



Contents – August Newsletter, 2022

- Our Mission Statement
 - Calendar of Events
 - Letter from the President
 - Council Minutes on Website
 - Training Graduates Nine New Volunteers
 - BHH Transitions
 - Get to Know Disaster Dave
 - November Blood Drive
 - Discover Volunteer Opportunities in Boquete
 - Comforting Quilts
 - The Magic of Music
 - Chris's Corner
 - A Visit to Boquete Home and Care
 - Being Prepared Workshop Moving to January
 - Make a Donation
 - Education Videos
 - Medical Equipment
 - The Tree of Life Donor Recognition
 - BHH Policies
 - Contact Us
-

Our Mission Statement

Our mission is to inform and promote community health. To support people with health and wellness needs by providing information, equipment and volunteer services. To provide palliative (hospice) care for the terminally ill in order that they may experience death with dignity and limited pain.

Calendar of Events

- September 7 – Council Meeting (via Zoom only)
 - September 14 – General Meeting (via Zoom only)
 - November 19 – Blood Drive (Animales Event Center, Alto Boquete)
-

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

As we go to press, BHH just completed training a whole new set of volunteers. This training focuses on all that we do, so that trainees come away with a thorough knowledge of all our functions. They can then choose an area for which they would like to volunteer. **Lesley Hughes, Craig Gatrel, Denise Daniels, and Maxine (Max) Wolfe** handled the training duties.

We have a full class of nine individuals for this training session. These volunteers bring a variety of skills to our teams, but everyone has the

same desire to contribute to the community in a positive way. We are very grateful that they picked BHH as their volunteer organization.

From time to time, our Patient Care Coordinators receive calls from people with suicidal thoughts, those patients or caretakers dealing with dementia, and inquiries about creating a caretaker support group. BHH is not a licensed healthcare provider so we do not provide any medical services, but we can provide information and some initial support to people with these issues. We will be adding some pages to our website soon with contact information geared to these callers. These pages will contain contact information and links to well-known and highly praised websites. When our PCCs get calls about these issues they will be able to help the caller get some help. Sometimes all a person needs is someone to listen to them. We are going to make sure they get that opportunity!

By the way, if you have any experience in these areas, please contact **Dave Nichols**, our new Volunteer Coordinator. You can also volunteer to help on the BHH website at [volunteer](#).

Be well,
John Earle



MEETING MINUTES

Council Minutes Now on BHH Website

Anyone interested in council minutes for 2022 can now find them on the website. All future minutes will also be posted there.

Meeting Minutes



On the left: Maxine Wolfe, Ginny Woolley, Bob Honyak, Deb Hornstra, Herta Bernback, and Kelly Honyak. On the right: Craig Gatrel, John Quintana, Lesley Hughes, Robert Ryan, Barry McNeil, and Dave Nichols.

Training Graduates Nine New Volunteers

On August 22, 24, and 26 an enthusiastic group of volunteers attended Boquete Health and Hospice New Volunteer Training. In this 3-day comprehensive class, local experienced instructors spoke on a wide range of topics. The group learned about the history of BHH, how it fits into the community, and the resources available to all Boquete

residents. They also had ample opportunity to participate in hands-on activities.

During the training **Kat McKay** of the Equipment Team spoke about the BHH medical equipment loan program. **John Ferguson** of the Respiratory Team demonstrated how to clean and test an oxygen concentrator, as well as replace filters. **Dr. Rod Gottula** discussed the death and grieving process. And **Sandra Cripe** explained the value of the Being Prepared for End of Life in Boquete program.

The training is designed so volunteers can discover the myriad of services and equipment that BHH offers to the community and enables them to answer questions such as these:

Did you know there is a Being Prepared for End of Life workbook available? It stresses the importance of detailing your medical preferences and end-of-life wishes. Panama's medical system and services are very different from what we are accustomed to in our home countries. Navigating through the local healthcare network can sometimes be daunting. Details on obtaining a manual can be found later in this issue.

Did you know that BHH services are available to all residents of the entire Boquete community? BHH is not exclusively for expats! In fact, 50% of recent calls to our Patient Care Coordinators have been from Panamanians.

Did you know that music can be comforting and stress-relieving? BHH can provide a customized music program for patients and caregivers through its Magic of Music program.

