

FALL/WINTER 2019

INSIGHT



STORIES OF LOVE AND LIFE AT STEDMAN COMMUNITY HOSPICE

turning loss **INTO LOVE**

...and grief
into gratitude



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olga CONSORTI

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"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." - Mother Teresa

Next year begins my 30th year with the Foundation, where I am privileged to be surrounded by stories of love, kindness, hope and inspiration. With a grateful heart for everyone I have met during this passionate journey, I have announced my retirement effective May 3rd, 2020 following our 16th annual Hike for Hospice.

Upon reflection of my career, I have been inspired by the courage and conviction of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton, who instilled in me that it is an honour to serve those in need. Helping ensure the most vulnerable in our community receive the compassionate care they deserve has truly been the greatest privilege of my life.

Because of the incredibly generous hearts of our donors, I have been surrounded by the height of human kindness. Your commitment to our cause is the true reason for our Foundation's success in building, equipping and furnishing the Hospice, in addition to funding vital programs and services not covered by the government.

One common theme that threads through my experience in this role is not how much people have given, but how much love they have put into giving, as noted by Sister Teresa.

I hope you consider renewing your support this year, whether it's through a donation of cash, gift of stock, a memorial gift, naming us in your will, or by volunteering. It's the love that you put into these selfless acts of giving that is truly felt by our patients and families in need.

Every donation is valued and will be put to immediate good use. For those who can give \$100 or more, your donation will be doubled, thanks to a generous matching gift from an anonymous donor. You will also receive a commemorative 2019 pewter keepsake as a memento of our appreciation and a reminder of the tremendous impact your gift will have on the patients and families we are privileged to serve.

Without you, our valued donors, none of the stories featured in this edition of INSIGHT magazine would have been possible. But it's not just about stories; it's about the people's lives that you are impacting. It's about the love you put into giving to support families, friends, neighbours and colleagues, as they turn to the Hospice in their life's final journey.

Please help us ensure that the love that pours into the Hospice remains abundant through your continued generosity.

Everyday people make a real difference every day.

Turn any occasion or celebration into a fundraising opportunity!

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Anniversary of being cancer-free | Christmas | Casual Dress Day | Craft & Bake Sale |
| Birthday | Lemonade Stand | Soup Supper | Car Wash |
| Wedding Anniversary | Spring Dance | In Memoriam | Family Get-Togethers |
| Wedding | Reunion | Garage & Yard Sale | Holiday parties |



At Stedman Community Hospice, we know ordinary people can do extraordinary things!

Call us at 519-751-7096, ext 2476 to tell us about your Hospice fundraiser.



Donate \$100
or more
and your gift
will be matched!

See enclosed
donor slip
for full details!

from grief TO GIVING

... 11-year-old fundraises
in memory of his mom

Anderson Whitehead, at the tender age of 11, has come to personify inspiration and positivity for not only everyone at Stedman Community Hospice, but the entire community of Brantford and many across Canada.

On November 7th, 2018, Anderson, the only child of Kevin Whitehead and Laura McKay, lost his mom to cancer. The devastated boy vowed not to let his grief get the best of him, choosing instead to honour his mom's life by raising money for Stedman Community Hospice, where Laura spent her final days.

And for the better part of a year, that is exactly what he has done. And what a year it has been!



Anderson with his mom, Laura McKay, shortly following her cancer diagnosis. (Submitted photo)

Anderson had always dreamed of meeting his idol, Montreal Canadiens goaltender Carey Price. His mom encouraged him to believe that anything was possible and had hoped to see his dream fulfilled. Sadly, Laura passed away before it happened. After her death, the family decided to do everything they could to find a way for an emotionally distraught Anderson to meet Price. In February of this year, it became a reality.

Through tears, Anderson remarked that it was the happiest moment of his life. Price, having been made aware of Laura's passing, gave him a big hug and gifted him with autographed items.

"When Price gave him the hug and said: 'Things will get better, bud,' Anderson said everything in his body just left him," says Kevin Whitehead.

A video of the moment, taken by his aunt Tammy during a warmup skate in Toronto, was uploaded to the internet and went viral, with over 10 million views in less than a week. This phenomenal moment in the young man's life may well have been the positive force needed to awaken the 'go-get-em' spirit lying latent inside Anderson, just waiting to be unleashed.

