

so inspirational

A VERY SPECIAL CHAPLAIN: STEPHANIE GAMEROS *comforts patients in myriad ways.*



Hear the Music

To learn more about Stephanie Gameros—and listen to audio and video clips of her work, as well as how to request her services—visit singingchaplain.org.

Spreading Joy

SINGING CHAPLAIN BRINGS SOLACE AND SMILES TO PATIENTS

How many people get to do what they love every day? Stephanie Gameros does, by combining her calling to ministry with her passion for music as a singing chaplain.

“I’m so blessed to have found a way to connect my two loves: singing and people,” she says. “I want to follow what gives me joy in my life, and what I do is the most fun in the world.”

Gameros visits Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital every weekend and, like her spiritual colleagues across St. Joseph Health System-Sonoma County, is an inter-faith chaplain. “That means we value and recognize everyone’s faith traditions, even if they don’t have one,” she explains.

THE HEALING TOUCH OF MUSIC

Every patient is visited by a chaplain, but Gameros is the only one who arrives with a guitar slung across her back. She spends time with patients and prays with them if they wish. At the end of her visit, she asks if they’d like to hear a song.

“It’s always kind of fun, because I bet they’ve been wondering the whole time, ‘Why does she have that guitar?’” Gameros says.

She has a repertoire of around 400 songs that includes folk, country, oldies, reggae, hymns, children’s songs, pop music and songs in Spanish. Even people who speak other languages express delight as soon as Gameros begins to play. “Music can cross language barriers,” she explains.

Gameros firmly believes in the healing power of music, and says studies have shown how it can instantly calm the listener. She’s also seen first-hand how profoundly music can touch someone.

“There was a man with Alzheimer’s disease who was unable to speak a full sentence that made sense to us, but as soon as I began playing ‘Amazing Grace,’ he sang every verse with me,” Gameros says. “He could express himself through song, which was amazing, and it shows how music goes beyond words to reach us on an even deeper level.” **WRITTEN BY AMY LYNN SMITH**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF NEWTON