Did you know that crutches, wheelchairs, and other equipment are available to the community? BHH has medical equipment available for short-term loan at no charge.

Did you know that a blood drive is scheduled in Boquete on Saturday, November 19? Don't miss it! Look for more information later in this issue. Your donations of blood and financial contributions are vital to the well-being of the community and ensure that everyone in the community who needs blood will receive it.

We wholeheartedly thank all the participants who generously gave of their time and knowledge and look forward to working with our new volunteers! New Volunteer Training is available to anyone who would like to learn more about the organization and the possibility of volunteering. Contact **Dave Nichols**, Volunteer Manager, at disasterdave@yahoo.com if you're interested.

BHH Transitions

Congratulations to **Bill Hinrichsen**, who is not only taking care of our website, but has also stepped in to take on the role of Treasurer.



After a couple of weeks of orientation with **Lesley Hughes** (who will be his back up), he will be paying our bills and keeping us afloat.

Lesley, of course, will continue to serve the council as the Past President and pitch-hitter for the PCCs when they are all out of the country.

Congratulations and welcome to **Maxine Wolfe (Max)**, who has stepped into the role of Trainer for Boquete Health and Hospice. She comes to us with a great background in training and we are so happy to have her join us.

Congratulations to **Dave Nichols**, aka Disaster Dave, who is taking over volunteer management. He has a great deal of experience in the non-profit and government sectors, including disaster preparedness. Lesley is so happy! He also handles our social media and keeps our Zoom meetings on track!

Congratulations to **Sandra Cripe**, now Team Leader for the Being Prepared team, which creates the training and manual we offer to help navigate end of life decisions here in Panamá. Taking this training is critical for both expats and Panamanians to ensure their last wishes will be carried out under Panamanian law. Sandra is actively enhancing the Being Prepared program to reach a much broader Boquete audience, both Panamanian and expat.



