



# ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



## A MESSAGE FROM Kelly Hubbard, Executive Director

What a year! I cannot be more proud of the entire Hospice Simcoe team for their dedication and flexibility in adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic. We pivoted very early using innovative ways to provide our programs and services, while ensuring the delivery of high quality palliative care and bereavement support. The staff and volunteers working within the Community Programs team adapted quickly, supporting clients over the phone and hosting virtual Zoom meetings by the end of March. We continue to provide online and phone support to best meet the needs of our community. The Residential Program continues to provide nursing care to residents with enhanced infection prevention and control practices and visitor restrictions. Our Fund Development program has been affected the most with events being cancelled, postponed or modified in some way due to the limits of large gatherings. We are adapting to our “new normal” following Public Health guidelines and Ministry directives.

We are extremely grateful to all who support Hospice Simcoe; our ambassadors, our volunteers, our donors. You all make this happen! We cannot do this important work without your very generous and ongoing support. I hope you will consider a donation to our Annual Appeal this year. We are very fortunate to have a generous donor who will be matching your donation in support of Hospice Simcoe!



## A MESSAGE FROM Chris Nichols, Board Chair

It's hard to believe that another year has passed. I feel very privileged to serve on the Board of Directors. I am past the usual tenure as Chair, but given the effects of COVID-19, the Directors thought it best to have me stay for another year, providing stability and continuity during a very unsettling time. We are so impressed to hear that Kelly and her team stepped up to the plate, ensuring our patients and their families received care during the most difficult time of their lives. Hospice Simcoe was one of the first Community Agencies to reach out and provide care virtually, as of the end of March. Very impressive indeed.

Last year, Hospice Simcoe was fortunate to enjoy the success of our most profitable events. The Hike, Golf tournament and Gala raised over \$250,000. Due to COVID-19, we have cancelled the Golf Tournament and the Hike has become a virtual event for 2020. We are fortunate that our faithful donors are still there. You must also know that the Finance Committee is exemplary in managing our finances. We didn't expect this, but if there was a time that we were struggling, we have enough to continue operations for six months.

This is an unsettling time. Certainly the social isolation has had a huge impact on everyone. But it also gives us more time to reflect. Hopefully, one thing we learn from all of this is to count our blessings and appreciate the small things in life. We need to stay positive. That is the motto for Hospice Simcoe. Despite the current situation, staff and volunteers have demonstrated creativity and unique ways to ensure the best for our community. A heartfelt thank you from the Board of Directors to our volunteers, staff & donors.



# A MESSAGE FROM

## Dr. Kelly Emerson, Co-Medical Director

It has been a very interesting and challenging year with regard to providing palliative care both at Hospice Simcoe's Residence and in the community! Our new out-patient hospice clinic was really starting to take off and connections were being made between the teams providing robust palliative care when COVID-19 hit. Being challenged to still provide excellent palliative care resulted in new and innovative ways to provide care. We were able to see many patients virtually through webcams and iPads to help patients and families in their journey. To protect staff and patients, MDs providing care at our Residence were seeing patients virtually for many months.

As things are opening up, it has been wonderful but different to return to in-person care as it involves protective gear and social distancing. The mix of virtual and real time care will continue indefinitely. It has allowed us to be flexible and more efficient and more creative when it comes to providing a palliative approach to care.

Resilience!!



# A MESSAGE FROM

## Dr. Brian Morris, Co-Medical Director

Our Co-Medical Director, Dr. Emerson, has described the challenges of the last year very clearly. I have been wondering and pondering about where we go from here. How can the pandemic be viewed as an opportunity, allowing us and forcing us to change - and change quickly - as individuals, an organization, and a society. From the trivial (I have learned to bake bread) to the society level game changers (will Canada adopt a guaranteed basic income policy?), change is happening. How do we direct it, and manage it, so that we end up better?

