



## CASE STUDY

# Alive Hospice

### Organization Background

Alive Hospice is a nonprofit organization that provides compassionate care and support for terminally ill patients and their families, grief support for adults and children, and education about the end of life. Alive Hospice was founded in 1975, making it the first hospice program in Tennessee and the Southeast, and the first in the nation to provide hospice care in private homes. Alive Hospice is accredited by the Joint Commission and is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

### Background

With 365 volunteers to recruit, screen, evaluate and onboard, Alive Hospice volunteer management is time consuming and complicated. And yet, it's vital for funding due to a Medicare mandate that they utilize volunteers to provide direct patient care equivalent to at least 5% of the direct patient care time provided by paid staff. The volunteer management team must balance ongoing screening and onboarding of new volunteers with the evaluation and recognition of all existing volunteers, which requires a great deal of work and time. In addition, efficiency, accuracy and reporting are vital to ensure compliance, continued accreditation by Joint Commission and funding from Medicare.

### Solution

Sterling Volunteers was engaged as a resource for the streamlined screening service Alive Hospice needed. Leveraging their online technology, volunteer managers easily and quickly dispatch screening invitation emails to current and prospective volunteers. The Sterling Volunteers platform provides the screening results all in one place, shortening the onboarding process and providing valuable reporting capabilities needed for accrediting bodies.

### Results

Alive Hospice realized a more than 50% reduction in onboarding time, thanks to their ability to quickly run required reports. Previously, reports could take 10+ days to create versus 5 days today – and they're available in a single dashboard. The volunteer management team at Alive Hospice now reviews and tracks the status of all people in all stages of the screening and onboarding process and is able to spend more time on recruitment efforts.

Prior to partnering with Sterling Volunteers, Alive Hospice started the screening process as soon as a prospective volunteer expressed interest, incurring a \$45 up-front cost that was lost if they later changed their mind. With 8-12 volunteers onboarding a month, this can represent up to and beyond \$7,000 per year – savings important for a volunteer organization. Now, the screening process is triggered by the volunteer who fills out the online application. Volunteers are also given the option to pay for their own report and many choose to do so, saving additional money for organization. Finally, Alive Hospice saves costs on first year volunteers who already have a current background check with Sterling Volunteers. They simply need to share it with their Fast-Pass to enable Alive Hospice to have free access to the up-to-date report.

### Key Highlight

A large number of volunteers, reporting obligations and volunteer management requirements created significant resource challenges for Alive Hospice. The Sterling Volunteers platform enabled quicker, more cost effective screening as well as greater efficiency onboarding the most qualified volunteers. Significant cost savings were achieved by eliminating unnecessary screenings and leveraging reports shared by pre-screened volunteers. Improved reporting capabilities enable continued accreditation by the Joint Commission – key to Alive Hospice's livelihood. All of these improvements enable Alive Hospice to deliver an enhanced patient experience via qualified volunteer support for all those in need.



*Using Sterling Volunteers' platform helps us increase our recruitment efforts so we can achieve our Medicare staffing targets and Joint Commission reporting requirements without the burden of the extra work. Additionally, the support and customer care we receive provides quick and effective resolution to any issues we have, freeing up the team's time to provide the best possible experience for our volunteer body."*

**- Renee Wisby,  
Director of Volunteer Services,  
Alive Hospice**