

FALL/WINTER 2025

INSIGHT

Stedman
Community
Hospice Unstoppable
Compassion

STORIES OF LOVE AND LIFE AT STEDMAN COMMUNITY HOSPICE



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Advance Care Planning a compassionate gift for families and loved ones

Have you ever thought about who would speak for you if you couldn't speak for yourself? Advance Care Planning (ACP) is more than just a set of documents; it is a meaningful process of reflecting on what matters most, sharing your values and wishes and naming a Substitute Decision-Maker (SDM) who can speak for you if you cannot. These conversations bring peace of mind and reduce stress for families, ensuring that future healthcare decisions reflect your deeply held beliefs and preferences. In Ontario, [AdvanceCarePlanningOntario.ca](https://www.advancecareplanningontario.ca) provides a clear five-step process:

- identify your SDM
- learn about your health
- think about your values
- talk with loved ones
- keep the conversation going

Starting early allows decisions to be guided by clarity rather than crisis, helping SDMs feel confident and supported.

Here at Stedman Community Hospice our Palliative Care Outreach Team offers compassionate support to patients facing serious illness, as well as support for their caregivers. The team creates a safe space to explore values and prepare for future decisions during in-home assessments. Their supportive presence helps families navigate uncertainty with dignity, ensuring that planning becomes a conversation rooted in care, not fear. Families often tell us how much relief they feel once these conversations have started.

Digital platforms like [Take Care Together](#) also make it easier to document and securely share wishes, personal values, and important healthcare documents. Having these preferences easily acces-

sible prevents confusion, minimizes family conflict, and ensures your voice is heard when it matters most.

Additionally, resources like the [Waiting Room Revolution](#) podcast, led by Dr. Sammy Winemaker and Dr. Hsien Seow, complement these efforts by offering a practical "7 Keys" framework to help families stay hopeful and prepared during illness. One principle, Invite Yourself, encourages individuals and caregivers to actively participate in healthcare conversations rather than waiting passively.

Their companion workbook [Hope for the Best, Plan for the Rest](#) and [Workshop in a Box](#) toolkit provide practical tools for both families and professionals to strengthen advance care planning discussions.

Advance care planning is not only about preparing for the future — it's about living well today. By starting the conversation now, you give your loved ones peace of mind, clarity, and the confidence to honor your wishes when it matters most.

Advance Care Planning Resources

Please visit our website at <https://www.sjlc.ca/insight-magazine> to download a digital copy of this article, which includes links to some of the resources mentioned.

**Advance Care
Planning Canada**

Get your free Advance Care Planning Toolkit

Download the digital version of this newsletter at the link provided above and simply click on this space to get your free toolkit from Advance Care Planning Canada.

Donor Support Makes Cost-Free Compassionate Care Possible

Stedman Community Hospice relies on community support to fund beds, food, nursing services, bereavement programs and so much more.

Please use the enclosed donation slip to make your gift today or donate online at [sjlc.ca](https://www.sjlc.ca)

Hospice gardens becoming a standard of excellence in therapeutic program development

The outdoor spaces at Stedman Community Hospice are thriving, with restorative environments that provide daily enrichment and serenity for patients, residents, families, and staff alike. The gardens have also provided an ideal backdrop and creative palette for the development of a Horticultural Therapy Education Series, led by Stedman Community Hospice Horticultural Therapist Lynn Leach.

Over the past two years, Lynn, a therapeutic landscape designer, developed and delivered the series, attracting students from diverse backgrounds across North America.

The program, approved by the Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association (CHTA), is currently the only in-person HT education course in Ontario, and one of only two in Canada. Graduates of the program receive their mandatory Horticultural Therapy Training to obtain their professional designation with the CHTA.

This work caught the eye of others in the Ontario hospice network, and in May, Lynn was invited to present at the Hospice Palliative Care Ontario annual conference.

Since returning from the conference, other hospices have sought Lynn's guidance and expertise for the development of similar programs at their own sites.

"We are very proud of our beautiful therapeutic spaces and Lynn's program," says Hospice Director, Kerri VanSickle.

"Lynn's work with other hospices will no doubt result in other great therapeutic spaces being developed across Ontario, and that is great news for hospice care, in general," Kerri added.

"Beyond their visual appeal, the gardens offer comfort and solace, making them an integral component of the care we provide."

Kerri says that it's the donors and volunteers who make this care possible.

We hope they are equally proud of the gardens and what it means to patients and families," she stated.



