

FALL/WINTER 2021

# INSIGHT



STORIES OF LOVE AND LIFE AT STEDMAN COMMUNITY HOSPICE



## The Joy Of Joyce

A Daughter's Story

### IN THIS ISSUE

- **Handy Hugs: Useful tool during pandemic**
- **Truth and expression important for children when grieving**
- **Facts about hospice care**

# Wrapped in a Hug

Sometimes all you need is a hug. But during a pandemic, hugs aren't always possible.

In the spring of 2021, as we entered another lockdown, a small group of Stedman Community Hospice volunteers, led by long-time volunteer Sylvia McIver, went to work to create Handy Hugs. These beautifully designed Hugs consist of a long span of fabric with "hands" attached at both ends. On the Hug there is space for Hospice patients and their families to write meaningful messages to each other. The Handy Hug can then

wrap patients in a hug when their loved ones can't be with them.

These hugs are available for both patients living at the Hospice as well as those supported in their home by the Community Outreach team.

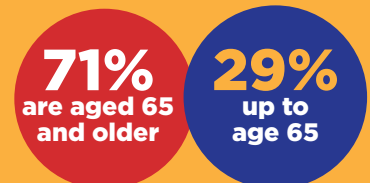
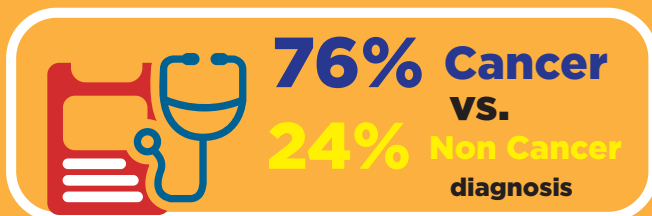
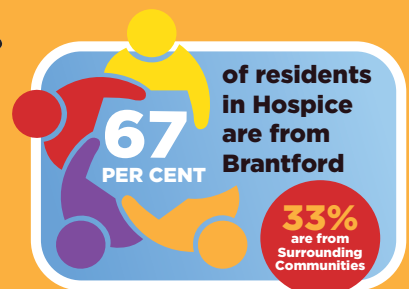
The Hug also serves as a meaningful legacy item. The feelings and wishes of the person who is in the last days of their life can be captured and held in

*Hospice patient Sharon Craddock (left) receives a Handy Hug from her great niece, Caroline, during an outdoor visit.*



the hug for young children and other loved ones, anchoring them to that special person after they have passed away. A few thoughts written in a hug can help maintain the memory of the love that was shared.

## Impact Report 2020/2021\*



\*Numbers are from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

# Stedman Community Hospice participating in paramedics pilot project

Ontario has launched a new pilot project that allows paramedics to treat palliative care patients on scene for symptoms, rather than being obligated to take them to hospital.

The pilot project is part of the government's plan to ease hospital overcrowding and end so-called hallway health care, Health Minister Christine Elliott said.

The one-year pilot began in April, 2020, and is the first project under new ambulance rules to let paramedics take patients to facilities other than a hospital emergency department.

"We are incredibly excited to partner with our local paramedics

to ensure that patients are getting the right care, at the right time in the right place. This will allow for patients currently on the Stedman Outreach Program to receive symptom management in crisis situations right in their home rather than having to be transported to the emergency department," says Kerri VanSickle, Clinical Manager at Stedman Community Hospice.

Other pilot projects are in the works to allow paramedics to take patients to mental health and addictions crisis centres.

Under the trial run, specially trained paramedics will be able to treat patients receiving palliative care, including administering medication



for pain relief, shortness of breath, hallucinations, nausea, vomiting and terminal congested breathing.

The government said the patient can ask at any time to instead be taken to a hospital.

Patients must be enrolled in the program in advance in order to receive this service in their home.

This can be done by speaking with their Home and Community Care Coordinator.

## Your donations help families say good-bye



Since opening our doors in 2004, Stedman Community Hospice has supported thousands of families in our Hospice or through our Community Outreach and Bereavement programs. This would not be possible without the support of our community.

