



# Save the date



**May 2-4**  
Camp Aloha



**September 12**  
Hospice Savannah Foundation  
Golf Tournament



**December 7**  
Tree of Light

## Sincerest Appreciation to our 2024-2025 Leadership

### HOSPICE SAVANNAH BOARD

*Chair:* Nancy Sheets *Vice Chair/Secretary:* David Sneed  
*Treasurer:* Joel Goodman

*Member-at-Large:* Timothy Freeman

Marcia Berens · Dr. Bertice Berry · Connie Darbyshire · Dr. Morris Geffen  
Suzan Kiepper · Kimberly Pannell · Don Steinberg · Judge Tammy Stokes  
Derek Zimmerman



### STEWARD CENTER FOR PALLIATIVE CARE BOARD

*Chair:* Maura Sovchen *Vice Chair/Secretary:* Mindy McStott  
*Treasurer:* Dee Dee Seagraves

*Honorary Lifetime Member:* Helen Steward

Ross Kaminsky · Amy Minis · Donya Oglesby



### HOSPICE SAVANNAH FOUNDATION BOARD

*Chair:* Patrick Wall *Vice Chair:* Jon Peters  
*Secretary/Treasurer:* Adam Kaminsky

*Honorary Lifetime Member:* Myron Kaminsky

Troy Baird · Merry Bodziner · Rabbi Robert Haas · Toby Hollenberg  
Jessica Little · Tara Nobles · Anita Smith-Dixon · Lynn Wedell



### PACE BOARD

*Chair:* Jimmy Hedrick *Vice Chair/Secretary:* Eula Parker  
*Treasurer:* Holden Hayes

Jeff Kole · Tanya Milton · John Coleman



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[hospicesavannah.org](http://hospicesavannah.org)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride in what we have accomplished together. In 2024, Hospice Savannah celebrated its 45th Anniversary with the "Life Together Campaign," a remarkable initiative that raised nearly \$3 million. This milestone is a testament to the unwavering support of our community and the dedication of our staff and volunteers. Just as we addressed the lack of end-of-life services 45 years ago, we are now tackling the urgent needs of our aging population, ensuring that our community's elderly can live with dignity and comfort in their own homes.

Our visionary CEO, Dr. Kathleen Benton, embarked on a nationwide tour to identify the best models of care. Her journey led her to the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), a comprehensive approach that was not yet available in Georgia but was thriving in neighboring states. With determination and the enthusiastic support of Senator Ben Watson and Representative Jesse Petrea, Dr. Benton successfully lobbied our state legislature. In May 2024, Governor Kemp signed the PACE bill, and the state awarded Hospice Savannah \$500,000 to establish Georgia's first PACE site. This center will provide all necessary services under one roof, allowing eligible individuals to remain in their homes while receiving the care they need.

Looking ahead, the Hospice Savannah Foundation will launch a PACE Fundraising Campaign in 2025 to support this monumental task that will transform healthcare in our community. I want to personally thank each of you for your unwavering support over the years. Now, more than ever, we rely on your generosity and commitment to help us better serve our aging population. Together, we can continue to make a profound difference in the lives of those we care for.



Sincerely,

Jamey Espina

Vice President of Development & Community Services, Hospice Savannah Foundation



## HOSPICE Savannah ANNUAL GRATITUDE REPORT for the COMMUNITY

Founded by our community in 1979, Hospice Savannah was at the forefront of addressing the unmet needs of those suffering from serious illnesses. Years later, the Full Circle Grief and Loss Center was created to offer bereavement services to address the grief of those left behind. In 2004, we recognized the gap in care for those not yet ready for hospice, and established the Steward Center for Palliative Care, a place where patients could have their symptoms managed while continuing to seek curative treatments. And when we witnessed the non-paid caregivers of our community struggling for support and resources while they cared for a loved one, we answered with a dedicated program for them with the Edel Caregiver Institute.

Following a year of celebration to commemorate our 45th Anniversary, we now prepare to embrace a year of transition – one of expansion, refocus, and a renewed commitment to serving the other unmet needs of our community. Our growth extends beyond physical space and service areas; it encompasses innovative programs and enhanced benefits designed to better support the most vulnerable in our community, the ever-growing aging population.

As part of this commitment, we are expanding our focus on aging in place, ensuring that older adults have the resources and support needed to remain independent and thrive in their golden years. Through our CAPABLE Program, an evidence-based, client-directed home intervention, we enhance mobility, functionality, and independence while reducing depression, social isolation, fall risks, and unnecessary hospitalization. Furthermore, we are proud to be the funding recipient for Georgia's first Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), a community-based initiative that provides comprehensive, seamless healthcare services, empowering seniors to live healthier, more independent lives in the comfort of their own home.

Hospice Savannah will continue its commitment to assist the seriously ill, the grief stricken, and the struggling caregivers of this community. It will also continue its commitment to seek out additional, innovative ways to assist others who are struggling in the community, just as we did 45 years ago.



