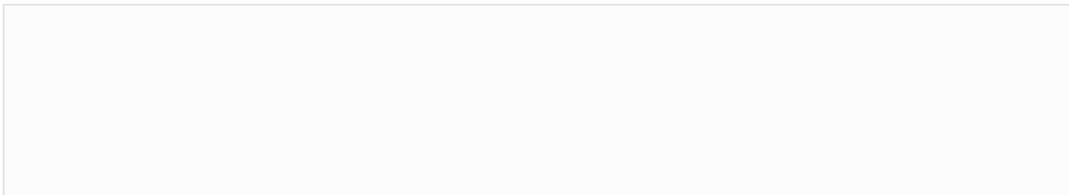




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# Our Mission Statement

*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. To create a culture of respect and appreciation within our organization and a rewarding experience for our volunteers.*

[Volunteer](#)

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## Calendar of Events

- **June 12**– General Meeting, 10am (Animales Event Center, Alto Boquete) – **Michael Schwartz** presents:  
  
How to Lose a Kidney Without Really Trying
  - **June 14-15** – World Donor Day Blood Drive
  - **July 3** - Council Meeting
-

# President's Letter

**Dear friends of Boquete Health & Hospice,**

May has been another month of improving connections with the community. We have had more meetings with Asociacion Boquetenos Luz de Esperanza and sharing information on how we can work cooperatively to assist cancer patients in the Boquete area.

We are now starting to get referrals from the Palliative Care team from Social Security and our number of Hospice patients has almost doubled in the last couple of months. Families have expressed their appreciation for the care and information we have been able to provide to them during those difficult times.

The really good news is that we have been granted our 501c3 nonprofit tax exempt status from the IRS. This means we will be able to solicit donations from individuals and companies in other countries and they will be tax deductible, increasing their incentive to donate to us.

We still need volunteers to step up to the plate and take on some tasks. In the past, there seemed to be concern of being overburdened when you volunteered. This is no longer the case, as we acknowledge that individuals want to work as volunteers to give back to the community, but that it needs to fit in with the lifestyle that they have adopted down here. So please check in with us and find out where you might be able to contribute. The vast majority of tasks have nothing to do with dealing with those that are in the dying process, but you can be sure that what you do, contributes to

the comfort of patients and their families and will be extremely rewarding.

With gratitude,

**Rod Gottula, MD**

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**Michael Schwartz  
Presents  
How to Lose a Kidney  
Without Really Trying**



Just over a year ago, I experienced a severe pain in my side, and instantly recognized it as a kidney stone, thanks to my friends' vivid descriptions. Despite never having had a kidney stone before, I was certain of my diagnosis. This is a true story that happened to me, and it's time I shared it.

I learned that the pain from a kidney stone can be intermittent, and that the hospital experience can strip you of all inhibitions. Spoiler: there are no special hacks to achieve this—it just happens naturally. Sometimes, a routine hospital visit can lead to unexpected outcomes, like leaving without a kidney. This is my untold story, and I'm ready to share it with you now.

(Editors note: come prepared to laugh and cry)

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# Influenza

## Did You Know?

Dra. Shanon Tuer

Flu season is in full swing , the most recent flu shot is available at MINSA and the Policlínica in Boquete.

If you don't want to wait in line Dr.Gomez / Dr Shannon's clinic has the flu shot available, it includes 4 strains. Let Me know and I will put you on the list at the clinic if you want to get it privately.

This flu season has started with a bang, we have had some deaths here in Chiriqui and viral meningitis as well as bacterial meningitis cases.

Also of note is there have been many cases of gastroenteritis, with nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and fever. It is probably due to a water borne bacteria due to the change of seasons.

Currently there is a campaign to get your vaccine boosters , but especially the flu vaccine. **If you are at risk , over 60 or with risk factors go get your flu vaccine.**

Did you know?

New flu vaccines are made twice a year, one for each hemisphere's winter season. This is because the virus mutates rapidly, circulation patterns change, and vaccines stop being effective from one winter season to the other.

Did you know?

In a typical year, there are an estimated 1 billion cases of flu and up to 650,000 flu-related deaths globally. Flu is most serious for older people, pregnant women, young children, and people with underlying health conditions.

Did you know?

1930s

vaccinations against influenza started.

4-5 months

is the average time it takes to make a seasonal influenza vaccine.

[Below reprinted from Panama News](#)

According to reports by the Gorgas Memorial Institute for Health Studies (Icges), the two strains of the influenza virus that are circulating in the country are AH1N1 and AH3N2.

This was explained by the head of the Department of Epidemiology of the Ministry of Health (MINSA), Lourdes Moreno, who recalled that it is extremely important for the population to get vaccinated, especially children over six months and under five years old, the elderly, people with chronic illnesses and pregnant women.

“Influenza cases are more severe, which has led to a greater number of hospitalizations and, therefore, deaths,” said Moreno.