This spring, thanks to grants from the Samuel W. Stedman Foundation and private donors, privacy blinds on the hospice's two patios were installed, increasing the enjoyment of the gardens for patients and their families.

"The privacy blinds allow for protection from the elements, but patients and their loved ones still have an unobstructed view of the gardens," says Julie Powell, President and CEO of St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation.

"While those using the patio can view the garden expanse, anyone strolling through the gardens are not able to observe people on the patio," she added.

"The privacy feature was an important consideration for us. Many patients choose to live their final moments on the patio, surrounded by nature. The addition of the blinds ensures the family has the privacy they need during these final moments together," Julie stated.

As we continue to nurture these spaces, we are gratified to witness the healing and comfort it brings to those in our care.

Registration is now open for the 2025-2026 HT Education Series, offering a new group of students the chance to discover how horticulture therapy—through specialized techniques, programming, and management—can transform lives. For more information please visit the Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association's website at <https://chta.ca/students/>.



Hospice team makes dream come true for the Magalas family

There are only a few things in life significant enough to be called milestones, and some of them may even be called momentous. Among them we might count the first day of school, graduating high school, or falling in love for the first time.

For a young man, not many things rank as high as the mother-son dance on your wedding day and newly engaged Travis Magalas had envisioned it many times. Now his mom's advanced cancer was putting this dream into doubt.

As children of Laura and Eugene Magalas of Waterford, Travis and his younger siblings Brooke and Garrett grew up working on the family farm.

"Farm families are different from regular families," says Travis.

"Working on a farm, you spend all your time around your parents and your siblings. You're rarely away from each other, and Mom was always right there with us. She worked hard in the office keeping the books and answering the phone, and in the middle of the day she drove out to the fields to deliver lunch to everyone. She was as much a part of the operation as any of us."

Travis says the strong family bond meant that when he was planning to propose to his girlfriend, Rochelle, this past March, he asked his parents to join him and Rochelle's parents in Florida to be present when he popped the question. Having fought

and conquered breast cancer years ago, Laura, 55, was now battling bone cancer but was well enough to make the trip.

Stedman Community Hospice's outreach team had been helping Laura manage her pain and symptoms from home since September, 2023, but her husband recalls that not long after returning from Florida Laura's cancer progressed and her pain reached new heights.

Dr. Bernadette McNeil, Laura's outreach physician, felt it was time for Laura to transfer to Hankinson House, Stedman Community Hospice's inpatient hospice in Brantford, where she could receive full-time care.

"In hearing that, I broke down," Eugene shared.

"When you hear those words, you know the day of reckoning is not far off."

"Dr. Bernie, in witnessing that moment, did her best to comfort me, assuring me I was doing what was best for my wife," says Eugene.

Laura was admitted on Thursday, May 14 and Eugene wasn't sure she would make it through the day.

"Her pain did not let up, it was off the charts, but within 24 hours the staff was able to bring it under control and she was comfortable," says Eugene.

Travis and Rochelle had set their wedding date for Saturday, August 9 but it was looking less and less likely that Laura would be alive to experience it.



Rochelle placed a call to the Hospice on Friday and asked if there was any chance that she and Travis could be married in the Hospice gardens the following day. The answer was a resounding yes.

"Supporting families in making memories and living life to the fullest for as long as possible is a fundamental part of hospice care," says Hospice Director Kerri VanSickle.

"When a request like this is made, we will move mountains to see that it happens."

Harnessing a dedicated team of volunteers allowed the Hospice to bring wedding plans to fruition without missing a beat in patient care.

"The Hospice was a beautiful gift for Laura and our family - it was a step towards Heaven."

"It was like magic," says Rochelle.

"Our close friends and family and the photographer all made themselves available to be with us. Hospice volunteers worked away in the kitchen to see that we had a lovely reception for our guests. And when my dress arrived, it didn't need a single adjustment. Everything just came together," Rochelle added.

Eugene says it was a blessing that Laura was at the Hospice and receiving around-the-clock care.



"Because she was no longer in pain, she was able to sit in a wheelchair and be fully present," says Eugene.

"The hospice was a beautiful gift for Laura and our family - it was a step towards Heaven."

Travis says he will always treasure the memory of dancing with his mom on his wedding day.

"I was so scared she wouldn't make it to August 9, and thanks to the amazing people at the Hospice, she didn't have to," says Travis.

Laura Magalas died peacefully at Stedman Community Hospice on June 23, with the comfort of knowing her son's greatest wish had been fulfilled.

