



February 14, 2024

### NOTICE

The Board of Directors of Kaweah Delta Health Care District will meet in a Marketing & Community Relations Committee meeting at 4:00PM on Thursday February 14, 2024, at The Executive Office Conference Room; 400 W Mineral King Avenue.

All Kaweah Delta Health Care District regular board meeting and committee meeting notices and agendas are posted 72 hours prior to meetings in the Kaweah Delta Medical Center, Mineral King Wing entry corridor between the Mineral King lobby and the Emergency Department waiting room.

The disclosable public records related to agendas are available for public inspection at Kaweah Health Medical Center – Acequia Wing, Executive Offices (Administration Department) {1st floor}, 400 West Mineral King Avenue, Visalia, CA and on the Kaweah Delta Health Care District web page <https://www.kaweahhealth.org>.

KAWEAH DELTA HEALTH CARE DISTRICT  
Dave Francis, Secretary/Treasurer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kelsie K. Davis".

Kelsie K. Davis  
Board Clerk, Executive Assistant to CEO

DISTRIBUTION:  
Governing Board, Legal Counsel, Executive Team, Chief of Staff  
<http://www.kaweahhealth.org>



# **KAWEAH DELTA HEALTH CARE DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MARKETING & COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Executive Office Conference Room

400 W Mineral King Avenue – Kaweah Health Executive Office Conference Room

**ATTENDING:** Directors: Ambar Rodriguez (Chair) and Dave Francis; Gary Herbst, CEO; Marc Mertz, Chief Strategy Officer; Karen Tellalian, Director of Marketing & Media Relations; Deborah Volosin, Director of Community Engagement; Raymond Macareno, Sr. Communications Specialist; María Rodríguez Ornelas, Sr. Communications Specialist; Gary Rogers, Sr. Communications Specialist; Patrick Moorman, Jr., Sr. Marketing Specialist; Greg Bitney, Sr. Graphic Designer; and Kelsie Davis, Recording

## **OPEN MEETING – 4:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER** – *Ambar Rodriguez, Chair*

- 1. PUBLIC / MEDICAL STAFF PARTICIPATION** – Members of the public may comment on agenda items before action is taken and after it is discussed by the Board. Each speaker will be allowed five minutes. Members of the public wishing to address the Board concerning items not on the agenda and within the jurisdictions of the Board are requested to identify themselves at this time. For those who are unable to attend the beginning of the Board meeting during the public participation segment but would like to address the Board, please contact the Board Clerk (Kelsie Davis 559-624-2330) or [kedavis@kaweahhealth.org](mailto:kedavis@kaweahhealth.org) to make arrangements to address the Board.
- 2. MARKETING & MEDIA RELATIONS** – *Karen Tellalian, Director of Marketing & Communications*
  - 2.1. [Social Media Update](#)
  - 2.2. [Marketing Update](#)
  - 2.3. Digital Campaign ROI report
  - 2.4. [2023 End of Year Internal Communications Report](#)
  - 2.5. [Review of Spring Vital Signs](#)
- 3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** – *Deborah Volosin, Director of Community Engagement*
  - 3.1. Update on community engagement and events

**ADJOURN** – *Ambar Rodriguez, Chair*

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate at this meeting, please contact the Board Clerk (559) 624-2330. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the District to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the Kaweah Delta Health Care District Board of Directors meeting.*

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*Mike Olmos – Zone I  
President*

*Lynn Havard Mirviss – Zone II  
Vice President*

*Dean Levitan, MD – Zone III  
Board Member*

*David Francis – Zone IV  
Secretary/Treasurer*

*Ambar Rodriguez – Zone V  
Board Member*

**MISSION: Health is our Passion. Excellence is our Focus. Compassion is our Promise.**

 Kaweah Health Medical Center

# Media Relations Update



[kaweahhealth.org](http://kaweahhealth.org)



# Top Performing News Content –October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024

**Becker's Hospital Review** · Anna Falvey, Claire Wallace , Z  
News | US | Nov 3, 2023 · 3:24 PM

## 34 hospitals and health systems with great simulation and education programs | 2023

... interventions and designing patient centric hospital rooms. **Kaweah Health** (Visalia, Calif.). The **Kaweah Health** Simulation Center has ...

Kaweah Health

635k Reach 49 Social Echo 764 Views 3 Editorial Echo Positive

**KSEE-TV** · Victoria Meza  
News | US | Dec 15, 2023 · 8:41 PM

## WATCH: Santa lands at a Visalia hospital, brings cheer to families

Straight from the North Pole, Santa Claus landed at **Kaweah Health Medical Center** via the SkyLife helicopter on the hospital's helipad ...

Kaweah Health Medical Center

341k Reach 5 Social Echo 11 Views



**Nation World News**  
News | IN | Dec 15, 2023 · 5:33 PM

## Santa travels to Kaweah Health in SkyLife helicopter to spread holiday cheer

... at **Kaweah Health** to meet staff and patients on Friday, Dec. 15, 2023. Ron Holman/Visalia Times-Delta Santa Claus arrives at **Kaweah Health** ...

Kaweah Health

81.1k Reach 152 Social Echo 13 Views



Positive

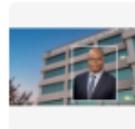
**GV Wire** · Edward Smith  
News | US | Dec 18, 2023 · 2:48 PM

## Kaweah Expands Cardiac Care: First of Three Stanford Heart Docs Arrives in Visalia

... care at **Kaweah Health**. Dr. Michael McLean is the first of three cardiothoracic surgeons who will live and work in Visalia, according to ...

Kaweah Health

68.6k Reach 2 Social Echo 255 Views



Positive

**The Fresno Business Journal** · Ben Hensley  
News | US | Dec 19, 2023 · 7:32 AM

## Stanford heart surgeon comes to Visalia as part of Kaweah Health program

Dr. Michael **McLean** Visalia-based **Kaweah Health** welcomed cardiac surgeon and Stanford Medicine faculty member Dr. Michael **McLean** to its ...

Kaweah Health, McLean

41.5k Reach 1 Social Echo



Positive

 Kaweah Health Medical Center

# Social Media



[kaweahhealth.org](http://kaweahhealth.org)



# Competitor Performance - October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024

Profile	Audience	Net Audience Growth	Published Posts	Public Engagements	Public Engagements per Post	% Audience Growth	Published Carousels	Published Videos	Published Photos	Published Links	Published Text	Reactions	Comments	Shares
Your Profiles Average	5,950.43	191.29	81.14	7,668.86	94.51	3.32%	18.33	15.71	54.14	5.00	1.00	7,086.86	461.57	210.75
Competitor Profiles Average	13,112.31	238.92	53.62	3,842.54	71.67	1.86%	24.6	7.31	32.77	5.88	0.75	3,650.00	110.62	133.13
1  Valley Children's	62,382	1,587	23	2,646	115.04	2.61%	N/A	1	17	5	0	1,940	146	560
2  Kaweah Health	26,347	829	204	25,688	125.92	3.25%	N/A	42	150	12	0	22,499	2,414	775
3  valleychildrens	23,314	409	39	23,725	608.33	1.79%	27	5	7	N/A	N/A	23,482	243	N/A
4  @CareForKids	19,323	-17	58	319	5.50	-0.09%	N/A	0	38	14	6	268	17	34
5  adventisthealth	15,991	461	95	5,562	58.55	2.97%	25	32	38	N/A	N/A	5,421	141	N/A
6  Community Region...	14,790	199	15	137	9.13	1.36%	N/A	4	9	2	0	115	8	14
7  Saint Agnes Medica...	13,045	66	46	773	16.80	0.51%	N/A	0	43	3	0	642	38	93
8  Adventist Health in ...	7,284	79	77	4,039	52.45	1.10%	N/A	6	55	16	0	3,491	327	221
9  kaweahhealth	7,037	278	174	21,314	122.49	4.11%	40	40	94	N/A	N/A	20,661	653	N/A
10  Sierra View Medical...	5,115	57	71	1,617	22.77	1.13%	N/A	4	61	6	0	1,259	215	143
11  Kaweah Health Lif...	3,905	83	52	428	8.23	2.17%	N/A	7	41	3	1	341	60	27
12  dignityhealthbakers...	2,941	149	97	4,976	51.30	5.34%	37	26	34	N/A	N/A	4,827	149	N/A
13  saintagnesmedicalc...	2,842	77	53	1,927	36.36	2.78%	7	3	43	N/A	N/A	1,894	33	N/A

# Competitor Performance - October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024

## Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

<u>Impressions</u> <b>4,863,269</b> ↗ 179.9%	<u>Engagements</u> <b>422,671</b> ↗ 210.6%	<u>Post Link Clicks</u> <b>22,023</b> ↗ 122.5%
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Engagement Rate (per Impression)

**8.7%** ↗ 11%

# Top Posts - October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024 – Post Engagements

Platform	Post Title	Date	Total Engagements	Reactions	Comments	Shares	Post Link Clicks	Other Post Clicks
TikTok	#HonorWalk 🥺 for 20-year-old patient who donated his organs and helped six patients awaiting organ transplants....	Thu 2/1/2024 1:42 pm PST	197,829	193,319	2,199	2,311	-	-
Facebook	New Year New Baby   Baby Maya was born at 2:40 a.m. weighing 8 pounds and 2 ounces. She received diapers, a beanie,...	Mon 1/1/2024 12:32 pm PST	33,842	2,776	189	31	1	30,845
Facebook	#HonorWalk for a 20-year-old patient who donated his organs and helped six patients awaiting organ transplants....	Fri 2/2/2024 6:47 pm PST	16,778	6,052	475	291	1	9,959
Facebook	UPDATE   It takes a village to save the life of someone in our community. This week, patient Merri Bland met, face-to-face, wit...	Thu 11/30/2023 9:41 am PST	11,589	822	55	25	2	10,685

# Top Posts – TikTok

2/2/24

@kaweahhealth\_

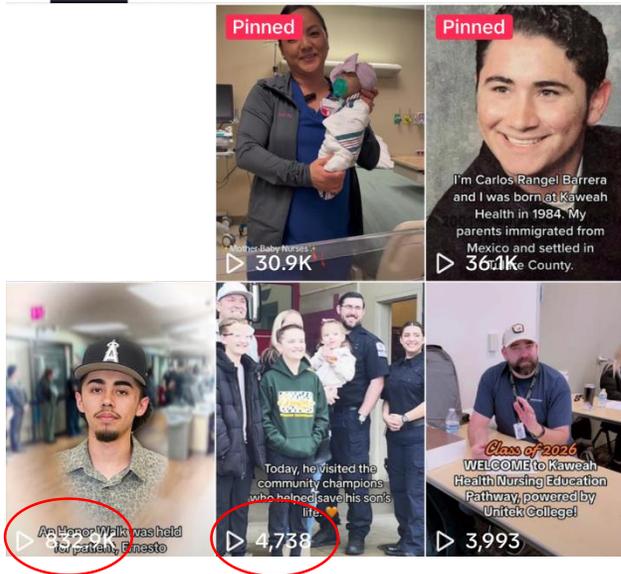
9 Following | 1,421 Followers | 85.8K Likes

Edit profile | Share profile | Profile icon

Healthcare system serving Tulare and Kings counties.

www.kaweahhealth.org

Instagram



2/13/24

@kaweahhealth\_

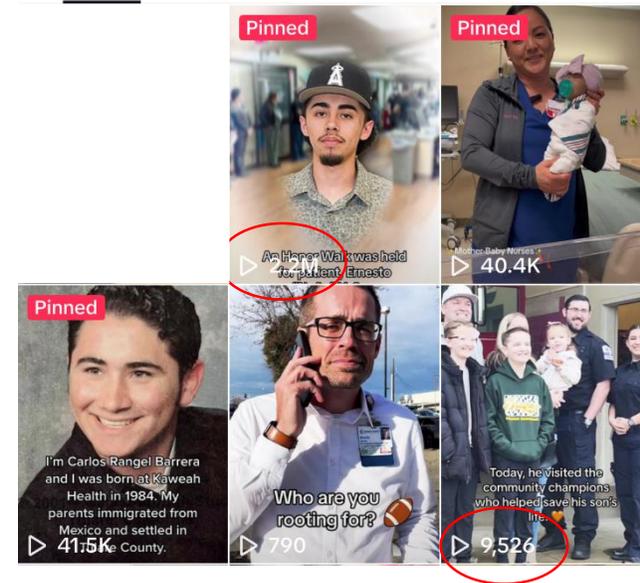
15 Following | 3,328 Followers | 201.5K Likes

Edit profile | Share profile | Profile icon

Healthcare system serving Tulare and Kings counties.

www.kaweahhealth.org

Instagram



# Top Posts - October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024 – Reach

<p> <b>kaweahhealth_</b> Thu 2/1/2024 1:42 pm PST</p> <p>#HonorWalk 🥰 for 20-year-old patient who donated his organs and helped six patients awaiting organ transplants. Patient, Ernesto...</p>  <p>Reach <span style="float: right;">1,803,892</span></p> <p> </p>	<p> <b>Kaweah Health</b> Mon 1/1/2024 12:32 pm PST</p> <p>New Year New Baby   Baby Maya was born at 2:40 a.m. weighing 8 pounds and 2 ounces. She received diapers, a beanie, and a blanket from...</p>  <p>Reach <span style="float: right;">64,399</span></p> <p>  </p>	<p> <b>kaweahhealth_</b> Thu 1/11/2024 3:12 pm PST</p> <p>We're Mother-Baby nurses, we love helping mamas with their babies. #KaweahHealth #imachallenge #nursetok</p>  <p>Reach <span style="float: right;">35,938</span></p> <p> </p>
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# Top Posts - October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024 – Shares

 **kawahhealth\_**  
Thu 2/1/2024 1:42 pm PST

#HonorWalk 🙏 for 20-year-old patient who donated his organs and helped six patients awaiting organ transplants. Patient, Ernesto...



[Shares](#) 2,311

 **kawahhealth**  
Fri 2/2/2024 9:21 am PST

#HonorWalk for a 20-year-old patient who donated his organs and helped six patients awaiting organ transplants. Patient, Ernesto...