There are so many things that Hospice Simcoe does so well already, that I sometimes find it difficult to think that we can improve! But can we work even better with our community partners to improve early identification of people who would benefit from a palliative approach? Can we expand our outreach to the community to help our whole community understand what we do and understand the importance of advance care planning? Can we take on an active role in research, to study and improve the whole field of palliative care? This last initiative, coming from our new board member Dr. Didiodato, is already underway.

So, Hospice will change - but at the same time, will continue to do what we do best, providing compassionate excellent care for those in need.



*We truly got to enjoy these loved and precious moments in her final days.*

There truly are no words to even begin to describe our family's experience at Hospice Simcoe when our Mother's cancer diagnosis quickly turned palliative. From the very moment we walked in, it quickly became our home away from home. The outpouring of love and support from everyone at Hospice Simcoe is something we cannot even express in words; this team truly are Earth Angels.

The entire volunteer and staffing team went above and beyond to make us feel welcomed and comforted. From the daily visits from the NSMHPCN nurse at RVH to check on our Mom while waiting for a bed, to allowing her to have her dignity right up into her last days. Waking up the first morning in Hospice and hearing Mom say; *"It's a beautiful morning outside, look at all the birds"* after a lengthy stay in a hospital with no view, was so comforting. The staff of Earth Angels made every effort to ensure that she was comfortable and pain free. This space allowed us to enjoy family rituals like Hallmark movie days with tea parties, Grey's Anatomy and PJ's in a cozy space, sleepovers with Scrabble games, big bubble baths and warm lights with Faith Hill playing. All things she loved.



It allowed our Dad to finally rest a little easier at night. Dad found relief and was able to be more relaxed, just knowing the amazing nurses were popping in more frequently to check in on his wife and make sure she was not in any discomfort. Dad was able to enjoy those final days as her husband, best friend, and support system, while she received extraordinary care. This place provided a space that family and close friends could visit, we'd have meals together in the Solarium due to the ability and unique space to move the beds around their premises. We were able to listen to live music together and just be present, the smiles on her face during these moments are ones that are forever in our hearts. We truly got to enjoy these loved and precious moments in her final days.

It was a place that the kids found comfort in during a very difficult transition and loss. PJ's and story time with Grammie in a comfortable place to visit. There were no bright lit hallways or intimidating hospital equipment; there were Christmas decorations hanging, ginger molasses cookies baking, warm smiles, hugs and support. You truly feel just at home, and if you were lucky being greeted by Daisy (Hospice Simcoe Service Dog) it was always a loving embrace. The grief support helped the kids to understand the progression of the disease as it happened, in a manner that wasn't scary for them. These remarkable and incredible volunteers helped the kids to find their own ways for expression to deal with the grieving process and funeral preparation. The creativity and thought that goes into these programs are so heartfelt and unique.

In a time of so much pain and grief we were able to share many laughs and happy memories because of Hospice Simcoe. We were able to create beautiful, creative legacy pieces that we will cherish for a lifetime. This was all possible and a lot more bearable thanks to the amazingly wonderful staff & volunteers at Hospice Simcoe. For that our family is eternally grateful & forever thankful.

We look back with nothing but fond memories made here. We know the door is always open for a game of Scrabble, with a heartfelt welcome, a cup of tea and a place we will forever feel closest to our Mom.

- The O'Hara family





Mary and I were introduced to Hospice Simcoe through their Day Programs. Dr. Emerson had let us know that it might be something to think about, so somewhat reluctantly we called and signed up, not really knowing what to expect. Mary was in the Living Well Group and I joined the Caregivers Group. Both of these groups ran at the same time, making it easy to come and go together. For me it was a relief to have Mary safe and close to me and it gave us both some time to spend with others in the same position we found ourselves.

Mary initially was not convinced that the group was for her after the first meeting. However, I said we should give it a chance as it was good to get out. Then it all changed once she got to know the team at Hospice Simcoe (Volunteers Marjan, Gaile and staff member Teneal) and became friends with Roberta, another member of the group. Mary then looked forward to heading over to Hospice's Community location for group, and all the programs that were introduced. It was a safe environment to talk, share and help each other.

