



*Growing our mission.
Helping people live.*

**HOSPICE**
Savannah

— ANNUAL —
**GRATITUDE
REPORT**
for the COMMUNITY

As we reflect on 2025, I am filled with deep gratitude for the trust our community continues to place in us and immense pride in the dedication of our teams. This year marked one of meaningful growth and strengthened impact across all areas of our organization. Our hospice services experienced remarkable expansion, allowing us to walk alongside more families than ever before with compassion, dignity, and a commitment to individualized care. This growth reflects both our community's evolving needs and our ongoing mission to ensure that every person receives the right level of support at the right time.

Our Hospice In-Patient Unit remains one of the most stable, trusted, and consistently high-quality resources in our region. Throughout 2025, our staff upheld the highest standards of clinical excellence while creating an environment of comfort and peace for patients and their loved ones. Their dedication ensures that families can find respite, symptom management, and compassionate presence at some of life's most vulnerable moments.

This year also underscored the importance of supportive care services that extend beyond traditional hospice. Hospice Savannah continued to lead the Southern Care Collaborative of non-profit hospices, with membership more than doubling in the Collaborative over the last 5 years. Our palliative care program continued to expand its reach, offering symptom relief and guidance earlier in the care journey. Through participation in the CMS GUIDE caregiver support initiative, we strengthened our ability to support families with resources, education, and structured assistance, recognizing that caregivers are essential partners in care. In addition, the integration of the Johns Hopkins CAPABLE program has empowered older adults to safely remain in their homes by combining nursing, occupational therapy, and home modification services. These offerings reflect our unwavering commitment to holistic, person-centered care that addresses the full spectrum of needs across aging, illness, and caregiving.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are preparing to take another transformative step with the launch of PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) - an innovative model that provides comprehensive, community-based care to help seniors remain independent for as long as possible. We are honored to become the first PACE site in Georgia, a milestone that speaks to both our leadership in the field and our deep commitment to meeting the needs of our region. This program will create new pathways of support for seniors and families, strengthening the continuum of care we are proud to provide. Furthermore, we established the PACE Georgia State Association to strengthen collaboration, knowledge sharing, and strategic alignment among emerging PACE programs across the state.

Together, we celebrate a year of progress, compassion, and community partnership—and we look forward to the extraordinary impact the coming year will bring.



Sincerely,
Kathleen D. Benton

Kathleen D. Benton
CEO & President, Hospice Savannah



Hospice Savannah

Micheal never imagined his life would take this path—six years of facing both pancreatic and prostate cancer, weathering surgeries, and making countless decisions no one should ever be asked to make. Through it all, he and his wife, Sarah, held tightly to their shared belief in quality over quantity, a mantra that guided them from the very beginning. Micheal chronicled his journey on TikTok and his blog after seeing other cancer stories, but with a plan “to tell a different kind of story— one centered on living.”



After a week of unbearable pain made them question whether he would wake up the next morning, everything changed. Sarah realized they could self refer to Hospice Savannah, and Micheal was admitted that same day. Within 24 hours, “hospice did what it does best—got me out of pain really fast,” he said.

For Micheal, that relief was transformative. Hospice Savannah didn’t take control—it “handed it back” to his family, giving them choices, options, and room to breathe again. Sarah felt that shift deeply: “It is somebody else’s job to manage the pain now. That was such a relief for me as his caregiver.”

Their nine year old daughter found comfort too. Knowing she would receive a full year of grief counseling meant “everything” to their family. Even music therapy—something Micheal initially resisted—lifted him from a dark place he “didn’t even realize [he] was in.”

In these final chapters, Hospice Savannah gave Micheal more than comfort. It offered dignity, clarity, and the precious freedom “to live the days he had left the way he wanted to.”

Butterfly Program

Charlene has been with Hospice Savannah for years, serving families with extraordinary tenderness. When a baby comes to the inpatient unit, nurses often say, “Charlene, we’ve got a baby.” And she comes—no matter the hour—to hold, comfort, and simply be present.

One of those babies was Baby B, who arrived just days before her first birthday. She had endured more hardship in eleven months than many experience in a lifetime. Charlene spent “hours and hours just holding her,” because, as she shared, “I wanted to fill her life with as much love as she possibly could have in the time she had with us.”

During the 66 days Baby B stayed with Hospice Savannah, she was held, sung to, wrapped in blankets, and embraced by a circle of



“We tried to fill her life with as much love as



Edel Caregiver Institute

When Maureen’s husband, Bill, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, the daily challenges of caregiving quickly became overwhelming. On her doctor’s advice, she turned to the Edel Caregiver Institute (ECI). After a one-on-one session with a certified dementia coach, Maureen joined the Richmond Hill support group where she found practical guidance, camaraderie, and a judgment-free place to share challenges. The group became a vital circle of friends who helped her “keep her sanity” through an incredibly overwhelming season.

Despite her independent nature, Maureen eventually found herself at a breaking point during the holidays, as her daughter, usually her primary support, became ill and couldn’t visit. The isolation was crushing and Bill was declining. At her daughter’s urging, she called Hospice Savannah. Within 24 hours, a team arrived to assess Bill’s needs. Hospice Savannah’s presence brought relief and partnership, allowing her to focus on being his wife rather than carrying the burden alone.

With ECI’s community walking beside her and Hospice Savannah providing compassionate and empathetic support, Maureen regained the balance she desperately needed. Today, she feels surrounded by people who truly care—people who make sure she never has to navigate this journey alone.



