

# INTOUCH

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024



  
**HAVEN**  
HOSPICE  
FOUNDATION

*Making Haven Hospice Stronger*

# NICE NOTES

Kind words of appreciation from families of patients that Haven has served.

Thank you for taking such great care of our dad. You all helped to make a difficult time easier. We really appreciated it!

Words can't express how thankful my family and I are for the Haven Hospice facility. Excellent staff, professional, caring and respectful. So grateful for the care of our loved one.

You were angels surrounding my aunt with deep care and dignity. We all so appreciate the loving care you provided her during this sad time.

My mother received excellent comfort and care at Haven Hospice. Every single person that I worked with showed patience, respect, and compassion during the whole process of enrolling my mother into hospice to helping me deal with her passing. I will forever be thankful for the team at Haven Hospice.

# Welcome to In Touch

Dear Donor:

It is always important to plan and celebrate a new year. It is equally important to review past successes. Because it is important, included in this edition of In Touch you will find details of end-of-year giving and patient family stories.

Spring is partially here and by March it will be in full bloom. And April, as Shakespeare said, "Hath put a spirit of youth in everything."



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon A. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Sharon Jones, FAHP, CFRE**  
Vice President of Development  
Executive Director of the Haven Hospice Foundation

# The Thomas A. Plein Foundation Gives \$25,000 to Dementia Care Program

The Thomas A. Plein Foundation awarded Haven Hospice a \$25,000 grant in support of its Dementia Care Program, which educates Haven team members, patient caregivers and community partners to improve the quality of life for individuals living with dementia. The program also aims to relieve caregiver stress.

The Plein Foundation's grant will go toward the creation of memory cafes and caregiver support groups; the purchase of life enrichment tools (i.e., robotic animals, busy blankets, aromatherapy, baby dolls, puzzles, art supplies, etc.) that provide meaningful activities for patients; and the purchase of caregiver support guides and other resources to help them prepare for their loved one's dementia journey and alleviate potential for caregiver burnout.

Additionally, Haven is in the process of certifying 12 team members through Positive Approach to Care, LLC, and Teepa Snow. These certifications will ensure that Haven is sufficiently trained to provide ongoing education to staff, volunteers, community partners and patient caregivers. Funding from the Plein Foundation will be used to meet the needs of patients living with dementia in all 18 counties that Haven serves.

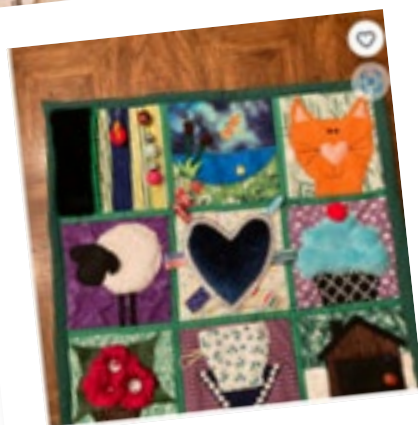
“Haven found that a significant number of its patients year-over-year had a dementia diagnosis and that some families were struggling to meet the cognitive, physical and emotional needs associated with dementia.



*Haven Hospice Dementia Care program manager Anita Howard displays some of the resources provided by the program, including enrichment tools and educational materials for caregivers. The Plein Foundation awarded Haven with a grant in support of the program.*

Our team realized that special training and education were a must to help us identify ways to assist each patient and their caregiver(s) with having a better quality of life,” said Anita Howard, Haven Dementia Care program manager. “Alzheimer’s and other dementia-related diseases affect each person differently. The Plein Foundation’s gift will allow Haven to help staff, families and community partners identify how to best care for those living with dementia. We are thankful for these funds and are already putting them to use at Haven and in the communities we serve.” 🍌

Please visit [BeYourHaven.org/Dementia](https://BeYourHaven.org/Dementia) to learn more about Haven Dementia Care. Those who wish to financially support the program can visit [BeYourHaven.org/Donate](https://BeYourHaven.org/Donate).





## Husband of Patient Donates Handcrafted Covered Wagon

Mr. Peter McDonald's wife, Joan, recently passed at Haven's Suwannee Valley Hospice Care Center in Lake City. To show his gratitude for the incredible care he and his wife received, he donated a handmade covered wagon to be sold or auctioned.

Mr. McDonald, a true craftsman, said that his covered wagons take six-to-nine months to build. He does not use formal plans, but instead analyzes authentic photos to determine how he will build his creation. If you look underneath the wagon, you'll see that it has a proper chassis, like a real covered wagon. And if you look inside, you'll find the most intricate details, including miniature sheets, décor, woodstoves and more. No detail is overlooked.

The first wagon he created was to raise funds for a large family reunion years ago. That one sold for \$1,500. So when Mr. McDonald decided he wanted to

help Haven Hospice raise money, he grabbed his antique tools—handed down from his grandfather and father—and went to work.