The Caregiver Support Group gave me time to be with others going through the same challenges. I never worried about Mary when she was with Marjan and Gaile. We could vent without feeling guilty and take time to just breathe. I feel fortunate to have developed two friends from the Caregiver group, one of whom's wife died three weeks after mine, strengthening our friendship knowing what the other was experiencing.

Hospice Simcoe is such a place of peace, filled with caring staff and volunteers. Everyone is positive and genuinely there to help in whatever way they can. We both knew this was where Mary and I would like to spend the final days of her life. So, when the time came, Mary and I hugged each other and cried before leaving home, knowing in our hearts it was the right decision and the best place to be. When we arrived at Hospice Simcoe's Residence, we were both scared, still not really believing this was happening to us. The nurses were amazing and gently walked us through every step, communicating to us what would be happening next. It was then that I really understood the compassion, care, respect, and love that was at Hospice. Our palliative care physician, Dr. Emerson, was so patient and caring with us when making decisions with Mary's care. The rooms are a generous size and are even equipped with a murphy bed for spouses or family to stay overnight. I stayed with Mary day and night for the 10 days, which included Christmas.

During this time, a couple came to the residence and cooked Christmas dinner with all the trimmings for the staff, residents and their families. I was invited to share dinner with the staff, a truly special group of people that made you feel like part of their family.

The volunteers at Hospice are AMAZING. Always smiling and offering to help in anyway they can. Hugs are given out if you need one too! Many of the volunteers had experienced Hospice through a loved one and now are giving back. I will be participating in the Hike for Hospice to support this incredible organization. In closing, I would encourage people to visit Hospice Simcoe to see the facility for yourself.

**Be brave and do it for your loved one. You will never regret it.**

- Alex Rattray

*It was a safe environment to talk, share  
and help each other.*



*It's the one thing in the week that I really look forward to.*



My youngest son, Rob, was almost 56 years old when he decided to return to Barrie to enable me to stay in the family home 'for just a few more years'. The near future seemed secure and assured.

A year later, Rob was diagnosed with rectal cancer, stage 4. Despite months of radiation and chemotherapy, the cancer stopped responding and nothing more could be offered. We faced hopelessness and helplessness.

I can't even begin to imagine how we would have coped without Hospice Simcoe and the many supports made available to us. They helped us plan ahead for Rob's needs. The LHIN team provided homecare, the palliative care doctors took care of medical needs, and staff and volunteers at Hospice Simcoe's Community Support location became like family as Rob joined the 'Living Well' group and then persuaded me to join the 'Caregivers' group. I'm not much of a 'joiner' but, reluctantly for Rob's sake, I joined. Rob was already committed to various spiritual and meditative practices, and this background allowed him to bring open fearless acceptance and serenity to his new reality. We found comfort in participating in Mindfulness Meditation together.

We were met by the homey aroma of soups and baking as we opened the door, greeted by Hospice staff and volunteers ready to chat and listen. We (Caregivers) would hear hoots of laughter from Rob's Living Well group. It made me realize what a lonely journey Rob was on, one that only his peers could really understand. When in-person meetings were cancelled because of COVID-19, Rob expressed his disappointment, "*It's the one thing in the week that I really look forward to*". He was glad to resume online as soon as it became possible. During the 2 years of being Rob's constant caregiver, my family and I never felt alone or solely responsible for his care. Hospice was there any time we needed them.

As Rob lost stamina and strength, he began to talk about the end of the journey. Dr. Emerson was continuously available to relieve his increasing pain. Rob was adamant that he wanted to be conscious, and present for his last breath. He talked of MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying). After many heartfelt discussions with Dr. Morris and others, Rob made his decision to die at home amongst family. A date was set. But MAID requires that the patient be alert and able to confirm their final wishes. In Rob's case, with the likelihood of infections and delirium looming, the date had to be advanced by 4 days.

