



Durham  
Hospice  
Services

# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

Hospice Services Community Newsletter for Durham Region



## What is in a year?

VON Durham Hospice Services welcomed our new manager Cheryl McFarlane. Cheryl comes to Hospice Services with a wide scope of hospice palliative care experiences; clinically and in leadership.

The year also brought the reality of a global pandemic and the increased need for community supports.

Hospice Services adapted to new modes of delivering programs and services to our clients. Our staff and volunteers helped to ensure our clients were and continue to be supported and remain connected to community.

Our commitment and focus to provide high quality palliative care to our clients and their families is the bedrock of our work. In the following pages you will learn more about some of our progress in the past year, with more to come!

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Keep an eye on our social  
media for updates on:

- **National Carers Day**
- **National Volunteer Week**
- **Hospice Palliative Care  
Week**

### Let's Connect!

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## A Message from Cheryl McFarlane

Manager, Home and Community Care  
Hospice Services

### *Writing the Next Chapter*

*When the pandemic first impacted our hospice services and programs, our team rose to the challenge remaining essential to the care of our clients throughout Durham Region. Our support remained necessary to the emotional, practical, social and existential well-being of those we serve, in addition to the systems navigation, palliative pain and symptom management and education support we provide in communities throughout Durham Region. Hospice Services adjusted, adapted, and planned from how we previously delivered our services and supports, to new applications and formats under growing needs. Day Hospice went virtual, sustaining connections and support between peers in a safe space maintaining no one should have to go through a threat of illness alone. Our incredible volunteers have been steadfast in sharing hundreds of hours with our clients virtually or by telephone. Growing Grief and Bereavement needs and interest in support groups were serendipitously met using distance eliminating technology like Zoom, and reaching into every community. Our Community Palliative Educations under virtual format saw classes at maximum.*

*We are now looking forward to our new normal - reinvigorated with the promise of new opportunities, greater collaborations, and new service additions in supporting our clients, families, caregivers and communities.*

*A sincere Thank You to those who support us! We could not do our work without the support and gifts from our volunteers, donors, and community collaborators.*

## Join us for our upcoming workshop on Advance Care Planning - a conversation that can make a big difference in your life.

Having a conversation about the end-of-life care you or a loved one would prefer when the time comes, is not easy – but it is important. Nearly 80% of people cannot make their own decisions when this care is needed. Most think their family members or doctor(s) will know what to do when the time comes, but this is rarely, if ever the case. What is needed is a well-communicated care plan and a decision maker acting on your behalf, should you become unable to voice your care decisions in the future.

Hospice Services is offering two workshop sessions in celebration of **Advance Care Planning Day on Friday April 16th 2021**, from 10:00-11:00 AM and 2:00-3:00 PM via Zoom. These sessions will help provide more understanding on the benefits of Advance Care Planning and the need to have conversations that lead to decisions and planning for end-of-life care. To register, please call us: 905-240-4522. Participant workbooks and materials are included at no cost.

### Benefits of Advance Care Planning



Helps ensure you receive care that is consistent with your beliefs, values and preferences.



Helps lessen the stress, anxiety and depression of loved ones or family members



Reduces non-beneficial transfers to acute care and unwanted interventions



Can improve end-of-life care, and person and family satisfaction with care



## Our Bereavement Support Groups provide a safe space for those who need it.

Dealing with the loss of a loved one can be a difficult and lonely journey for many people. Grief can leave them feeling unheard and isolated. The current environment has only compounded the difficulties of loss.

Our Bereavement Support groups are facilitated by peers who understand what it means to have lost a loved one. Participants of our support groups often find a sense of comfort and understanding being surrounded by others who have travelled or are travelling a similar path.

Over the past year our Support groups have taken place in a virtual setting with the help and understanding of our extremely dedicated volunteers and incredible clients. It has been wonderful to witness thoughtful interactions and lasting connections being made between participants.

