

It takes a village



Just a few generations ago, tending to the dying was a natural part of living in a community. When someone was nearing the end of life, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, church congregations, and others all pitched in to provide necessary care and support.

Today these responsibilities are more often left to specialists in institutionalized settings, separated from the daily lives of the general population. As a result, most people are so unfamiliar with end of life that they avoid acknowledging or even talking about these matters until a great deal of needless suffering has occurred. This is especially difficult for people living in the margins of society who frequently deal with a disproportionate amount of illness and injury at a younger age and with greater severity compared with others.

Strong community connections are vital to our success. If you are already doing work in end-of-life care, homeless services, or any capacity you think might support our effort, we'd love to hear from you.

Help support our efforts

Whether you are an individual, or represent a business, civic organization, faith community, foundation, assistance agency, or another kind of group, we need you and others to get involved.

Donate

We hope you will contribute generously to build the base funds needed before we can open our doors. We are now ready to receive contributions with an immediate goal of \$500,000 to get started. A "wish list" of additional in-kind donations for house furnishings, office supplies, food and sundries, clothing, and personal items for our guests will be available soon.

Join our team

We are actively seeking to expand our board of directors and add members to various working committees involved in planning, organizing, and operating our program. We are especially interested in increasing our cultural diversity and welcome all races, ethnicities, ages, education, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, and other attributes.

Volunteer

Solace was founded by and will always rely on the gifts of time and talent provided by volunteers—from direct personal caregiving & companionship, to helping with shopping & meal prep, administrative tasks, education and outreach, house maintenance, and more.

Creating a more equitable community



Solace is based on the premise that every human being has the right to die in a dignified manner, surrounded by compassion, respect, love, and grace. With the purpose to reduce suffering at the end of life, Solace supports physical comfort, emotional and spiritual wholeness for all persons, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, class, education, age, sexual or affectional orientation, physical ability, language, political affiliation, economic position, citizenship status, military experience, and legal standing.

*Living on the street is hard enough;
no one should have to die there.*

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SOLACE FRIENDS



COMMUNITY, COMFORT, & CARE AT LIFE'S END

Solace Friends, Inc., (Solace) is a 501c3 non-profit organization working to bridge the existing gaps in end-of-life care services for terminally ill people in Dane County.

Imagine...

having to face the end of your life without a roof over your head—sick and in pain, out in the elements with no bed, no bathroom, no medicine, and no one to help manage symptoms or provide even the most basic support and solace.

Most of us have access to high-quality care at the end of life. But even here in Dane County, where some of the world's best medical and hospice resources are located, huge disparities in end-of-life care exist between different segments of our population.

Solace Friends, Inc. (Solace), has been created to help ensure that high-quality end-of-life care is accessible to the most vulnerable individuals in our community—especially those who are experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, extreme poverty, mental and emotional health issues, addiction, social isolation, and neglect.



The need

Although there are no official records that document how many Dane County residents die without adequate housing or caregiver support each year, we do know the number is significant and climbing. Besides those who are unsheltered, countless more die in places that are ill-equipped to address the unique needs of our most vulnerable and disenfranchised community members. Under the current system:

- None of the homeless shelters can accommodate terminally ill patients.
- Supportive housing agencies don't have resources necessary to provide adequate end-of-life care.
- Assisted-living facilities require residents to have a higher level of self-sufficiency and financial independence than many dying people possess.
- Hospitals, skilled nursing, and even our local residential hospice center can't always provide the level of attention needed to serve this unique population.
- Environmental factors such as location, accessibility, and general atmosphere of the care setting are big concerns.

This model helps to reduce many of the burdens and barriers hospice care and other health and social service professionals face while trying to serve our mutual clients, benefitting both care recipients and care providers.

Solace Home



Our goal is to bridge the existing gaps in end-of-life services between different populations by creating and maintaining a community supported *Social Model Hospice Home* where up to four individuals at a time can receive secure housing and support from compassionate caregivers.

We believe that everyone deserves a dignified death, regardless of their status in the larger community. Solace will not only ensure that basic human needs such as shelter, food, hydration, and hygiene are met; residents will also receive comprehensive, person-centered care that nurtures bodily comfort, emotional, social, and spiritual wholeness.

Working together with local hospices

Solace itself will not be licensed as a hospice provider. Solace staff and volunteers will supplement—not replace—the services provided by area hospice organizations.

Hospices will be responsible for medical management of complex symptoms such as unrelenting pain, nausea, shortness of breath, anxiety, wound care, etc., and provide physician oversight, scheduled visits from nurses, nursing assistants, social workers, counselors, hospice volunteers, and others. They will also supply medications, durable medical equipment, and other care supplies necessary for treatment.

Solace staff and volunteers will offer additional non-medical support just as family caregivers do when hospice patients receive in-home care. This includes meals and assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing, toileting, dressing, as well as housekeeping tasks like cleaning and laundry. Just as importantly, Solace will also offer companionship and community.