Save the Date

- May 1-3 Camp Aloha
- September 4 HSF Golf Tournament
- December 6 Tree of Light Ceremony

caregivers who became her family. When her mother had to return to work, she trusted that our team would be there when she could not—a trust earned through compassion, presence, and unwavering care.

Pediatric hospice care is expensive, specialized, and emotionally demanding, yet these children—our community’s children—deserve comfort, dignity, and every ounce of love we can give them.

Families often visibly take a sigh of relief when they see the care their child receives—like someone is helping them carry that burden.

Stories like Baby B’s are heartbreaking—but they are also beautiful. They remind us why the Butterfly Program and our Hospice In Patient Unit must exist.



s possible."

– Charlene, Hospice Savannah Volunteer & Certified Death Doula



For more information, scan the QR Code.

2025 At a Glance

1,454

Hospice Patients

1,258

New Admissions

EDEL CAREGIVER INSTITUTE

591

Caregivers Reached

1,255

Return Consultations

76

Support Groups

STEWARD CENTER

6,678

Total Palliative Care Patients
Hospital, clinic, & in-home

HEALING ARTS

878

Music Therapy Visits

797

Massage Therapy Sessions

FULL CIRCLE

643

In-person Visits

1,237

Support Groups



VOLUNTEER SERVICES

6,327.25

Direct Care Hours

4,785

Patient phone calls

256

Veterans Program Honorees

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

16

Independent/Assisted Living and Memory Care facilities visited

75

Presentations / outreach events

11

SNFs actively served during 2025

CAPABLE

296

Referrals

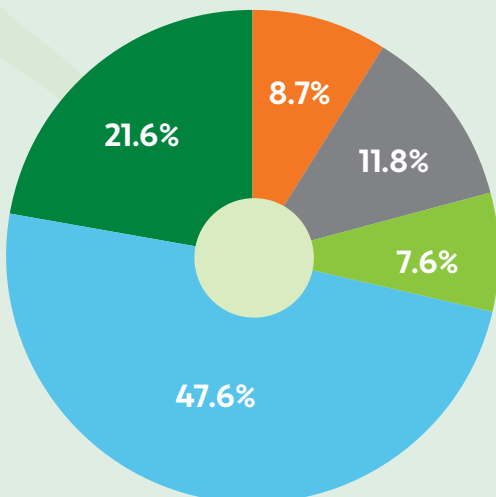
102

Clients

64

Completed program

Because of your generous support, our Foundation allocated **\$1,314,111.85** to the following uncompensated care and services in 2025:



Edel Caregiver Institute
\$150,773.00

Healing Arts
\$153,533.00

Bereavement
\$100,000.00

Steward Center for Palliative Care
\$626,316.00

Charitable Care
\$283,489.85

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



In 2025, Hospice Savannah officially launched a capital campaign to bring the first PACE Center to the State of Georgia and to our community. The PACE Capital Campaign began with tremendous momentum, and we are nearing our \$5 million goal—but we still need your support to cross the finish line. This remarkable early progress has been made possible through the generosity of individual donors, private foundations, and state and local grant partners.

PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) provides comprehensive medical, social, and supportive services that help nursing home-eligible seniors remain safely in their homes and engaged in their communities. This innovative model of care will introduce a level of coordinated, wrap-around support that has not previously existed in our state.

We now look ahead to opening the Kole Center for PACE Georgia in 2026 and welcoming our first participants later this year. We are deeply grateful to our Board of Trustees, whose confidence and approval of program development during the procurement process enabled Hospice Savannah to move decisively and position our organization to establish the very first PACE site in Georgia.

Sincerest Appreciation to our 2025-2026 Leadership

HOSPICE SAVANNAH Board

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

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



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Ross Kaminsky · Amy Minis · Donya Oglesby



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PACE Board

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Savannah, GA 31405

hospicesavannah.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we look back on 2025, I am once again filled with deep gratitude for the extraordinary generosity and compassion of our community. This past year, the Hospice Savannah Foundation raised nearly \$4 million—a remarkable achievement that speaks directly to your belief in our mission and your commitment to the people we serve. Every gift, every act of support, and every word of encouragement strengthens the work we do each day.

Across the country, hospice inpatient units are closing due to the rising costs of care and dramatically reduced reimbursement. It is a heartbreaking trend at a time when families need these services more than ever. Yet here in Savannah, we have chosen a different path. Hospice Savannah remains steadfast in its commitment to keeping our Hospice In-Patient Unit open, ensuring that families facing symptoms too complex to manage at home will always have a place of comfort, dignity, and compassionate care. Thanks to this vital unit, we are also able to provide specialized, tender care to babies and children—patients not typically associated with hospice—ensuring that families of all ages receive the support they need in their most vulnerable moments. Your generosity will keep these doors open for the families who depend on us.

At the same time, we are witnessing the extraordinary impact of your support on the future of healthcare in our region. Last year’s successful capital campaign has propelled us forward in establishing the Kole Center for PACE Georgia, the very first PACE site in the state. What began as a visionary idea is now becoming a reality—one that will transform how our community supports older adults who wish to remain independent in their own homes. The PACE model, with all necessary services under one roof, aligns beautifully with our mission not only to help people live at the end of life, but to help people live well throughout life. This expansion honors our past while boldly stepping into the needs of the future.

As we move into 2026, we remain focused, energized, and profoundly grateful. We cannot do any of this without you. Your belief in our mission sustains us. Your generosity fuels innovation. Thank you for standing beside us—year after year, challenge after challenge, milestone after milestone. Together, we continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jamey Espina".

Jamey Espina

Vice President of Development & Community Services, Hospice Savannah Foundation