

STORIES OF LOVE AND LIFE AT STEDMAN COMMUNITY HOSPICE

A WIDOW'S STORY

MAKING THE JOURNEY FROM HOSPICE VOLUNTEER TO CONSUMER

Having spent 25 years in the learning environment of the York Region Public School Board, Marion (Marnie) Hyett always embraced the opportunity to learn something new. Now long retired from her career as a school secretary, she initially turned down the invitation from Stedman Community Hospice to participate in the Widow to Widow program after her husband Jim passed away there.

"I didn't think I needed it," she shared. "I'm so glad I changed my mind."

Jim's decline was rapid. He was diagnosed with colon cancer in early May of 2019. A week later he made an emergency trip to Brantford General Hospital where he soon underwent surgery. Shortly after, his doctor determined the cancer had progressed quickly and nothing more could be done but to make him comfortable.

There was no question for Marnie as to where Jim should spend his final days. As a volunteer at Stedman Community Hospice for the past six years, she recognized that she alone could not provide the level of care equal to that of the Hospice.

Jim passed away in Hospice on June 9th, the day after their 62nd wedding anniversary.

"He hadn't ever made a big deal about anniversaries," says Marnie, "but this time, in the days leading up to it, he had mentioned it a number of times, to the point where the nurses

and personal support workers said to me that they probably should get busy and do something."

The staff surprised Marnie and Jim with a cake. He was awake and alert long enough to know they were celebrating and softly said to Marnie "Our anniversary."

"He knew," says Marnie, smiling.

Later that night, one minute after midnight, Jim passed away peacefully with his wife by his side. Jim had a good life. The couple had raised two wonderful sons together, and were blessed with five granddaughters.

A few weeks later, when Marnie returned to her Hospice volunteer duties, Camillia Galezowski, the Hospice's Supportive Care Coordinator and facilitator of the Widow to Widow program spoke with Marnie about the program and offered an opportunity for her to participate.

The Widow to Widow program, made possible through donor support, is a 10-week structured group program, where women can share their grief experience in a judgment-free environment, and reflect on how grief has affected various aspects of their lives. It helps dispel the misconceptions of loss and helps women recognize grief avoidance. It also helps women establish a new self-identity and to move on in their lives without their partner.

"I thought I had a handle on things," says Marnie, "but I learned a lot."

"I learned there was a difference in grieving and mourning. The program allowed me to share some of my feelings openly with a group that was supportive and totally understanding of my feelings," she shared.



Marnie and Jim Hyett celebrating their 62nd wedding anniversary at the Hospice.



At the Hospice, Jim and Marnie enjoyed visits from their sons Larry (on the left), of Oakville and Steve, of Picton.



olga **CONSORTI**

FOUNDATION LEADER TO RETIRE IN MAY AFTER 3 DECADES OF SERVICE

Effective in May,
Foundation
President and CEO
Olga Consorti will

retire in her 30th year of service to St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre and Stedman Community Hospice.

Simply put, Olga has made a tremendous impact on our organization and our community as a whole. Responsible for fundraising, marketing and communications in support of St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre, and Stedman Community Hospice, under Olga's stellar leadership, the Foundation has grown exponentially from raising \$15,000 annually to \$3,500,000 per year currently.

Fueled by her unwavering commitment to her community, and inspired by the courage and conviction of The Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton who instilled in her that it is a privilege and honour to serve those in need, Olga has dedicated her career to ensuring the most vulnerable in our community receive the compassionate care they deserve.

Among her many accomplishments is leading the fundraising efforts and strategic redevelopment of the former St. Joseph's Hospital into the current St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre 205-bed long-term care facility and Stedman Community Hospice – the community's only hospice for the terminally ill and was the 5th of its kind in the province. Most recently, Olga was also instrumental in planning and

implementing the successful \$7 million capital campaign to build Stedman Community Hospice's 26,500 sq. ft Hankinson House, increasing the Hospice from 6 beds to 10 beds, among other community benefits.

In recognition of her outstanding professional and civic contributions, Olga is the recipient of the Mission Legacy Lifetime Achievement Award by the Sisters of St. Joseph in honour of her longstanding commitment to health care and carrying out their mission, as well as the distinguished Paul Harris Fellow Award, presented to her by the Rotary Club of Brantford - the highest honour the Club bestows in acknowledgement of exemplary dedication and service to the community.

Karen Robb, Chair of St. Joseph's Lifecare Foundation noted, "Those who have had the pleasure and privilege to work with Olga, including staff, volunteers, and Board members will miss her enthusiasm, compassion, kindness, and the unique spirit she brought to her role each and every day. An accomplished leader who truly embodied the values of our organization, Olga leaves an incredible legacy of accomplishments that has positioned the Foundation for long term success."

Robb added, "We are incredibly grateful to Olga for her extraordinary contribution and wish her every happiness in her well-deserved retirement."

Cont'd from page 1....

It provided Marnie with a new social outlet with women who were living a similar experience and through 10 weeks of grief support, many friendships were formed.

All of us now get together once a month for dinner," says Marnie. "It's wonderful!"

The Widow to Widow program is one of a number of cost-free grief support programs made possible through donations from the community. The Hospice offers a similar program for men, as well as one-on-one support sessions for adults. A separate support program exists for children which includes one-on-one sessions as well as an annual day camp and Christmas activity program.

