

# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

## VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



### *All the Best, Kathy*

I assigned myself the task of writing the farewell message to Kathy Stewart, knowing I would have a difficult time with it. For the past ten years, almost every Tuesday, I have worked closely with this lovely lady. We have become good friends and I'm really, *really* going to miss her.

As we all know, Kathy is first and foremost a people person. From the beginning of her work-life, her jobs have involved connecting with people in her community. Pre-Hospice, in the education field, Kathy worked in daycare, starting at the Barrie YMCA, as a young grad of Georgian's first ECE program. Vasey was her next stop where she helped set up and run a co-op nursery school. However, the achievement that brought her the most pride was the "Parenting Lab School" which she helped promote and establish. Her dream, to establish a cooperative daycare within a high

school setting, turned out to be extremely successful. With Kathy at the helm as Director of this program, run completely by volunteers, she encouraged students to assist and was part of the Family Studies program. Established in 1981 within Midland Secondary School, this labour of love still continues today although in a different location and has, over the years, touched the lives of over 800 children in the Midland area. Kathy's abilities to coordinate volunteers, market the program and raise money were certainly developed there.

Hospice is incredibly lucky that after 25 years in ECE, Kathy changed her career path and, after completing the Volunteer Management Course at Humber, joined us as Volunteer Coordinator. Starting in July 2010, she immediately made a difference and continues to do so to this date.

Kathy arrived at Hospice Simcoe just after the house opened when Hospice wasn't fully known to the community. At the time, the volunteer contingent numbered around 20. Some of us were newbies. Others had been with the organization since day one when Hospice Simcoe was just an idea. Kathy's mandate at the time? To build a volunteer community that was able to serve the community in many ways and to let Barrie and area know what Hospice Simcoe was all about. And build it she did.

From the very beginning, Kathy demonstrated the qualities of an exceptional Volunteer Manager. Strong leadership skills enabled her to take a small group of volunteers and grow it into an impressive contingent of 200+ men and women who are committed to the goals of our organization.

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# ALL THE BEST KATHY

Her amazing communication skills with staff, board members and volunteers helped to enlist excellent people to the team and her intuitive nature found the perfect fit for each new person who signed on as a volunteer. (I've always been amazed at Kathy's ability to match a person with a specific task and to search for new opportunities for those with exceptional skills in certain areas. Therapeutic Touch, Reflexology, Yoga and musicianship are but a few of these areas.) As she says herself, "I'm a connector. I see possibility within people and work to find a place for people to shine and feel valued."

All of these tasks need someone with good organizational skills and Kathy has those in abundance. Constantly juggling many balls at the same time seems to come easily to her and that's why our volunteer organization runs so very smoothly. Finally, Kathy shows appreciation to our team. The Christmas gathering which we've all come to love was her idea. The Spring Appreciation Celebration - hers as well. Little notes of thanks, some yummy chocolates, or just a warm smile and a sincere thank you are all ways Kathy shows us that she acknowledges our work.

In preparation for writing this, I sent an email to a few volunteers asking for a couple of words, a phrase or sentence about Kathy. Responses were immediate and warm.

*"Amazing...crafty, cheerful and very informative." "big asset to Hospice" "It was our lucky day when Kathy Stewart first walked through the Hospice doors." "... always interested....she made us feel as if we were the most important people in the house that day."* "I always felt appreciated." "Kathy's friendly smile and warm greetings ... made me feel welcome." "We can always rely on her to help out." "She welcomed me to Hospice...with sincere warmth and kindness in her greeting." "Kathy is always ready to listen and acknowledge the thoughts of others."

It's easy to see that Kathy Stewart is a very special lady.

We are going to miss you, Kathy. That infectious smile, your warm laugh and your love for people have encouraged us all to be better volunteers and to embrace the vision you have created. We will do our best to continue that legacy.

