

FALL/WINTER 2020

INSIGHT



STORIES OF LOVE AND LIFE AT STEDMAN COMMUNITY HOSPICE

Lauren's love lives on

"She touched every part of our lives"



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- **Home Run For Hospice pays tribute to great dad and great care**
- **SC Johnson funds Hospice needs**

Remembering Jamie Corke:

Home Run For Hospice honours local baseball hero and dad

Although Brandon Corke only ever saw his father play in one game, he is keenly aware of the contributions his dad made to local baseball.

Jamie Corke was a star outfielder with the Brantford Red Sox in the 1970s and 80s, and went on to coach and umpire. He left a legacy in Brantford as a member of the city's sports hall of fame and was named one of the top 100 IBL players of all-time in 2018.

Jamie passed away at Stedman Community Hospice on December 6th, 2019 after a brief battle with cancer.

Brandon remembers being with his dad on trips to the grocery store and shopping mall and

often being stopped by adoring fans wanting to reminisce about Jamie's past glories on the ball field.

This October, Brandon arranged a Red Sox Alumni charity baseball game in honour of his dad, which raised more than \$12,000 for Stedman Community Hospice.

"Just the experience we were allowed to have at the Hospice – the comfort, the visiting, the atmosphere that just really allows for those last days of life to not be something filled with a hospital room," says Brandon.

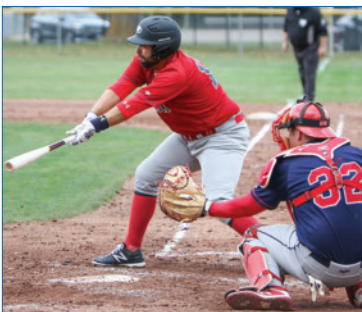
"The five days he spent there were a blessing," he shared.

Home Run for Hospice was the only game to be held at Arnold



Anderson Stadium in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of social distancing regulations, attendance at the game was very limited, but a live YouTube feed meant fans could watch from home.

In addition to the baseball fundraiser, the Corke family, including Brandon, his mom Vicki, and sister Becky, raised more than \$4,000 during Hike In Your 'Hood For Hospice in August.



What's your virtual fundraiser?

Brandon Corke's dad, Jamie, was synonymous with the Brantford Rex Sox baseball team. When Jamie died, the Corke family honoured their dad by fundraising during Hike In Your 'Hood For Hospice. Brandon felt there was more that could be done, and he was right!

Inspired by his dad's commitment to local baseball and grateful for the care he received at Stedman Community Hospice, Brandon launched the 1st Annual Home Run For Hospice, raising more than \$12,000 with a special ball game that fans could watch live on YouTube.

YOU CAN BE LIKE BRANDON!

Take an activity you like and turn it into a fundraiser! The possibilities are virtually endless!

Virtual Fundraising Ideas

- trivia night
- talent show / open mic
- video game marathon
- garage sale
- yoga / fitness class
- paint night
- art class
- cooking class
- birthday fundraiser
- donate in lieu of gifts
- storytelling
- create and sell for charity (quilts, mittens, hats, socks)

Call us to share your ideas!

519.751.7096, x 2476

Be like Brandon.

Legacy building:

How will you remember me?

The Legacy program at Stedman Community Hospice was developed primarily for young families to provide children with memories of their mom or dad after the parent had passed away, but Clinical Manager Kerri VanSickle is hoping to see the program expand to include all patients.

"We've been doing legacy building activities as the need, or request has arisen," says VanSickle, "but because the mental health benefits are so great, helping families through the grieving process, we're hoping to make it a standard program for everyone in our care."

VanSickle says legacy building can include activities such as letter-writing, card creation, and voice recordings, often with the items being given to children at significant points in their lives, such as a 16th birthday, graduation or marriage, as specified by the parent before dying.

Other families request molds of interlocking hands, capturing those fine details unique to each person. The molds serve as a source of connectivity to a loved one after their death.

The signature item of the Hospice's legacy programming is the handmade hug blanket. Measurements are taken of the patient's arms and shoulder width, (their hug span), and using those measurements a blanket is created by a member of the Hospice team and given to a child

to symbolize their parent's hug.

Hug blankets can also be created for the patient by a loved one to go with them to their burial, to symbolize that even after death, they are being hugged by someone who loves them.