Community Outreach Program: Measures of Impact

2024-2025 Data



762

Patients referred to the Palliative Care Outreach Program



192

Individuals referred to Grief and Bereavement services



2766

Physician / nurse visits in the home



1200

After hours calls from families and agency nurses to our Palliative Care Outreach Team



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Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Haldimand & Norfolk Counties

Unstoppable Compassion in Action:

Outreach delivers compassionate care to patients and caregivers in their homes

For individuals and families facing serious illness, end-of-life issues, or grief, the Stedman Community Hospice Palliative Care Outreach Team (PCOT) offers a lifeline of support, compassion, and expert care.

Our mission is simple yet profound: to walk alongside patients and their loved ones, easing suffering and improving quality of life during life's most difficult times.

The World Health Organization defines Hospice Palliative Care as an approach that improves quality of life by preventing and relieving suffering — addressing pain, as well as physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges.

The Outreach team brings this definition to life every day, meeting people where they are—at home, in hospital, or in hospice. Our care includes adults, children, and youth, because serious illness and grief touch families across the lifespan.

At the heart of the team are dedicated professionals who blend medical expertise with compassion. Hospice Palliative Care physicians provide consultation when referred by a family doctor or specialist.

Once involved, they collaborate with family physicians, cancer clinics, and community nursing agencies to ensure all aspects of care are addressed. Their visits bring reassurance and relief at critical moments.

Meet Our Community Outreach Physicians and Nurses



Dr. B. McNeil



Dr. C. Anokye



Dr. A. Montour



Dr. S. Singh



Dr. A. Trevor



Dr. E. Sault



Dr. R. Renn



Dr. R. Martin-Godelie



Nurse Lara



Nurse Tara



Nurse Cathenia



Nurse Nathan



Nurse Tracy



Nurse Jeanette

Our Hospice Palliative Care Nurse Specialists serve as a vital bridge between Ontario Health at Home, community nurses, and care providers. They assess needs, and help develop treatment plans for symptom management in concert with other professionals involved in the patient's care.

They also provide 24/7 after-hours phone support, offering timely guidance to community nurses and family members during critical situations. This helps prevent unnecessary emergency department visits, ensures continuity of care from familiar providers, and provides high-quality support in the comfort of home.

Our Clinical Navigator ensures seamless communication as the main point-of-contact between the community and the team. By coordinating referrals and triaging incoming calls and requests, this role keeps the circle of care strong, connected, and responsive.

Equally important are our Supportive Care Practitioners, experts in the emotional and spiritual aspects of care. They help patients and families cope, restore hope, and plan for end-of-life. With a quiet, companioning presence, they support patients and families to help them navigate anticipatory grief from diagnosis through to bereavement.

Collaboration is a hallmark of PCOT's work. We partner

with Ontario Health at Home Care Coordinators, community agency nurses, and personal support workers (PSWs) to provide comprehensive care that is tailored to each person's needs.

Thanks to Ontario Health funding and community generosity, PCOT services are entirely free. No family carries the burden of cost while navigating an already challenging journey. Donor support through St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation helps sustain and expand these vital services.

The Stedman Community Hospice Outreach Team embodies unstoppable compassion. Their expertise, presence, and collaboration ensure patients and families of all ages never walk alone through serious illness, end-of-life, or grief.

For information, please contact us at 519-751-7096, ext 2500.



"Thank you for the crucial work you do through your Community Outreach Program. Ensuring comfort and dignity for individuals in their own homes is at the heart of person-centered palliative care."

The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association

Our Clinical Educators, Navigators, and Supportive Care Staff



Clinical Coach
Shelley



Clinical Navigator
Jodie



Clinical Navigator
Jennifer



Supportive Care Practitioner
Krista



Supportive Care Practitioner
Julie



Supportive Care Practitioner
Sydney



Spiritual Care Practitioner
Justin



Thank You

TO OUR VALUED DONORS

As seasons change
one thing remains constant

~ Our Gratitude To You ~

May your heart & home be filled
with the peace and comfort
you've so generously provided to others.



We appreciate *Your Expressions of Gratitude*

“ Thanks is not enough for what you do for clients and their families. There are angels on earth and you are them.
Dianne Joyner

“ Thank you for providing so much peace and love to my Mom during her short stay last fall.
Lara Morris Bell

“ Thank you to the staff & volunteers for your dedication and commitment in making our hospice a place of comfort and support.
Sonja Barker

Programs and services of Stedman Community Hospice are made possible by donor support.

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