Ernie was 20 years old.  
He is remembered for his

[Shares](#) 351

 **Kawah Health**  
Fri 2/2/2024 6:47 pm PST

#HonorWalk for a 20-year-old patient who donated his organs and helped six patients awaiting organ transplants. Patient, Ernesto...



[Shares](#) 291

# Top Posts October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024– Comments

 **kaweahhealth\_**  
Thu 2/1/2024 1:42 pm PST

#HonorWalk 🥺 for 20-year-old patient who donated his organs and helped six patients awaiting organ transplants. Patient, Ernesto...



Comments 2,199

 **Kaweah Health**  
Fri 2/2/2024 6:47 pm PST

#HonorWalk for a 20-year-old patient who donated his organs and helped six patients awaiting organ transplants. Patient, Ernesto...



Comments 475

 **Kaweah Health**  
Mon 1/1/2024 12:32 pm PST

New Year New Baby | Baby Maya was born at 2:40 a.m. weighing 8 pounds and 2 ounces. She received diapers, a beanie, and a blanket from...

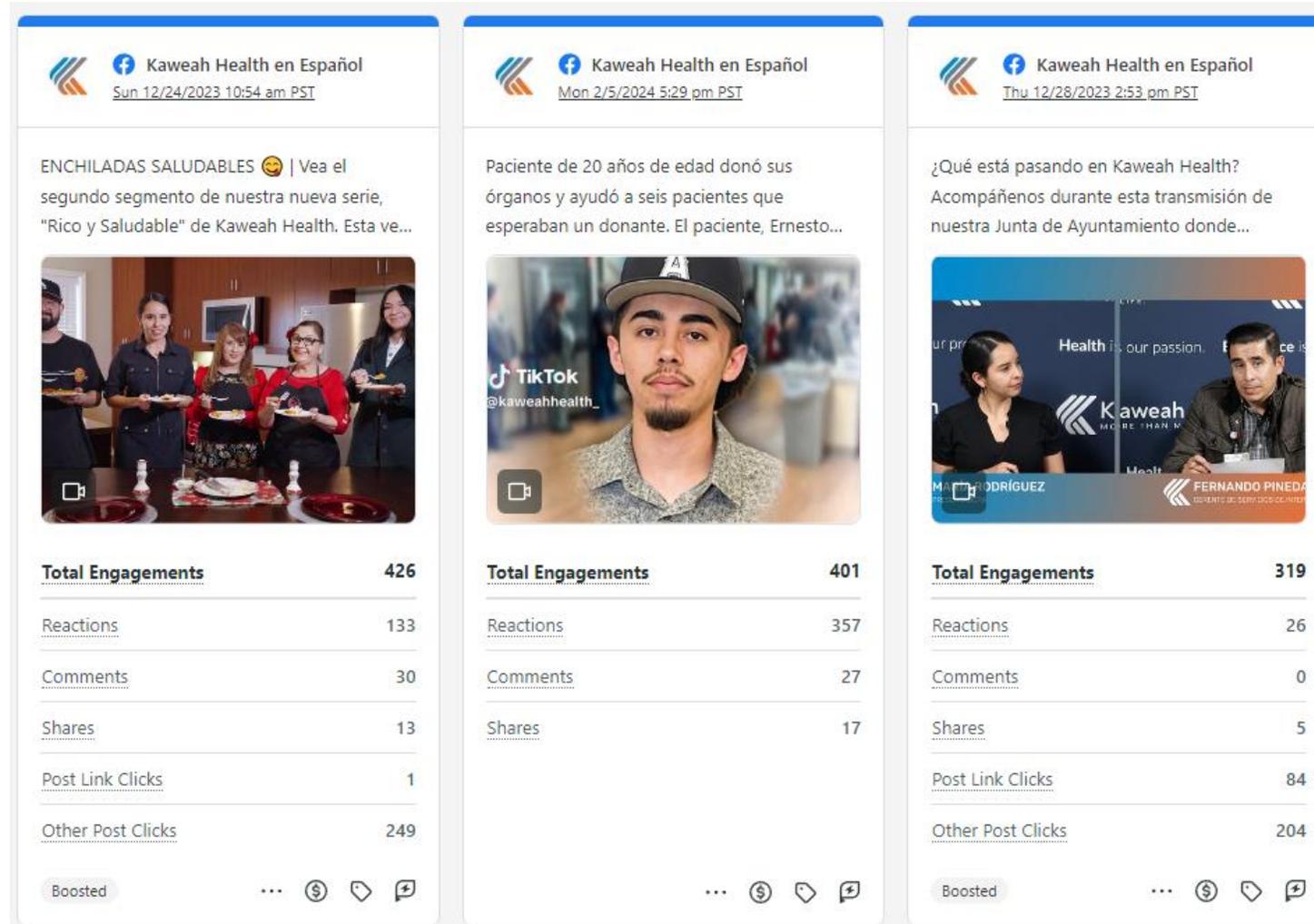


Comments 189

@kawahhealthspanol |  996 LIKES, 1,105 FOLLOWERS |  76 FOLLOWERS

## Top Posts October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024 – Post Engagements



@kaweahhealthspanol |  996 LIKES, 1,105 FOLLOWERS |  76 FOLLOWERS  
Top Posts October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024 – Reach

<p> <b>Kaweah Health en Español</b> Mon 2/5/2024 5:29 pm PST</p> <p>Paciente de 20 años de edad donó sus órganos y ayudó a seis pacientes que esperaban un donante. El paciente, Ernesto "Ñoño" Yañez...</p>  <p>Reach 2,605</p> <p>...   </p>	<p> <b>Kaweah Health en Español</b> Thu 12/28/2023 2:53 pm PST</p> <p>¿Qué está pasando en Kaweah Health? Acompáñenos durante esta transmisión de nuestra Junta de Ayuntamiento donde...</p>  <p>Reach 1,845</p> <p>Boosted ...   </p>	<p> <b>Kaweah Health en Español</b> Thu 12/14/2023 3:05 pm PST</p> <p>¿Le gustan las ENCHILADAS? Esta receta le encantará. 😊 Pronto le traeremos una manera muy saludable de preparar esta delicia de la...</p>  <p>Reach 1,818</p> <p>...   </p>
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NEW – Pinterest Page



@KaweahHealth



## Kaweah Health

 kaweahhealth

kaweahhealth.org · Kaweah Health is the largest hospital in Tulare County and a certified Level III Trauma Center in Visalia.

74 followers · 41 following

2k monthly views

Share

Edit profile

Created

Saved

# NEW – Healthy Baby, Healthy Mama Podcast



[Soundcloud.com/KaweahHealth](https://Soundcloud.com/KaweahHealth)



[YouTube: @KaweahHealth](https://YouTube:@KaweahHealth)



Healthy Baby, Healthy Mama | Episode 2: Caring For Kids

Kaweah Health  
443 subscribers

Subscribe

1



Share

Download

Clip

Save



 Kaweah Health Medical Center

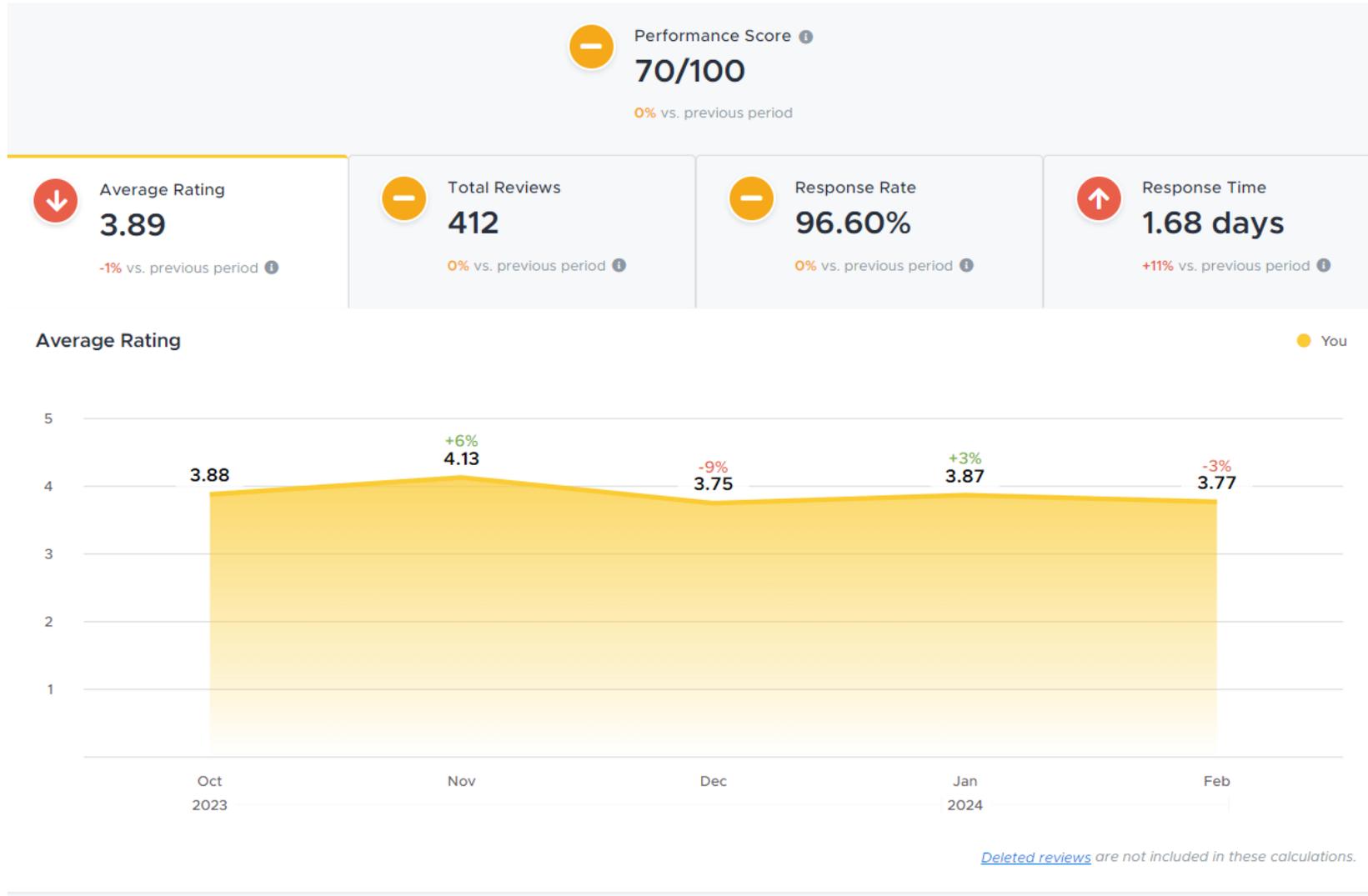
# Reputation Management



[kawahhealth.org](https://www.kawahhealth.org)



# Average Rating – October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024



## Top Locations - August 17, 2023 – October 25, 2023

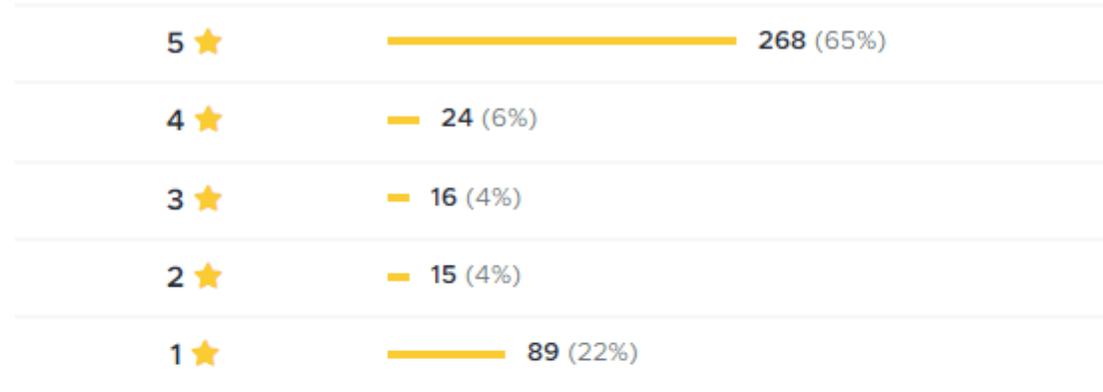
Rank	Location	Score
 1	<b>Kaweah Health Urgent Care (Court Street)</b> 1633 S Court St Visalia CA	93 / 100
 2	<b>Kaweah Health Therapy Specialists Spine and</b> 820 S Akers St Visalia California	93 / 100
 3	<b>Kaweah Health Medical Center</b> 400 W Mineral King Ave Visalia CA	91 / 100

## Top Locations - October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024

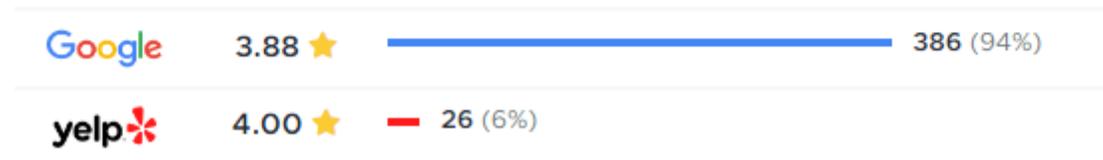
Rank	Location	Score
 1	<b>Kaweah Health Medical Center</b> 400 W Mineral King Ave Visalia CA	87 / 100
 2	<b>Kaweah Health: Emergency Room</b> 400 W Mineral King Ave Visalia California	79 / 100
 3	<b>Kaweah Health Therapy Specialists Spine and</b> 820 S Akers St Visalia California	78 / 100

## Rating Info - October 26, 2023 – February 12, 2024

### Ratings Distribution



### Review Sites Distribution



## MARKETING UPDATES

- **Bus ads**
  - **Tulare County**
    - Population 477,054 covering 4,839 square miles
      - Valley Children's
  - **City of Tulare**
    - Population 65,496 covering 21 square miles
      - Tulare Clinic
  - **City of Visalia**
    - Population 157,347 covering 50 square miles
      - Valley Children's
      - Dr. Martinez
      - Urgent Care
      - Dr. Flores



**SINCE 2016**

# Partners for Children and Babies

Valley Children's doctors on site 24/7



Located in Kaweah Health Medical Center • [KaweahHealth.org/Pediatrics](http://KaweahHealth.org/Pediatrics)

# Excellent health starts with excellent care.

Family physicians and specialty care.  
Medicare and Medi-Cal accepted.

