



The 2024 inaugural Toss for a Cause event is the first community-wide event that Housecall Providers has hosted since 2018.

## Event showcases connected nonprofit community

**Mark your calendars! You are cordially invited to the “Toss for a Cause: A Community Day in the Park” event on June 1, 2024, from noon to 4:00 p.m. at the beautiful Sellwood Park.**

The day will feature “Nonprofit Row” where participating nonprofits will present their services and answer questions. It will also feature food carts, a beer and cider garden, outdoor games, fun raffles with prizes throughout the day, cornhole games for families and friends to join, and of course, the Toss for a Cause cornhole tournament to crown the nonprofit Portland Toss for a Cause Champion of 2024. Come root for your favorite team!

While the pandemic may seem behind us, the work of renewing

and strengthening our community connections is ongoing. Housecall Providers realized early in the pandemic that the networks connecting our community-based organizations could fade without an intentional effort to reinforce them. This need inspired the creation of the Housecall Providers community engagement group in early 2022. Housecall Providers CEO, Rebecca Ramsay, thinks of it this way, “When we connect with others in our community, we care for those interactions and grow our (See “Event showcases” page 5)

## Spring 2024

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Dr. Craig Tanner

## Hospice welcomes new medical director

**Housecall Providers' newly appointed Hospice Medical Director, Dr. Craig Tanner, brings an extensive 13-year medical journey marked by diverse experiences and a profound commitment to compassionate care.**

Craig's medical ambitions were initially rooted in a very different soil. "I initially pursued college as a music major," he shares. This artistic pursuit took a turn towards medical care when his mother, a certified nursing assistant (CNA), brought the idea up to him one day. "I worked as a CNA for four years because of my mother's influence and loved it," he said. "I began nursing school during this time but later opted for medical school."

Craig's career reflects his passion for serving the most at-risk populations as well as his upbringing in a Navy family. From a Veterans Affairs (VA) primary care clinic where he cared for chronically mentally ill veterans, to a skilled nursing facility and time spent as a hospitalist, he ultimately pursued a Hospice and Palliative Medicine Fellowship.

"The VA often felt like home as the population was so familiar to me from growing up in that world," says Craig. "I still think of it as a very special place that does amazing work with a population that has

had tremendous challenges and burdens."

Throughout Craig's training and career, he gravitated towards the most difficult conversations and the most severely ill patients. "It always felt like a privilege to enter into those spaces, and I learned to feel quite comfortable in those conversations," he says. It was this inclination that naturally led him to specialize in hospice and palliative medicine, where he found fulfillment in guiding patients and families through life's most delicate phase.

Joining Housecall Providers in summer of 2022, Craig was drawn to the organization's clear mission and commitment to serving the community. "I feel proud to represent an organization where the values align closely with my own," he says.

His approach to end-of-life care is deeply empathetic, focusing on understanding individual needs and dispelling misconceptions about hospice. "Everyone's journey is unique," Dr. Tanner emphasizes, "and I feel my job is not to get them to any particular place but rather to come alongside them."

Reflecting on a memorable patient experience, Craig shares a touching story of fulfilling a patient's final wish for a lobster dinner. This moment encapsulated the essence of hospice care, showing how small gestures can make a significant impact on patients and their families.

"The joy in his face and the fact that we made him not just feel important, but showed him that he was important, was amazing," says Craig. "I don't think I'll ever forget that, and it speaks not only to the power of hospice, but how special this group is."

Beyond medicine, Craig enjoys the accepting culture of Portland and the Pacific Northwest where he can pursue his hobbies, spend time with family and enjoy the "glorious summers." Looking back on his career, Craig reflects, "I feel very privileged and grateful for the role I've been able to play in the lives of patients, families, and the other staff and professionals that care for them." ■

# Knowing what to do through difficult transitions

Looking back on her father, Jim's, last year of life, Gloria Willis is thankful that she knew what to expect and what to do. When she received the call from her sister in Elko, Nevada, that their father's Alzheimer's disease had started to progress, she understood what it meant. "He needed a higher level of care," Gloria says. "It was time for him to be with me in Portland."

As a social service provider, she knew that the first step would be to find him the right place to live for the level of care he needed, close by her home so she could visit often. She already knew that the second step was to get him signed up with Housecall Providers Primary Care. Gloria explains, "I've seen over and over how convenient it is for folks to have the doctor come to them, especially for those who have challenges getting out of the house."

Even with her background and having seen how well Housecall Providers patients are supported, when it came to her father receiving care it felt much more personal. Gloria recalls Jim's primary care provider, Barb Sutton, putting her father at ease and helping him stay positive. "Things like, 'aside from your primary diagnosis, you are perfectly healthy' kept him from dwelling on the diagnosis itself and helped him feel good about things," she says. "And frankly, it made me feel good too."

Remembering her father, Gloria describes a quiet and gentle man, a postal worker for more than 30 years and a music lover who introduced her to Ray Charles for which she is forever grateful. Reflecting on small things with big impacts, she notes that he also taught her to play cribbage which has turned out to be a valuable life skill. Her fondness and love for her father is reflected in all the stories she tells.

**"When you go through it yourself, it just makes it that much more real."**



Gloria Willis and her father Jim enjoying a beautiful day together

In April of 2023, Jim's provider, Barb Sutton, met with Gloria and recommended hospice care. Having watched her father's decline, Gloria was prepared for the recommendation but notes that Barb made the conversation easy. "She was just very respectful and answered all of my questions, like the difference between palliative care and hospice care, what the next steps will be, who will be on the care team, things like that."