The hospice receives only partial government funding. Annually the Hospice needs to raise \$1.3 million to cover the cost of our operations budget not funded by the government. This is why the support of the community is so crucial. Your donation ensures we can continue to provide compassionate, end-of-life care at no cost to our patients and their families.

## How your donation helps



**A gift of \$50** provides an hour of one-on-one counselling for a grieving family member



**A gift of \$100** buys groceries for a day at Hospice



**A gift of \$500** covers the expenses of one patient for a day in Hospice

# The Joy of Joyce

A Daughter's Story



**A**t the young age of 41, Kristal Beauvais has had more interaction with Stedman Community Hospice than most.

In 2018 Kristal's uncle, James Hinton, passed away at Stedman Community Hospice after a 2-year battle with cancer. A few months later, in 2019, another uncle, Joe Hinton, passed away at the Hospice, also from cancer. Working full time, with two kids of her own, Kristal's experience at the time was primarily on the peripheral, mainly living it through the eyes of her aunts and her mother, Joyce Calleya, who took turns keeping vigil at their brothers' side during the final weeks and days of their lives.

"After my uncles died, my mom, with the help of other family members and volunteers, held a fundraiser in support of Stedman

Community Hospice, raising more than \$12,000," says Kristal.

"That was my mom. She was a true leader and was always active with community causes."

"I think my mom felt that fundraising and volunteering for this great place was the least she could do."

received at the hospice, and it was provided to us at no cost," says Kristal.

Little did Joyce know when she volunteered at the Handbags for Hospice event in October of 2019 that a few months later she herself would need the services of the organization she had

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*"I think my mom felt that fundraising and volunteering for this great place was the least she could do."*

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Joyce Calleya also participated in Hike for Hospice, the annual spring fundraising event in support of Stedman Community Hospice and volunteered at the Handbags for Hospice fundraiser that October.

"We were all so thankful for the tremendous care my family

supported so fervently.

"My mom was always a caregiver. She was a single mom to me and my brother Jesse. She took care of everyone, made all the decisions and always approached life with a positive attitude. When she received her lung cancer diagnosis in February,



*The Cheering Section. Joyce's grandchildren, Aydenne and Noah Beauvais don wigs in support of their nan as she began chemotherapy treatment.*

2020, she had that same great attitude and kept assuring us that everything would be okay, that we would get through it."

In February, Kristal and her husband Dan put an addition on their house and Joyce moved in. Joyce's plan was to live with her daughter until they could no longer manage her care and at that point she would move to Stedman Community Hospice if a room was available.

At home, Kristal looked after her mom's personal care.

"The role reversal felt so strange to me," says Kristal.

"Everything was flipped. Here was my mom asking me 'What should we do?' or 'Should I get radiation treatment?'"

A team from the Hospice's Outreach program came by on a regular basis to support Joyce's cancer treatment and help manage her pain.

"When we made the decision for Mom to move in with us, I struggled with the question "Am I traumatizing my kids with them seeing their grandmother this way?" says Kristal.

Kristal says it quickly became

clear that the presence of her family was a great emotional comfort to Joyce and she is grateful for the time the kids got to spend with their grandmother during those final months.

"It was good for them, too," she shared.

Over the next few months, the cancer progressed and a brain bleed around Thanksgiving made it necessary for Joyce to relocate to the Hospice.

"She was comfortable at the hospice," says Kristal.

"During the weeks leading up to the brain bleed, I don't believe she was as comfortable at home, but she wanted to be with us."

"Once Mom was at the Hospice, I could concentrate on just being her daughter. The PSWs and nurses looked after every aspect of her care – they bathed her every day, they changed her regularly, treated the sores that had developed, they attended to all of her needs. Although she was sedated and didn't have any real awareness of her surroundings, the staff gave her the same level of care that they would provide someone who was fully alert. They treated her with such dignity."