**Our Spring groups start in April**, run 8 weeks, and are facilitated by trained volunteers: **Daytime Spousal Loss**

Tuesdays April 13-June 1, 1:30-3 PM; **Mixed Loss** Tuesdays April 13-June 1, 6:30-8 PM; **Daytime Parental Loss**

Wednesdays April 14-June 2, 1:30-3 PM; **Evening Spousal Loss** Thursdays April 15-June 3, 6:30-8 PM; **Evening**

**Parental Loss** Thursdays April 15-June 3, 6:15-7:45 PM. Please call us if you would like to join a group: 905-240-4522.

## Day Hospice Provides Connection, Peer Engagement and Continual Learning

Day Hospice is a weekly, full-day program filled with fun, meaningful, and engaging activities for participants. It is a program which offers social interaction, peer support, and companionship in a group setting. It also provides caregivers with an opportunity of respite in a space where they can share and receive support.

In-person group sessions included sunny days by the lake, pumpkin bowling in the fall, and craft sessions on colder days. Over the past year Day Hospice has been adapted in a virtual setting to ensure community connections were maintained. A benefit of Day Hospice has been the expansion of our reach to support clients who previously might not have been able to join our in-person group sessions.

A virtual setting has enabled our participants to explore the world in a different way. A Royal Ontario Museum exhibition allowed us a journey to Madagascar where we learned how the Malagasy people masterfully weave beautiful and artful pieces of silk by hand!

If you think you, or someone you know, might benefit from our Day Hospice program, please give us a call. Our program is run by staff and volunteers and is offered at no cost to participants. Transportation assistance is also available. We are proud to participate in Charitable Gaming through Delta Bingo & Gaming. This ongoing financial support allows us to offer much needed programs and services.



## Some great news for our clients: Our new office furniture has arrived!

VON Durham Hospice Services is grateful to the Durham Community Foundation for granting us the funds needed to outfit our counselling, meeting, and education rooms with new furniture that meets COVID-19 infection prevention standards. Thank you for helping us be more prepared for our community.



# What Makes A Great Community Hospice Volunteer?

Hospice volunteers are an essential part of our hospice services care team, offering companionship and support to those in our community living with the impact of a life-limiting illness and/or diagnosis. Here are some of the qualities we look for in our community-based Hospice Services volunteers:

- **A desire to serve others compassionately in their community; wherever they reside in Durham Region.**
- **A keen respect for all cultural customs, ways of life and religious views.**
- **Strong self-awareness and understanding of personal limits.**
- **Consistency and punctuality: our clients rely and look forward to their time with their volunteers.**
- **Flexibility: your first match with a client may consist of quiet presence or reading to the client.**

All of our hospice services volunteers complete the Hospice Palliative Care Association of Ontario's (HPCO) volunteer training program, and take part in two orientation sessions with VON Durham Hospice Services staff prior to their first client match. Subsequent to these initial orientation sessions, additional training and education sessions are offered throughout the year on various topics related to hospice palliative care for our volunteer's continued development and learning. Our team engages with our volunteers on a regular basis, and supports along each volunteer's journey to ensure the most rewarding experience possible.

If you would like more information regarding our volunteer program, please contact us at (905) 240-4522.

## *Join us in celebrating our nominee for the June Callwood Award: Ken Crichton*

In this issue we want to recognize our 2020 June Callwood Award nominee, Ken Crichton. Ken has been actively involved in our Bereavement program over the past 10 years touching the lives of over 105 clients, and has served close to 1,600 hours of service.

Ken is a kind, approachable and reliable person always willing to help where needed. Ken openly and honestly shares his story of grief allowing him to form genuine connections with clients as he supports them through their grief journeys. He is also a fantastic ambassador throughout the Durham Region - passionately informing others of our services, events, and volunteer opportunities.



Hospice Services Volunteer

Ken goes above his duties to help other volunteers to attend various events. This creates stronger bonds amongst volunteers and positively impacts attendance in programs. He is encouraging when mentoring new volunteers, guiding them through our techniques until they are comfortable and able to confidently support clients on their own.

Ken has been a true asset to our Hospice Services volunteer program. Without dedicated volunteers like Ken, our organization would not grow and support those in need.

(Please print)

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