She stated that the last epidemiological report records 14 deaths and 45 hospitalizations, and that in the next report this number of hospitalizations will double. It is necessary for people to have a sense of duty and awareness, Moreno stressed. If you have flu

symptoms, isolate yourself, wear a mask, wash your hands frequently, do not self-medicate, and go to health facilities on time.

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## **World Blood Donor Day**

### **Blood Drive June 14th & 15th**

**at the UNACHI Extension, the Boquete campus of the  
Autonomous University of Chiriquí (UNACHI)**

**This is located opposite the  
Texaco station in Alto Boquete. There is a turnaround at the  
intersection, making it easy to access from the north.**

We have changed the location in order to make it easier for young UNACHI students to donate blood. As you may know, Panama imposes an upper age limit of 64 on blood donors (you may not donate after your 65th birthday). The country also prohibits anyone who has traveled abroad within six months from donating blood. These restrictions make it difficult to recruit sufficient donors from the population of mostly older expats in the Boquete District, many of whom are frequent travelers.

We will be accepting blood donations the EVENING of Friday, June 14th (3-7 pm) and the MORNING of Saturday, June 15th (7 am to noon). Please mark your calendars and if you are not eligible to donate, we hope you will encourage someone to give in your place and join the matching fund.

Blood is urgently needed in Panama. BHH is attempting to develop

a culture of blood donation which has been absent in the country. Please speak to your younger friends and express your hope that they will answer the call to donate. We need their support!

Please click the link below to pre-register (this will give you a set appointment time). We DO accept walk-ins but there may be a wait.

[\*\*Donate Blood\*\*](#)

[\*\*Join Matching Fund\*\*](#)



# WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

SAVE A LIFE  GIVE BLOOD

Do something  
amazing today.  
Save a life.  
Give blood!

Friday June 14th - 3pm to 7pm  
Saturday June 15th - 7am to 12pm

UNACHI Extension in Alto Boquete  
across from the Texaco gas station

Do something  
amazing today... **Join The  
Matching Fund**

Boquete Health and Hospice is partnering with our local university to collect urgently needed blood.

- Can't donate blood? No problem, you can still participate in the drive.
- For every pint collected, you match their donation with a \$ amount.
- You set the amount and you can set an upper limit.
- When the drive is over, we will email you your matching donation amount.
- You can pay at the Tuesday Market Table, with a credit card or ACH transfer to our bank.
- You get a Blood Drive Matching Donor Card and will get priority in the future if you need blood.

Your Matching Fund donation will support the blood drive and help BHH with all its community work. **BECOME A DONOR – SIGN UP NOW!**

Join the  
Matching  
Fund

# Being Prepared Class

On May 15, 2024 BHH had another successful Being Prepared class. There were 26 attendees. The presentation was filled with interaction between the skilled speakers and the attendees. Charlotte Lintz and Penny Barrett, two BHH volunteers with a lot of time and experience in Boquete, lead the class. Valuable information from George Chin, our volunteer liaison to the US embassy and Sr Oliver Candanedo, a lawyer with a firm in David, provided the steps to completing the final phase of your life in Panama. Thank you to the attendees and presenters that made this event a success.



# Volunteer Orientation Class

Boquete Health and Hospice is proud to add 5 new volunteers to their organization. An Orientation class was held on May 22nd to acquaint the new volunteers to the many choices of positions they may choose to serve. Our presenters included members of many of the many teams that make up BHH. Many thanks to President Dr. Rod Gottula, Liz Baze, Lesley Hughes, Deborah Hornstra, Lori Pyers-Goodwin, Luis Botero, Valarie Harmon, Charlotte Lintz, Mary Nieves, Chris McCall, Lorraine Handler and Bill Haldeman. Your enthusiasm and dedication makes this organization a great place to volunteer.



# In Appreciation! Michael Polecek "Improving Quality of Life"



We were delighted to have Michael Polecek as our special guest speaker during May, which coincidentally, is Mental Health Awareness month. A certified Psychiatric/mental health nurse, Michael has presented at state, national and international conferences. In just 45 minutes he highlighted for us what is normally a 2-day workshop. Stress is our everyday reality. The presentation helped us to understand different types of stress - trauma stress verses toxic stress, how stress impacts our mind and body. Michael showed us all of the different ways that we experience stress in our life. What types of our stress are normal and a good thing. But a lot of our stress is poisonous and eventually can be a killer. We explored aspects of our human reaction to stress and trauma. He described how stress can affect a change in chemical DNA. We learned how the pituitary gland and our brain work together to release adrenaline in stressful situations. At this point, both breathing and the heart rate accelerate. Thus, lowering our immunity to disease. In this presentation, our speaker also offered strategies and exercises for minimizing harm by improving our resilience and mental health fitness.