"I think if my mom had passed away at home it would not have had the same degree of dignity. At Hospice, her passing was with ease. At home, we would have struggled through it," Kristal shared.

"At the Hospice, I didn't just feel they were caring for my mother, they were caring for me."

"Being at the Hospice also allowed me to grieve better. If she had been at home I would have been so consumed with attending to her care that I would not have taken the time to properly grieve. And you forget to look after yourself, to remember to eat.



*Joyce Calleya will be remembered for her love of family and her community. She is pictured here (far left) at a community event with a group of friends, including three of her seven sisters.*

They reminded me to eat. They reminded me to sleep, and I could truly sleep. At home, there were nights I didn't sleep. I was checking on her four or five times a night. At the Hospice, I knew if I slept there were people there checking on her. That transfer of care to hospice staff opened up the opportunity for me to just be with her, to enjoy her. It was the best decision we could have made."



**COVER PHOTO:**  
*Joyce Calleya with her children Kristal Beauvais and Jesse Calleya.*

# Grief & Bereavement: Truth and expression especially important for children

**B**ack in the fall of 2017, Emma Anderson was a scared seven-year-old. The shy, soft-spoken little girl had just learned that her dad, the centre of her universe, was very sick. John Anderson had been diagnosed with ocular melanoma (eye) cancer several years earlier when Emma was two years old. At that time the prognosis was good but by 2017, the rare form of cancer had metastasized to his liver and his future was now uncertain.

Just like adults, children also ponder all the big questions when confronted with major life events, questions like “What will happen to us?,” “Is my dad going to be in a lot of pain?,” “Will he go blind?” and of course “Will he die?”

Children often lack the opportunity to explore, discuss and express their experience with loss and grief. When given age-appropriate explanations, children are better able to understand concepts of death and loss. It can be difficult for younger children to name specific feelings, however, expressions of grief can be observed by changes in behaviour. For example, children may report having a sore stomach which can be related to feeling anxious but may be unable to specifically describe that.

“John and I had decided from the get-go that we would be truthful with her,” says Emma’s mother, Vicky.

In attempting to protect children, adults may withhold certain pieces of information or rely on euphemisms to explain illness and death. This can cause further confusion and fear.

Kerri VanSickle, Clinical Manager at Stedman Community Hospice says being honest with children about death and grieving is very important to a child’s mental health, and something the Hospice team strongly encourages.

“Children instinctively know when they aren’t getting the whole story,” she shared.

Kerri says that even when children do have the benefit of the truth, it can be extremely difficult for them to discuss their feelings or show emotion.

Dr. Wendy Harpham, doctor of internal medicine and award-winning medical columnist says “The greatest gift you can give your children is not protection from change, loss, pain or stress, but the confidence and tools to cope with all that life has to offer them.”



*The Andersons enjoy a trip to Disneyworld in 2017. Two weeks later they learned that John’s cancer had spread and he soon began treatment.*

“This is why our Children’s Bereavement program exists,” says Kerri.

“In Emma’s case, in the weeks leading up to her father’s death, she was having difficulty expressing her feelings. She had become very quiet and her mom felt she was internalizing her pain and fear.”

So Kerri introduced Emma to art therapy.

“Although I had a strategic plan in mind, it was important that Emma perceive our activities as very normal, very cool, that we were just hanging out. We were just doing crafts together.”

By the third week, Kerri felt that she had built trust with Emma and presented the opportunity for Emma to share her feelings.

“She had some big questions. Over the next couple of weeks, Emma continued to open up and share her feelings during art therapy.”

“It was really good,” says Emma, now 11.



*Emma Anderson (right) enjoys her new blanket, handcrafted by Hospice Clinical Manager Kerri VanSickle, using John Anderson's arm span measurements that were taken when he was a patient at Stedman Community Hospice. The blanket represents his 'forever' hug to his daughter.*

Kerri assured Emma that this was her space, her safe place to share. On matters of great importance, she helped Emma to understand why it would be helpful for her parents to know some of her private thoughts and asked her permission to share with them those things they could work on together as a family.

