Media Contact:
Krista Harding
Cherish Hospice
kharding@cherish-hospice.com
937-355-7154, ext. 205

Cherish Hospice Celebrates the 80th birthday of Longtime Military Vet Volunteer

Morris Lavender Donates Time to Comfort Hospice and Veterans Program Patients

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio (July 14, 2026) – Cherish Hospice, a hospice healthcare company in Springfield that serves southwest Ohio, celebrated one of its most dedicated volunteers on Wed., July 8, honoring Vietnam War veteran Morris Lavender as he marked his 80th birthday.

Lavender, the organization's longest-serving volunteer, spends about one day each week visiting hospice patients and participating in the facility's "Vet to Vet Café" program, where veteran volunteers provide companionship and support to fellow veterans.

After four years of service, the Cherish staff decided to do something special for Lavender: celebrate his 80th birthday surrounded by friends and family.

"I feel very privileged and honored to work with such dedicated and professional people," said Lavender. "The people at Cherish are probably the best group of people I've ever worked with. They're really a friendly and caring group."

"Just by sitting and talking with residents, Morris has developed some close friendships and has made a real difference in their lives," said Krista Harding, volunteer coordinator at Cherish.

As a volunteer with the Cherish "Vet to Vet Café" program, Lavender visits area facilities throughout the year, helping create a welcoming space where veterans can enjoy refreshments, connect, and share their military experiences. "Morris is great at facilitating conversations and getting veterans to open up about whatever is on their minds," said Harding.

When Morris' wife, Wilma, was in hospice, he saw firsthand the compassion and care hospice workers provided during her final days. Inspired by their kindness, he became a hospice volunteer. "They cared for my wife like family," Lavender said. "A few years later, I saw a flyer from Cherish looking for volunteers, and I thought it was my chance to give back. I love making people smile, and it's become my motto. It helps to brighten up their day and lighten up mine," said Lavender, who also recruited his sister to start volunteering at Cherish.

Lavender has spent a lifetime making people smile. For 35 years, he volunteered as a clown, entertaining residents in nursing homes, visiting hospital patients, and helping bring comfort and joy to those who needed it most.

A Springfield, Ohio, resident, Lavender has always stayed active in his community. Over the years, he coached children's gymnastics, volunteered with Junior Achievement, and raised a large family that now includes seven children, 15 grandchildren, 31 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

About Cherish Hospice
Cherish Hospice provides hospice care for terminally ill patients with many types of progressive and chronic diseases. Its philosophy is based on the three pillars of compassion, guidance, and quality of life, and it offers services ranging from nursing and alternative therapies to spiritual support and bereavement counseling. Cherish Hospice has offices in Springfield and Canton, Ohio, and Warsaw, Ind.

Partnered with CHAP, We Honor Veterans, and National Alliance for Care at Home, Cherish provides industry-leading nursing care, ensuring that the patient's physical, mental, and emotional symptoms are addressed. Cherish is hiring: www.cherish-hospice.com/careers. For further information, call (937) 355-7154 or visit www.cherish-hospice.com. To request more information on the Vet-to-Vet Café program, Veterans or their families can contact Cherish Hospice at 937-355-7154 or by email at kharding@cherish-hospice.com.

###

Caption:
Longtime hospice care volunteer and Vietnam War veteran Morris Lavender is celebrating his 80th birthday and four years helping fellow veterans and their families as they undergo hospice care with Cherish Hospice, in Springfield.