 **Kaweah Health  
Tulare Clinic**  
[KaweahHealth.org/Clinics](http://KaweahHealth.org/Clinics)

**(559) 685-7100**

At the corner of Mooney and  
Prosperity in Tulare

OPEN Monday-Saturday  
8AM-5PM

Family Medicine Physician

## Dr. Rafael Martinez

Most commercial insurance  
plans accepted.



**(559) 624-4800**

*Se habla Español*

[KaweahHealth.org/MedicalClinic](http://KaweahHealth.org/MedicalClinic)

 **Kaweah Health  
Medical Clinic**  
BEN MADDOX

PEDIATRICIAN

## Dr. Ester Flores

Accepting new patients  
ages newborn to 18.



**(559) 624-4800**

*Se habla Español*

[KaweahHealth.org/MedicalClinic](http://KaweahHealth.org/MedicalClinic)

 **Kaweah Health  
Medical Clinic**  
BEN MADDOX

# Urgent Care 7 days a week

Walk in or get in line online at  
[KaweahHealth.org/UrgentCare](https://KaweahHealth.org/UrgentCare)



IN VISALIA | Court Street (559) 624-6090 | Demaree (559) 624-6800

- **Billboards**
  - **North and South Mooney Avenue**
    - Weekly traffic 161,000 impressions
      - Valley Children's
      - Urgent Care
  - **Visalia Rawhide 2024**
    - Kaweah Health Grandstands
  - **ImagineU Children's Museum**
    - Estimated 80,000 visitors a year
      - Valley Children's
      - Dr. Flores
  - **Highway 99** (Tulare)
    - Stanford Medicine
  - **Highway 198** Digital (Hanford)
    - Weekly traffic 46,481 impressions
      - Stanford Medicine

# Urgent Care

**7 days a week**

[KaweahHealth.org/UrgentCare](http://KaweahHealth.org/UrgentCare)



TWO LOCATIONS IN VISALIA • Court Street 559 624-6090 | Demaree 559 624-6800

# Partners SINCE 2016 for Children and Babies

[KaweahHealth.org/Pediatrics](http://KaweahHealth.org/Pediatrics)



# Kaweah Health and Stanford Health Care:



VISIT [KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery](http://KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery)

Providing advanced cardiothoracic surgery.

- **Print**

- **Tulare Farm Bureau** (Monthly publication)
  - Full page (Stanford Medicine and Dr. Mclean)
- **Tulare Farm Bureau** (World Ag Show special edition)
  - ½ page (Stanford Medicine and Dr. Mclean)
- **City of Visalia** (Live & Play community magazine)
  - Full page, print and digital (Stanford Medicine and Dr. Mclean)
- **Topograph Magazine**
  - Full page (Stanford Medicine and Dr. Mclean)
- **The Business Journal** (Book of List, yearly publication)
  - Full page (Stanford Medicine and Dr. Mclean)
- **Local Newspapers**
  - ½ page (Stanford Medicine and Dr. Mclean)
    - Visalia Times Delta, Tulare, Sun Gazette, Fresno Bee, Hanford Sentinel and Porterville



## Kaweah Health and Stanford Health Care:

Providing advanced  
cardiothoracic surgery.

Welcome Cardiothoracic Surgeon  
Michael K. McLean, MD

**Dr. Michael K. McLean** is a board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon and Stanford Medicine faculty member. Through a new affiliation with Stanford Health Care, Dr. McLean joins Kaweah Health in providing world-class cardiothoracic surgery. This means that more of our community will have access to lifesaving treatments such as bypass surgery and valve repair while remaining close to home and family.

Kaweah Health, working together with Stanford Health Care — just part of our ongoing commitment to meeting health care needs for you and those you love.

**TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:** [KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery](https://KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery)

 **Kaweah Health**  
Cardiothoracic Surgery

 **Stanford** | Health Care  
MEDICINE

Kaweah Health Cardiothoracic Surgery Clinic  
505 W. Main St. • Visalia, CA 93291  
**(559) 627-8600**

# Kaweah Health and Stanford Health Care:

Providing advanced  
cardiothoracic surgery.



Welcome Cardiothoracic Surgeon  
Michael K. McLean, MD

**Dr. Michael K. McLean** is a board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon and Stanford Medicine faculty member. Through a new affiliation with Stanford Health Care, Dr. McLean joins Kaweah Health in providing world-class cardiothoracic surgery. This means that more of our community will have access to lifesaving treatments such as bypass surgery and valve repair while remaining close to home and family.

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 **Kaweah Health**  
Cardiothoracic Surgery

 **Stanford** | Health Care  
MEDICINE

Kaweah Health Cardiothoracic Surgery Clinic  
505 W. Main St. • Visalia, CA 93291  
**(559) 627-8600**

**LEARN MORE** [KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery](http://KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery)

- **Email blast** (Stanford Medicine and Dr. Mclean)
  - January 23
  - 51,547 sent, 8,227 opens, 201 clicks

The graphic features a central portrait of Dr. Michael K. McLean, MD, a Black man with glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. The background is a dark blue with a circular surgical light pattern. At the top, the logos for Kaweah Health Cardiothoracic Surgery and Stanford MEDICINE Health Care are displayed. The main text reads: 'Kaweah Health and Stanford Health Care: Providing advanced cardiothoracic surgery.' Below the portrait, it says 'Welcome Cardiothoracic Surgeon Michael K. McLean, MD'. At the bottom, there are four orange buttons: 'Find a Provider', 'Our Services', 'Find a Career', and 'About Us'. The contact information and a link to learn more are also present.

**Kaweah Health**  
Cardiothoracic Surgery

**Stanford**  
MEDICINE | Health Care

## Kaweah Health and Stanford Health Care:

Providing advanced cardiothoracic surgery.

Welcome Cardiothoracic Surgeon  
Michael K. McLean, MD

Dr. Michael K. McLean is a board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon and Stanford Medicine faculty member. Through a new affiliation with Stanford Health Care, Dr. McLean joins Kaweah Health in providing world-class heart surgery. This means that more of our community will have access to lifesaving treatments such as bypass surgery and valve repair while remaining close to home and family.

Kaweah Health, working together with Stanford Health Care — just part of our ongoing commitment to meeting health care needs for you and those you love.

Kaweah Health Cardiothoracic Surgery Clinic  
505 W. Main St. • Visalia, CA 93291  
(559) 627-8600  
LEARN MORE [KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery](https://KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery)

Find a Provider    Our Services    Find a Career    About Us

**Kaweah Health**  
Cardiothoracic Surgery

**Stanford**  
MEDICINE | Health Care

- **Radio** :60 English and Spanish commercials
  - Stanford Medicine and Dr. Mclean



- **Television** :15 English and :30 English and Spanish commercials
  - Stanford Medicine and Dr. Mclean **coming soon**





**Dr. Michael K. McLean**  
Stanford Medicine Cardiothoracic Surgeon

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a tan blazer, is seated at a table. Behind her is a dark blue backdrop with the Kaweah Health logo and the text "MORE THAN MEDICINE. LIFE." and "MÁS QUE...". The backdrop also features the text "Health is our promise." and "excellence is our focus".

**Kaweah Health and Stanford Health Care**  
Learn More at [KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery](https://KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery)

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a tan blazer, is seated at a table. Behind her is a dark blue backdrop with the Kaweah Health logo and the text "MORE THAN MEDICINE. LIFE." and "MÁS QUE...". The backdrop also features the text "Health is our promise." and "excellence is our focus".

**Schedule a Cardiologist Appointment**  
Learn More at [KaweahHealth.org/HeartDoctor](https://KaweahHealth.org/HeartDoctor)

- **30-Minute Round Table Discussion with KSEE 24 (NBC)**
  - **Filming February 14<sup>th</sup>**
  - **Airing February 28<sup>th</sup> 7pm**
    - Gary Herbst, Chief Executive Officer
    - Dr. Sarmad Said, Cardiologist
    - Dr. Atul Singla, Intervention Cardiologist
    - Dr. LaMar Mack, Vascular Surgeon
    - Dr. Michael McLean, Cardiothoracic Surgeon
    - Tracy Salsa, Director Cardiovascular Services

**Example:**

**HEALTH**

# Healing Healthcare in the Valley: Kaweah Health roundtable

by: [Kathryn Herr](#)  
Posted: Jun 8, 2023 / 09:30 AM PDT  
Updated: Jun 8, 2023 / 09:52 AM PDT



- **YouTube**

- :30 Commercial over 100,000 views



Search



Kaweah Health Commercial | Man on The Moon

 **Kaweah Health**  
443 subscribers [Subscribe](#)

[1](#) [Share](#) [Save](#) [...](#)

100K views 4 months ago

- **New Movers**

- New art and creative in progress



400 W. Mineral King Ave.  
Visalia, CA 93291-9857  
[KaweahHealth.org/Welcome](http://KaweahHealth.org/Welcome)

# Just moved?

## Kaweah Health checks all the boxes.



- ✓ Medical Center ranked in 2023 as one of **America's 100 Best Hospitals™** by Healthgrades\*
- ✓ Cardiac surgery program ranked six years in a row as one of **America's 50 Best Cardiac Surgery™** programs by Healthgrades\*
- ✓ Pediatrics and NICU staffed by doctors from Valley Children's Hospital
- ✓ Urology program in alliance with Keck Medicine of USC
- ✓ Rural health care clinics serving Dinuba, Exeter, Lindsay, Tulare, and Woodlake
- ✓ Two conveniently located urgent care facilities and a Level III Trauma Center
- ✓ Kaweah Health Medical Clinic on Ben Maddox Way for Primary and Prompt Care. Walk-ins welcome.

### Looking for a job?

It takes a special person to work for Kaweah Health. If you really want to make a difference, visit [KaweahHealth.org/Careers](https://www.kaweahhealth.org/Careers).

\*[www.healthgrades.com/quality/hospital-ratings-awards](https://www.healthgrades.com/quality/hospital-ratings-awards)

## Welcome!

Whether it's an emergency, surgery, or specialty care, trust your health to 2023's most nationally recognized health care organization in the Central Valley.



Remove this magnet and keep it handy for quick access to a list of our services and providers.

[KaweahHealth.org/Welcome](https://www.kaweahhealth.org/Welcome)



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- Mercury Edge 2024 digital campaign (Spine)



(559) 624-3441 [Request an Appointment](#)

**It's time to get back out there.**

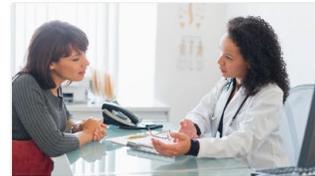
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Call (559) 624-3441



**Comprehensive care for back and neck pain starts here.**

If you've been living too long with back or neck pain, it's time to feel something else: hope. Kaweah Health offers a full range of care for even the most complex back, spine or neck conditions. Our team of specialists – including board-certified spine surgeons, physical therapists, pain management experts and more – work closely together and with you to find the



**Our care can get you there**

TEXT AD 1

**No one should live their life with pain.**

Find relief from back and neck issues in Visalia.

**Get Started Today**

TEXT AD 2

**Need relief from back or neck pain?**

Our expert care can get you there.

**Make an Appointment**

IMAGE AD 1

**No one should live their life with pain.**

Find relief from back and neck issues in Visalia.

**Get Started Today**

IMAGE AD 2

**Need relief from back or neck pain?**

Our expert care can get you there.

**Make an Appointment**

(Vascular)



(559) 624-6225

[Request an Appointment](#)

# At the heart of vascular innovation.

[Request an Appointment](#)

Call (559) 624-6225



## Leading with heart, every step of the way.

At Kaweah Health, we believe in a heart-first approach to healthcare. For over two decades, our



IMAGE AD 1

IMAGE AD 2



**At Kaweah Health, we have one goal:**  
Innovative care for the heart and its vessels.



[Learn More](#)



**We listen to every heartbeat with care.**  
Kaweah Health: Where vascular health is heartfelt.



[Call now](#)

TEXT AD 1

TEXT AD 2

**We listen to every heartbeat with care.**  
Kaweah Health: Where vascular health is heartfelt.



[Call now](#)

**At Kaweah Health, we have one goal:**  
Innovative care for the heart and its vessels.



[Learn More](#)

# Be smart about your heart.

[Request an Appointment](#) 



IMAGE AD 1

IMAGE AD 2



**Life is full of heart choices.**  
Be sure you're making the right ones.



[Request Appointment](#)



**Life is full of heart choices.**  
Our experts can help.



[Get Started](#)

TEXT AD 1

TEXT AD 2

**Life is full of heart choices.**  
Be sure you're making the right ones.



[Request Appointment](#)

**Life is full of heart choices.**  
Our experts can help.

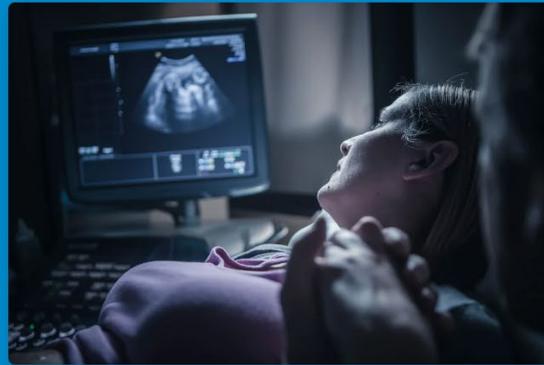


[Get Started](#)

# You've got this. We've got you.

Personalized care for your maternity journey.

[Request an Appointment](#)



## Delivering care beyond your expectations.

Bringing a baby into the world takes a team. At Kaweah Health, our caring obstetricians and nurses give little ones a warm welcome and provide all the loving support a mother needs.