“The reason I donated the covered wagon was to raise money for Haven’s Suwannee Valley Hospice Care Center. A lot of people donate money, and I am not in a situation where I can do that, but I loved the idea of giving a covered wagon to the staff so they can use it to raise money. I hope it raises even more than my last. I put a lot of my heart and feelings in things I build. I think that shows in the wagon I built,” said Mr. McDonald.

Mr. McDonald and his wife did not take their end-of-life preparations lightly. In 2017, before health issues were even on the horizon, Peter and Joan took care of all their arrangements to remove the financial and emotional burden from their children when the time came. This included their cemetery plot, caskets, advance directives and living will. It also included hospice.

“Joan had been to Haven a few times visiting our friends who were patients. She loved the facility. That’s why we chose Haven,” said Mr. McDonald.

“The staff are very good and if you have any problems, they do everything they can to take care of it for you. I expected to go first, but it didn’t work out that way. When I get to the stage that I need hospice care, Haven is where I’ll be going.”

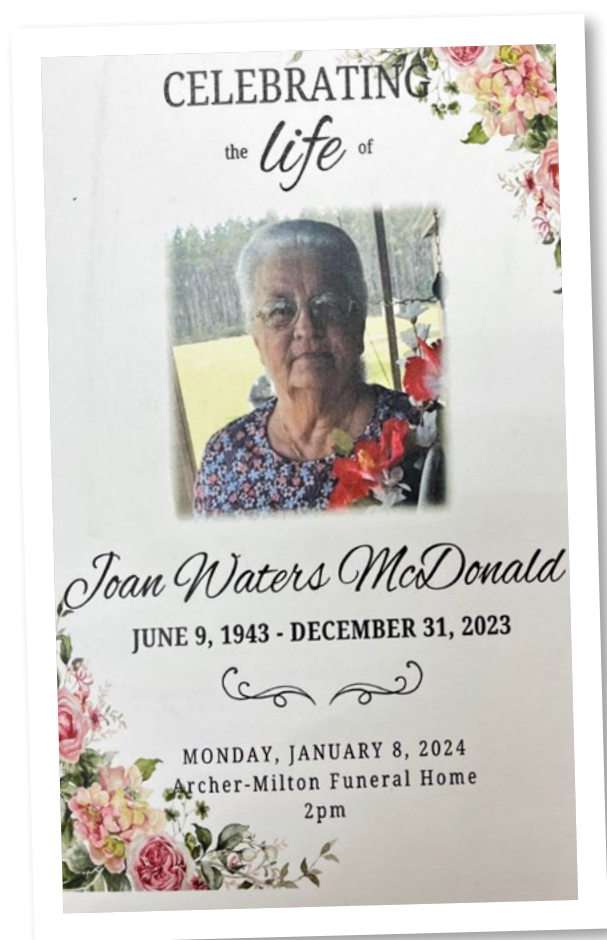
For now, Mr. McDonald is continuing his wood-working projects as a way to cope with the loss of his wife and occupy his mind. He is currently working on a 30-inch replica of the Mayflower, starting by laying the keel first, just like shipwrights did centuries ago.



A former technical and mechanical engineer, Mr. McDonald has also built remote control airplanes, boats, furniture and countless replicas. It was his wife who kickstarted his passion for carpentry, he said, when she needed him to make a computer cabinet for their home.

“Joan was really an interesting lady,” said Mr. McDonald. “She loved genealogy and had 20,000 family photos on her computer. She spent a lot of time doing that. She also loved gardening.”

Mr. McDonald also hand-delivered a bouquet with a beautiful message to Haven’s Lake City staff to thank them for the care they provided his wife, sharing, “I couldn’t ask for better nurses or staff. I just enjoyed being there and so did my wife, even knowing she was going to pass. She was happy.” 🍊





# Haven Women of Philanthropy Groups Socialize and Learn About Local History



*A good time was had by all at the Haven Women of Philanthropy – Lake City’s Columbia County Historical Museum social in January. Thank you to Florida Gateway professor of history Dr. Sean McMahon for teaching everyone about the heritage of Lake City!*



*The Haven Women of Philanthropy – Gainesville enjoyed a social at the Matheson History Museum in February. Thank you to Gainesville historian Dr. Mark Barrow for the presentation on the history of medicine in Alachua County!*

**If you’d like to learn more or become involved with the Haven Women of Philanthropy, please visit [BeYourHaven.org/WomenOfPhilanthropy](https://BeYourHaven.org/WomenOfPhilanthropy).**



# New Mural Completed Outside of E.T. York Hospice Care Center

Thanks to the generosity of the Haven Women of Philanthropy – Gainesville and the vision of Gainesville Patient Care Manager Tootsie Young, Santa Fe College student artists have recently completed a mural at the E.T. York Hospice Care Center that will be enjoyed for years to come.