"The really great thing about play therapy is that for those parents who are struggling with having those difficult conversations, it provides an outlet for the child to come by the truth, with someone they trust," says Vicky.

Kerri says Stedman Community Hospice's grief and bereavement programming is based on the premise that grief begins the moment someone is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness.

"The importance of expression throughout the grieving process cannot be overestimated, for both

the patient and their loved ones."

For John, coming to terms with his situation was difficult.

"John had difficulty accepting the inevitability of his death which made it difficult for him to express his feelings verbally," says Vicky.

For John, his expression ultimately came in the form of the written word. Before he died, John wrote letters to Vicky and Emma as well as to Emma's half-brothers, his adult sons Erik and Cameron.

"My letter is a treasure," says Vicky. When I have a low point in my day, or I'm second-guessing myself, I go to it. He's still there helping me."

Vicky says John's letters have also helped everyone stay connected as a family, helping her and Emma stay close to John's sons, who are significantly older and didn't grow up in the same household as Emma.

"In fact, Erik is getting married soon and Emma will be part of the wedding party," shared Vicky.

Recently, Kerri presented Emma with a blanket that she handcrafted using the measurements of John's arm span before he died on March 29, 2019. The blanket is meant to be John's 'forever' hug to his daughter.

"John was a big hugger," says Vicky.

"Emma will cherish the blanket forever, especially knowing her dad was involved in bringing it about, and it was created by Kerri, someone who has become very special to her."

Kerri is currently laying the groundwork for a peer-to-peer support program where young people can freely exchange their thoughts and feelings with others in similar situations. She considers Emma a graduate of the Children's Bereavement Program, and says there is definitely a future role for Emma as a mentor to other children who are dealing with grief issues.

"I would really like that," says Emma, wrapped in her 'forever' hug, smiling.

*Recommended reading: [kidsgrief.ca](http://kidsgrief.ca)*

## Let it Grow, Let it Grow, Let it Grow!

Join the monthly giving club and your donation will be **doubled!**



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!

If you're already enrolled in the program and decide to increase your donation, the amount of your increase will be matched!

PLEASE DONATE TODAY TO DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT.

Donate today at [sjlc.ca/donations](http://sjlc.ca/donations) or call 519-751-7096, ext 2475

A postage-paid envelope has been provided for your convenience.

Donate \$100 or more to receive our custom 2021 collectable ornament

## Did You Know?

### Hospice cares for people of all ages.

Although a larger percentage of our hospice patients are older, hospice provides care for all ages, including children. Last year, 29 per cent of our hospice patients were under 65 years of age.

### Hospice is not just for patients with cancer.

While many of our patients do have a cancer diagnosis, a number of patients do not. Increasingly we are providing care to families coping with end-stages of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, COPD, congestive heart failure and ALS.

### Care provided in hospice is highly specialized.

Hospice offers state-of-the-art palliative care. Specialized medicine combined with round-the-clock care from the hospice care team means our patients receive the absolute best care possible.



### Food can be an enjoyable experience for hospice patients.

Often food remains an important part of the day for hospice patients. End-of-life patients can benefit from smaller meals. That might include 3 a.m. sundaes or cheesecake, or a glass of scotch or Cabernet Sauvignon in the evening.

### Hospice care can begin as early as diagnosis and can continue beyond death.

Many patients receive hospice support in their home early in their diagnosis through Community Outreach Patients and families also benefit from hospice supportive care including spiritual care and social work. Bereavement support can continue long after the death of a loved one.

*Thank you for expressing your gratitude!*

Four of my friends  
have spent their final days  
in your care and were  
treated with great loving  
care and dignity.

*Paul N.*

Hospice  
was a gift.  
An oasis filled  
with love.

*Brian K.*

Stedman Hospice gave  
our family a place of  
refuge and peace while  
we said our goodbyes.

*Ivy H.*

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