IMAGE AD 1

IMAGE AD 2



**From planning to postpartum.**  
Meet with our OB care team.



[Request Appointment](#)



**From planning to postpartum.**  
Here for you, the whole way through.



[Find an OB Doctor](#)

TEXT AD 1

TEXT AD 2

**From planning to postpartum.**  
Meet with our OB care team.



[Request Appointment](#)

**From planning to postpartum.**  
Here for you, the whole way through.



[Find an OB Doctor](#)



# Communication Board

## December 2023

- Schwartz Rounds
- Holiday Giving
- Holiday Meal
- Jewelry Sale
- Compliance Matters
- Parking Survey
- Kaweah Share
- Kaweah Share Star
- The OpenSesame Observer
- Kaweah Pet Therapy
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Truck Calendar
- Blood Drives (3)
- Hand Hygiene

## November 2023

- Thankful For You
- Kaweah Share
- Kaweah Share Star
- The OpenSesame Observer
- Just Culture Review
- The Root of It
- Privacy Matters
- Blood Drives (2)
- Pet Therapy
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Trucks

## October 2023

- Mandatory Annual Health Update
- Vaccination Card
- Schwartz Rounds
- Hospice Event
- Decorating Contest
- Witches and Wizards
- The OpenSesame Observer
- The Root Of It
- Compliance Matters
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Trucks

## September 2023

- Movie Night
- Corporate Games
- OpenSesame Observer
- Compliance Matters
- At the Root of It
- Good Catch Award
- Sepsis Scholar
- TIME - Sepsis
- Self-Care Calendar

## August 2023

- Sepsis Info
- Schwartz Rounds
- OpenSesame Observer
- TLC Special
- Blood Drives (3)
- Compliance Matters
- Good Catch Award
- At the Root of It
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Trucks

## July 2023

- Scrub and Shoe Sale
- Employee Connection Committee
- Dr. Ester Flores
- Compliance Matters
- Good Catch Award
- At the Root of It
- Language Resource Assistant
- Reflection Garden
- Self-Care Calendar

### June 2023

- Why Workday
- Nurse Education
- Blood Drives
- Sepsis Info
- TeamStepps Overview Course
- Rubber Ducky Derby
- Every Gift Counts
- Compliance Matters
- Language Resource Assistant
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Trucks

### May 2023

- Starlight Awards
- Nurse Week Bake Wars
- Nurse Baskets
- Compliance Matters
- Just Culture
- Blood Drives
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Trucks

### April 2023

- Nurse Week Bake Wars
- Nurse Baskets
- Celebration of Life
- Starlight Awards
- Mandatory Annual Training (MAT)
- Compliance Matters
- Just Culture
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Trucks

### March 2023

- St. Patrick's Day
- National Nutrition Month
- BINGO Challenge
- Just Culture
- Employee Assistance Program
- Mandatory Annual Training (MAT)
- Code of Conduct
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Trucks
- OpenSesame Observer

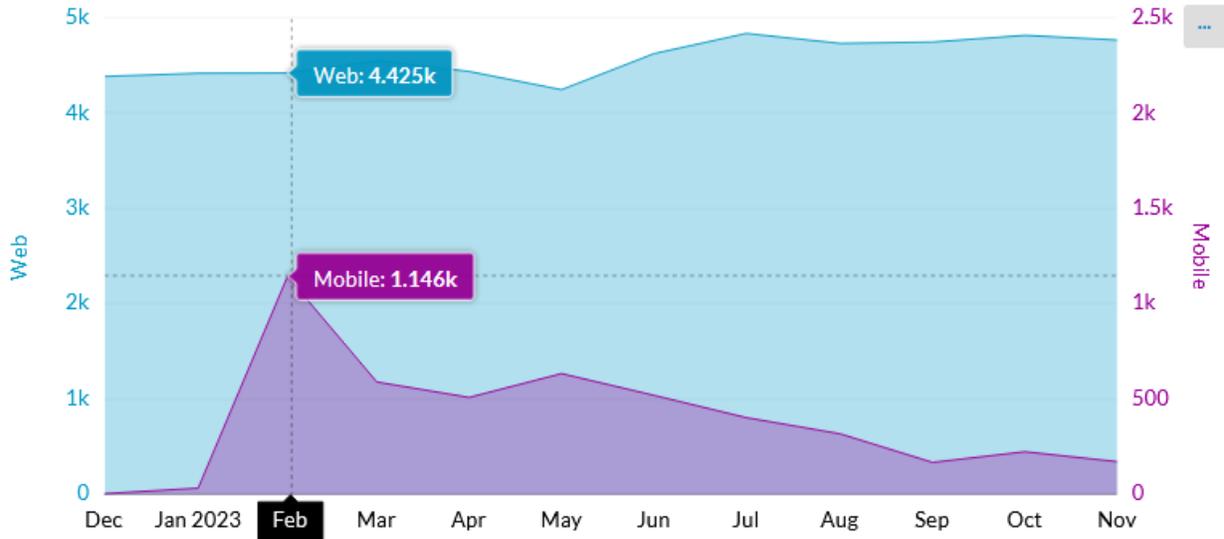
### February 2023

- Kaweah Compass Mobile
- Schwartz Rounds
- Kaweah Clean
- Stayin Alive 5K
- Compliance Matters
- Just Culture
- Chief QR Codes
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Trucks
- Expressions from the Heart
- Heart Month
- SuperBowl Party

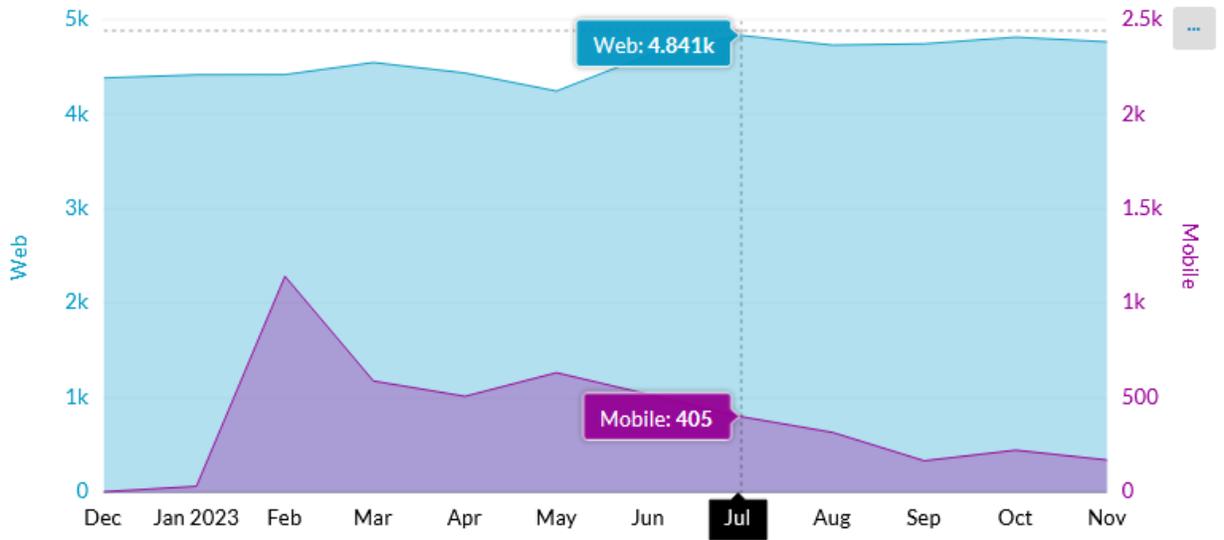
### January 2023

- Kaweah Compass Mobile
- Just Culture
- BEFAST Stroke
- Wellness Wednesdays
- Privacy Matters
- Self-Care Calendar
- Food Trucks

# Highest Active Users in 2023 – Kaweah Compass Mobile (Feb 2023 – 1,146)

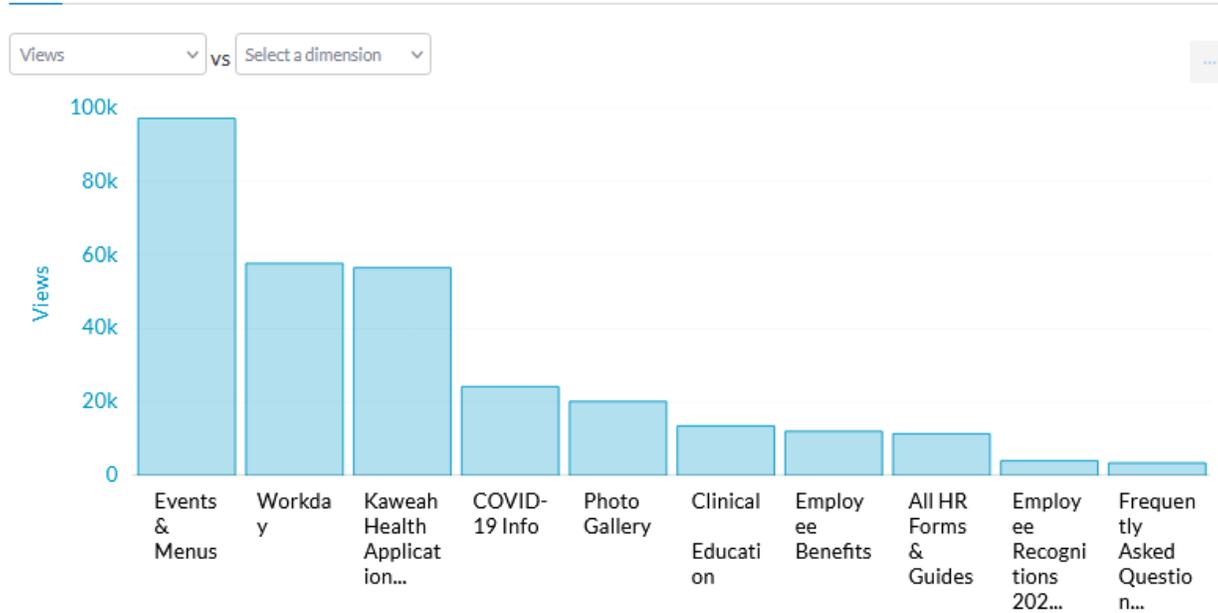


# Highest Active Users in 2023 – Kaweah Compass (July 2023 – 4,841)



# Most Viewed Content in 2023

Chart Table



Name	Type	Views	Unique Visitors	Landing Page Views	Likes	Shares	Comments	Participants
Events & Menus	Site	97401	4225	889	131	7	13	69
Workday	Site	57871	4662	9412	1	0	2	3
Kaweah Health Applications	Site	56696	3972	56661	0	0	0	0
COVID-19 Info	Site	24291	2590	1144	6	0	6	9
Photo Gallery	Site	20246	3032	1041	703	273	68	194
Clinical Education	Site	13600	1502	4006	1	0	0	1
Employee Benefits	Site	12118	2130	6261	0	0	0	0
All HR Forms & Guides	Site	11459	1752	3412	1	1	0	2
Employee Recognitions 2020	Site	4075	1390	23	56	0	12	49
Frequently Asked Questions	Site	3483	1488	604	2	0	4	5

# Kaweah Health Employee Huddles (January – December 2023)

Video with questions and answer email to staff district wide.

---

December 22, 2023 — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

December 8, 2023 — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

November 10, 2023 — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

October 27, 2023 — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

Friday, October 13, 2023 — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

September 29, 2023 — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

September 1, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

August 18, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

July 21, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

July 7, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

June 23, 2023 - — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

June 9, 2023 - — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

May 26, 2023 - — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

May 12, 2023 - — Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

April 28, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

April 14, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

March 31, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

Financial Update March 2023

March 17, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

March 3, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

February 17, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

February 3, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

January 20, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

January 6, 2023 - Kaweah Health Employee Huddle

## Additional District Wide Emails

- 12x Monthly EAP Connection – Employee Assistance Newsletter – January through December
- Mock Code Triage
- Kaweah Health Parking Survey
- Blood Drives
- Free At-Home COVID Test
- Guild Fundraising Sale
- Schwartz Rounds
- Compliance and Ethics Week
- National Medical Staff Services Awareness Week
- Kids Nite at ImagineU Children's Museum
- Snap a Photo and Support Breast Cancer Awareness
- National Health Care Facilities Engineering Week
- 2023 Mandatory Annual Health Update
- Celebrate Respiratory Care Week
- Sleep Technologists Appreciation Week
- Busting Flu Myths - Schedule Your Flu Vaccine Today
- Breast Cancer Awareness "Coffee For A Cure"
- Kaweah Health Friends and Family Ticket Giveaway for Girls & Guitars Concert
- Perinatal Nurses Week
- National Patient Accounting Management Week
- Emergency Nurses Week (October 8-14)
- International Infection Prevention Week
- Honored to Serve on the Patient Care Team - Healthcare Security and Safety Week
- National Case Management Week
- Sepsis Scholar Contest Winners Announced!
- Health Care Supply Chain Week
- Special Broadcast on Fox 26 - Featuring Dr. Cory D. Jaques
- GO PINK! Breast Cancer Awareness T-Shirts Are Now available!
- Central Valley Regional Bioethics Conference
- Celebrating National IT Professionals Day
- National Construction Appreciation Week
- Happy CDI Week to All Our Hardworking CDI RNs!
- Celebrate your Clinical Educators during Nursing Professional Development Week
- Attention Nurses! Don't Miss Kaweah Health's Open House
- Health Care Heroes: Nephrology Nurses
- Sepsis 6 Contest
- Sepsis Scholar Contest Announcement
- Wearing a Hawaiian Shirt/Outfit? We would love to see it
- Workday Mobile - Available Now for Your Mobile Device
- Kaweah Health's Farmers Market - Acequia Wing
- Rehab Aide Week
- Kaweah Health Hospital Guild: Scrub & Shoe Sale
- Kaweah Health Celebrates Healthgrades America's 100 Best Hospitals Award
- Celebrating National CNA Week
- Kaweah Health Medical Clinic Offers Pediatric Services for Kaweah Health Employees
- Workday Training in NetLearning
- Kaweah Health Starlight Awards
- \$10 OPPORTUNITY DRAWING: Kaweah Health Photo Backdrop
- CBS 47: Healing Health Care In The Valley - A Kaweah Health Roundtable
- Go-Live of Phase 1 for Workday
- Speech and Hearing Month!
- Happy National interpreter Appreciation Day
- Medical Laboratory Professionals Week
- Occupational Therapy Month
- World Social Worker Day
- 50% Off Whole Fruit - In Honor of National Nutrition Month
- Ash Wednesday
- Register Today! Stayin' Alive 5K Run/Walk by Kaweah Health
- Important Notice - IRS Mileage Rates for 2023 - Change

# Vital Signs

## Working Together for Better Care

KAWEAH HEALTH AND STANFORD HEALTH CARE

*Michael McLean, M.D.  
Cardiothoracic Surgery*



# Vital Signs

SPRING EDITION | 2024

## Vital Signs

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Kaweah Health.