In early spring of 2019, with the help of family and friends, not only did Anderson participate in the Hike for Hospice, an annual fundraiser for Stedman Community Hospice, he was the Top Youth Fundraiser raising nearly \$6,000 to support Hospice programs and services for end-of-life patients and grieving families. Donations for Anderson's campaign came in from people near and far, many of them strangers who had been following Anderson's story through their shared love of hockey.



Anderson meets his hero, goaltender Carey Price of the Montreal Canadiens. (Photo by Tammy Whitehead)

Hike organizers also arranged for Anderson to have a private meeting with Walter Gretzky and have his photo taken with Canada's favourite hockey dad.

This memorable photo moment was made even more special when

publicists with the Canadiens franchise became aware of the story. They shared it with viewers during the telecast of the next game and published it on their website. This prompted donations to the Hospice from across Canada, in the name of a young man whose profound love for his mother stirred a nation.

And he wasn't done yet. On June 19th, Anderson and his dad were invited to attend the Annual NHL Awards in Las Vegas as part of a fan tribute. During the televised awards, Anderson was brought on stage to receive a videotaped message from Price. Unknown to Anderson, Price was actually backstage and surprised the 11-year-old by joining him, presenting him with a hockey jersey and inviting him to attend the 2020 All Stars game. The Las Vegas crowd responded with a standing ovation.

Earlier this month, Anderson reached out to St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation, saying he had been given autographed jerseys from three of the Canadiens' star players, including Price, and had a fundraising idea to use them to raise more money for the Hospice.

Anderson is an inspiration to our nation; a shining example of how our youth of today can make a huge impact on our tomorrows. He has put a challenge out to everyone encouraging them to support the Hospice in whatever way they can. He is a wonderful example of someone who has managed his grief by making a positive difference for others, and we are so grateful for his kind and generous heart!

happiness & GRATITUDE

...couple asks wedding guests to give to Hospice



Three years ago, youth director Betty Steenbeeker and drywall installer Arnold Winter were strangers to one another. Both belonging to Christian Reform churches, they had heard each other's name spoken by mutual church friends, but their paths had never crossed. They were leading separate lives, making a living, being good parents, and coming to grips with the fact that their partners in life had been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

Before they would meet, the two would take a similar but separate journey down the road of caring for and eventually saying good-bye to the person they had hoped to spend the rest of their lives with. Their paths would take them to Stedman Community Hospice, where they would find the care they needed for their dying loved one -- and for themselves, the peace of mind to let go.

Little did they know that soon after the saddest chapter of their lives had been written, an invitation from a friend to fundraise for Stedman Community Hospice would bring them together, and a new story of love and hope would unfold.

On October 4th, 2019 Betty and Arnold were wed, in front of their five children and a large gathering of family and friends at Hope Christian Reformed Church, Brantford. The wedding invitation stated that instead of wedding presents, the couple would prefer that guests make donations to Stedman Community Hospice. By mid-November, more than \$12,350 dollars had been donated to Stedman Community Hospice as a result.

"That was actually a very easy decision for us," says Betty.

"We're at that stage in our lives where we don't need or want gifts, and for both of us, Stedman Community Hospice was just an incredible part of our journey."

Betty and Arnold met in May of 2018 when their mutual friend, Nancy Hartholt, invited them to be part of her Hike for Hospice team. Nancy's husband, Walt, passed away at the Hospice and she was putting together a team to raise money in his memory.



Betty with her first husband, Tony, who passed away on July 11, 2017 of renal cell (kidney) cancer.

In addition to meeting at a Hospice fundraiser, the couple, in their early 50s, have a deeply personal connection to the Hospice; in July of 2017, Betty's

husband Tony spent his final five days there. Several months later, Arnold's wife Johanna came to the Hospice and passed away five weeks later.

"It was an incredible experience," says Arnold.

"First of all, the surprise of finding out, the existence of in-home Hospice care to help Johanna with her pain and medication, that was incredible. And then to find out it was free was amazing, because that is the last thing you want to be dealing with at the time. And then to come to the Hospice itself and not have to worry about Johanna's health or looking after her physical needs, was unbelievable."