"As you can imagine, these blankets have enormous therapeutic value for someone who is grieving the loss of an immediate family member and at the same time provides peace and comfort to the patient in their final days," says VanSickle.

"One of the common fears of dying children is that no one will remember them when they are gone. The program allows them to create special items for loved ones that will be with the family for years to come. It goes a long way in helping relieve their anxiety," says VanSickle.

The cost of materials has prevented the Hospice from making the program available to all patients, but VanSickle says the mental wellness benefits it provides to people of all ages can't be overestimated.

"We hope to begin expanding the program to include a greater range of ages within our residential hospice and over time, have it available to all patients. Our ultimate goal is to make the legacy building program available to everyone in our care - residential hospice as well as our community outreach," says VanSickle.

"Ideally, we would have a binder



Hug blankets are handcrafted by Hospice staff using the patient's arm and shoulder measurements. The blankets are given to a loved one as designated by the patient to represent their hug after the patient has passed away.

with images of various legacy-building items and activities that we would present to patients as part of the admissions process, when they are most likely to be well enough to participate and give direction on their wishes."



Artwork featuring handprints of family members, including the person who has passed away, is a popular legacy item.



Mother of three leaves legacy of love and selflessness



On September 8, a determined Lauren Barnes lifted her young, cancer-riddled body out of bed and drove her eldest daughter to Brantford Christian School for her first day of Grade One. The following day, the 32 year old mother of Everly, Maielle and Eden, passed away at Stedman Community Hospice with her children, husband and parents by her side.

While it may surprise most of us to imagine that scenario, it did not surprise Lauren's husband, Russ. Diagnosed in October of 2019 with rectal cancer that had spread to her liver, the beautiful young mom was given just months to live. And live, she did, creating beautiful memories for her children and husband, immortalized in dozens of photos and videos.

"She didn't start making the most of every moment when she

received the cancer diagnosis, she had always been that way," says Russ.

"She always cherished every moment. That's who she was."

Lauren was seven months pregnant at the time of her cancer diagnosis. On October 27, 2019, two days after receiving the devastating news, Lauren went into labour while at the hospital

home healthy and happy in early December.

Lauren and Russ were together for 10 years, after first meeting on an online dating site. Having just completed university on a golf scholarship, Russ suggested Northfield Driving Range as the location of their first date, thinking it would be a good opportunity to show off his golf

"Being a mom was the best part of her, the part she took the most pride in, and frankly, the part she was best at."

for treatment, and gave birth prematurely to a little girl they named Eden.

Over the next few weeks, the family struggled to come to terms with Lauren's terminal illness and Russ took time off from work to be with his wife. Little Eden spent five weeks in the neonatal unit of the hospital, arriving

skills, but says it was he who was blown away.

"I remember telling Lauren on that first date that I had friends in the NHL and friends who were semi-professional golfers, but I didn't envy them at all because none of them had what I wanted."

As it turned out, Lauren wanted the same things Russ did – to



marry her best friend and raise a family to the best of her ability. She later shared with Russ that the hopes and dreams he conveyed to her on their first date resonated loudly with her because they matched her own.

"She captured my heart that day," says Russ. "Although I had not grown up with faith the way Lauren had, I truly felt God's presence. I knew this was no ordinary encounter."

"When I think of the jobs we've had that paid really good money, but were putting us on a path we didn't want to be on, we both felt so strongly that we would be happier with less if it meant we could be at home raising our children and being together. That was really important to us. Lauren was the smartest person I ever met, and could have done anything she wanted, but being a mom was the best part of her, the part she took the most pride in,

and frankly, the part she was best at," Russ shared.

"She took a job as the custodian of Brantford Christian School, so she could be more involved in family life. I went to work at Zamboni here in Brantford for the same reason."

Church and faith was a very important part of Lauren's upbringing and Russ was eager and happy to embrace a life of faith when he married Lauren in August, 2011.

"Faith and great support from amazing family and friends are the reasons I am able to get through this," says Russ.

"Wes Coburn, the Spiritual Care Coordinator at Stedman Community Hospice is someone I have leaned on through all of this. He's a big reason that I am able to keep it together."

As part of the Hospice's Grief & Bereavement Program, grief support is available to family members from the moment a life-limiting illness has been diagnosed in a loved one.

