

Hospice to host grief group in June

SEQUIM GAZETTE STAFF

A five-week grief support group series kicks off from 1-3 p.m. Monday, June 7, at Trinity United Methodist Church, 100 S. Blake Ave., in Sequim, and a six-week grief support group series starts from 2-3:30 p.m. on June 8 in the Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County (VHOCC) conference room, 829 E. Eighth St., Port Angeles.

Sponsored by Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County (VHOCC), the Sequim group is facilitated by Debby Smith, who had a 35-year career as a registered nurse and has been a hospice volunteer for 25 years.

She brings her wealth of experience in leading grief support groups, breast cancer patient care and psychiatric medicine, program organizers say. Her goal is to provide a safe atmosphere for open dialogue about the death and grief process and lessen the fear and anxiety associated with loss.

The Port Angeles group will be facilitated by Donna Geer, who has a professional coaching certification, is the advisor to veteran students at Peninsula College and owns Shore Pine Productions. Her experiences with death and dying have helped her appreciate the importance of providing a safe place to talk about the death of a loved one.

Though there is no charge, space is limited in both groups and participants must pre-register with the VHOCC office by calling 360-452-1511. Both groups are likely to fill quickly, organizers say.

Another Sequim-area group will be offered mid-August.

Orientations set

Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County offers monthly orientations for those interested in learning more about or volunteering with the organization.

June sessions are scheduled for 11 a.m.-noon (online) on Thursday, June 3, and 10-11 a.m. Friday, June 4, at 829 E. Eighth St., Port Angeles.

Volunteer positions are available to fit individual schedules and talents, and training is offered, organizers say. Positions in equipment delivery are open for both Port Angeles and Sequim areas. Respite and office positions are also available.

'Practical Tools' class set

VHOCC is offering "Empower Yourself: Practical Tools for Living Alone," a series of workshops, to offer support and advice to help with some of these new challenges.

The series started in May and will address "Shopping & Cooking for One" on Wednesday, June 2. It then continues through July with a focus on household finances, consumer protection and fraud prevention, and self-care.

Scheduled every other Wednesday from 2-3:30 p.m., the series is free to the public with some meetings online and some in-person. In-person meetings are limited to a small group and require masks to respect current meeting guidelines.

Participants must register; do so by calling VHOCC at 360-452-1511 or by emailing to office@vhocc.org.

Rosalinda Castiglioni will facilitate the "Shopping & Cooking for One" workshop in-person on June 2. Castiglioni was an educator and teaching psychologist, having taught both in the U.S. and abroad. Castiglioni, who does outreach with the VHOCC's Ambassador Committee and facilitates a monthly drop-in grief support group, said her love for cooking and being on her own for years has drawn her to present the "Cooking for One" workshop.

About VHOCC

Since 1978, VHOCC has been providing free hospice services to patients and their families in Clallam County from Diamond Point to Joyce. Part of VHOCC's mission is to offer grief support groups, not only to families of hospice patients, but to anyone in the community who has experienced the death of a loved one.

For more information, visit VHOCC.org or [facebook.com/Volunteershospiceofclallamcounty](https://www.facebook.com/Volunteershospiceofclallamcounty) or call 360-452-1511.

OBITUARIES

Kaylor Sherman Ross

Kaylor Sherman Ross of Sequim died of age-related causes at his Sequim home on May 19, 2021.

He was 92. Ross was born Oct. 14, 1928.

A memorial is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, June 12, at Drennan & Ford Funeral Home, 260 Monroe Road, Port Angeles.

A complete obituary will be published soon in the Peninsula Daily News.

Sign an online guestbook for the family at [drennanford.com](https://www.drennanford.com).

STARLINGS IN SEARCH OF SUPPER



It's feeding time for these local starlings, perched atop a fence near downtown Sequim. Sequim Gazette photo by Michael Dashiell

Bringing home your new cat



OPHS
Olympic Peninsula
Humane Society

Luanne Hinkle

We all know how adorable kittens can be, and this is the time of year these bundles of joy are abundant. Before you get lured in by the cuteness factor of these fluffballs, however, there are a few things to consider to start your new family member off on the right paw.

First, let's assume that everyone in your household is ready, willing, and able to bring the animal into your home. Just as important is to ensure you prepare the proper environment for your new cat. Beyond food, scratching posts, a litter box, and a few toys, every cat needs a safe and secure place where it can retreat to feel protected and use as a resting area.

Your new cat or kitten should have the ability to exit and enter a sheltered space from at least two sides if they feel threatened. Most cats prefer this area to be just big enough for them. Good examples of safe places are a cardboard box, a cat carrier, and a raised cat perch with a hiding box. There should be at least as many safe places as there are cats in a household.

If you have other animals, the introduction process is essential in determining the success of having a multi-animal household. The territorial nature of a cat means that the time required for the introduction process varies greatly.

Too often, an adoption occurs and the new owner

returns the cat within a day saying it won't come out from under the bed (a preferable hiding place for many). This tendency is normal and indicative that a little bit of time and effort is needed for a comfort level to occur.

Introducing your new cat to an existing family cat should be done gradually. Cats are naturally territorial in the wild and will defend their home range and its associated resources. Therefore, some cats become "aggressive" in an attempt to protect their place in the household. Gradual introductions are the key.

Provide each cat with their own room, free from small objects and wires. If your bathroom is accessible make

sure the toilet seat is down! Choose a space for your new cat that doesn't interrupt the resident cat's routine. Avoid direct interactions between the cats at first.

Visit your other cats and let them smell the new cat on you. Most cats will learn to cope with the new housemate and put major aggression issues aside.

Take time for introductions

Allow for a settling-in period before any whisker-to-whisker introductions. Let the cats sniff each other under the closed door from their respective areas. This way they can safely get used to each other's presence. Then switch bedding and

other items between the two cats. This way, each cat can become used to the scent of the other.

Visual introductions can then occur by placing your new cat in a carrier, allowing them to sniff each other through the wire door. Have them meet this way several times a day for about an hour.

Continue this interaction for several days or until they remain calm in each other's presence. At the end of each positive encounter session, separate the cats. The alone time allows them to regain their sense of territory and confidence.

Initial introductions with the family's dog should always be done with your dog on a short leash. The restraint will eliminate any chasing and allow you to remove your dog immediately if your cat is showing signs of fear or distress. Positive interaction will include careful investigation from both cat and dog — a wagging tail from your dog and your dog backing off if your cat becomes defensive.

If attempts to chase, out-of-control pulling on the leash, whining, barking, or agitation occurs, it's time to stop and revisit later.

If your dog is behaving in a friendly and cautious way, try not to intervene in their interactions. Praise and reward the dog for their good manners. Interrupt any attempts to chase and redirect your dog's attention to another activity. Carefully watch both pets' body language for clues before you increase their time together.

Following this advice should allow for a happy blended family with plenty of purrs and lap cuddles.

Luanne Hinkle has been the Executive Director of Olympic Peninsula Humane Society (OPHS) since December 2017 and has more than a decade of experience in executive-level positions leading major fundraising and program development efforts in the nonprofit arena. See ophumanesociety.org.



Carefully watch your dog and new cat as they get to know each other. Drew Herman/Olympic Peninsula News Group

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