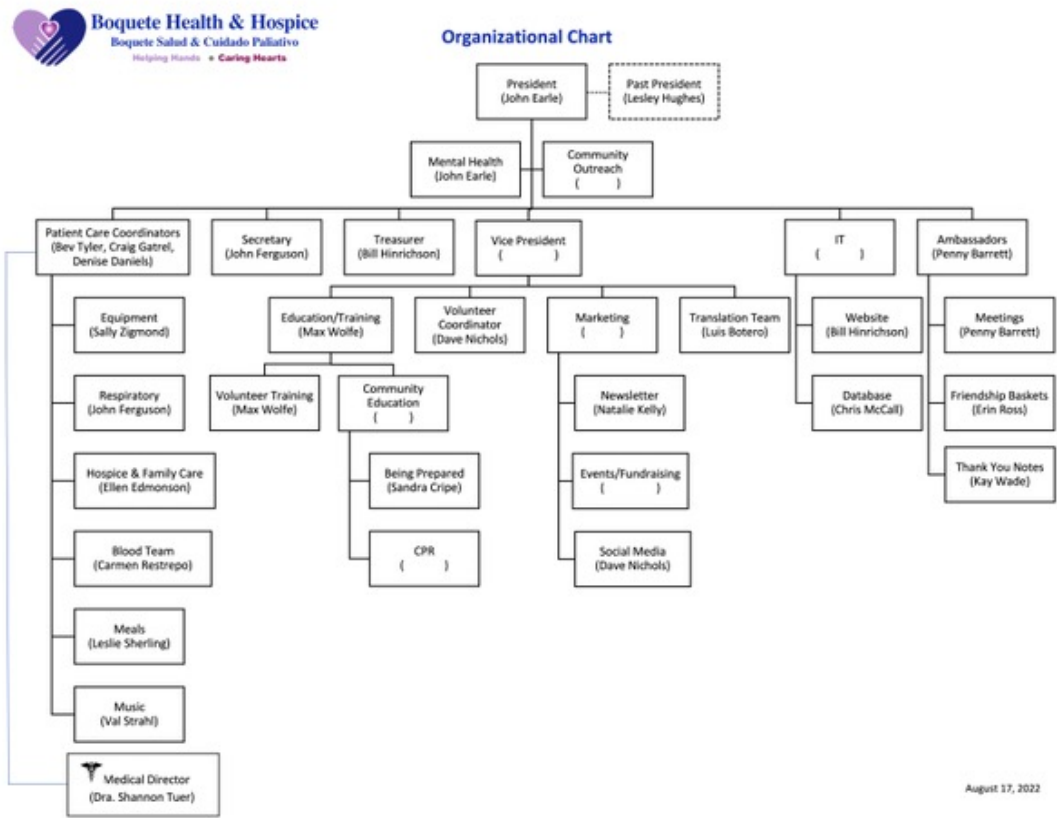
Get to Know Disaster Dave

I know some of you, but I wanted to formally introduce myself. I am the new Volunteer Manager for BHH. My wife and I moved here 18 months ago and love Boquete. And if there are other Palmerians out there, we just broke ground in Palmira Abajo!

So, what do I want? I want you to have a great volunteer experience with BHH! I will be chatting with some of you as we go down this road of reopening. And if you're interested in taking on something here at BHH or want to try something new, check out our organization chart below. There are some empty slots we would love to fill.

If you have concerns, want to volunteer or try a new role, or are interested in learning more, shoot me an email and let's chat (phone, Zoom, email; no snail mail). That's it. I'm here to help you have a great time at BHH.

Dave Nichols
Volunteer Manager
disasterdave@yahoo.com



Every Blood Donor is a **Hero**

November 19
7 am – 12 pm

Be a **Hero**

Donate here in Boquete
It's so EASY and QUICK!

Animales Event
Center across from
Ivans Market



**URGENT! BLOOD IS NEEDED to help
your Community, Neighbors and
maybe your Family!**



Boquete Health & Hospice

Boquete Salud & Cuidado Paliativo

Helping Hands • Caring Hearts

Join the Hero's Blood Drive ~
Help Your Community and Neighbors!

Date/time: Saturday, November 19, 7am-12 pm

Location: Animales Event Center (Ruby McKenzie Clinic) across from Super Centro Ivan's

Requirements: Must be under 65 years old with no Covid since September 15.

On average, a pint of blood saves three lives. The BHH program, which partners with Hospital Regional, is the only true blood bank in Panama.

Please consider being a blood donor and if you can't donate blood, join our Hero's Matching Fund Drive. For every blood pint collected, you match donations with a dollar amount. You set the amount, with an upper limit if desired. Support this vital program by donating your time, talent, or funds!

For more information go to boquetehealth.org/what-we-do or call/text: WhatsApp +507-6590-2000 or call 507-6781-9250, 8am-5pm, Monday through Friday, 9am-1pm, Saturday and Sunday.

Donate blood and save a life today! Sign up to give blood at the link below.



CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO

Sign Up Now to Donate Blood!

Congratulations to Martine Heyer-Boot and Lorraine Handler on Creating a One-stop Shop for Discovering Volunteer Opportunities in Boquete!



**Activities that
Make Boquete
Fun & Interesting**

New to Boquete?

There are many opportunities for you to volunteer, meet new friends and make a difference here in Boquete. Sharing your skills and energies will enrich your life while contributing to our community.



“TAKE A LOOK”

Introducing New Website



boquetevolunteers.com

The unveiling of a new website....
boquetevolunteers.com.

The focus of this site is on the volunteering opportunities and the special needs of the various Boquete charities. It also includes a section on membership clubs and leisure activities or Hobby Clubs.

Please send us your comments and suggestions:
info@boquetevolunteers.com




We're proud to be included in boquetevolunteers.com and encourage everyone to visit this site to learn more about BHH and the other organizations that serve our community.

Comforting Quilts for Hospice Patients



These beautiful quilts were handmade made by local artisan **Sarah Zink** as a blessing to our hospice patients. Sarah is a master quilter who generously supports local charities and organizations around Boquete with her gorgeous fabric works of art.