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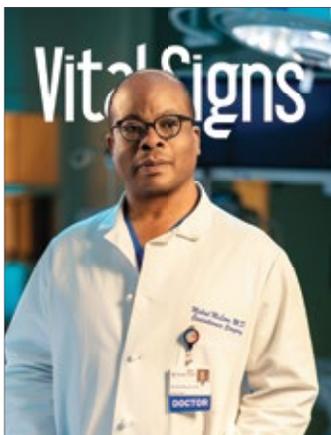
Maria Rodriguez Ornelas

Gary Rogers

Samantha N. Torres

### Share your success story with us!

Kaweah Health and the  
community we serve  
would love to hear  
your story. Contact  
us at [Marketstaff@  
KaweahHealth.org](mailto:Marketstaff@KaweahHealth.org)  
or call (559) 624-2463.



# 4

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CELEBRATE HEART MONTH  
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HOSPICE  
FOUNDATION BUILDS  
A LEGACY FOR ALL.

### ON THE COVER

Dr. Michael McLean is  
the first of three Stanford  
Medicine cardiothoracic  
surgeons who will live and  
work in Visalia.

## LETTER FROM THE CEO

The end of 2023 marked another chapter of growth and change at Kaweah Health. While we saw many positive signs in our day-to-day operations, other challenges arose that we will continue rising to meet. Throughout the many challenges Kaweah Health has faced in recent years, I can truly say that I am honored to work with such a dedicated and resilient team who remain focused on providing the best care possible to our community. The work of everyone at Kaweah Health continues to inspire me and hopefully our local community as well.

I am very happy to report that Kaweah Health's financial condition continues to improve and stabilize. In the first five months of the new fiscal year, we have outperformed our budget, generated a modest profit, and increased our number of days cash on hand (an important measure of liquidity and balance sheet strength). By comparison, our bottom line is more than \$30 million above this time last year. This financial stabilization is a testament to the strong team at Kaweah Health who has been able to create solutions across all of our departments to help put us "back in the black". While recovering from the global pandemic is a difficult process, we see that we can actually emerge as a stronger, more resilient organization.

In October, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 525, requiring a mandatory \$25 minimum wage for all employees of the health care sector by 2033 or sooner. The bill will absolutely create funding challenges for all hospitals, but especially ones serving rural communities or high Medi-Cal patient volumes. Since signing the bill, Governor Newsom has publicly stated he is seeking major reforms to the law, in an effort to reduce its \$4 billion cost to the State in the face of a record \$38 billion budget deficit. The first pay increases were scheduled for June, but Newsom wants to delay them until the state's fiscal outlook is healthier. It is unclear what the changes will be, but we remain strongly opposed to SB 525 and are deeply concerned about its long- and short-term financial impacts.

Without question, Kaweah Health greatly values and appreciates its employees. Over many years our hospital has worked hard to create a supportive environment and recognize employees for the life-saving work they do. As a not-for-profit, community hospital, our profits aren't deposited into investors' accounts. Our profits go back into caring for the community and taking care of our employees. Although I am greatly disappointed with the supporters of SB 525 and their lack of a more-measured solution to solving staffing and quality of care issues, I will continue working hard to increase revenues and advocate for higher Medi-Cal reimbursement rates in order to pay our employees the highest wages possible.

In our ongoing effort to improve the quality and access to the best care possible in our community, we are very excited to announce our new affiliation with the Stanford Medicine Cardiac Surgery Program. As part of that affiliation, we welcomed Dr. Michael K. McLean in October. Dr. McLean is a board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon and Stanford Medicine faculty member who brings more life-saving heart surgery and advanced heart care to the residents of Tulare County.

I am also happy to announce the Kaweah Health Medical Clinic on Plaza Drive is now open and offering occupational medicine, workers' compensation medicine, and more in the Industrial Park area of Visalia. As we expand services there, look for primary care and prompt care in the future. Please remember that you can support quality healthcare in your community by using the excellent primary and specialty care, clinics, labs, testing, and more that are available locally. Kaweah Health is proud to offer high-quality care close to home, and we are committed to serving all people of Tulare County.



**Gary Herbst**

Chief Executive Officer of  
Kaweah Health

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### KAWEAH HEALTH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Zone 1

**Mike Olmos**

President

Zone 2

**Lynn Havard Mirviss**

RN, Ed.D

Vice President

Zone 3

Vacant as of print date

Zone 4

**David Francis**

Secretary/Treasurer

Zone 5

**Ambar Rodriguez**



# A Healthy Heart is a Great Start.

**Celebrate Heart Month by keeping your habits healthy in 2024.**

**H**ear disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, so bringing awareness and encouraging people to take care of their hearts and seek regular medical check-ups is a priority to keep our community healthy. That is why every February in the United States is Heart Month, a month dedicated to raising awareness about cardiovascular health and encouraging people to take steps toward a healthier lifestyle. Kaweah Health observes heart month by sharing life-saving information and taking part in community events to raise awareness and promote a heart-healthy lifestyle.

It is never too late to take better care of your heart. Here are some simple ways you can ensure your heart is getting the exercise and support it needs.

## **Get Moving**

Regular physical activity is a key component of maintaining a healthy heart. It can help to lower your blood pressure, improve your cholesterol levels, and reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.

There are many different ways to get regular exercise, and the best type of activity for you depends on your individual needs and preferences. If you're new to exercise, start slowly and gradually increase the amount of time and intensity of your workouts over time. Some easy ways to incorporate more exercise into

your routine include taking a daily 20-minute walk, joining a fitness class, riding your bike for local errands, doing yard work or gardening, or playing sports with friends or family.

## **Eat Healthily**

Embracing a heart-healthy diet is vital for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, representing a key step in fostering overall well-being. Prioritize nutrient-rich foods, including a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins in your meals to provide essential vitamins and minerals, which promote cardiovascular health. Reduce salt and sugar intake, as they are linked to heightened risks of hypertension and heart-related issues. Choose healthier cooking methods, like grilling or steaming, to enhance the heart-protecting nutrients of your dietary choices. With just a few changes, you can fortify your cardiovascular health and take steps toward a better overall well-being.

## **Know Your Numbers**

Regularly schedule comprehensive checkups with your healthcare provider to monitor vital indicators like blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Understanding these numbers allows for a more precise assessment of your cardiovascular risk and helps your doctor create a personalized plan for improving your heart health. If necessary, your doctor may refer you to a cardiologist for specialized testing and further care to ensure the right approach to taking care of your heart.

## Get Involved

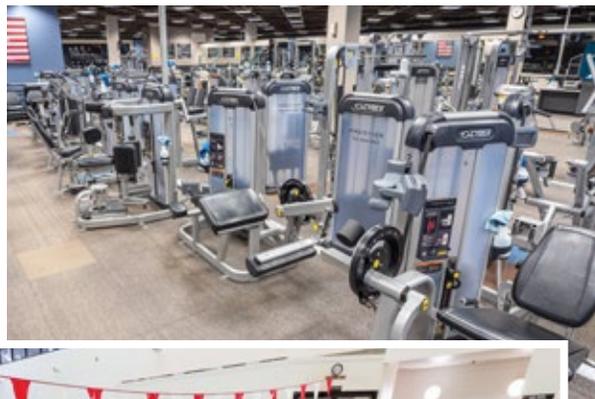
The goal of Heart Month is to remind people how important their heart is to overall health and inspire them to make a commitment to better cardiovascular health. Kaweah Health hopes that through education, lifestyle changes, and local events, our community can make a difference in the ongoing battle against heart disease, promoting a healthier and happier future for all.

## Join the Gym

One of the best things you can do to stay healthy is join a gym. The Kaweah Health Lifestyle Fitness Center is Visalia's largest gym, spanning two stories and providing a wide range of facilities, classes, and services to its many happy members. With outstanding features like an indoor track, pools, and hardwood basketball court, what truly distinguishes this gym is its status as the only medically-based fitness facility in Visalia. This means members have access to qualified, certified, and experienced fitness professionals who can assist in achieving their health and fitness objectives. The gym offers personalized exercise programs designed by an exercise physiologist, tailored to individual health and fitness requirements. Members also enjoy wellness checks, fitness profiles, and program designs anytime, and at no extra cost. Whether you are an experienced athlete or embarking on the initial stages of your fitness journey, the Lifestyle Fitness Center has something valuable to offer to everyone on a quest to stay healthy. **KH**

### Lifestyle Fitness Center can help you keep your heart in top shape with some of the best facilities around:

- Indoor pools
- Hardwood basketball court
- Exercise studios
- Circuit weight training
- Cardiovascular conditioning
- Cardio theaters
- Climbing wall
- Indoor soccer
- Indoor track
- Volleyball
- Locker rooms/showers
- Saunas/spas
- Massage therapy
- Kids Zone (child care)
- Wireless internet
- Pro shop
- Cafe



## DID YOU KNOW?

Each day, your heart beats about 100,000 times and pumps 2,000 gallons of blood.



The audible beating sound your heart makes is from the clap of valve leaflets opening and closing.

Members at Lifestyle Fitness Center enjoy the widest range of gym equipment available in the area.

Heated, indoor pools means members can swim and exercise year-round in comfort.



# A Clearer View to Success

Doctors and Foundation are working together toward better outcomes.

▲ Dr. Kyle Potts is using a new scanning device in the fight against breast cancer.

All across Kaweah Health's many departments, you will find different people who work both on the front lines and behind the scenes to help save lives. Of course, there are the doctors, nurses, technologists, and other people you see, but there are also scientists, technicians, social workers, recruiters, planners, and more who have the same goal of caring for the community. These groups work together every day, sometimes in surprising ways.

In the early fall of 2023, Kaweah Health's Chief Strategy Officer Marc Mertz and Director of Physician Recruitment/Relations J.C. Palermo were meeting with Visalia breast surgeon, Kyle Potts, MD, when they asked him if there was anything he needed to help him provide better outcomes to patients. Dr. Potts immediately thought of a new machine he had recently seen at a conference — a CT (3D) breast specimen imaging machine by a company named Clarix. The machine allows doctors to load a surgically-removed tumor from a breast cancer patient and scan it while still in the

operating room, providing a highly detailed, 3D image in just three minutes.

Coincidentally, Dr. Potts and fellow breast surgeon Carol Machado, MD, had recently been talking about getting new technology that could give them better and faster imaging capability during surgery. And while Dr. Potts appreciated the support from the hospital's administration, he didn't have any expectations. "I thought it was great they were interested in helping, but honestly I thought we were just talking about things," says Dr. Potts.

Following the meeting, Mertz went to work behind the scenes, "After learning about the Clarix machine, I thought how great it would be if we could get one," he says. "So, I took the idea to Kaweah Health Foundation Director Liz Wynn. The foundation has been instrumental in getting new, cutting-edge equipment for Kaweah Health." Mertz is absolutely correct. Since its founding in 1979, Kaweah Health Foundation has raised more than \$74 million for life-saving equipment supporting neurosurgery, neonatal intensive care, cardiac surgery, breast health, acute care, cancer radiation treatment, and more. Wynn and the foundation board were very interested in learning more about this

new tool to help women fighting breast cancer, and the timing was ideal. “When Marc (Mertz) brought the idea to us, we were getting ready for our Think Pink fundraising campaign for Breast Cancer Awareness month in October,” says Wynn. “So, I invited Suzie Potts, Dr. Potts’ wife, to come and present at our next board meeting.” During the presentation, Suzie showed the board members the benefits of the machine, highlighting the positive impacts it would have for patients: shorter surgical times, less time under anesthesia, fewer follow-up surgeries, and faster recovery times.

The presentation made a strong impression, inspiring the board to act immediately. “After learning about the machine, the board members and I were really excited — two of them representing Graham and Associates and the Sence Foundation immediately stepped up to provide matching funds to help purchase the machine,” recalls Wynn. The board took a leap of faith and approved the purchase of the equipment prior to all the funds being raised. “The board believed that every week delayed was a week a breast cancer patient missed out on this amazing technology,” says Wynn. “Dr. Potts and Dr. Machado might perform more than 20 lumpectomies combined every week.”

Thanks to the passion of the board and dedication of the foundation, Dr. Potts and Dr. Machado were using the new machine to help evaluate cancerous tumors taken from patients by late November. As hoped, it only took a few cases before the machine showed its worth. During one of Dr. Potts’ first few surgeries using the new technology, the clear image showed that more tissue needed to be removed from the patient, likely preventing a second surgery.

Dr. Potts is both grateful and impressed by the quick work of the foundation to bring this new technology to the hospital. “I can’t say enough about Kaweah and the foundation,” he says. “We are very fortunate to have them in the community. They are helping to bring the best technology available to our patients.” Right now, Kaweah Health is one of only three hospital systems in California with this technology, and the only one north of Southern California.

Dr. Potts is a Visalia native and has been a general surgeon in Visalia for almost 20 years.



▲ Dr. Kyle Potts demonstrates how tissue samples can be scanned during surgery without having to leave the operating room.

◀ Dr. Carol Machado (L) and Dr. Kyle Potts are improving outcomes for breast cancer patients through new technology.