On a more personal note, Tuesdays just won't be the same. I'll miss the "Morning Porter!" greeting when I walk in the door, the text chats, your requests to make the newsletter "just one page longer..." And I'll miss your requests for **new** volunteer party ideas and **new** newsletter ideas and **new** ways to engage volunteers. (You always want to keep things fresh!)

Thank you for helping me become a better volunteer and for finding my special niche as newsletter editor. Mostly, thanks for being a kind and thoughtful friend. You may be leaving but our friendship will continue. Monthly breakfasts, crafting occasions and shared Grandma experiences will still happen.

But Tuesdays just won't be the same.

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# MANAGING GRIEF AT CHRISTMAS



**Thanks, Colleen!**

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year”; according to the song by Andy Williams anyway. Yes, this is the time of year where things are a little brighter and more hopeful; people in general seem a little kinder and more festive. How could one not be happier with that?

Some who could attest to the holidays not being the best time of year though, are people who have had a loved one die. When someone in your world you care about has died and you’re grieving them, the holidays are not always all they are made out to be. In fact, it can be an all-out struggle. Those moments that many people enjoy such as decorating the tree, holiday parties, watching the holiday classics or attending various faith-based services all of a sudden can be sheer torment, for they serve as a constant reminder that your person is not physically there to partake in these activities with you. Furthermore, when you’re grieving it can be hard enough to muster up enough energy to do the day-to-day necessities of life, let alone participate in the jolliness of the season. For some, the pain of the holidays can be enough to make one want to pack their bags and jet off to a far away, isolated island.

No matter what we do to support people who are bereaved during the holidays, we won’t be able to fix the grief people are feeling. That being said there are some strategies we can utilize to help people feel supported and make this time of year more bearable.

- **Address the elephant in the room:** Life is forever changed when someone we care about has died. Have a conversation about grief and the holidays with the person you are supporting. Talk about the changes and what they mean to them.
- **Validate their thoughts & feelings:** People are always allowed to feel how they feel, sometimes they just need someone else to remind them that it’s okay to do that. The thing about grief is you will experience all sorts of different emotions, and people can feel guilty when bereaved about experiencing positive ones. Help the person you’re supporting recognize they are allowed to experience joy and sadness through the holidays, and everything in between.
- **Encourage them to celebrate how they want:** Expectations should not be placed on people who are grieving to act like it’s business as usual when it’s not. If they want to celebrate the holidays like they would have before their loved one died, that is okay. If they choose to cancel Christmas while they are adjusting to their new normal, also more than okay. Support them as they explore what they want to do and encourage them to do what feels right for them.



# MANAGING GRIEF AT CHRISTMAS

- **Boundaries are important:** Setting and maintaining healthy boundaries is always important. The extra festive activities and social gatherings during the holidays can be exhausting. Help the people you are supporting identify their needs and wants and what they are uncomfortable with. For example, you get yet another invitation for another party? If you don't want to go, you have the right to decline the invitation.
- **Explore different traditions:** Part of the difficulties individuals who are bereaved have surrounding the holidays is that there may be so many rituals and traditions they had with their person. Doing these things without them can feel foreign and painful. Sometimes implementing new traditions can help create new memories that aren't tainted by grief. New traditions can also be done in a way that help people incorporate their person into their holidays (such as lighting a candle at the table for them or going around sharing your favourite holiday memories of them.)

**Thank you for all you have done for Hospice and your community over the past year. Happy holidays and we will see you all in 2021!**

## Tree of Remembrance

It has always been a tradition at this time of year for people to remember their loved ones—those close by, those who are far away, and those who are no longer living. For many years now at Hospice, we have provided an opportunity for people in our community to remember their loved ones by placing one of our ornaments on our Tree of Remembrance. This year the tree will be displayed outside in our gazebo throughout the month of December. Over the holiday season, we welcome you or anyone you know in the community to come by and place an ornament on the tree as a special way of remembering your loved ones who are no longer with you... (or who are with you in spirit.). The tree will remain up until Monday, December 28th, so if you wish to get your ornament back, please remove it from the tree by that date. ...from Lori