The Magic of Music



**Anxious?
Stressed?
Depressed?
Try This! ➡**

"We may be sitting on one of the most widely available and cost-effective therapeutic modalities that ever existed. Listening to music seems to be able to change brain functioning to the same extent as medication, in many circumstances." - Stanford University*

*Reference: Stanford Report: "Feeling the Beat: Symposium Explores the Therapeutic Effects of Rhythmic Music"

Life can throw us curve balls sometimes, unforeseen circumstances that we must deal with. It might be due to an illness, or caretaking for someone else who is ill. It might be other situations at home or even situations outside the family home over which we have no control, such as the recent civil demonstrations and their subsequent economic impacts here in Panama. When we find ourselves overly anxious, stressed, or depressed, music can provide relief! And this is not simply due to distraction. Listening to music can directly affect our brains and lower stress hormones to quickly elevate our mood. It can have other physiological impacts as well, including lowering blood pressure, lowering heart rate, reducing muscle tension, slowing breathing rate, and reducing anger and frustration.

If you find yourself dealing with elevated levels of anxiety, stress, or depression, check out the new playlist put together by the Magic of Music team for just this purpose! Here's the link: [Depression, Stress &](#)

[Anxiety Playlist.](#)

To find out more details about the ability of music to combat anxiety, stress, and depression, check out the Magic of Music team's article, "[Music for Relaxation and Stress-Relief.](#)"

The team can build custom-tailored playlists that can help patients and their caretakers who contact Boquete Health and Hospice for assistance. You can find out more on the [BHH website](#), or join the conversation with the [Magic of Music Community Group](#) on Facebook. Contact us at WhatsApp at +507-6781-9250 to borrow a music player.



Is a Slow Heart Rate Good or Bad for You?

Bradycardia, or a low heart rate, is more likely as you age—and could be a sign of health issues.

You expect your body to slow down a bit as you age, but if the same slowing happens with your heart, is that a good or a bad thing?

A slow heart rate (or a low heart rate) is known as bradycardia, and occurs frequently in older adults. “As people get older, there is occasional normal wear and tear on the electrical system of the heart,” says cardiologist **Jose Baez-Escudero, MD**. “As a result, the normal rhythm tends to slow down.”

Dr. Baez-Escudero shares when to worry about low heart rate—and the signs and symptoms to watch for.

[Read the Article](#)



Boquete Home and Care in Alto Dorado (photo credit Villa Esperanza SA)

A Visit to Boquete Home and Care

By Roderic Gottula

I recently visited Boquete Home and Care, an assisted living facility established in 2017 in Alto Dorado, off the main highway between Bajo Boquete and Alto Boquete. Boquete Home and Care has a capacity of eight or nine patients.

The facility is owned by Villa Esperanza, a Panama City-based company with twenty years of experience in the senior living field. The company also owns Home and Care San Miguel Arcangel in David.

Most patients at Boquete Home and Care are housed in double occupancy rooms, but single occupancy rooms are sometimes available. The current fees for a bed are \$850/month for double occupancy and \$1,000/month for single occupancy. A shorter stay of fifteen days is also offered for half the monthly fee. Patients are served three meals and three snacks a day.

The David facility is larger, with a capacity of 24 beds, and is slightly less expensive than the Boquete facility. It is located just off the main highway, north of the city proper in the Las Perlas neighborhood, an easy drive from Boquete.

The Boquete facility is staffed by nurse technicians, who have a level of training between that of fully qualified nurses and certified nurse's aides.

The manager, **Liz Cianca**, speaks good English and divides her time between this facility and the one in David. A second staff member speaks some English. The rest of the staff speak Spanish only, but use Google Translate to communicate with English speakers, which should mitigate communication issues.

Prior to the pandemic, Boquete Home and Care also offered respite care for \$35/day, but had to stop this service due to MINSA regulations. They hope to start providing respite again when MINSA allows it.

The manager told me they have served many patients with dementia as well as some terminal cancer patients, and they can meet the needs of such patients. The doctor who provides care is **Doctora**

Wendy Gonzales of Bajo Boquete. Patients are sometimes prescribed medications for serious behavioral issues, but the facility tries to use such meds on a very limited basis.

On inspection, the facility was clean. Rooms appeared somewhat sparsely but adequately furnished. Bathrooms had large showers with low thresholds. There is a large yard where some patients take walks for exercise and a large covered veranda in front where patients can sit outside during the day.

Manager Liz was quite pleasant and answered all our questions. She had very little knowledge of BHH, so we directed her to our website. We explained that on a case-by-case basis, we might be able to help them with patients who meet BHH criteria, and gave her the phone number for BHH.

