

## Annual Fund 2022-2023

Hospice of South Texas gratefully acknowledges the following Annual Fund donors from April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023

- End-of-life care for everyone who needs it, regardless of ability to pay
- Grief support and bereavement services
- Innovative programs and training for our volunteers
- Community and professional education in end-of-life issues
- General endowment to ensure our future needs will be met

Love. Comfort. Support. From Us To You.

Your 2023-2024 Annual Fund gift will help us continue to provide:

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# 2023-2024 ANNUAL FUND HOSPICE OF SOUTH TEXAS

## Your Non-Profit Community Hospice

### Our Mission - Love. Comfort. Support. From Us to You.

Every day Hospice of South Texas delivers heartfelt care and comfort to those struggling with serious illness. We enable people to regain who they are beyond their illness by helping control symptoms, providing practical support and empowering control. As South Texas's oldest local care provider and only not-for-profit hospice, our team members have grown up next door to those we care for. We are part of the fabric of our community.

## Choose Hospice of South Texas



Sylvia Kelley

Hospice of South Texas (HoST) care and support is a choice you and your family should make not only at end of life, but also when treatment is no longer an option. Sylvia Kelley and her daughters, Cindy, Laurie and Betsy, chose HoST because of past experiences with family members as well as HoST's great reputation in South Texas. Sylvia's husband, Dan, spent his last days in the Dornburg Center of Compassion, which provided a very peaceful time for him and the family as his life ended. In an interview with Sylvia, she shared her own 18-plus-month journey with Hospice of South Texas.

"I always thought hospice came in the last weeks of dying, but it is not like that; it is a wonderful program that helps you live your best life, for however long that may be. I am a testimony of what hospice can do. I continue to volunteer one afternoon a week at Twice Blessed. I volunteer three hours on Fridays and I am still able to drive.

I had breast cancer in the early '90s. It laid dormant for 25 years and returned when I was taking care of my husband. I decided to do some radiation treatments and Ibrance. It worked, but in two years the cancer returned. This time I tried oral medications, but I could not take them; they were too painful. After my husband died, I tried chemo. The only thing positive about chemo is I lost my hair and had a hair vacation! After just three treatments, I felt really bad and it so affected my legs that I had to use a cane to walk. I could not do anything because my balance was terrible. My oncologist offered another treatment and I said, "No, I am done." I am 86 years old and did not want to spend my days being sick, so I was not going to do anything else that made me feel sick. Then my doctor said, maybe the next step is hospice. So, my daughters and I discussed this option and we agreed to sign me up with HoST. At the beginning, I was a bit taken aback because hospice to me meant imminent death. I did not know about this wonderful, long-term hospice. My goal was to not feel sick every day and that I have achieved.



Sylvia enjoyed volunteering



Sylvia & daughters Laurie & Betsy

When my daughters and I first discussed hospice care, I was in shock and hesitant, thinking no, no, no, I am not imminent. We decided to say yes to HoST because I was absolutely not taking any more treatments. I signed up with HoST and could not be more pleased. My goal was to continue to live by myself and feel the best I could each day. HoST was a big relief for my daughters too. HoST caregivers are just a phone call away for me and my daughters. These wonderful care providers are familiar with my circumstances and are a part of my team. When my condition changes, hopefully I will be able to utilize the Dornburg Inpatient Center. The fact I can get the care I need at home is invaluable. My nurse takes my vitals, checks my pain levels, looks at my medications and my supply needs, and evaluates how I am doing. It is wonderful not to lose your independence

(Continued)

## Choose Hospice of South Texas

(Continued)



Sylvia & daughter Cindy

and to be able to stay in your own home. Now I have an easy, peaceful life along with my puppy, Ike. That's my story."

Sylvia was a HoST patient from July 2021 and passed in the Dornburg Inpatient Center during January 2023. Sylvia's daughter, Cindy Marshall, had family members using HoST during 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021-2023. Cindy's husband, Russell Marshall, has been an avid supporter of HoST and was co-chair of the Dornburg Center of Compassion Capital Campaign Committee along with Dr. Terry Whitehouse from 2013-2017.

Cindy stated, "HoST is dear to our hearts, and my husband and I very much believe in Hospice of South Texas. HoST hospice care at home was such a wonderful experience, just knowing the nurse and doctor were coordinating care for our loved ones gave us such peace. When it was time for inpatient

care at the Dornburg Center, simply walking through the facility provided a sense of relief, calm and peace. We as a family appreciate all the hard work and consistency of service from all areas – from the nurses and DME guys to the person answering our calls. This choice mattered because it gave us great comfort knowing that HoST teams were giving Mom the very best care."



