

STORIES OF LOVE AND LIFE AT STEDMAN COMMUNITY HOSPICE

Honouring Patti's legacy a focus for her family

A year after Patti Ferras-Mills passed away, her family says their focus now is to properly honour the legacy of an incredible human being.

"She was tiny, but her personality was larger than life," says daughter Chauntelle.

An active, adventurous individual, Patti packed more into her 64 years of living than most people do in their lifetime. Before esophageal cancer claimed the life of this vivacious mother of two and grandmother of three, Patti was living life to the fullest and energizing everyone around her.

A nurturer to the core, Patti spent 32 years working as a residence counsellor at the W. Ross MacDonald School for the Blind, and wrapped up her career as an educational assistant with the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board.

Scott Mills, Patti's husband of 22 years and stepfather to Chauntelle and Janal says Patti's

life was all about caring for those around her, especially her grandchildren. The one thing that Patti did for herself was maintain a dedicated regimen of physical fitness.

"That's why it was so strange when she started losing her energy," says Janal.

"One day I saw her napping, and that is something she never did. We knew something was off."

True to form, when Patti received a stage four cancer diagnosis, she approached it with the same verocity she applied to everything in life - she was determined to conquer it.

"She was going to will it away," says daughter Janal.

Patti's relationship with Stedman Community Hospice began with the Community Outreach Program, where in addition to receiving care from the clinical team at home, Patti availed herself of the services of the hospice's supportive care staff.

"Her relationship with



Patti Ferras-Mills delighted in spending time with her daughters Chauntelle and Janal, and grandchildren Haley, Lexie and Brodey. She was looking forward to welcoming a fourth grandchild but passed away before granddaughter Sayde arrived.

supportive care practitioner Sydney was very important to her," says Janal.

"Mom was always so in charge of her life and didn't want to hide from the truth - that wasn't her nature, and Sydney really helped prepare her for what to expect. She was very open with her about how her illness might look as it advanced."

"Mom also recommend-

ed that I, my sister and Scott meet regularly with Sydney because she thought it would be helpful in processing what was happening," says Chauntelle.

"We did that, and continue to do so, and she was right - it has played a huge part in helping us heal."

Patti was admitted to Stedman Community Hospice in early February 2025, and passed away

five weeks later on March 15.

In May, Patti's family and friends came together to honour her memory at Hike or Bike for Hospice, an annual fundraiser for Stedman Community Hospice. Entering a team of more than 20 participants called "Patti's Girls," they not only fundraised in memory of Patti, but claimed the title of Top Fundraising Team, raising more than \$10,000 for the hospice.

Scott also supported those efforts, helping with fundraising and participating in the bike portion of the event.

"Mom was so competitive. I could almost hear her say that if we were

putting in a team, we'd better make sure we win!" Janal chuckled.

On May 3, 2026, Patti's family will be the official ambassadors for this year's Hike or Bike for Hospice.

"This is exactly the way that she would wish to be remembered," says Chauntelle.

Chauntelle says that honouring Patti's life is a way to keep her a part of her grandchildren's lives as they grow up.

"We want them to know that they were the centre of her universe, and creating occasions to talk about her and celebrate her memory is how she remains present in our lives as long as we are here," she added.



Patti is pictured here with Scott Mills, her husband of 22 years.



Patti's Girls, a fundraising team of more than 20 family and friends, came out to Hike or Bike for Hospice in 2025 to honour Patti's memory, emerging as the Top Fundraising Team. This year Patti's family will be the official ambassadors for the annual fundraising event. Watch for their appearance on billboards and advertisements for the event taking place on Sunday, May 3.



Join us
Sunday, May 3rd
in support of Stedman Community Hospice

REGISTER TODAY AT STEDMANHIKE.CA