



Hospice News

Issue 2  June 2020

Supporting People, Changing Lives

Your Support in Action

What happens to your donations when they are received by Hospice? Well...

Your gifts provided the resources that supported a mom worried about her child's grief. Your donation helped a recently widowed woman understand the complex feelings of loss. Because you supported Hospice, a resident in a long-term care facility was connected by phone to a volunteer. The resources that you share equip us to provide virtual training for our volunteers.

This is what happens to your donations – we use them to raise the quality of someone's life.

You Make Hospice Happen!



Image by Silvio Zimmermann from Pixabay

Quotable



"I have had the honour, pleasure, and privilege of attending various people on the last and most sacred journey of their lives while sitting with them as they transition from this life to the next."

~ Murray Cowan
(and grandson Masen, dog Dora),
Hospice Volunteers

iPad Mania

A significant challenge created by Covid 19 is the social isolation experienced by many elders in our communities.

Those living in long-term care have few, or no face-to-face visitors due to Covid 19 protocols. Consequently, loneliness can be a significant barrier to wellness.

In response, Hospice is borrowing an idea from Grand Prairie Palliative Care Society: virtual visits. Through the generosity of many funders, we are purchasing iPads for elders. This program will provide the opportunity for virtual visits through Skype etc., as well as access to the online world of learning and exploration. iPads will also be available for those isolated in their homes.

Connecting with Hospice

Volunteer Coordinator, Joy LeBlanc:
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Hospice Society
OF CAMROSE AND DISTRICT

Apprenticeship

U.S. Author and psychotherapist Francis Weller describes our relationship to grief as *an apprenticeship with sorrow*. He states, “Grief works us in profound ways, reshaping us moment by moment in the heat of loss. We are also asked to work grief and to take up our apprenticeship with fidelity and love.” (*The Threshold Between Loss and Revelation*.)

He goes on to suggest that grief is more than an emotion; it is a fundamental human experience. It is one of a number of states of being which homo sapiens have the capacity to access. To navigate and integrate loss then, Weller says that Sorrow invites us to learn from it, to *apprentice* ourselves to it.

In this relationship, sorrow guides us through the chaos of emotional waves, through the fracturing of life after a catastrophic loss. This is not a gentle or kind transition; this is metamorphosis. Like the caterpillar to the butterfly, we too in our grieving experience the utter disassemblance of life as we knew it, and the subsequent regrowth into a new version of ourselves.

I close with Weller’s wisdom:

“This apprenticeship is, at heart, about the shaping of elders, the ones capable of meeting the pain and suffering of the world with a dignified and robust bearing.”



Artist Unknown

From Our Volunteer Coordinator

Play Dates for Adults: Navigation CARE Volunteers

In our society it is recognized that children need more than just their family; they need friends. They need peers with whom to have fun, to share stories, to play sports; peers with whom to do all kinds of things.

As adults we continue surrounding ourselves with friends as well as family. When we are able to be mobile and have no physical limitations, this is quite easy to do. It is not always the case, though, for people who, through health issues are confined more and more to their homes. Often, families become caregivers of people they love. Caregivers are amazing people, but in caring for their loved ones they sometimes forget that they don’t have to do it alone.

There are amazing Nav-CARE volunteers within Hospice who are willing to have “play dates” with the person whose life has become more limited. These *volunteer friends* do for the person what we all need: They broaden their world and allow the family to take a break.

Independence is so valued in our society that often families feel they are responsible for caring for their loved ones alone. Caring can include forming relationships with volunteers who are willing to come to spend time with them. They may listen to their stories, bake, garden, walk, read, play cards, sing, sit quietly while a loved one naps or goes for coffee or engage in whatever is meaningful to the individual they are visiting. The volunteer visitor is the friend who unconditionally accepts the person just as they are.

There is a beauty to having a Nav-CARE volunteer begin visiting early on in a client’s decline in health. Volunteers can help navigate health care systems and provide direction to other resources as health declines and other needs arise. All the volunteers in the Hospice Society of Camrose and District are able to continue having a loving presence through an early life limiting condition, to end of life care and then as grief companions to bereaved family members.

The gift the family and caregivers give the volunteers is allowing them to share their compassionate hearts with the family’s loved one. Anyone may call the Hospice Society and ask for an “adult play date” with a kind, compassionate volunteer.

Mark Your Calendar



- ☀ We are planning a series of Facebook Live/Zoom education opportunities for the public that will include such topics as: *Supporting Grieving Children; Sitting with dying: a volunteer's story; Impact of Social Isolation on Elders; What is Thanatology?* Plus, about 15 more. Watch our website for the upcoming schedule of these “lunch ‘n learn” sessions, rolling out mid-July (hopefully).
- ☀ We are back in our Mirror Lake office spaces and slowly moving into socially-distanced, face-to-face meetings.
- ☀ Volunteer training schedule (partially offered virtually) will be set soon – watch our website for updates.