We discussed BHH's interest in serving more of the local Panamanian population, and how we might play a role in educating people about approaching family members with dementia. We also let Liz know that BHH loans out medical equipment, also on a case-by-case basis.

I invited Liz to my dementia talk at the library this month as she seemed to be open to additional training of her staff in dementia care. A visit by BHH to the David facility might be appropriate in future.



BE
PREPARED

**Being Prepared
Workshop Moving to
January, 2023 ~
Expect the**

Unexpected! Be Prepared for life Changes in Panama!

The next Being Prepared Workshop for End of Life in Boquete will be held January 12, 2023. Mark your calendar—the information in this workshop and accompanying manual is critical for any expat in Boquete.

Provide peace of mind for your self and your loved ones by navigating the legal paperwork, thinking about difficult questions regarding end-of-life care, and getting your affairs in order.

Don't wait until January to start thinking about these important topics. You can get a PDF of the manual **NOW** by making a minimum \$5 donation via PayPal on the website.

[Donate \\$5 for Manual](#)

To Make a Donation

BHH functions with donations provided by the community. If you are interested in supporting the work we do, there are several ways to donate:

- ▶ Scan the QR code to the right or use the link below. Both will take you to the donation page of our website at boquetehealth.org where you can make a PayPal donation. All major credit cards are accepted.
- ▶ Donate directly at our blood pressure table in the Tuesday Market (Tap Out) in Boquete OR when picking up or returning equipment. All checks must be made payable to Boquete Hospice and Health Foundation.
- ▶ Make a wire transfer or a direct deposit of cash or check to Boquete Hospice and Health Foundation, Global Bank, Checking Account #16-101-23071-6.



We appreciate all donations and use them in a variety of ways to help our community.

[Donate via PayPal](#)

Education Videos

BHH is happy to offer education videos on our website. They provide excellent info for caregivers and the general public in Spanish and English. Topics cover using equipment including crutches, wheelchairs, and walkers, as well as moving patients safely for patient and caregiver and general patient care. There are also informative videos on Alzheimer's and other types of dementia. To learn more, visit our website using the button below and go to Patient Caregiver Videos, Español Paciente Videos, or Dementia and Alzheimers in the dropdown menu under the Education tab.

[Videos](#)

Need Medical Equipment?

If you or someone you know has a need to borrow or return equipment, please contact our patient care coordinators (PCCs) at 6781-9250. All requests related to equipment must go through the PCCs. The PCCs will work with you or the caregiver to determine the appropriate equipment, availability, and loan period. Once the equipment need is identified, the PCCs coordinate with the equipment team to ensure the correct equipment is sanitized and ready to be checked out (picked up) at our locker located at Alto Dorado. A member of the equipment team will contact you or the caregiver directly to make arrangements to meet at our locker.



Please note that our equipment team members only go to the locker for scheduled equipment checkouts and returns. **No equipment team member is staffed at the locker and the locker is only open during specific times.** Therefore, it is important to contact the PCCs first. When you are ready to return equipment, the process is the same. Simply call the PCCs at 6781-9250.

If you are using a piece of equipment for the first time, be sure to visit

our website using the button below and go to Patient Caregiver Videos or Español Paciente Videos in the dropdown menu under the Education tab to learn more about using equipment and caring for patients in the home.

Videos



Tree of Life

Boquete Health and Hospice gratefully recognizes the names of our extremely dedicated and very generous donors on our website. Their kindness keeps our Tree of Life growing and strong. A huge thank you to all of our contributors!

List of Donors

Donate



The policies of the organization are posted on our website and are updated as needed at boquetehospice.org/bhh-policies.

Read

Contact Us

Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm

Saturday and Sunday, 9am to 1pm

Hospice/Health: (507) 6781-9250

Blood Donor Program: WhatsApp (+507) 6590-2000 or call (507) 6781-9250

Email: info@boquetehealth.org

Website: boquetehealth.org

Facebook: facebook.com/boqueteheartshandsandhelp

Instagram: instagram.com/boquete_health_hospice/

All patient information shared with any Boquete Health and Hospice volunteer is kept in the strictest confidence.

Freely send this to anyone or use any part.

Our mailing address is:

info@boquetehealth.org

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Thank you!