Betty shares a similar connection to the Hospice.

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"A couple of times, the staff had brought Tony out to the garden in his bed. I remember sitting there thinking how can I be feeling so much peace, sitting here in this beautiful garden when my husband is so ill," says Betty.

"I could not believe that in the chaos of life, and knowing that my husband wasn't coming home again, how peace-filled I felt at the Hospice."

"Being there allowed me to just let go of all those tasks, of caring for him, changing his clothing, trying to keep up with hygiene – it allowed me to just be his wife," she shared.



Arnold with his first wife, Johanna, who passed away on April 27, 2018 of cancer.

About three weeks after meeting at Hike for Hospice, Betty and Arnold went out to dinner, and soon began spending more and more time together. Their journeys of losing their spouse after long battles with cancer, and talking about it with each other was a big part of the couple's bonding process.

"Even though everyone's story is unique, we could really understand what the other was going through. It was wonderful to have someone to share your grief with, someone you could be completely open and honest with," says Betty.

"Some things that you wouldn't necessarily share with other people, because they wouldn't fully understand, with each other we had that safe place of being able to share right to the core."

Nancy Hartholt, who has known both Betty and Arnold individually for three decades, and was good friends

with Arnold's deceased wife, Johanna, says it couldn't happen to nicer people.

"In the midst of sadness and grief, they found joy in each other. I see it as such a blessing. And I can't think of a better way for the two of them to honour their spouses than by requesting donations to the Hospice. It is such a worthy and needed place in Brantford, and I am thankful for their desire to see donations go there."



Betty and Arnold

Olga Consorti, President and CEO of St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation, the official fundraising organization for Stedman Community Hospice, noted that designating gifts in honour of a special occasion in lieu of presents, is a wonderful way to support the Hospice. It's also the perfect present for the person who has everything!

In addition to weddings, people often make In Honour Gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, teacher gifts, Mother's and Father's Days, and Christmas. Often donors and employers who, instead of sending gifts to family, friends and employees at Christmastime, donate to the Hospice, and in their Christmas card, they include a note card from the Foundation that lets the person know a donation was made in their name.

For more information on how you can raise funds for the Hospice through a personal fundraiser, or to order In Honour cards, please contact Nancy Billard, the Foundation's Director of Development & Communications at 519-751-7096, ext 2476.



Congratulations to St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre Brantford

(Stedman Community Hospice & St. Joseph's Long Term Care)

on receiving the designation of

Accreditation with Exemplary Standing

the highest award a Canadian healthcare provider can receive from Accreditation Canada.

This designation means the organization has attained the highest level of performance, achieving excellence in meeting the requirements of the accreditation program.



volunteer adopts dogs of **HOSPICE PATIENT**

Kristan Higgins, author of *In Your Dreams* wrote "When an eighty-five pound mammal licks your tears away, then tries to sit on your lap, it's hard to feel sad."

To that, Norm Curran, as a parent of two Goldendoodles might say "imagine the joy of two!"

For almost 10 years, Norm and his wife Lone (pronounced Lonnie) held their dogs, Bogart and Oliver, at the centre of their lives.



Norm and Lonnie Curran.
Lonnie passed away at
Stedman Community Hospice
on September 17th, 2019.

"We weren't supposed to have any more dogs," says Norm.

"When our American bulldog died of cancer, we decided not to get another dog because it was simply too hard on us when we had to say goodbye."

To his surprise, one day Norm came home from work to find a Goldendoodle.

"You'd have to know my wife," says Norm. "She had a mind of her own and when she decided on something, that was it."

Norm recalls returning home after being away for a week and thinking how much his newly acquired dog had grown.

"As it turned out, this wasn't the same dog at all. Lone had gone out and added a second Goldendoodle to the household."

Late last summer, Norm, Lone, and their dogs Oliver and Bogart moved from Burlington to Brantford. It would be their 13th move during their marriage, and while they didn't know it at the time, it would also be their last as a family.

On September 13, just days after moving into their Brantford home, Lone began to feel sick, and a diagnosis of brain cancer soon followed. Subsequently, Lone had surgery to remove the tumor but unfortunately, the doctors were not able to get it all, and a course of chemotherapy was scheduled.