When he started his career, he did a variety of procedures, and over time he has become one of the most trusted breast surgeons in the Central Valley, with medical breast procedures representing about 95 percent of his work. In his career he has seen the field of breast surgery greatly evolve. “It’s become very specialized and the techniques have developed tremendously,” he says. “It has led to a much higher skill level in surgeons and much better outcomes for patients.” Dr. Potts does about 10-15 procedures each week including biopsies and lumpectomies, helping hundreds of women in their battles against cancer each year.

Dr. Potts’ patients truly appreciate his experience, expertise, compassion, and honesty. When Sally Rogers first met with Dr. Potts in 2018, she was seen because of an abnormal mammogram result. “I was able to meet with Dr. Potts throughout my journey, starting before my diagnosis,” she

— “  
***It’s an absolute game changer. This is the future of breast cancer treatment right here in Tulare County.***  
 — ”

Dr. Potts on the new portable CT scanner



▲ Dr. Potts meets annually with patient Sally Rogers after her successful cancer treatment and surgery in 2018.

says. “I was so scared at first, I just told him to remove both breasts, I didn’t care.” Dr. Potts was quick to calm Sally down and clearly explain everything about her case, what they knew, what they might find out, and exactly what her care plan

success rates well in the 90 percent range,” says Dr. Potts. “That’s why it’s so important for women to do an annual checkup and mammogram.”

The biggest challenge in breast cancer surgery is referred to as margin status. When a cancerous tumor is surgically removed, about 8 milliliters of normal tissue surrounding the tumor is also removed, called a margin. On average, about 30 percent of breast cancer surgery patients have to come back for additional surgery because cancerous tissue was present at the margin but not visible via x-ray. “For a long time, Dr. Machado and I had been talking about getting some kind of new technology to help us reduce the rate of additional surgeries,” says Dr. Potts. “If we

could reduce that rate by half, it would make a huge difference to so many patients.”

Being able to clearly see the widths of the margin is the key to removing all of the cancerous tissue. With traditional 2D imaging, measuring the margins around the tumor is difficult

because doctors can only view a single, flat image. The margins under and above the tumor are hidden or obscured, and surgeons must rely on their skill and experience to remove the right amount of tissue. A 3D image, however, is made of hundreds of individual scans taken from multiple angles and stitched together using software, creating a final image which can be rotated, easily viewed, and measured from all sides. This 3D image removes most doubt about the margin status. “It’s an absolute game changer,” says Dr. Potts. “The ability to completely see the tumor you are working on in 3D is such an advantage. We can precisely and clearly visualize



▲ Behind every great doctor is an equally great team.

Dr. Potts’ staff, L-R: Evelynn Martin-Navarro, Mariela Gallo, Dr. Potts, Melanie Mullis.

Not pictured: Suzie Potts

would be. Leading into her surgery, Sally was in a much different frame of mind. “The only way to explain it is that I felt completely safe. He was so clear about everything and answered every question I had,” she recalls. “And all of his staff were so amazing. They really do care about you.” After her successful treatment, Sally is cancer free, but still comes to an annual check in with Dr. Potts. “Early-stage cancer treatment is highly effective, with

the exact location and details of a tumor and confidently determine and confirm all traces of a breast cancer tumor have been removed.” Dr. Potts emphasizes the high quality of care available here in Tulare County. “You don’t have to go to Stanford or Fresno. You don’t have to go out of the area to continue your treatment. Kaweah Health is keeping the technology up to date here so we can continue to provide some of the best breast care.” KH

# Building Better Care Through a Strong Foundation

Every day of the year, the Kaweah Health Foundation works to support the mission of Kaweah Health in providing world-class health care to the community, saving countless lives in the process. As the only hospital in Visalia, and the only trauma center between Fresno and Bakersfield, it is vital that Kaweah Health has the space and equipment needed to treat all of its patients for many different conditions. The comprehensive care available today is supported in large part by the generous community and the Kaweah Health Foundation's tireless efforts. Money is raised through capital campaigns, grants from companies, the annual Golf Classic event, and beneficiary designations from wills and trusts.

The Think Pink campaign that helped pay for the Clarix 3D imaging

machine was designed to raise awareness for breast cancer during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, observed each year in October. In addition to raising awareness, the foundation also assists uninsured cancer patients by helping to pay for procedures such as biopsies or follow-up ultrasounds, as well as surgical comfort needs such as head coverings, compression garments, and wigs. "So many people have someone in their lives who has been touched by breast cancer," Wynn says. "These patients are already in a very tough emotional situation, and we want to be able to help them in any way possible."

Wynn emphasizes the strength and passion of the foundation staff and the many generous organizations who supported the Think Pink campaign.

"We are a team and all worked to raise awareness at the many community events we attended during October," she says. "Our support came from everywhere: Visalia Mall, Casey De Anda Realtor, Human Bean, Lost Girls Motorcycle Club, Ruiz Foods, City of Visalia Police Department, and so many more community groups and members. We are very grateful to all of them." KH

Learn more about Kaweah Health Foundation and how you can offer support at [KawahHealth.org/Pink](https://www.kawahhealth.org/Pink).

## Did you know...

**1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime?**



**Donate Today!**  
[KawahHealth.org/Pink](https://www.kawahhealth.org/Pink)





# A Journey to Recovery

Betty and James Boretti started a fundraiser to honor the Kaweah Health staff who helped save her life.

## Betty Boretti bravely faces the battle of her life.

**F**ollowing a routine mammogram in November 2022, Betty Boretti was called back for a biopsy, which is normal when the results of a mammogram suggest there might be abnormal or cancerous tissue. During a biopsy, the doctor removes small pieces of breast tissue from the suspicious area so they can be analyzed in the lab to see if they contain cancer cells. Just after Christmas 2022, Betty received the call — the analysis showed it was definitely cancerous. On top of that, there were some lumps under her arm as well because the cancer had started to migrate, technically referred to as stage two breast cancer. For Betty, the diagnosis came out of the blue and left her shocked. “It was very scary,” she remembers. “I kept asking myself why it happened to me.” But soon after the initial disbelief, and with the support of her husband James, they changed their focus. “We took a deep breath, acknowledged the information we received, and just started going forward to do what we needed to do to fight it,” she says.

When James Boretti moved to Visalia 20 years ago after marrying Betty, he didn’t know much about Kaweah Health, but he has seen it grow in size over the years, along with its reputation. After weighing their options for treating Betty, they decided to stay in Visalia. “We chose to go to Dr. Havad at the Sequoia Regional Cancer Center because of the experience, knowledge, compassion, and skills that he, the nursing, and medical staff all have,” he says. Sequoia Regional Cancer Center in Visalia is one of California’s most advanced cancer treatment facilities. The center offers patients a multidisciplinary approach to cancer care through the combined efforts of surgeons, radiologists, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, and other caregivers.

Betty’s treatment date was set to begin February 1, 2023. Doctors inserted a small chemotherapy port through one of her veins, which would deliver the medicine directly into her veins. When Betty was coming out of surgery, however, the staff was not able to wake her up, and they soon noticed complications. Betty was immediately transferred to Kaweah Health, where she underwent emergency open-heart

surgery to save her life.

Within only three hours, Betty had gone from a chemotherapy appointment to life-saving open heart surgery. “I am so thankful I was in a place where I could receive such responsive attention and care,” says Betty. “The skill level of the staff, both the medical and nursing staff, was incredible. I just feel fortunate.” She remained at Kaweah Health Medical Center for six days, three of which were in the intensive care unit, before moving into another area prior to discharge.

Five weeks later, Betty started her chemotherapy while coordinating visits from home health, who was helping her get back into walking and preparing her for the chemotherapy she was starting. The first phase of chemo went well, but the second phase was very difficult. “Betty fought really hard, and I’m very proud of her,” says James. “From the beginning, the doctor told us it’s going to be a journey — not an easy one — but a journey we can make.” One year later, there are not many signs left from her journey other than a scar from the open-heart surgery. Betty has recovered very well and is back to her normal life from before.

Betty’s journey was an emotional one, and while she was recovering from the open-heart surgery and preparing for chemotherapy, she felt incredibly grateful for the doctors and nurses who had cared for her during and after her heart surgery. As a token of her gratitude, she decided to do a pay-it-forward fundraiser benefiting Kaweah Health. “There are a lot of technological advances, a lot of advances in the medicine Kaweah Health Medical Center provides, and I want to support that,” says Betty. “We know this is a way to help other people who end up in situations like my wife did.” The funding will go towards state-of-the-art cardiac surgical lights and monitors. **KH**

Learn more about Betty and James’ fundraiser at [KawahHealth.org/Pink](https://www.kawahhealth.org/pink).



# Offer a lasting thanks.

The Kaweah Health Reflection Garden is approaching its final phase. Situated near the Acequia entrance, the garden will offer staff and visitors a beautiful space to reflect and restore. At its center is a monument to life. Engraved in English and Spanish, the verse is a tribute to life and our devoted caregivers who work so passionately to protect it.

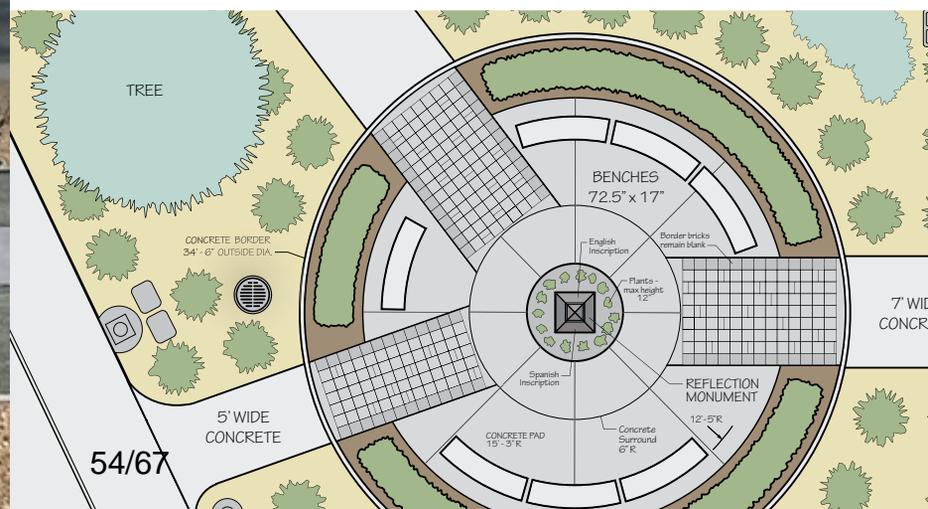


**We** are currently offering employees and the public a chance to honor our caregivers through the purchase of engraved pavers. These decorative stones will be displayed on the three approaches to the garden.

If you've been looking for a unique way to thank a co-worker who goes the extra mile, or honor that nurse who went above and beyond for you or a family member, this is your chance. Pavers may also be given as a gift.

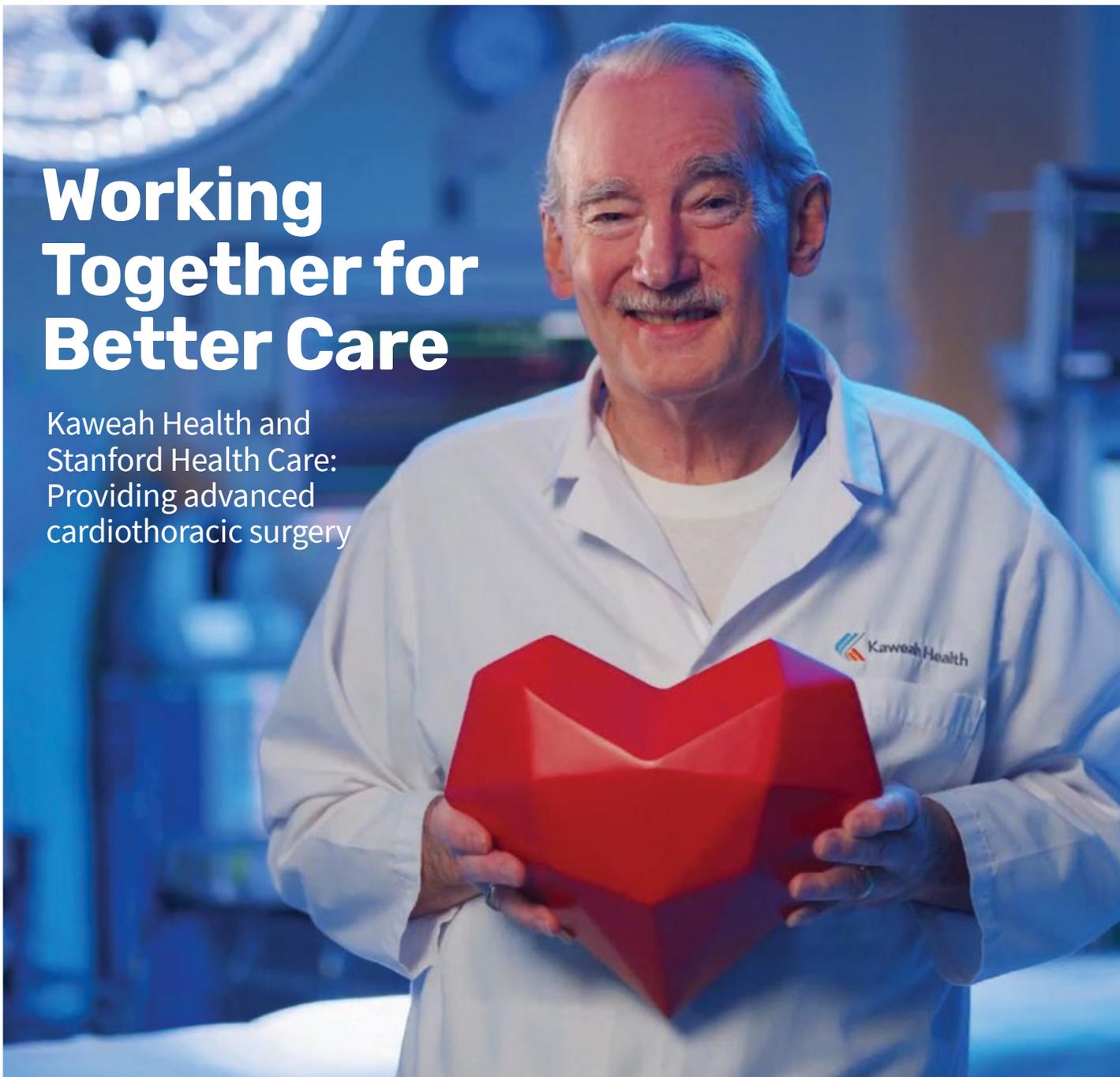
**Be a part of this tribute to life. To order or request more information, call the Kaweah Health Foundation at (559) 624-2359.**

The reflection garden project was initiated in 2021 by Kaweah Health nursing staff. Its construction is being funded through donations from employees and community members to the Kaweah Health Foundation. The drought tolerant landscaping was donated by Cal Water. No general funds will be used for the construction of this project.



