

# Donna Hague: Sunrise Center Volunteer

## 1. Where did you grow up?

*I grew up here in the high desert since age 10. My parents worked at the old George Air Force Base and retired there. I started 5<sup>th</sup> grade when we moved here and went to Hook Jr. High, Victor Valley Senior High School, Victor Valley College and Cal State San Bernardino.*

## 2. Tell us about your family.

*I live with my husband of 10 years in Apple Valley. He has 2 adult children and 4 grandchildren ages 1-13. I enjoy them when we get to see them. I have an older brother that lives in Memphis TN area. I have a few cousins and my sister in laws that live there. I don't get to see them as often as I'd like to but we do stay in touch quite often.*

## 3. What are your hobbies?

*I like to do outdoor activities when possible. That can include taking our German shepherd Toby for a walk, going out on our boat at the river or lake or just sitting outside when it's nice out. I like to watch comedies, things that make me laugh, and old black and white movies. I recently just discovered I love to spray paint old faded lawn ornaments! I also like to go out to dinner and shop! A girl thing*

## 4. What is your occupation?

*I'm an LCSW-Licensed Clinical Social Worker. I am licensed by the California State Board of Behavioral Sciences to practice clinical social work-psychotherapy in mental health settings. I've been in this profession since 2006. My primary area of specialization and practice has been in behavioral health and bereavement counseling, support and education. For the past 9 years I have worked at a local medical group where I am still currently employed in addition to contracted positions as a mental health clinical supervisor for post graduate interns accruing their state licensing hours. My 1<sup>st</sup> career was 20+ years in the fitness and health industry as a group exercise instructor, personal trainer and fitness manager.*

5. What made you decide to be a volunteer for our Center?

*There's a saying that 'we heal by helping others.' I've suffered many losses from death in my lifetime, beginning with my 13-year-old stepbrother who was shot and murdered in 1974. I was 17. My next loss was the sudden death of my son Gary, an only child in 1996. He was 20 years old and collapsed from a drug related incident while dirt bike riding. The next loss was my mother's death 3 years later. She was age 74. Her death was more of a natural death as her health began to decline which lead to her dying. My next loss was in 2006 when my husband at the time died. I found him dead on the couch due to a prescribed opiate related death. I was 48 years old. And most recently, 12 months ago, my twin brother Morris, was killed tragically due to a drunk driving accident. He was the 3<sup>rd</sup> car impacted by the drunk driver's car, suffered major brain damage and put on life support until I could get to Memphis to be by his side, at which time, we took him off life support and watched him die. I'm very much in the thick of my grief and mourning with his death. It was after my son's death, a number of years later that I wanted to change professions and to volunteer my services to help, support, inspire and encourage others with coping in their losses, a sort of giving back to the community. Death, loss and grief, is still something that western culture doesn't like to talk about or deal with. So many people, especially children have no voice or support which only complicates their grief and mourning processes. We need to be there for these families, the best way we know how to be. We might be all they have.*