

SILVER STORY

“My Experience Volunteering at Silverado Hospice”

An interview by Valerie Lomeli, Volunteer Coordinator
with Hospice Volunteer Maria

In recognition of Volunteer Appreciation Month I documented a conversation with our incredible Volunteer Maria Mapoy. Maria became a volunteer in November of 2018, at the time she was a student at the University of California Irvine. In January of 2019 Maria was matched with Ms. Shirley. As the Volunteer Manager I joined her on her first visit to make the introduction to the two future friends. Below is an interview with our volunteer Maria. Maria shares her volunteer journey from the first in person meeting, and remaining in each others lives through a pandemic. Virtually celebrating milestones such as birthdays, when Maria graduated from UCI and both ladies moving back “home”. Maria moved back to her home town when classes went virtual.

What drew you to volunteer for hospice?

“With the majority of my family living in the Philippines, my grandparents have been fortunate enough to have them nearby and therefore always have company. Unfortunately, I know that this is not feasible for all families. I have always believed that social interactions and companionship greatly promote mental health. As we age and our family and friends move away, these interactions become more limited. Regardless, the need for companionship remains. I decided to become a hospice volunteer in order to help fulfill this need. I wanted to provide support, friendship and a listening ear to someone who may need it. And that is how my story with Ms. Shirley began.

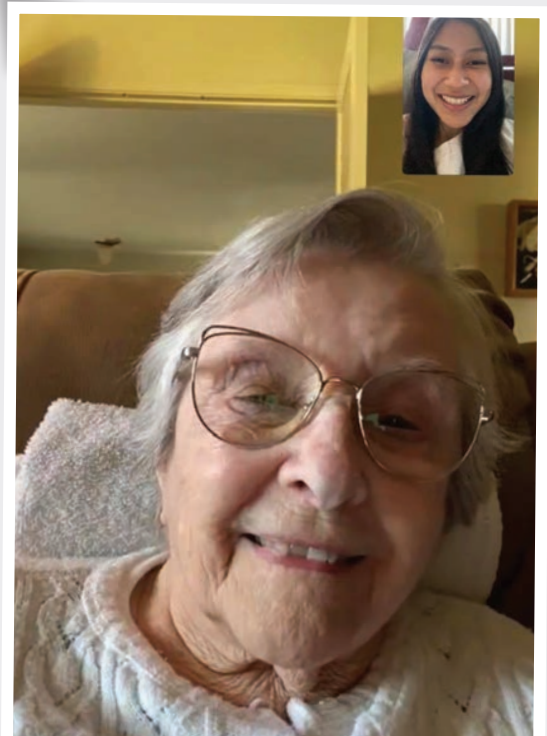
What was your first Patient interaction visit like?

“On the day of our first meeting I was nervous about many things. Will she want me there? Will she be comfortable opening up to a stranger? What if we run out of things to talk about? Looking back now, about two years after that first meeting, it’s crazy to believe how far from reality those fears ended up being. Ms. Shirley has welcomed me into her life with

open arms. The conversations we have are natural and even when we don’t talk, sometimes just being there with her and participating in activities that she enjoys, or watching her favorite TV shows together.”

**HAPPY
VOLUNTEER
APPRECIATION WEEK**

thank you for making a
difference in our
patient’s lives



Video chat with Maria and Shirley.

NEWSLETTER



SILVER STORY continued

How did volunteering for Silverado change during the Pandemic?

“When the pandemic began in early 2020, in person visits were suspended to ensure the safety of the patients. During this unprecedented time, everyone experienced what it was like to be in isolation. In order to maintain social relations with Ms. Shirley while still abiding to the social distancing guidelines, we began doing video calls every week. Shifting from being able to accompany Ms. Shirley in person to solely talking over the phone has had its challenges, but with the help of her wonderful caregiver, we have been able to feel as though we are still together.”

How do the video calls work for you both?

“As Ms. Shirley speaks, her caregiver navigates the cell phone and shows the surrounding area. The caregiver even taught Ms. Shirley how to use the video call application herself! It was such a proud moment when she was able to call me on her own.”

What have you taken away from this volunteer experience during the pandemic?

“As much as I miss physically being there with Ms. Shirley, I have learned that companionship comes in many forms and even when only done virtually, it still brings joy and comfort and eases the feeling of loneliness, that is so common during these months of quarantine.”