# Working Together for Better Care

Kaweah Health and Stanford Health Care: Providing advanced cardiothoracic surgery



▲ Dr. Frederick Mayer was instrumental in establishing Kaweah Health's Cardiothoracic Surgery Program in 1995.

**K**aweah Health is excited to welcome the first surgeon from its new affiliation with the Stanford Health Care Cardiac Surgery Program. Michael K. McLean, MD, arrived in Visalia in October 2023 and is now performing life-saving heart and thoracic surgical procedures such as heart bypass surgery, heart valve repair, and more. Dr. McLean is the first of three Stanford Medicine cardiothoracic surgeons who will live and work in Visalia as part of the Kaweah Health Cardiothoracic Surgery Program, working together with the Stanford Health Care Cardiac Surgery Program.

Establishing an affiliation with an academic medical center is no small endeavor and requires the work of many people over many months. Kaweah Health Chief Strategy Officer Marc Mertz explains the origins of the idea. "Part of my job is to look into the future and find places where we need to grow and find ideas that will help Kaweah Health continue to provide high-quality care long into the future," says Mertz. "One of the main challenges we face is providing enough care to meet demand, and this is definitely true of cardiac surgery." Mertz worked with Stanford Medicine representatives for nine months in the effort to bring more heart surgeons to Kaweah Health. The result was

an affiliation that would bring a total of three, highly-skilled heart surgeons to Visalia, all working and living here full time. “It’s an important step in increasing access to the highest-quality, innovative care that meets current technological advances,” says Mertz. In addition to being full-time surgeons, these doctors will also serve as faculty members at Stanford Medicine.

Dr. McLean and the future doctors from Stanford Medicine will be based at the Kaweah Health Cardiothoracic Surgery Clinic on Main Street in downtown Visalia and perform surgery at Kaweah Health Medical Center. In cases where Kaweah Health does not provide direct services (for example, very complex open-heart surgeries or heart transplants), the doctors from Stanford Medicine in Visalia will help facilitate patient transfers to Stanford Health Care in Stanford, California. So far, Dr. McLean has settled in quickly, performing open-heart surgery within his first few days in Visalia. “It’s been very smooth — the staff, technicians, and facilities here are excellent,” he says. “The need for open heart surgery in this area is high, so it’s important to provide more access. I’m excited to be here.”

Kaweah Health’s Cardiothoracic Surgery Program was established in 1995 and has grown to become a nationally-recognized leader in the region, providing life-saving heart and thoracic surgery procedures to patients. The program is led by Frederick W. Mayer, MD, a board-certified cardiothoracic surgeon with more than 40 years of experience. Dr. Mayer is widely recognized as an expert in cardiac surgery and has been instrumental in developing the cardiothoracic surgery program at Kaweah Health from the beginning. “I started the cardiac program here in 1995, and we did our first open heart surgery in 1996. I’m quite pleased with the program and

what we’ve provided,” states Dr. Mayer. To date, the cardiothoracic program at Kaweah Health has performed more than 8,000 open-heart surgeries. The program consists of a multidisciplinary team that includes cardiothoracic surgeons, cardiologists, nurse practitioners, nurses, surgical techs, perfusionists, cath lab techs, and sonographers. This team works together to provide a continuum of care for heart patients, from diagnosis

and treatment to rehabilitation and follow-up. The program also offers a variety of support services for patients and their families, including cardiac rehabilitation, nutrition counseling, and stress management.

Looking forward, Dr. Mayer is pleased with the new affiliation. “Having Dr. McLean here and working with Stanford Medicine is going to help recruit some of the best cardiac surgeons around. This is going to be an amazing benefit to Visalia and the Central Valley, to have local access to this level of heart care for many years to come.”

In addition to Stanford Health Care, Kaweah Health maintains an affiliation with the nationally recognized Cleveland Clinic Heart, Vascular & Thoracic Institute. These affiliations allow Kaweah Health’s heart program to share best practices in patient care, outcomes, quality reporting, and offer patients access to the broadest possible range of solutions from skilled, experienced doctors, nurses, and technicians. 



**Dr. Michael McLean is a Stanford Medicine heart surgeon and Stanford faculty member living and working in Visalia. He specializes in heart bypass surgery, valve repair, and other advanced cardiac procedures.**

## Heart Surgery Terminology

- Cardiothoracic surgery — Refers to surgery on the heart, lungs, and chest
- Minimally-invasive surgery — Surgery on the heart using small incisions
- Open heart surgery — Surgeries such as coronary bypass and aortic aneurysm repair
- Bypass surgery — A surgery that attaches a graft above and below a blocked artery, sending blood around the blockage
- Heart valve surgery — A surgery to fix common problems like narrowing valve openings and leaking valves
- Septal defect surgery — Septal defects are holes in the heart that allow blood to flow to parts of the heart and lungs where it should not. These defects are repaired by stitching or patching the hole.

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Learn more about Kaweah Health’s heart surgery program at [KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery](http://KaweahHealth.org/HeartSurgery).



# Compassion for Community

Kaweah Health's Population Health team is changing lives, one story at a time.

**S**ome of the most inspiring stories coming out of Kaweah Health do not come from inside the hospital's walls, but from the outside, in public spaces and the streets. That is because behind the busy scenes of Kaweah Health's emergency room and clinics is a team dedicated to a cause that goes beyond traditional health care, dedicated to changing the lives of people who are at risk in the community no matter where they are.

The Population Health Department at Kaweah Health is working every day to transform lives in profound ways. Many Tulare County residents may not be aware of the impactful work done by this department, work that illustrates Kaweah Health's commitment to serving the

community and improving health outcomes for everyone.

The work Population Health does is part of California's CalAIM program aimed at improving care and outcomes for Medi-Cal members. The program prioritizes addressing homelessness and mental health, using Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports (CS) to help members navigate these public services to get the help they need.

The primary focus of ECM is supporting members in managing multiple chronic health conditions, connect patients to primary care and specialty care, and reduce emergency room visits. While CS prioritizes finding housing and addressing the needs of those facing homelessness, many times there are other issues involved like mental health challenges, substance abuse,



**The population health team reaches deep into the community.**

Front, L-R: Cristalia Nunez, Nalor See, Maria Carbajal, Ellie Casas, Viviana Arroyo, Maricela Silva-Aguilar, Crystal Ortiz, Sylvia Reyna, Jessica Gutierrez, Sonia Duran-Aguilar

Back, L-R: Linda Gonzales, Laura Palomino, Devon Barlow, Emilio Montti Lopez, Marianita Arrizon, Noah Camacho, Blanca Aldaco, Freddie Romero, Jasmine Cortez-Quiroz, Miguel Esquivel, Omar Godoy.

Not pictured: Kayla Jacobo Enriquez, Irene Taff, Vivian Reyes

and frequent emergency department visits or hospital admissions. Kaweah Health Population Health Manager Crystal Ortiz estimates about 90 percent of the people her team works with have some type of mental health issue, often paired with substance abuse. “It can be a difficult situation for the members, but we know how to put them on a path to a better life,” she says. “Our team is so knowledgeable and compassionate — we truly care about the people we work to help. We all have a strong desire to help people.”

The many arms of Kaweah Health’s Population Health team are the community care coordinators (CCCs). They are the ones in the field, making contact with and guiding members of the community to better health and better lives. Most CCCs are stationed at Kaweah Health’s clinics, mental health facilities, and emergency

room, where they work proactively with individuals in need. Crystal explains how they reach people in need, “Our CCCs find people in different ways. Many are referred by providers or health plans, others come from emergency room visits. Sometimes we even receive a call that there is someone on the corner who looks like they need help.”

For those without housing or who are at risk, Kaweah Health’s Population Health team uses a comprehensive, whole-person approach to care. CCCs first coordinate individuals’ care, linking them to necessary treatment for physical and mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and other essential services. The goal is not only to provide medical assistance to members in need, but also to address the underlying social issues impacting their health. In addition to guiding members to the help they need, CCCs also teach members about the different services available and how to go about getting them.

Each CCC carries a caseload of 40 members. A typical day involves reviewing cases and trying to contact each member at least once a month. While working with members, CCCs connect them to primary care and social services. “We talk to them and try to understand what their needs are,” says Crystal. “From there, CCCs create a plan that might cover many areas: counseling, doctor appointments, or social services appointments. Then they provide the support to help the members succeed.” That support ranges from accompanying members to medical appointments, helping them secure identification and social security benefits, or just giving them a ride.

Helping members reach greater health and stability is not a one-visit process. For many of the successes the Population Health team celebrates, they have invested at least a year of time and attention, often longer, to reach these milestones. Each one of the successes is a testament to the team’s dedication, time, and effort. For countless Tulare County community members, Kaweah Health’s Population Health team is making a lasting difference and changing lives. 

— “ —  
***Our team is so knowledgeable and compassionate — we truly care about the people we work to help. We all have a strong desire to help people.***

— ” —  
Population Health Manager Crystal Ortiz on her team of community care coordinators

# Positive Change.

Our Population Health team is making a difference in our community and in people's lives. The following is just a sample of the 2023 success stories made possible by their work.

Names have been changed.

## 2023 Journal

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*Monica and Joey. Unhoused for five years. Dealing with social and health-related obstacles. Veronica requires regular dialysis. Jeffrey battles depression. We were able to secure social security cards and identification for them. Placed first in a transitional housing facility (Eden House) — later to a more permanent solution at The Lofts.*

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*Alisha. Living in a toxic environment at a room and board facility. The Kaweah Health Client Services (CS) team helped her find suitable housing. With assistance, she was able to secure her own apartment in Woodlake.*

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*Sandra. Living on the streets. Successfully transitioned into a one-bedroom apartment. Housing opportunity was made possible through The Housing Choice Voucher program. Her new home was fully furnished through the No Place Like Home program (NPLH). Thank you NPLH!*

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*Richard, his significant other, and two daughters — Unhoused and living in an abandoned trailer. The CS team assisted the family in securing a house and other health services. Richard and his family are now in stable housing and no longer in distress.*

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*Jeanette, mother of four. Residing in a shelter when met by the CS team. Jeanette and her children are now comfortable and safe in a three-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment, fully furnished through NPLH.*

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*Annie. Residing in her car, on a friend's couch, and in motels with her two sons. The CS team is actively working on finding housing for her. The home will be furnished by Community Services Employment Training (C-SET).*

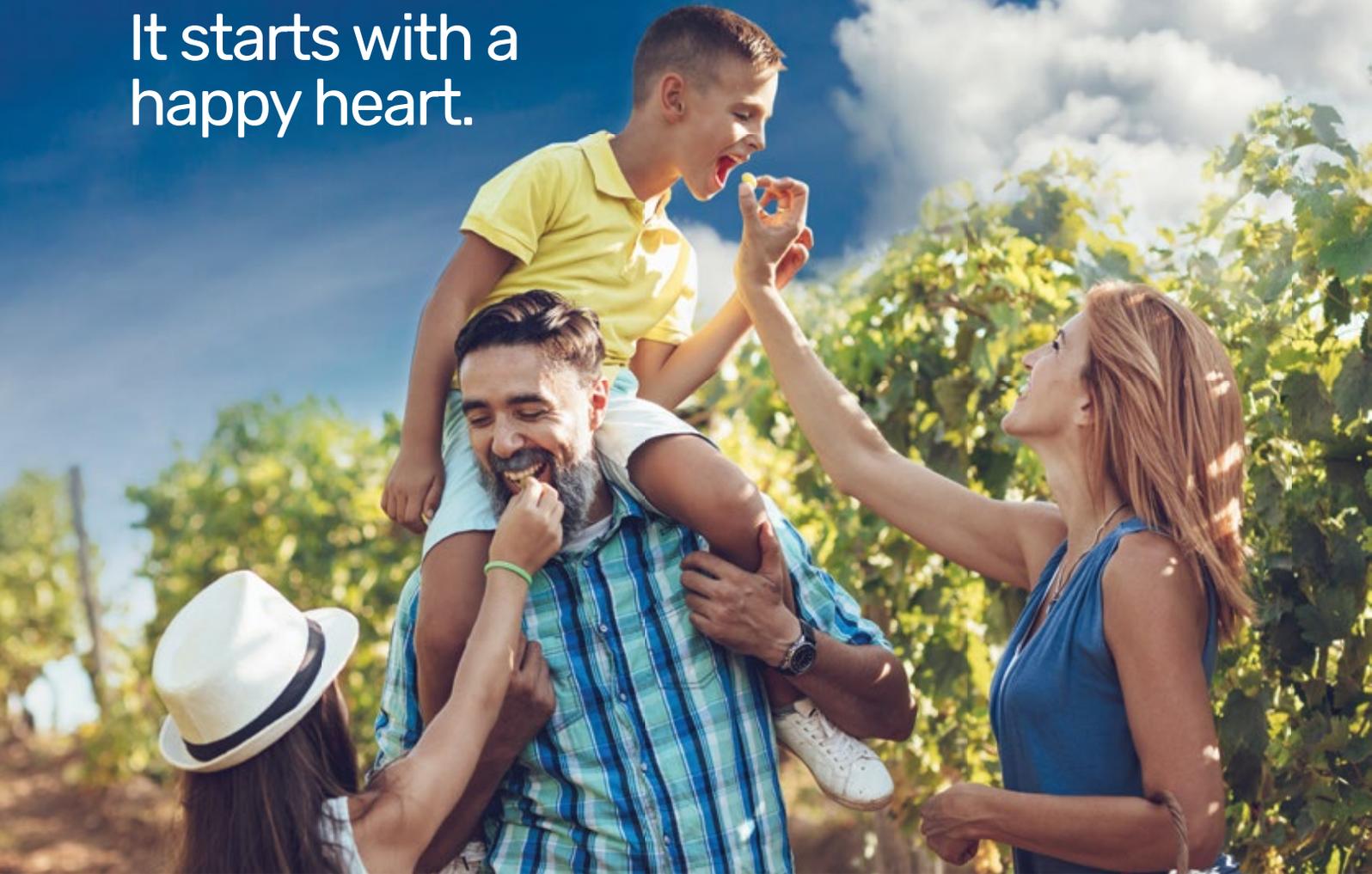
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*Isabel and her two daughters. At one time living in their vehicle and motels, they are now in a stable housing arrangement. Their three-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment was furnished through the support of C-SET.*

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# The pursuit of healthiness.