When identifying changes that would improve the care center experience for patients and families, Tootsie thought of an area where two patient windows faced a blank fence. Care center team members had been working on beautifying the area by installing bird feeders and a gazing globe, but Tootsie knew that painting a mural on the existing fence would be the perfect finishing touch. She worked with Haven Vice President of Development Sharon Jones to enlist the help of

the Haven Women of Philanthropy – Gainesville, who unanimously decided to fully cover the cost of the project.

The Women of Philanthropy – Gainesville suggested reaching out to the Santa Fe College art department to ask if any student artists would be willing to help. India Brooks, professor of art fundamentals, was happy to recruit her top students for the job. After two weeks of painting sessions, the mural of a colorful sunset was completed.



Tootsie said she chose a sunset because it represents the idea that “we are all just walking each other home,” a sentiment that reflects the shared purpose of helping one another reach a place of comfort and peace, both in and outside of the care center.

Thank you to the Haven Women of Philanthropy – Gainesville, Tootsie, the students, and everyone involved in collaborating to make this mural a reality! 🍊



# Holidays with Haven at the Blanche Hotel

The Haven Hospice Foundation held Holidays with Haven at The Blanche Hotel in Lake City. The holiday-themed event raised funds to support Haven Hospice's palliative care program in Columbia County.

The Blanche Hotel was transformed into a winter wonderland as guests arrived in their most festive holiday attire. Attendees visited with Santa Claus, enjoyed a meal by Blue Water Bay and danced to music by Crooked Shooz, one of north Florida's and south Georgia's finest dance bands.

Master of ceremonies and Haven Hospice Foundation treasurer, John Medina, introduced Haven's chief medical officer Hampton Groover, M.D., for a special message, in which he spoke about Haven's palliative care program.

"Holidays with Haven was a great success. It was a fun, elegant evening in support of a great cause," said Tina Roberts, Haven Women of Philanthropy member. "On behalf of the Haven Women of Philanthropy - Lake City, I would like to thank the community for their outpouring of support." Roberts served as co-chair of the event, along with fellow Haven Women of Philanthropy member Susie Hall.

The Haven Hospice Foundation holds events throughout the year to raise funds for hospice patients and families. The Holidays with Haven event was made possible thanks to this year's top sponsors: Jill and Mike Adams of Adams Family Farms, First Federal Bank and Odom, Moses & Company/Raymond James. Proceeds from Holidays with Haven will benefit Haven's palliative care program in Columbia County, which brings supportive care to patients with advanced illness, wherever they call home.

If you or your organization would like to be involved in Haven's Lake City events in the future, please reach out to [devmail@beyourhaven.org](mailto:devmail@beyourhaven.org).



# Thank You, Jackie Price!

## *Haven's Chief Compliance Officer Retires*

Jackie Price is retiring after 17 years of service with Haven. Since January 2007, she has worked tirelessly to lead Haven's corporate compliance and risk management, quality assessment and performance, and Health Information Management teams.

If you ever met Jackie, you know she fit her role well. She was able to have difficult conversations, with staff and patients and families alike, and come out on with a positive solution. Jackie credits her diverse background for creating her "unique perspective" in the workplace.



"I have been through so much in my life that I can put myself in the shoes of the family and I am able to help nurses and social workers see what the patient or family is going through. If we can meet people where they are and provide services that meet their needs, we are going to be able to remain compliant and give high-quality care."

Going out on a high note, Jackie recalled the incredible growth and resiliency that Haven has shown recently. "The timeframe that was the most difficult in my career, but the most rewarding, was the past five-or-so years," said Jackie.

"We came out from under hard times, found our president Pauline just before COVID-19, and look at we have done since. We survived the pandemic, provided a safe place for families to be with patients, turned around our financial outlook and built the strongest leadership team I have every had the privilege of working with. I am leaving Haven in good hands with this crew at a truly 'Great Place to Work.'"

Jackie added that while she is not a clinician, it has been a privilege to be a small part of helping Haven fulfill its mission. One of her favorite things about Haven is the people who are here to either provide care at the bedside or support the team members who do so.

Jackie always went beyond her job requirements in her support of Haven. She always attended Haven events, fully embracing the theme. She supported Haven's programs, including Camp Safe Haven, and donated handmade items for the Attic Resale Stores to sell.

"Jackie is known for her dedication to the Haven mission, care and compassion for colleagues, love for her family, and the beautiful crafts that she creates and donates to the Attic Stores," said Haven President Pauline Taylor. "We are grateful for Jackie's many years of service to Haven and wish her the very best in this next phase of life." After almost two decades of supporting Haven, Jackie is near-giddy about retirement. She has conquered many family "firsts," being the first to graduate college, earn a master's degree and she is now the first to retire on her own terms.

