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## **Día de los Muertos Tradition Observed by Hospice of Santa Barbara**

### **Community Members Create Traditional Latin American Altar/Memorial at Hospice of Santa Barbara**



*Día de los Muertos altar on display at Hospice of Santa Barbara*

**October 26, 2011, Santa Barbara, CA**—Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), is a Latin American tradition to celebrate, remember and present special offerings in honor of those who have died. Loved ones create altars where “ofrendas” (offerings) such as bread, sugar skulls, figurines, candles, incense, yellow marigolds and photos are placed in honor of the person who has died. Offerings are often very personal such as photographs of the deceased and their favorite food items and flowers.

In observance of Día de los Muertos, Hospice of Santa Barbara and community members have created an altar/memorial. The altar/memorial, is located at Hospice of Santa Barbara, and can be visited by anyone in the community who would like to make an “offering” or view the memorial.

“What I particularly like about Día de los Muertos is the positive approach to celebrating the life of someone with very personal acts,” said Steve Jacobsen, Executive Director of Hospice of Santa Barbara. “We live in a diverse community, and we embrace different cultural approaches to grieving,” said Jacobsen.

Hospice of Santa Barbara’s Hispanic Family Services offers free counseling; support groups and education to help Spanish speaking adults, teens and children cope with the death of a loved one. Hospice of Santa Barbara has five full-time Spanish speaking employees, including its clinical director, and several counselors and social workers/care managers.

In addition to one-on-one counseling in Spanish, Hospice of Santa Barbara began offering a Spanish-speaking grief group for the first time, in response to increasing Hispanic intake numbers and client interest. In the first three quarters of 2011, Hospice of Santa Barbara had 133 new clients enter the Spanish-speaking programs, including 61 children.

From its beginnings 37 years ago, Hospice of Santa Barbara's goal has been to serve all the children, teenagers and families of our community with free, compassionate and practical care.

**To visit The Hospice of Santa Barbara Día de los Muertos altar/memorial:** The altar is located inside Hospice of Santa Barbara and will be up through November 3. Anyone in the community who would like to place mementos on the altar such as photos, candles, personal items, or whatever they feel best represents their loved ones, may do so during business hours. (NOTE: Items should be labeled and retrieved by owners.) Hospice of Santa Barbara is located at 2050 Alameda Padre Serra, Suite 100, in Santa Barbara and is open from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

Hospice of Santa Barbara “volunteers” its free professional counseling and support services to more than 470 children and adults every month who are experiencing the impact of a life-threatening illness, or grieving the death of a loved one. For more information, please call (805) 563-8820 or visit [www.hospiceofsantabarbara.org](http://www.hospiceofsantabarbara.org).

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