When friends ask me about the MAID experience, the only word that seems fitting is 'beautiful'. The COVID-19 'bubble' of 10 persons allowed for immediate family as well as Dr. Morris and Michele, Rob's LHIN homecare nurse. Rob was fully awake, aware and at peace. We each had private time with him before gathering together. He said how grateful he was to have us all there with him, and that he was now ready.

Even in our grief, we reminisce and share our gratitude that MAID was available to Rob. None of us could imagine wanting to change anything...it was perfect and it was what Rob wanted.

- Gwen Sullivan



*...the only word that seems fitting is 'beautiful'.*



# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## Residential

2020 Highlights | Annual Newsletter

Our clinical team, which consists of Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses, Personal Support Workers, a Spiritual Care Coordinator, Physicians and Volunteers provide compassionate care and support to residents and their families during their final days and weeks at Hospice Simcoe's residence.

The arrival of COVID-19 brought many changes to practice for the clinical team, but this has not impacted the exemplary care the team provides. Practice changes include the use of Personal Protective Equipment, screening tools, new visitation guidelines, increased cleaning measures and many new policies and procedures. The clinical team has remained adaptable, resilient and committed. We are incredibly proud of the leadership which every clinical team member has displayed and continues to do so.

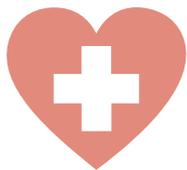
## OUR RESIDENCE IN A YEAR

**256**

We provided care to 256 residents and their families last year in our residential care facility.

**13**

The average length of stay is currently 13 days.



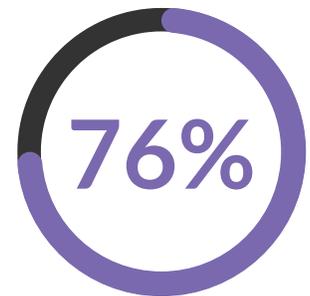
**27,558**  
**HOURS**

of 24/7 care was provided by our Clinical Team.

**+ 20,346 HOURS** — provided by Nurses

**+ 5,413 HOURS** — provided by PSWs

**+ 1,799 HOURS** — provided by Spiritual Care Coordinator



Did you know?  
76 % of residents had a cancer diagnosis and 24% of residents had a non-cancerous diagnosis.



Our average occupancy rate at the Residence is 88%.

# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## Community Support

2020 Highlights | Annual Newsletter

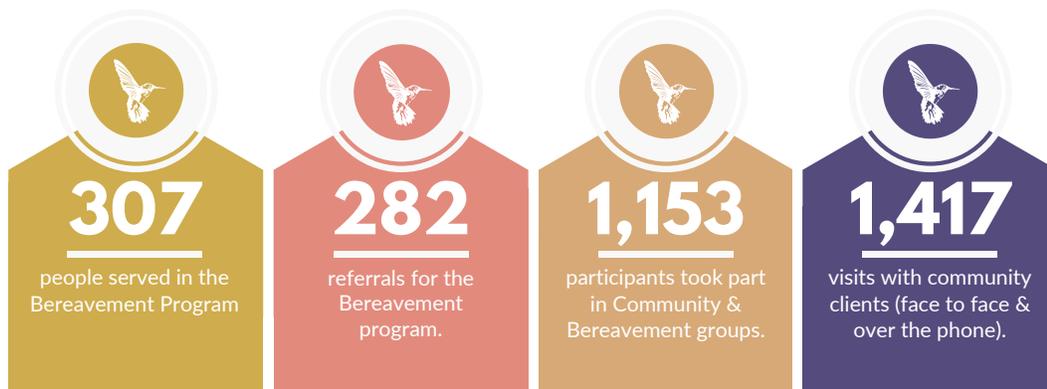
The Community Support team has always been dedicated to providing compassionate, expert care to those dying and bereaved in our community. No matter the circumstances, we strive to meet the needs of the people we serve; as we walk alongside them in their experience with end of life and grief. This past year proved to be quite unique when compared to others; as we all came face to face with COVID-19 and the challenges it presented. Like everyone, we went from business as usual to the Bell Farm office being shut down and the team scrambling to figure out how to support clients safely and effectively from a distance. Fortunately, the team was able to quickly think outside the box and establish creative ways to support our clients and community.