## Patient Companions Provide Small Deeds of Kindness

Volunteers are at the heart of Hospice of South Texas (HoST) and enhance the care given to our patients and their families, whether it be a listening ear, a game of cards, or simply being present for a few hours each week. One of the most rewarding volunteer opportunities is the patient companion. Mary Margaret Rieger has been a HoST patient companion since 1997 and has touched many lives over those years. When Peggy Bivens, age 94, came on service, Mary Margaret was assigned as her patient companion and spends 1-2 hours per week visiting Peggy in her home. Her daughter, Tamyé Crockett, loves the role of the patient companion, which gives her mother the opportunity to share her life stories, perhaps open up about things she might be reluctant to talk with her family about, and enjoy the occasional bit of laughter. Hospice of South Texas with the addition of Mary Margaret as patient companion continues to give the family a true sense of peace and that all will be well.



Peggy Bivens and Mary Margaret Rieger



## Keimryn Lee – Strong, Courageous and Loved Beyond Measure



Keimryn; her mom, Askaskia Hobbs; her sisters, Ayngelyn & Keiyanah; and her grandparents, Rev. & Mrs. Fred Hobbs

On Tuesday, April 13, 2021, I received a phone call from Citizens Medical Center that shook our entire world. I was informed that my daughter, Keimryn, at the age of eight had a bone tumor in her left femur that had been causing her to limp. During the weekend, she complained of increased pain and experienced falls. I drove her to Texas Children's Hospital in Houston on Sunday after church. More X-rays were performed, and she was admitted to the oncology floor that night. Keimryn, still not knowing what was to evolve in her life, was strong with every poke and prod. Osteosarcoma (bone cancer) was confirmed. She began chemotherapy the very next week. Keimryn knew what was going on and asked that I keep her updated and to not use medical words so she could understand.

Keimryn completed multiple rounds of chemotherapy and participated in many trial studies, including immunotherapy, and all failed. In addition to the treatments, she also had limb

salvage surgery, which included her orthopedic oncology surgeon removing her left femur and replacing it with an internal prosthetic made in England. Keimryn continued to keep a smile on her face and a very spunky, big attitude despite the rapid tumor growth.

Hospice of South Texas (HoST) was called, and I could not have asked for a better team to come into our home. At this time, Keimryn was still able to walk. The multiple bone tumors continued to take over and she became paralyzed due to a tumor located on her sacrum that grew rapidly. HoST made sure that we were always equipped with whatever supplies we needed – from cath supplies to oxygen, we had it immediately. Keimryn did not let this diagnosis keep her down. She continued to dance, using the wheelchair, and sing – she did all she could to be sure family and friends didn't see her struggle. Her goal was to encourage others and allow them to see that no matter what you are faced with, always smile and enjoy life to the fullest.

Keimryn wasn't easy on her HoST nurses; she made sure they knew she was a smart little nine-year-old and she knew the ins and outs of her treatment. On Monday, July 11, 2022, I made a call to Hospice of South Texas because of some complications. It was late at night; the HoST nurse on-call came over to evaluate Keimryn. My daughter, without hesitation, said, "I don't like my feet being touched." We did not know that would be one of the last sentences she would ever speak. I made sure to call her sisters into the room. Both told Keimryn they loved her, and she replied, "I love you too." Throughout the night, I talked to Keimryn, rubbed her semi-bald head, and told her I loved her. At 4:16 am on July 12, 2022, Keimryn sat straight up in my bed and took a deep breath. I immediately called the on-call HoST nurse. As a healthcare worker myself, I knew the end was near. Keimryn had made a list early in her diagnosis of the people she wanted present when this day came. My oldest daughter called those individuals, and we surrounded Keimryn. Her sisters, Ayngelyn and Keiyanah, made slime with her. Keimryn was still able to communicate to yes or no questions. At 9:09 am, on July 12, 2022, she took her last breath in my arms, holding her sisters' hands, as she ran into the arms of Jesus. Four hundred and fifty-six days on this journey that we as a family could never imagine taking. We know she was at peace because she had a personal relationship with God. We serve a God that will not fail and His will shall be done.

Keimryn touched so many lives in her nine years. Her inspiration lives on through The Keimryn Strong Foundation, Inc., created and composed by Keimryn to assist families affected by childhood cancer. A special thank you to Hospice of South Texas for answering the call to treat pediatric patients. It was Keimryn's wish to die at home and not in the hospital – Hospice of South Texas made that possible. I thank HoST for being present with us throughout this devastating journey and for their guidance in all our decision making.



"Thumbs up"



Keimryn with mom

**Hospice of South Texas has pediatric hospice care for children with serious, life-limiting illnesses from birth to 21 years of age.** Families want to do everything to ease their child's pain and help them live as fully and comfortably as possible. This can be an incredible strain on parents; lack of sleep, money worries, work pressures, the needs of other children and relatives – everything influences your ability to cope. HoST can help you and your family with our compassionate Caterpillar Care: specialized care and support provided concurrently with curative or life-prolonging care, or as the main focus of care.