Jim's time receiving hospice care was filled with love from his daughters and Gloria appreciates this as something beautiful. She is grateful she was able to be with her father through his illness and that his care home and Housecall Providers primary care and hospice always kept him comfortable.

Gloria joins a long list of family members and caregivers who are thankful for Housecall Providers steady and compassionate support through difficult transitions. In Gloria's case, though, she went from being an advocate to an ambassador. In her words, "When you go through it yourself, it just makes it so much more real. Housecall Providers is an essential piece of our community." ■



Hospice gives David and Walter Warren the gift of time together.

## Confident in his father's care

**When Walter Warren's doctor recommended Housecall Providers Hospice, his son David had no misgivings. He knew from his mother's experience on hospice what it meant: His father would be receiving the increased level of care he needed. Though his conditions were severe, the care Walter received from Housecall Providers helped him recover from a long stay in the hospital.**

Walter celebrated his 92nd birthday last November, nine months after starting hospice care, and a year later he still enjoys spending time with his family.

At 6'2" and a gifted athlete, Walter played on several championship basketball teams, notably winning the Navy Pacific Fleet championship when he was stationed in Kodiak, Alaska. David inherited that enthusiasm. "My love of basketball definitely comes from Dad. My folks would take us to

watch the Portland State games and the Globe Trotters, and I would also follow him to the gym where he played on the Hillsboro city league team." The two of them continue to watch games together, discussing the stats and sharing their love of sports. Just before Walter's 92nd birthday, David reflected, "I think about how lucky I am that nine months after going onto hospice, Dad is still with us. I have had some awesome memories with Dad in that room."

Frequent communication with the hospice team makes it easier for David to feel confident that he knows what is happening with his father's health. As David elaborates, "It's still tough dealing with this but Scott (spiritual counselor) fills me in and follows up after visiting. He'll talk to Dad and then call me with a report but also always asks how I am doing. He's a good sounding board."

As David discussed, it is not just the personal contact from the care team that reduces stress, it is also that they manage the communication and coordination of additional services. David explains, "For example, it is really helpful that the hospice team takes care of prescriptions. I used to have to battle with insurance companies and pharmacies over this and that – and now hospice takes all the work and worry out of it."

With so many difficult decisions for family members and caregivers to make at the later stages of a loved one's life, choosing hospice does not mean giving up. It means choosing increased care to help a loved one get the most out of life. Walter's time with his family this past year has been a precious gift, cherished by both him and his loved ones. ■

### Have questions about hospice care?

Reach out to us at **971-202-5501** to discuss any questions or for more information.

# Love our services? Share your experience with others.

**Your words matter.** A Google review lets others know the impact Housecall Providers has had on you and/or your family's life.

Your review helps us:

- Recruit passionate, mission-driven staff
- Assist families seeking quality in-home medical care
- Strengthen our community's health and well-being

So please, take a moment, make an impact.  
Your review is powerful.



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Leaving a review is easy.  
Simply scan the code and  
leave a review using your  
Google account.

## ("Event showcases" from page 1)

capacity to serve together. We become more resilient – together." Housecall Providers is organizing Toss for a Cause with our community networks in mind. The event will bring together local community-based organizations that support our elders and those who are homebound and/or seriously ill for a cornhole tournament and tabling event to introduce us all to the community and reintroduce us to each other.

More than 20 local nonprofits will take part. Hen Truong, Executive Director of H.O.P.E., an organization that offers free yard maintenance for elders, speaks to this point, "I meet so many people that have so many needs. I am as excited to find resources that can help those I serve as I am to showcase our own work. This is something that is really needed."

Housecall Providers has been bringing medical care into homes in the Portland metro area for almost thirty years. Meeting our patients in their home ensures that they receive the health care they need and maintain their independence at home for as long as possible. But they don't do this alone. The network of additional services from grocery delivery and yardwork help to constructing accessibility options like walk-in baths, handrails and wheelchair ramps are all vital to enabling elders, homebound and the seriously ill to age in place.

At Toss for a Cause, you will be able to meet the organizations that provide this network of community caring. You will be able to support the work Housecall Providers is doing to not only bring this community together, but bring health

care home. Just by showing up, you will be taking an active part in making our community stronger and more resilient. Come for the fun, the community, the food or the opportunities to learn. Whatever your reasons, you'll be supporting the cause.

If you are interested in joining the community sponsors or donors that are supporting the event, you can sign up by going to [housecallproviders.org/toss-for-a-cause/](https://housecallproviders.org/toss-for-a-cause/) and following the link or by scanning the QR code on the back page of the newsletter. If you would like more information about supporting Toss for a Cause, please email Barb Gorman at [bgorman@housecallproviders.org](mailto:bgorman@housecallproviders.org). We hope to see you there! ■

## Want to get involved?

Here are some ways you can be a part of this extraordinary day:

**Donate generously:** This celebration is community supported. Your donation will help make this an annual event for years to come.

**Become a proud sponsor:** Show your commitment to improving the lives of some of the metro area's most at-risk members.

**Volunteer your time:** Many hands make light work. Opportunities await to make an impact in your community and meet new friends.

**Celebrate with us:** Block your calendar for Saturday, June 1 at Sellwood Park from noon to 4:00 p.m. for what we hope will become an annual tradition in the metro region.



**Get Involved:** Scan the code below to find out more. Your journey with Toss for a Cause starts here!