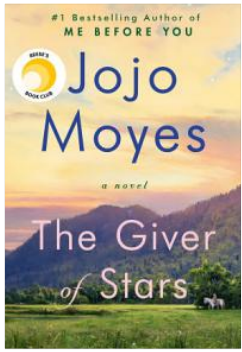
**“Christmas is doing a little something extra for someone.”**

**— Charles M. Schulz**



# Book Review

## THE GIVER OF STARS BY JO JO



During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt initiated the Works Progress Administration as part of his New Deal. The WPA provided jobs in the area of public works for millions of people who were looking for work. One of these initiatives was known as The Packhorse Librarians. The Packhorse Librarians were mostly women who delivered books throughout Appalachia to people who did not have access to books or libraries. They were paid approximately \$28.00 per month.

In 1939, eastern Kentucky was one of the poorest and most uneducated areas of the United States. The Giver of Stars is a fictionalized account of five women who became a part of The Packhorse Librarians.

Alice is an Englishwoman who left her country to marry a handsome American. Her husband's father is the owner of one of the largest coal mines in eastern Kentucky.

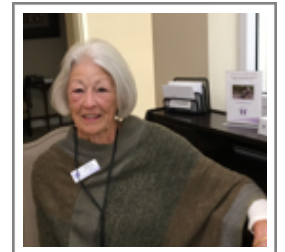
Margery is a smart-talking, self-sufficient woman who has never asked a man's permission for anything.

Izzy was born with a malformed leg and wears a brace which enables her to walk. She has an incredible voice and she breaks into song whenever the mood takes her.

Beth is a young woman with two small children. Her husband died as a result of "black lung" disease and, Sophie, is an educated Black woman who has returned from Louisville to take care of her brother.

What happens to these women during their time as Packhorse Librarians will make you angry and sad ... but you will also laugh and feel great joy for them. If you choose to read this book you won't be able to put it down or get it out of your mind.

Thanks, Sharron, for this review.



### Staff & Volunteer Picks

Have you read a good book lately? Have you seen a good movie? Do you have a favourite podcast? Let us know so we can share your suggestions with our readers. Here are a few suggestions we received this month.

**Sandi:** *The Tunnel* British series on Gem CBC

**Kathy S:** Ted Talk *The Happiness Advantage* Shawn Achor

**Wendy :** *Peanut Butter Falcon* The Movie Channel

**Natalie:** *White Houses* by Amy Bloom *Anne With an E* Netflix

**Dan:** *Booksmart* Amazon Prime



# WELCOME SUSAN AND MARILYN

Although it's sad to say goodbye to Kathy Stewart, we are very happy to welcome **Susan Haiplik** to Hospice Simcoe as Interim Volunteer Coordinator. Having met her and spent some time with her, it's easy to see why Susan was chosen for this role.

Susan is first and foremost a people person. She needs connection in her life and has always sought jobs which offer dialogue and interaction. An active volunteer for much of her life, Susan is not new to the Volunteer Coordinator role. For close to ten years she served at Gilda's Club as Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinator, a position that involved organizing 150+ volunteers, while at the same time, making the community aware of what Gilda's Club had to offer. She began as a volunteer at Gilda's Club soon after her father died of cancer in 2006. Before that she had volunteered at Casey House in Toronto, then at RVH in the palliative unit; end of life care is not new to her. As Kathy Stewart told me, "She seems a perfect fit for Hospice Simcoe."

Covid is what Susan sees as her biggest challenge right now. Meeting face to face with volunteers makes a big difference and Susan looks forward to the day when that's a reality. Getting to know people via Zoom and email is not her favorite way of connecting but, until we can all meet in person, she's doing her best. It's great to have you on board, Susan!