Living with a life limiting illness, being a caregiver or bereaved can be taxing and isolating for people on any given day. Add in a pandemic and the effects of these scenarios can be amplified; making the need for a safe space to explore their experiences greater. So, the community support team ventured out into the community, virtually, and brought our services to our clients. Using platforms such as Zoom and Crowdstack; all of our community programs and services are up and running for those in our community in need of them.

Our pivotal Home Visiting, Living Well and Caregiver programs are offering virtual support, where individuals and their volunteers can meet face to face using technological equipment. This ensures that those living with a life limiting illness (and their caregivers) are being provided continuous, high quality care from diagnosis to the end of life.

Those grieving the loss of a loved one, have continued access to one to one support, psychoeducational groups as well as our peer support groups; to ensure they are able to process their grief in a community of understanding individuals. Even our more physically active groups were able to support our clients, as completing Yoga for Grief classes and doing workout videos with the Walking Group were made possible through Zoom.

Our team was even able to launch new initiatives within the community, with our Advanced Care Planning chat room. Individuals from the community were able to join us on Crowdstack where they could ask questions and receive resources that could support them with their decisions regarding health and end of life.



# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## Volunteer Program

2020 Highlights | Annual Newsletter

It was an amazing year for the Volunteer team of growth, changes and successes. A 17% increase over last year and **20,874 hours** donated by volunteers before the end of March 2020. COVID-19 has required us to pivot and to look at our volunteer work through a different lens and to creatively support each other and our clients in new ways. This team of well-trained experts provides palliative care in our community for families and their loved ones when they needed it the most. As we now journey through this very unprecedented time for the world and Hospice, volunteers have risen to the challenges providing support in new and unique ways. Thanks for your compassion, dedication and flexibility.

*“as a family member I witnessed the army of volunteers that make life there a thing of beauty”*

*“the living well program was just what we needed”*

*“the goodies and tea made my day”*

*“we are so grateful for the Hospice volunteer and had no idea that this program existed”*

- Families & Clients



**HOURS DONATED** 2,275 — Visiting Hospice Services



988 — Administration Support

10,034 — Residence



387 — Maintenance, Decorating & Gardening

2,582 — Bereavement Support



2,954 — Board of Directors Training, Education & Awareness

1,003 — Fundraising

661 — Kitchen and Reception at our Community Support location



**200+**  
VOLUNTEERS

donated



**20,874**  
HOURS

# FUND DEVELOPMENT

2020 Highlights | Annual Newsletter

Fall is such a beautiful time of year. It is also a time when we reflect on what we are thankful for. We are truly thankful for the ongoing support we receive from so many people, organizations and businesses that allow us to provide services and programs to hundreds of individuals and families in our community every year – all at no cost to them.

This year has been a difficult one for fundraising. With so many people and businesses facing financial setbacks or challenges this year, their regular donations to charity have been something they simply could not do and we understand that. For others, those who are not in the workforce by choice, those who were grateful to have remained employed and for certain essential industries who continued to operate during this pandemic, we are asking for your help. We must raise approximately \$1.3 million each year to operate.

Even during the early days and weeks of the pandemic, we continued to offer all our services without disruption. It looked a little different, as it was necessary to restrict the number of visitors, volunteers and non-clinical staff in the building and support was done virtually.

From a fundraising standpoint, things immediately changed this spring. Our plan for our annual Hike for Hospice that nets us well over \$100,000 every year was put on hold. We switched to a virtual event in September. While all the results were not in by time of this mailing, it is inevitable proceeds from this event will be down as the beauty of this event is allowing people to gather in family groups and to reunite with other families, staff and volunteers. As the months went on, it was clear we could not host our annual Golf Tournament, as again, it would require at least 144 people to 'gather' together for a day of golf and meals.

