisco from a disease no one yet understood. It was an epidemic where the care that could be offered to those who fell ill outpaced the research to find a cure.

The Visiting Sisters and Hospice of San Francisco intervened and lobbied for a residential hospice. The Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church gifted the use of an old convent. Architects redesigned basic utilities and welcoming spaces. Volunteers painted walls in life-affirming colors. Furniture, fabric and art were gifted. The upstairs chapel became the Great Room, where many families and friends would wait out their beloveds' last days. Most remarkably, the project galvanized men and women across neighborhoods, religions, and sexual preferences to join together in common cause.

Coming Home Hospice opened its doors in the spring of 1987 as the first residential program in the nation for patients with AIDS. For the duration of the AIDS crisis, extraordinary staff and loyal volunteers assisted in the caring transition of thousands of loved ones and supporting the grieving process for families. As treatments for AIDS became more effective, fewer patients died and the disease became a chronic condition. In response, the scope of patients the hospice serves expanded to include anyone diagnosed with a terminal illness.

In more than a quarter of a century nearly 4,000 patients have passed through Coming Home Hospice. The youngest was 19, the eldest 105. All were, and continue to be, accepted and treated regardless of their ability to pay.

