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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

AUEN FOUNDATION SUPPORTS PROGRAM FOR JEWISH HOSPICE CARE

Funding will Expand Visiting Nurse Association's Care for Terminally Ill Patients

Palm Desert, Calif., (May 11, 2011) – Soon, the Visiting Nurse Association of the Inland Counties (VNAIC) will provide specialized care to Jewish patients who enter hospice, thanks to a grant from the Auen Foundation. The expanded service builds on the hospice program VNAIC already offers throughout the Inland Empire.

The VNAIC Palm Desert Hospice program provides end-of-life care to more than 600 patients and their families, making nearly 40,000 home visits each year. The VNAIC estimates that up to 15-percent of their patients are Jewish, based on client self reporting.

“This is an important cultural and religious distinction,” says Doug Morin, VNAIC Director of Development. “Serving our Jewish clients and neighbors is important to our organization, particularly in dealing with sensitive end-of-life care and concerns. The grant from the Auen Foundation allows us to begin our training, bring in rabbinical assistance, and launch this service.”

The VNAIC will begin the program with sensitivity training for all employees regarding the spiritual and cultural needs of Jewish patients and families, and include specific training for Jewish volunteers as a component of existing volunteer training. The grant will also provide for preparation and promotion of adult bereavement services geared toward Jewish family members. The VNAIC will also add to its spiritual services, which it offers to all patients and families, by including home visits by a Rabbi or Cantor if requested by a patient.

“End-of-life care is so critical for the patient and their family. Expanding a program to be culturally sensitive is the right thing to do, and we’re pleased to be a part of the genesis of this program,” says Catharine Reed, Auen Foundation Program Director.

The VNAIC’s hospice program, operated out of the organization’s Palm Desert office, is currently recruiting Jewish Volunteers. The training will begin soon to get the program up and running.

“Our intent is to make VNAIC a more responsive organization with programs that more closely match the demographics of our client base,” says Morin. “We feel certain that as we progress, this portion of our hospice program will become self-sustaining, so this is vital seed money. We are grateful to the Auen Foundation for tending to this community need.”

For more information about the program or to volunteer, contact VNAIC at 760-674-0451.

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About the Auen Foundation:

Established in 1992, *The Auen Foundation is dedicated to enhancing the overall quality of life of the aging population and raising awareness of the precious-end-of-life stage. We support charitable programs and services aimed at meeting the social needs of mature adults and their families.*