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# The Power of Giving Back

Bolivar Rios was an incredible businessperson who lived in the small community of Caldera for most of his life. He came from a large family, which was quite common here in Panama. When he was 25 years old, he went fishing using dynamite—a widespread practice at the time. A terrible accident occurred; Bolivar lost both of his hands. He also suffered damage to his chest and eyes from the explosion. Despite these setbacks he went on to own two bars, a motel, and a restaurant. He was also a Boquete district councilor and politician who worked hard on behalf of Caldera. While I was building Rancho de Caldera, the guys and I would go to his bar after work on Friday evenings for some beers. That is where I met Bolivar and became friends.

I saw a request for medical equipment come through and learned that he was on palliative care. I didn't feel comfortable with just visiting him without reaching out. I struggled with how to do that like many people who aren't sure how to be helpful in that kind of circumstance.

The universe works in unusual ways. Lorraine and I went for dinner in Caldera recently and ran into two of Bolivar's daughters. Nora and Elys, whom we had never met. We were engaging in small talk, after learning of our volunteer work with BHH the sisters shared how incredibly grateful they were for Dr. Rodric Gottula's visit (BHH President). They said that he made all the difference in the world for the whole family. He explained the stages of death—what is normal and what to expect. The family was then able to provide support for their father because they understood what was happening. Bolivar had a very peaceful and pain-free passing with

his family free of stress. The family is extremely grateful to Dr. Gottula and Boquete Health and Hospice.

Recently, Boquete Health and Hospice has been getting many more requests for palliative care visits. Currently, BHH is very short-handed with only two hospice care volunteers. If you have a medical background or a desire to volunteer and help people in the community, we would love to have you as a volunteer. Volunteering can include direct patient care. It can also be working in the background to have influence as well. Often volunteers have no understanding of how much of an impact that can make in patient and family's lives. I volunteer doing the newsletter and database, we were proud that we belong to an organization that helps so many people.

**“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”**  
**Maya Angelou**

**Click the button below to volunteer, you will be rewarded in many ways.**

**Sign Up to  
Volunteer**



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**Can You Reduce  
Stress With  
Aromatherapy?**

Can easing stress be as simple as taking a whiff of something that smells pleasant? That's the working theory behind [aromatherapy](#), an ancient form of treatment that continues to captivate our senses today.

Quite simply, interest in aromatherapy is booming. It's estimated that the global market for [essential oils](#), like lavender, sweet orange and cedarwood, will grow by many billions of dollars in the coming years.

But does this form of [complementary and alternative medicine](#) pass the scientific sniff test and deliver stress-relieving results? Let's find out from functional medicine specialist [Melissa Young, MD](#).

**Read  
the  
Article**



## Tree of Life

*Boquete Health & 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!*

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# Support BHH with a Donation

BHH is supported 100% by donations. We greatly appreciate all contributions and use them in a variety of ways to help our community. There are several ways to donate:

- Make a donation via our [website](#) with Visa and MasterCard, or by clicking the button below.
- Make a direct deposit or an electronic transfer to our bank account:

Bank name: Banco General

Account name: Boquete Hospice and Health Foundation

Account number: 04-48-[96-075844-7](#)

Account type: Savings

- **Donate checks or cash directly (all checks must be made payable to Boquete Hospice and Health Foundation):** at a monthly Council or general meeting, blood drive, BHH workshop or event, at our Tuesday Market tables, or when picking up or returning equipment at our storage facility.

*Thank you for your support!*

Donate  
Now

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## Council Business



To bring a topic to the attention of the Council for consideration, please

discuss it with your Team Lead, who will ask the Council Secretary to add it to the next monthly Council agenda.

### Council Members

President – Dr. Rod Gottula

VP, Community Engagement – Jeanie Miller

VP, Operations – Kat McKay

Secretary – Lorraine Handler

Treasurer – Bill Hinrichsen

Patient Care Coordinator – Bev Tyler

Patient Care Coordinator – Liz Baze

Patient Care Coordinator – Bill & Cheryl Crabbe

Patient Care Coordinator - Kevin Dobson

Past President – John Earle



Council minutes are now on the BHH website at [BHH minutes](#). All future minutes will also be posted there.



The policies of the organization are posted on our website and are updated as needed at [BHH policies](#).



**We Respect Patient Confidentiality.**

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

*names are used in testimonials or other marketing materials, we have obtained permission from those mentioned.*

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### Contact Us

Monday - Friday: 9am - 3pm

Saturday: 9am - 1pm

Sunday: Closed

Hospice/Health: [+507 6781-9250](tel:+50767819250)

Blood Donor Program: WhatsApp  
[+507 6590-2000](tel:+50765902000) or call [+507 6781-9250](tel:+50767819250)

Email: [info@boquetehealth.org](mailto:info@boquetehealth.org)

Website: [boquetehealth.org](http://boquetehealth.org)

Check us out and like us at: Facebook,  
Instagram, and YouTube!

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Newsletter team: Chris McCall and  
Jeanie Miller – Editors, Lorraine Handler  
-Support, and Bev Tyler – Proofreader.

Thanks to everyone who contributed  
their time and talent to this issue!

Subscribe [here](#) to receive our monthly  
newsletter and send submissions to  
[BHH newsletter](#).

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