In retirement, Jackie plans to submerge herself in her old and new hobbies; she can't wait to learn how to play the keyboard, use the pottery wheel she was gifted last year, and try out a new engraving tool. She is also thrilled to spend time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Jackie said she is not done with Haven, though! She intends to use her newfound spare time to support the Attic store nearest her in Chiefland.



Haven team members gathered to celebrate Jackie and her retirement in January. Jackie attended with family members and her coworkers spoke emotionally about her impact on their careers and Haven. Jackie said a few words, including, "Hospice done well is the best gift ever. Keep fighting the good fight. It's worth it." 🍊



# Lake City Team and Make a Difference Fund Provide Christmas for Pediatric Patient

Haven patient Richard “Nico” Acosta-Ochoa Jr. was born in 2014 with a heart problem. His family relocated to North Central Florida to seek care at UF Health Shands Hospital. Over the years, his health has had ups and downs. After a recent decline, the family and their healthcare team chose to pursue hospice care, sharing that their goal for Nico was “to live out whatever time he has left at home and to be happy.”

Nico’s RN case manager Constance Wilton said that, based on assessments from his care teams, this would likely be Nico’s last Christmas. He believes very much in Santa and she knew that Haven had to help make it an extra special holiday season. She reached out to the Make a Difference Fund for assistance paying for Nico’s Christmas list. Nico, who keeps his hair long because he is “strong like Samson in the Bible,” asked for two larger items (including a virtual reality camera to pair with his gaming system and an Iron



Man game) and a handful of small items. Between the Make a Difference Fund, Haven staff and the community, the team was able to fulfill his list. And Haven RN Cliff Neukam (our very own Santa) made a special trip!

“When I met Nico, hearing his story broke my heart. As a mother, I could not imagine knowing this would likely be my son’s last Christmas. He had a few wants that were out of the family’s reach,” said Constance. “I personally took private anonymous donations from friends and family for a sick child in need. I was so shocked at how, with such a small amount of information, people gave so generously! We were able to cover our sweet patient’s entire wish list, gifts for the other small child in the family that was currently in the home, and mom and dad. All the money that was left was used to buy gift cards to their favorite places, as well as gas and grocery cards to assist the family with other needs. My cheeks hurt from laughing and smiling so much and many tears were shed. In the weeks after Santa gave this sweet boy the most amazing Christmas of his life, he has talked about it many times during our visits. He says things like, ‘It was epic!’ It was his dream to get the Eiffel Tower Lego set and he has not wasted any time getting started on it. My heart was literally bursting at the seams for the friends and families that contributed as well as friends that donated through their businesses to make this possible! Thank you so much to everyone that helped, including the employees at SVEC in Live Oak, First Federal Bank in Lake City and Precision Auto in Live Oak. This was a truly humbling, heartwarming and happy moment that I will never in my life forget.”



Thank you to Constance for making this happen and to everyone who contributed to a Christmas that Nico and his family will never forget. 🍓



**HOSPICE ATTIC  
RESALE STORE**

# **ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!**



**Saturday, March 9, 2024**



Thank you for helping us support  
Haven Hospice patients and families!  
Stop by for 10% off all merchandise  
at all of our locations.





## Camp Safe Haven - Family Bereavement Camp

*A place to help children, youth and their families understand their feelings of loss and find peace.*

Haven offers bereavement camps at no cost for children, youth and their families who have lost a loved one. Children and youth suffering a loss can often benefit from the development of coping skills to handle their emotions. Supported by Haven's professionals and volunteers, Camp Safe Haven provides fun and therapeutic activities to help children work through feelings of grief.

### Encouragement, Empowerment, Enlightenment

Camp Safe Haven is free and open to children and youth, ages 5-18, who have experienced the loss of a loved one, regardless of how that loss occurred. Attendance at camp will give participants the tools they need to acknowledge that a change in their life has occurred and to accept that change through a three-step approach:

- » Encourage participants to acknowledge their feelings, thoughts and behaviors related to loss.
- » Empower participants to learn how to manage their grief reactions.
- » Enlighten participants with the understanding that grieving is a natural process, it's okay to feel sad, and it's okay to express their feelings and learn that others experience grief too.

**Saturday, April 27**  
**9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**Cuscowilla Nature  
and Retreat Center**

210 SE 134 Ave, Micanopy, FL

*All children and teens must be accompanied by a caregiver.*

Space is limited, so please register by calling the Healing Hearts Grief Line at 1.844.LIGHTEN (544.4836) or filling out the online registration form at [BeYourHaven.org/Camp](https://BeYourHaven.org/Camp)

*Scan the QR code to be taken to the site! →*





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