"I've always been a sensitive sort," Russ shared, through tears.

"Wes was someone who validated and encouraged my need to express my grief openly. I'm strongest when I can cry. As men, society often teaches us that it's not okay for a man to cry, that to hold it in was to be a man. I never felt that was true. I think it takes more courage to cry, to be vulnerable. It has been extremely helpful to have someone older and wiser than me tell me that it's exactly what I need to do to heal."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Stedman Community Hospice saw the number of patients receiving outpatient care increase significantly, largely due to the fact that limits had been set by the Ministry of Health on how many visitors a patient in a health care facility like a residential hospice could have. Receiving hospice care in their own home allowed the Barnes family to stay together until the last possible moment.

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Dr. Bernie McNeil and other members of the Hospice management team, recognizing that Lauren would eventually need the 24-hour care that residential hospice provides, devised a plan that would enable Hospice staff to observe government-mandated social distancing rules and still keep the family together during Lauren's final days.

To address their special circumstances, a large room off the Hospice kitchen, normally used as a child-centred family room was fully disinfected and set up as a patient room, with sleeping accommodations for loved ones. A separate entrance was made available that would allow loved ones to come and go without entering the common areas of the Hospice.

Determined to stay home long enough to see her child off to her first day of Grade One, Lau-

ren spent just a short time in the room before passing away.

"Even though we didn't spend much time in this room, we were so grateful to the Hospice team for coming up with a perfect solution for our family," says Russ.

"The good news is that going forward, we now have this option available for young families in residential hospice, making it possible for children to be with their mom or dad until the end," says Elaine Calvert, Vice President of St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre and Manager of Stedman Community Hospice.

"Lauren resisted leaving her home until the very end, even when it had become obvious in her physical appearance that the cancer was taking its toll."

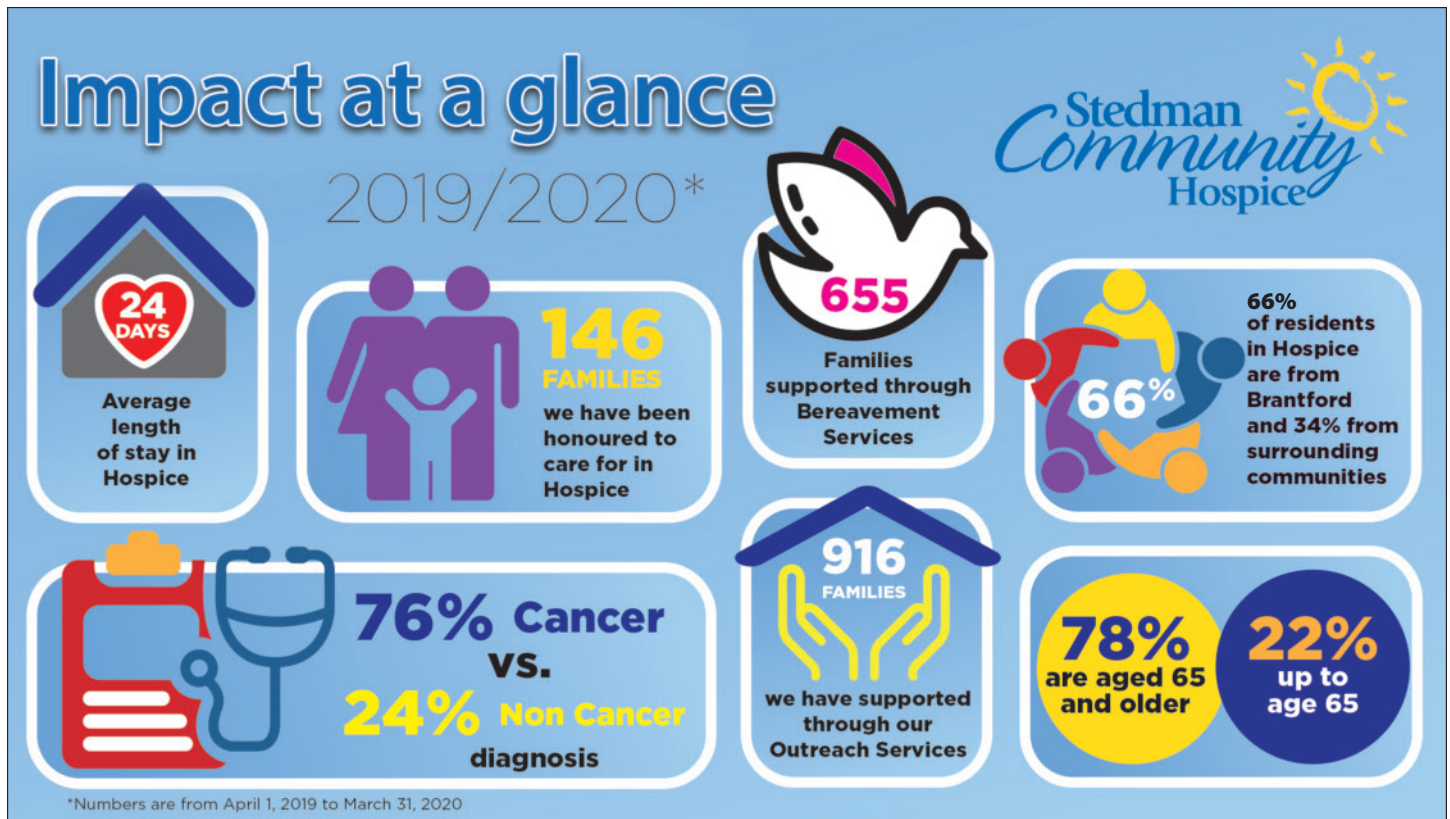
"She still found the energy. Even through her treatments, she poured so much into her kids everyday – artwork,