Sincerely,

Kathleen D. Benton

CEO & President of Hospice Savannah

# 2024 At a Glance

**1,350**  
Hospice Patients

**1,103**  
New Admissions

## EDEL CAREGIVER INSTITUTE

**865** New Caregivers  
**845** Return Consultations  
**50** Support Groups

## STEWARD CENTER

**6,095** Palliative Care Patients  
Hospital, clinic, & in-home

## HEALING ARTS

**669** Music Therapy Sessions  
**743** Massage Therapy Sessions

## VOLUNTEER SERVICES

**7,188** Direct Care Hours  
**4,561** Phone calls/ additional services  
**213** Veterans Program Honorees

## FULL CIRCLE GRIEF & LOSS CENTER

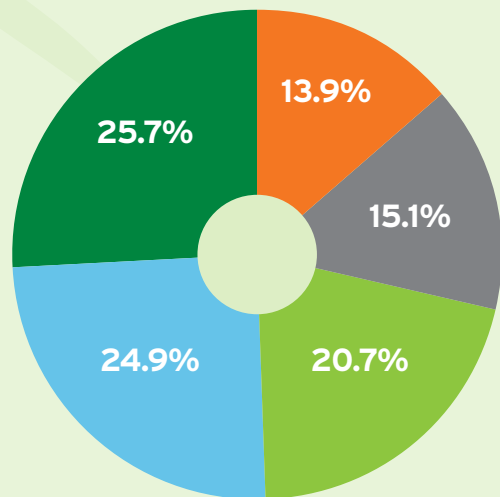
**885** In-person Visits  
**1,623** Support Groups  
**60** Camp Aloha Participants



### Location of Hospice Care

- 57%** Family Home
- 26%** Hospice Inpatient Unit
- 9%** Long Term Care Facility
- 8%** Assisted Living Facility

Because of your generous support, our Foundation allocated **\$1,040,703** to the following uncompensated care and services in 2024:



- Edgel Caregiver Institute**  
**\$144,837**
- Healing Arts**  
**\$157,409**
- Bereavement**  
**\$215,362**
- Steward Center for Palliative Care**  
**\$258,864**
- Charitable Care**  
**\$267,231**

WE THANK ALL INDIVIDUAL DONORS, FOUNDATIONS, CORPORATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONS THAT SUPPORTED OUR WORK IN 2024.



Hospice Savannah recently celebrated its 45th anniversary with a heartfelt event called "Life Together," honoring the remarkable contributions of community hero Don Kole. The celebration highlighted Hospice Savannah's enduring commitment to providing compassionate care and support to those in need. Don Kole, a beloved businessman and philanthropist, was recognized for his unwavering dedication to the community. His generosity and leadership have left an indelible mark on Savannah, making him a true cornerstone of the city's growth and prosperity. The "Life Together" initiative not only commemorated Hospice Savannah's legacy but also underscored the importance of community and the collective effort to ensure everyone can live comfortably and age in place.



### Edel Caregiver Institute

City of Savannah Mayor Van R. Johnson II proclaimed November 2024 to be National Caregiver Month. Mayor Johnson touched on his personal experience with caregiving. "The greatest gift you have is to be able to take care of them, because they took care of you," he said, thanking Edgel Caregiver Institute for its support and naming it as one of the inspirations for the proclamation.

### Steward Center for Palliative Care

In the spring of 2023, after receiving a diagnosis of Multiple Myeloma, Joe Cerda was referred to the Steward Center for Palliative Care. He walked into the clinic with the assistance of a cane, was in extreme pain and very unsure about his future. He was concerned about using pain medication and overwhelmed by the road ahead. But with the support of his palliative care staff—working alongside his oncology team, Joe found a path forward. According to Joe, the personalized care he received "saved my life and made my treatment bearable... it gave me comfort and enabled me to fight and continue healing." With open conversations about pain management, access to innovative therapies like virtual reality, and a holistic approach to his care, Joe was empowered to take charge of his health and his treatment journey. By the time he completed his treatments and time with palliative care, he was in remission, walking without a cane, and no longer in need of pain medication. Recognizing the partnership and support from Joe's team at the Steward Center, one of his physicians likened his journey to a baseball game saying it was the bottom of the ninth, two outs, a thousand runs up. "He was going to win this time," the doctor said. And he did.



### CAPABLE

When Hospice Savannah's CAPABLE team worked with Deborah Goldwire, they were able to identify some immediate changes that they could make to keep her safe and healthy in her own home. Grab bars in the bathroom kept her from pulling the doorknob off the door a second time. A bench in her bathtub and new shower curtain rod helped her wash her hair without getting water all over her slippery bathroom floor. An electric broom helped her keep her space clean. While simple, small changes like these are not easy for someone to make on their own, without help. The CAPABLE program provides help for our older adults at no charge and improves health outcomes, increases independence, and reduces healthcare costs for our participants. "It is a blessing," Deborah said. "It really left an impression on me. I'd recommend CAPABLE to anybody."



### Full Circle Grief and Loss Center & Healing Arts

Music has the remarkable ability to evoke memories and bring joy, a truth well-known to anyone who has heard a beloved nursery rhyme or a song from their past. For Hospice Savannah patients like Dorothy "Dot" Stock, who is living with dementia and speaks very little, music serves as a bridge to reconnect with loved ones. During a recent visit, Music Therapist Taylor Kersey played Ms. Dot's favorite songs, sparking smiles and gentle swaying. As the visit drew to a close, Ms. Dot's daughter, Marla Geffen, recalled a cherished childhood tune, "A You're Adorable," and the three of them joined in singing together. For a few precious moments, the music brought them

closer, creating a meaningful experience for all. Marla said, "I am so grateful for this incredible program. Thank you, to Hospice, to Taylor and to everyone who, through your support, gives the gift of music to individuals who are nearing the end of their lives. It is an enriching & enjoyable experience at a time when every bright moment and connection is treasured!"

### Community Outreach

In 2024, Hospice Savannah's Outreach team continued their growth strategy by adding a third Healthcare Outreach Educator, four new senior housing communities, and increased presence in skilled nursing homes, assisted living and independent living facilities, and added Long County back to its service area. Community growth continued in Chatham, Bryan, Liberty, and Effingham, most notably in Liberty County with a 42% increase in market share.

SERVING **CHATHAM, BRYAN, LONG, LIBERTY, & EFFINGHAM** COUNTIES

To view the accompanying videos for these stories and more, scan the QR code here.