What would you like to say to someone who is thinking about volunteering for hospice?

“To those who are thinking about volunteering, I highly recommend it. It is a rewarding experience that not only benefits the mental wellbeing of the person you will visit. But also provides you with a beautiful friendship that you will carry with you the rest of your life.”



What Shirley’s family had to say about their volunteer, Maria:

“Maria is a very special young lady. She enriches the quality of my Mom's life in a very special way! Maria has been there for Mom every week whether in person or, now during the pandemic, by video calls. She is a lovely young woman. I wish the world had more Marias!!!”
-Jan, Shirley’s daughter

Awareness Dates to Remember

Volunteer Appreciation Month

National Autism Awareness Month

National Cancer Control Month

National Facial Protection Month

Occupational Therapy Month

Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month

Parkinson’s Awareness Month

Testicular Cancer Month

Oral Cancer Month

April 2 | World Autism Awareness Day

April 5-11 | National Public Health Week

April 16 | Annual National Healthcare Decision Day

National Healthcare Decisions Day | April 16th

by Kristina Nguyen, RN, BSN, Patient Care Manager

An article published last year by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) brought great insight to how important it is to have thought about (and even have in place) an advanced directive. As thousands of Americans became suddenly ill with COVID, they were leaving many loved ones with the decision to make healthcare decisions on their behalf in hopes they were making these decisions the best to what they feel their loved ones would have wanted.

An advanced directive is a document that lists your wishes in the event that you are unable to. It can be as detailed as you would like including several pages and scenarios of health situations, or short and simple with the use of a Physician Order of Life Sustaining Treatment – also known as a POLST form. A POLST form is typically bright pink and it has 3 main sections: A) Asks if you would like to be resuscitated, B) goes through the measures of comfort or the amount of treatment you would like,

and C) questions the use of artificial feeding if you are unable to eat. POLST forms are commonly asked for on admit into hospice as the team would like to feel prepared and aware of the wishes of the patient in the event there is a sudden decline or change in condition. The POLST form will make the direction of treatment to take much easier and clearer to the family.

Having this form completed is not a requirement to come onto hospice services but it does make it easier for the team and family to be on the same page regarding care efforts. The NHPCO offers a website that has many resources on any help one may need when making healthcare decisions for themselves or loved one at this site: [CaringInfo.org](https://www.nhpc.org). If you have family and care about their mental health and wellbeing, it may be important for you to take the time to prepare your own advanced directives!

Source: <https://www.nhpc.org/national-healthcare-decisions-day/>

Grief Support Groups by Christine Hernandez, LCSW, Director of Family and Social Services

Silverado Hospice is dedicated to the well-being of the family by offering a grief support group every month. Although some individuals may be reluctant to attend a support group, friendships are often formed because of the shared circumstances of the loss of a loved one. It is especially challenging if the loss occurred during the pandemic, regardless if it was related to COVID-19.

A grief support group can address:

- **Feelings** - Empathy, understanding, acceptance, and personal value
- **Communication** – Supportive discussion, openness/honesty, and safety in self-disclosure
- **Information** – Coping strategies, options, updated resources
- **Connections** – Sense of community, supportive networks, and sense of belongingness
- **Opportunities** – Personal growth (adjusting, overcoming), helping others, shared leadership, and mutual exchanges

It is the goal of the Silverado bereavement team to provide a place where healing can begin by caring for themselves. For more information on our virtual grief groups, please contact the Bereavement Counselor at (949) 240-7744. Groups are available in English, Spanish, and Korean languages.

Big Celebration for 102 years

Ms. Lillian celebrates her 102nd birthday with a party with her friends and Silverado care team. Photographed below, the team presents Ms. Lillian with flowers, balloons and chocolate cake. Anyone who gets to sit and chat with Ms. Lillian quickly learns chocolate is her favorite; and she is really only 82 years! Her volunteer Norma, who visits weekly also surprised her with flowers on another day. Her close friend shares, Ms. Lillian had three parties that week! I think we can all agree there is nothing wrong with having a “Birthday Week”.



Ms. Lillian with her flowers and cake



Ms. Lillian with Julie Pleng, Jazmin Hernandez, & Dina Fegrino



Ms. Lillian with Volunteer Norma

CONTACT US

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Volunteer inquiries: (888) 328-5660

Visit us online with our 24/7 Live Chat Line: [silveradohospice.com](https://www.silveradohospice.com)



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