We saw a very sharp decline in memorial donations that would normally be made in person at funerals and celebrations of life. Donations from people visiting family and friends at our residence dropped off as we moved to restricted visiting.

If you are able, please consider a donation this year. Please consider becoming a monthly donor. By spreading the amount out over the year it is not only easier for you to budget, but it allows us to better plan knowing some of our funding is stable and predictable.

Thank you for giving local. Every dollar you donate to Hospice Simcoe stays with Hospice Simcoe and is used to support people in our community.



**\$1.3 MILLION**

In order for us to continue to provide our programs & services at no cost, we must raise \$1.3 million each year.

# ANNUAL APPEAL

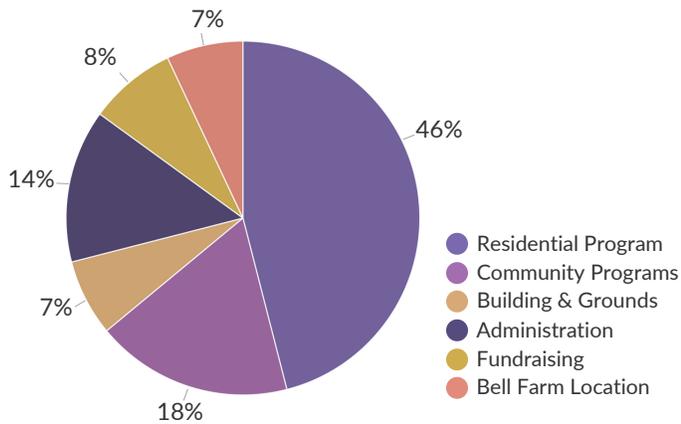
*Your donation will have double the impact this year!*

Annual Newsletter 2020

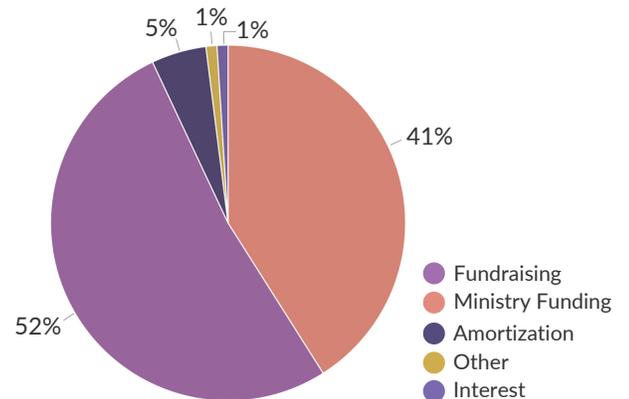
A generous donor has offered to match, dollar for dollar, any Annual Appeal donation this year up to a total amount of \$100,000. Your donation will go twice as far to provide end-of-life services, bereavement and community support. Fundraising has been challenging this year so, more than ever, we need your support. Included with this newsletter is a donation slip and return envelope. If it is more convenient for you to pay by credit card, give us a call at (705) 722-5995, or you can donate on-line at [www.hospicesimcoe.ca/ways-to-donate/](http://www.hospicesimcoe.ca/ways-to-donate/)

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## EXPENSES BY PROGRAM 2019/2020



## REVENUE BY SOURCE 2019/2020



*My husband spent his final two days at Hospice Simcoe. The staff were phenomenal and extremely compassionate. I cannot say enough good things. Our kids felt like they were at home. The ongoing support they are receiving through the teen support program is comforting. Thanks so much for helping us all through an extremely difficult time.*

- Tamara



### RESIDENCE

336 Penetanguishene Road  
Barrie, ON L4M 7C2  
T: 705 722 5995  
F: 705 722 0716

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

130 Bell Farm Road, Unit 1  
Barrie, ON L4M 6J4  
T: 705 725 1140  
F: 705 725 1710

[www.hospicesimcoe.ca](http://www.hospicesimcoe.ca)

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