In December, 2018, Lone entered Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton where it was determined her platelets were too low to begin chemotherapy. She had also suffered blood

clots and other complications resulting from having contracted pneumonia, making it impossible for her to receive treatment. She was transported to Brantford General Hospital in February where she was visited by a medical team from Stedman Community Hospice, who determined their Residential Hospice would be advisable and three days later, Lone was admitted.

Norm spent most of the days that followed at his wife's bedside, leaving only to go home to walk and feed Oliver and Bogart a couple of times each day.

As Lone's time in Hospice grew, Norm realized he needed a plan for the care of the dogs, and decided that as difficult as it would be, he would have to find them a new home. He mentioned this to Hospice volunteer, Cathy Finch, who unbeknownst to him, was in the market to adopt a dog.

Cathy spoke with her husband, Mike, about the possibility of adopting two dogs since they had only ever planned on getting one. Being parents of twins, they understood the importance of keeping the dogs together and arranged with Norm to bring the dogs for a visit.

Cathy recalls the visit went really well, and after receiving a favourable assessment of the dogs from the vet, Cathy and Mike adopted Oliver and Bogart on May 13th.



Cathy and Mike Finch at home with
their dogs, Oliver and Bogart.

Norm came to visit the dogs on a couple of occasions and was very pleased with how well the dogs had adjusted.

The adoption enabled Norm to dedicate all of his time to his dying wife. On September 17th, 2019 Lone passed away with Norm by her side.

Norm says he owes a debt of gratitude to the Finches. Not only did the adoption give him precious time with Lone, it gave him the peace of mind of knowing the dogs were together and in a happy home.

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Cathy, who is retired and has been a volunteer at Stedman Community Hospice and St. Joseph's Long-Term Care residence for the past eight years, is a lifelong nurturer. The mother of three grown children and grandmother of four, she also raised several dogs over the years. She has helped dogs from animal shelters regain trust after they have suffered trauma and abuse from owners who eventually abandoned them. Oliver and Bogart were the opposite.

"These dogs are wonderful!" says Cathy. "They are so well behaved. It's obvious they came from a very loving home."

The dogs are so gentle and well behaved that Cathy has trained them as therapy dogs, visiting senior residents at St. Joe's Long Term Care facility regularly.

"I volunteered at St. Joe's last week without the dogs and they all asked where my dogs were. They used to get excited to see me and now they get excited to see the dogs," Cathy chuckled.

This story is a testament to the culture of kindness at Stedman Community Hospice, a culture worthy of the donors who built our house of love – one that defines the basis of care given to patients, families, and their fur babies too.



Did you know that in addition to helping us provide cost-free care for patients, your donation helps support a number of valuable programs for families?

As well as providing one-on-one grief support, the Children's Bereavement Program includes day camps and special holiday programming that gives kids the opportunity to manage their feelings through music therapy, arts & crafts and other creative outlets.

Thank you for making this possible.

Make your gift today at sjlc.ca/donations

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When do you begin to consider hospice care for your loved one?

If you are asking yourself that question, chances are the time is now. Even when you feel your loved one is able to reside at home and family members are able to look after their present needs, making an inquiry is always a good choice. It is the first step towards planning for the care and comfort of someone you love when their final days are on the horizon. It is also a healthy step towards maintaining your own emotional and physical wellness during a difficult, often stressful time.

Stedman Community Hospice is committed to providing cost-free care to end-of-life patients and offering support to their loved ones. A conversation with a member of our medical team will help determine your current needs and assist you in planning for compassionate care when it becomes necessary. Call us. We are here to help.



Help is just a phone call away.
Call 519.751.7096, Ext 2500



Stedman Community Hospice offers the following cost-free services:

- Day Wellness Program
- Community Outreach
- 24 hour Residential Hospice Care
- Adult Bereavement Program
- Children's Bereavement Program
- Education Programs

We serve the communities of Brantford and Brant County, Norfolk and Haldimand Counties, and Six Nations of the Grand.

Our residential care building consists of 10 well appointed patient rooms, each with a bed designed for optimum comfort and rest, individual washroom, gas fireplace, sofa bed and other features.

Please contact us to arrange a tour or to learn more.

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

Donate online today at sjlc.ca.



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