photos, videos."

"Over the last year I took a lot of videos of all those special moments she spent with the girls. I was documenting how she wanted her legacy to go, which was her just giving everything she had to her kids. I also knew that years down the road, I needed my kids to fully understand who their mom was," says Russ.

"Even though right now I am consumed with her loss, I am clear on one thing: we need to remember this beautiful creation and honour her in every way. She touched so many lives. Some people could live 90 years and not have an impact. She wasn't one of them. I was blessed to have known her, and I thank God for that every day."

Please visit us online at sjlc.ca/news for an expanded version of this story.



SC Johnson funds call bell system and fire panel at Stedman Community Hospice

Thanks to a grant from SC Johnson, Stedman Community Hospice and St. Joseph's Long-Term Care Home will see significant improvements this fall.

The \$215,000 grant to St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation, the official fundraising organization for Stedman Community Hospice and St. Joseph's Long -Term Care, will fund the installation of a new call bell system and fire panel currently underway at Stedman Community Hospice, and pay for new beds for St. Joseph's Long-Term Care.

The Hospice project, at a cost of \$170,000, will provide necessary infrastructure to support patient care and make possible the addition of a new patient room, for a total of 11.

"We are extremely grateful to SC Johnson for their continued support, enabling us to put into place quality improvements that not only support patient care, but allow us to build capacity and provide care to more people," says Julie Powell, President & CEO of St. Joseph's Lifecare



Foundation.

When the Hospice was built in 2014, fire panels were not required as part of fire code regulations, but this has since become mandatory in commercial buildings and health care facilities.

In addition to raising the alarm, fire panels set into motion a series of alerts that include notifying the fire department of a potential fire and pinpointing the area from which the smoke or fire originates. It will work in tandem with the Hospice's already existing sprinkler system, potentially saving lives and

minimizing property damage in the event of a fire.

The call bell system will allow for more efficient response to patient needs and assist families in getting bedside assistance quickly.

SC Johnson is the Hospice's largest corporate donor, with donations totalling more than \$1.8 million since 1981.

SC Johnson is a privately held manufacturer of household cleaning supplies and other consumer brands.

Let it grow, let it grow, let it grow!

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Thanks to an anonymous donor, if you join the Monthly Giving Club for as little as \$15 per month during the period of November 15 to Dec 31, your donation will be matched!
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Thank you for your words of encouragement and support

A selection of notes received from our donors for our front line staff

Thank you for your good work. Be safe. The entire community appreciates your service - Ted D.

Thank you for the risk you take every day, for the sacrifices you're making at home - K.M.

To the wonderful nurses & caregivers who are helping at this most difficult time
Thank you! The world has changed so much - Kim L.

Dear frontline workers, I'm sending a smile your way and a big cheer! We are all in this together - Daphne C.

Be her daughter.

We'll help care for your mom.



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