The Hospice also offers a Day Wellness program for individuals who have been diagnosed with a life-altering illness. Participants have the opportunity to engage with others who are learning to manage a new reality.

"I'm so grateful to the donors for making the Widow to Widow program possible, for making this building possible," says Marnie. "The people here are like family to me. It really is a wonderful place; we are so lucky to have it in our community."

To make a donation in support of Grief & Bereavement programs at Stedman Community Hospice, please call 519-751-7096, ext 2475 or give online at www.sjlc.ca.

elaine CALVERT

STEDMAN COMMUNITY HOSPICE WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR



**Executive Director (ED) of Stedman Community Hospice,
Elaine Calvert**

St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre and Stedman Community Hospice are pleased to welcome Elaine Calvert to the position of Executive Director (ED) of Stedman Community Hospice.

In her role, Elaine is responsible for planning, directing and managing all programs and personnel of Stedman Community Hospice.

Elaine is a Registered Nurse who holds a Master of Arts in Leadership. She has 15 years of strategic and operational leadership, complemented by seven years of direct care experience, including work in acute care, community, and long-term care sectors.

Most recently, Elaine was the Director of Research and Development for Think Research, where she led a research and development team focused on the development of a seniors' care program and the provincial deployment of Ministry-funded clinical support tools. She is a highly accomplished client-centered professional, with a solid understanding of the complexity of the healthcare system.

"Elaine is strongly committed to providing patients and families with compassionate care and caring in every aspect of their experience," says David Wormald, President of St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre.

"I am delighted that Elaine has joined our team and look forward to her leadership and contributions going forward."

Elaine plans to attend Hike for Hospice on May 3rd, and is looking forward to meeting and engaging with donors and Hospice families.

LONG-TIME VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR TO RETIRE IN APRIL

For 15 years, Cheryl Ann Corner has been the face of Stedman Community Hospice for the hundreds of volunteers she has trained to dutifully serve and care for patients and their families. On April 30, she retires, and will be dearly missed by staff and volunteers alike.

In her role as Volunteer Coordinator, Cheryl Ann has overseen all things related to the volunteers – training, scheduling, and retaining.

"Since the day our doors opened, she has worked tirelessly to grow and develop our Volunteer Program, without which our hospice could not exist," says Jennifer Dennis, Hospice Education Coordinator.

Cheryl Ann was known for her daily emails to staff and volunteers,

designed to keep everyone in the loop, and always punctuated with an inspirational message.

"Cheryl Ann is the essence of everything positive found in one beautiful person," says long-time Hospice volunteer Norma Schmitt.

"She is genuinely caring, resourceful, supportive, witty, and kind. She will be greatly missed."

Upon retirement, Cheryl Ann plans on spending more time travelling with her partner, Keith, and enjoying her beloved grandchildren.

She leaves a legacy of love, compassion, kindness and dedication, all of which live on in the extraordinary volunteers that we are privileged to have in our Hospice.



**Long-time Volunteer Coordinator
Cheryl Ann Corner set to retire in April**



Hike for Hospice

SAVE THE DATE - JOIN US

POSTPONED

99 WAYNE GRETZKY PARKWAY

TITLE SPONSOR methapharm Specialty Pharmaceuticals

INCREDIBLE PRIZES FOR TOP FUNDRAISERS!



HIKE FOR HOSPICE ON HOLD

In response to the global COVID-19 health crisis, we are following the directives of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and postponing the Hike for Hospice, originally scheduled for Sunday, May 3rd. We are so grateful to our amazing sponsors and to everyone who has already registered or donated to this event.



PSW Stephanie Weatherbee takes on screening duties at the Hospice.

Although the Hike is the Hospice's largest event, raising in excess of \$340,000 annually in support of cost-free end-of-life care, the health and safety of the community comes first.

All of our collective energy at this time must go to support our front-line staff. We are so proud of their dedication, working around the clock and

multi-tasking many roles to do whatever they can to keep the Hospice doors open and the love and care abundant for patients and their families.

In the meantime, efforts are being rewarded by "Project Feel-Good," an internal campaign to support the health care teams at Stedman Community Hospice and St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre. We are trying to find creative ways to



RN Stephanie Lang is quick to offer a friendly smile while on infection control duties.



Flowers delivered by the owners of Forest of Flowers to lift spirits.

boost morale and say 'thank you' for the outstanding work being done.

Despite the hardships that local business are facing having to close their doors, management at The Keg Steakhouse donated several cases of fresh produce to the Hospice, while Forest of Flowers owners delivered dozens of flowers to the Hospice and St. Joseph's

Lifecare Centre to lift up everyone's spirits. Tim Horton's has also showed their support by making stops all across Ontario, including our site, to deliver coffee and donuts to our healthcare teams.

One thing we can always count on is our community's unwavering spirit and resiliency. When we look back at this time in our history, may we be proud of our story and how our thoughts, actions and words helped shape our future for generations to come.



Fresh produce donated to the Hospice by The Keg Steakhouse.

Please continue to check our Stedman Community Hospice Facebook page and Twitter for ongoing updates.

Thank you and stay safe!



@StedmanCommunityHospice

SJLC.CA



@StedmanHospice