It starts with a happy heart.



**Healthiness** is everything, which is why Kaweah Health provides two locations to help keep your heart healthy and happy. The talented teams at the Kaweah Health Cardiology Centers provide a wide range of cardiology subspecialists along with the attentive, leading-edge cardiology and vascular care you need — all in a comfortable and convenient setting.



IN VISALIA  
820 S. Akers St.  
Suite 130  
Visalia, CA 93277  
(559) 624-6520

IN TULARE  
938 N. Cherry St.  
Tulare, CA 93274  
(559) 686-3481



IN VISALIA: [KaweahHealth.org/VisaliaHeart](https://www.KaweahHealth.org/VisaliaHeart)

IN TULARE: [KaweahHealth.org/TulareHeart](https://www.KaweahHealth.org/TulareHeart)



# A Gift of Life

Organ and tissue donation program touches lives across California.

▲ Sunny Luna is an organ transplant recipient and advocate for organ donation education.

**S**unny Luna is a Visalia native who currently works as a social worker, helping the people of Tulare County. And while she lives a fairly ordinary life by most standards, her life's journey is nothing short of extraordinary.

In 1992, towards the end of her senior year in high school, Sunny's childhood took a dramatic turn when she received a diagnosis of systemic lupus, an autoimmune condition that prompts the body to attack its own tissues and organs. By that time, her kidneys were already being affected by the disease. Despite undergoing intensive treatments including chemotherapy and other medications, both of her kidneys failed shortly after graduating from high school, leading her to undergo dialysis.

In February 1993, Sunny received a call from University of California San Francisco that a kidney was available for her. "As an 18-year old who had been used to a healthy life, all I could think of was that I

would never have to come back to the hospital and be hooked up to a dialysis machine — Was I ever wrong," she remembers. Sunny underwent the procedure, but despite a successful surgery, the transplanted kidney could not resist the lupus infection and failed after only 14 days. Over the following months, Sunny suffered serious complications, including a minor stroke, heart attack, collapsed lungs, and a seizure. She was placed back on dialysis. Despite all of these challenges, Sunny continued taking evening college courses and working towards a degree in social work from California State University, Fresno.

In December 1994, Sunny's father decided to donate his kidney to Sunny. "The experience that time was wonderful," she recalls. "I was out of the hospital within a week, and during my recovery, I spent time with my family, cherishing every moment, and realizing that good health is never to be taken for granted."

Her health improved greatly after that, and Sunny and her husband Chris welcomed the birth of their son Christopher in 2001. Sunny

is still doing well today, employed as a social worker in Visalia.

Across the United States, finding suitable organs for transplant is done by organ procurement organizations (OPOs), not-for-profit organizations responsible for recovering organs from deceased donors for transplantation. Donor Network West (DNW) serves the northern California and Nevada regions. In their service area, there are more than 9,000 patients on the waitlist for organ donation, approximately 1,000 of which are located in the Central Valley. The majority of these patients are in need of kidney transplants, followed by those requiring liver, heart, and lung transplants. The current waiting period for a kidney transplant in California is about eight to ten years.

Fewer than one percent of all potential donors meet the specific medical criteria to become one, and recovered organs need to

topic. DNW works with dozens of counties across Northern California and Nevada, serving more than 13 million people. They meet with community figures, religious leaders, and educators to learn more about their constituents and the best way to educate them about organ donation. Doing more than 50 presentations each year, DNW helps people make informed decisions that could help others in need.

Thanks to the partnership with Donor West, Kaweah Health is able to contribute to this life-saving program. Kaweah Health Director of Critical Care Services Shannon Cauthen oversees the program for the hospital. “We are deeply touched by all of the patients who volunteer to donate organs,” she says. “To honor those patients, we do what is called an Honor Walk, which gives us the chance to rec-



▲ Sunny Luna and family after her son's UC Berkeley graduation, L-R: brother-in-law Aaron, Sunny, son Christopher, and husband Chris.

be used within a short timeframe. If a suitable donor is found, a team of doctors is contacted who quickly fly in to rescue the patient's organs for donation. Immediately after, they fly out and deliver them to patients in need of transplants. It's a highly choreographed sequence of events that saves lives.

For many people, the only information they have received about organ donation is a checkbox on their driver's license application, so it is essential to educate the public about the

ognize and be thankful for the gift of that patient. During the Honor Walk, the house supervisor or charge nurse announces a patient's donation, and the leadership team is invited as well. Up to 100 staff members may come out and line the halls as the patient is transported from the unit. In addition to the Honor Walk, an organ donor flag ceremony is later held with DNW and Kaweah Health staff, and the donor's family. A special flag is raised during a brief ceremony led by a Kaweah Health chaplain. KH

Learn more about organ donation at [DonorNetworkWest.org](http://DonorNetworkWest.org).

## DID YOU KNOW?

One person can save up to eight lives by being an organ donor, and they can enhance the lives of as many as 75 others through tissue donation.



▲ The Donate Life flag is raised to honor patients after donating their organs.



# From Local Scribe to Faculty Physician

Golden West High School graduate's inspiring journey at Kaweah Health

In the Golden West High School graduating class of 2005, the future Dr. Dries Van Dyk set his sights on becoming a doctor and started working in the Kaweah Health Emergency Department as a scribe, which is someone who helps doctors and nurses by writing down important information during a patient's visit to the hospital. At the time, he wasn't sure where he might end up practicing medicine someday, but he knew he was pointed in the right direction. After finishing medical school in Nevada, the timing was perfect — he was able to do his residency in Visalia, becoming one of Kaweah Health's first emergency medicine residents in 2016, part of the new Graduate Medical Education (GME) program there.

Dr. Van Dyk remembers his excitement on Match Day, the day when medical school graduates are paired with a hospital to do their residency training, "Having grown up in Visalia, it was really

great to be able to do my residency here. Both my parents and my wife's parents are here." Dr. Van Dyk finished his emergency medicine residency, following up with a fellowship in the simulation lab at Kaweah Health.

With his residency complete, Dr. Van Dyk continued working full time in the Kaweah Health Emergency Department, where he enjoyed the challenge and excitement of that environment. "There's something different every day in the ED," he says. "It's a great challenge to your skills and is an exciting place to be." Recently, Dr. Van Dyk was asked to become Kaweah Health's GME Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Director, overseeing and engaging with a number of committees that ensure quality metrics at Kaweah Health Medical Center are met. In this position, Dr. Van Dyk works with all 130 residents in the GME program to complete quality improvement projects,

▲ Dr. Van Dyk appreciates being able to care for the people of his hometown.

which involve monitoring, analyzing, and improving healthcare processes.

Although he was a bit uncertain about what his new teaching duties would be like, he has settled in to the change. "Teaching in the classroom feels like the opposite of working in the emergency department," says Dr. Van Dyk. "The pace is slower, and I can look at more than just the patient in front of me. It's given me a better understanding of the system of care as a whole." One of the many outstanding doctors found throughout the hospital, Dr. Van Dyk is proud to not only serve the community of Tulare County where he grew up, but also the doctors in Kaweah Health's Graduate Medical Education program. 



# Care.

**For some, it's an emotion.  
For us, it's a career.**

**I**t takes a special person to work for Kaweah Health. We serve a region where the challenges are unique, and the needs are great. But for us, the greater the need, the greater the reward.

Kaweah Health clinical and support staff are part of an organization that delivers a better quality of life for some, and a second chance at life for many. Our employees have the satisfaction of knowing they are making a difference — for individuals, and for their community as a whole.

If you want to use your talents alongside people who face each day with courage and purpose,

in an environment that empowers you to do your absolute best, this is where you belong.

Care. For some, it's an emotion. At Kaweah Health, we put it into action — every day. If you really want to make a difference, visit [KaweahHealth.org/Careers](http://KaweahHealth.org/Careers).



**VISIT:** [KaweahHealth.org/Careers](http://KaweahHealth.org/Careers)



# A Strong Foundation of Support

Kaweah Health Hospice Foundation builds a legacy for all.

**K**aweah Health Hospice Foundation was founded with a vision of providing compassion and support to the community, creating comfort for individuals at their end-of-life journey. Its work is rooted in the belief that every person deserves dignity, comfort, and care during their final journey. Because of its dedicated efforts for more than 35 years, the quality of life for many patients and their families has been greatly enhanced.

Run entirely by volunteers, the foundation's role is to raise funds to help support the services provided by Kaweah Health Hospice and to provide education to the public. The foundation collaborates closely with Kaweah Health Hospice, whose role is to deliver a range of programs and services designed to meet the unique needs of individuals and families navigating their end-of-life-journey. These include grief support for families and children coping with loss, recognizing that the healing process extends beyond the passing of a loved one.

Kaweah Health Hospice Foundation is proud to be the supporting partner of Kaweah Health Hospice and the Kaweah Health Ruth Wood Open Arms House. Both of these programs are a not-for-profit hospice and hospice facility in a field that has grown increasingly for-profit over time. In fact, in 1990, only 5 percent of U.S. hospices were for-profit. Today, for-profits are the majority, representing 63 percent of all hospices. The work of the foundation supports this hospice program that is



▲ Kaweah Health Hospice Foundation members, L-R: Merrilyn Brady, Carol Nickel, Susan Harrell, Barbara Mayeda, Pam Rutter, Kelly Cooper, Robert Urtecho, David Zarate, Donn Ritter, Paul Verissimo, Margaret Moholt, Michelle Ducey. Not pictured: Susan Sevier, Nancy Reimer-Wood, Tina Tetz, Jim Johnson, Mary Ferrera, Mary Gray, and Kim Carsten

not driven by shareholder value, but by exceptional care consistent with patient goals, values, and preferences. All funds raised by the hospice foundation go directly to benefit Kaweah Health Hospice, the Ruth Wood Open Arms House, and its patients.

As a nonprofit, the foundation relies on community support to fund its programs and services. The foundation holds several fundraising initiatives throughout the year, from local events to philanthropic partnerships, helping to ensure all members of the community have access to dignified, end-of-life care, regardless of their ability to pay. Its mission is straightforward — to provide physical, emotional, social, and spiritual support to terminally ill patients, as well as their families and loved ones, while assisting patients and families to live with dignity and comfort as they cope with end-of-life issues.

Foundation board president Michelle Ducey explains how many of the volunteers come to serve. “Many of

our 18-member foundation board have a personal story that links us to the mission. Whether as board members or Kaweah Health Hospice volunteers, many speak of wanting to give back because a loved one had a meaningful experience with our hospice.” Michelle explains. “After the death of my husband 17 years ago, I became a volunteer for that very reason.” The foundation board works together with the hospice team, led by Ryan Howard, MD, and Tiffany Bullock, RN, collaborating and advocating for best practices, equipment, and support to improve care and services for hospice patients and their families. “We are a crucial safety net for the most vulnerable patients in our communities,” says Michelle. Board member Carol Nickel is a former hospice nurse who has been a board member since the early days of the Hospice of Tulare County, which became part of Kaweah Delta Healthcare District in 2003. “It’s been an honor to work with Kaweah Health Hospice Foundation for



Perhaps the biggest contribution to the residents of Tulare County is the Ruth Wood Open Arms House, a unique hospice facility in Visalia. The facility began as an idea after one of the hospice foundation board members saw a new type of hospice facility in San Diego, referred to as a social model hospice home — a house in a typical neighborhood that had been converted into a place for multiple hospice patients. The board members decided they would try to do the same in Visalia, so they formed a nonprofit organization and established the Ruth Wood Open Arms House, named in honor of Ruth Wood, a supporter of hospice for many years and a founder of Hospice of Tulare County in the mid-1980s. The group of board members went about finding a suitable house and eventually found one

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**Volunteers play a crucial role in maintaining and staffing the Ruth Wood Open Arms House, handling tasks like yard work, answering the door, and more.**

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◀ Hundreds of people attend an Oct. 2023 event featuring Dr. Ira Byock, speaking on improving care for people living with serious medical conditions.

so long and be a part of its legacy,” she says. “We truly have an exceptional group of people who want to give back to the community.”

One way the hospice foundation gives back is by educating the community. Through events such as the Norman Sharrer Symposium, guest speakers host learning sessions open to hospice and medical workers, as well as the general public. Attendees hear about topics like hospice care and advanced planning from noted authors in the field such as Dr. Ira Byock. The response for these events has been very positive, drawing diverse audiences of up to several hundred people. “I think this is just the beginning of what we want to do, demystifying hospice care and engaging in dialogue with people about care,” says Michelle. “The positive response has proved that the community is really interested in this.”

that would become the Ruth Wood Open Arms House, which opened in 2016. In 2021, the facility transferred ownership to Kaweah Health and continued offering its services to the community.

Since opening under Kaweah Health ownership in July 2022, the Ruth Wood Open Arms House has provided compassionate end-of-life care to more than 100 residents, supported by successful fundraising and community contributions, demonstrating a sustainable model. **KH**

Learn more about the Kaweah Health Hospice Foundation or how to become a volunteer at (559) 624-2359.

To contact Kaweah Health Hospice, call (559) 733-0642.

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