While **Marilyn Guest** will start her new role on November 23<sup>rd</sup> as Manager of Fund Development, she is not new to our Hospice team. Marilyn joined Hospice Simcoe seven years ago as a volunteer, where she started in the kitchen and speaks fondly of having the pleasure of working with legacy volunteer, Val Gardner. Marilyn is a professed mad baker who makes a mean pecan pie and butter tarts from her grandmother's recipes. Now, seven years later, Marilyn is following a calling where she will get to marry her passion for Hospice philosophies with her corporate experience. Marilyn joins the dynamic team with a broad-based business background, specializing in marketing, communications, fundraising events and public relations. Her goal is to glean as much information as possible from Lynda during her transition.

Marilyn is excited for new challenges and learning opportunities with the end goal of promoting all the grief support systems in the community as well as the residence.

Marilyn spoke thankfully about her experience of being on the receiving end of

Hospice Simcoe this past January; where her family breathed a huge sigh of relief as the clinical team took over the care for her father in his final journey. It has made Marilyn even more passionate about the frontline workers, where she expressed her gratitude for how Hospice helps people 'leave this world with the same passage of joy they did when they entered'. This is a dream come true for Marilyn and a dream for Hospice Simcoe as well.

Welcome Marilyn!

# VOLUNTEERS

## Hike for Hospice Totals

The final 2020 Virtual Hike for Hospice results are in. Participants and donors raised almost \$90,000. Thank you all! A special tip of the hat to the following top teams and individuals that raised a lot of money this year.

### Top Teams

- Hospice Hearts \$8,685
- Hospice Boarders \$5,625
- Hospice Bell Farmers \$3,700
- Joe Johnson Equipment \$3,260
- Wendy's - Yonge & Big Bay Point Rd. \$1,365

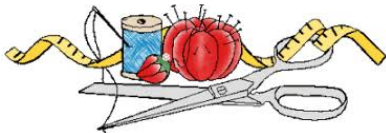


### Top Individual Fundraisers

- Marjan de Jong Deller \$7,593
- Alex Rattray \$6,630
- Joan Jarvis \$2,435
- Carol O'Kane \$2,360
- Barb Weir \$2,255
- Gaile Smiley \$2,189
- Jack Hunter \$2,105
- Darlene Botman \$1,515



Many thanks to Leslie and Jan from the Barrie Garden Club who put together the beautiful Christmas urns this year and to Kathy and Sandra for adding the lovely Christmas touches to the House.



### Can you sew?

We are looking for volunteers who would be interested in making cloth bags for our residents' belongings. If you can help, please contact [susan@hospicesimcoe.ca](mailto:susan@hospicesimcoe.ca).



# What's Happening?

The opportunities and requests for volunteer support that appear in this newsletter are designed for Hospice Simcoe registered and trained volunteers.

If you wish to become a registered volunteer, please contact Susan or Tonya; [susan@hospicesimcoe.ca](mailto:susan@hospicesimcoe.ca) [tonya@hospicesimcoe.ca](mailto:tonya@hospicesimcoe.ca)

Thank you!



## Volunteer Zoom Support with Kathy,

Lori & Susan

Dec. 10th 10 -11:30am - Grief

Dec. 21st 10 - 11:30am - How to Navigate the Holidays

## Have you signed up to make a Holiday Gnome?

Join with other volunteers on Zoom to make and create a wee gnome for your holiday mantel.

Dates: Dec. 8th or 16th from 2-4pm.

Register for this event by contacting Susan or Kathy by Dec. 5th.

Kits will be available for pickup upon registration. Please check the youtube link to see what's involved.

You will need: glue gun, rice, elastics and blush.

<https://youtu.be/JHsEhzaHfrY>



# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

## In our Community...

### Christmas Trees

Are you going to buy a live Christmas tree? We are grateful to the Downtown Barrie Business Association for choosing Hospice Simcoe as the charity recipient for the proceeds from this year's Noella Christmas Tree Lot at Meridian Place/Memorial Square.

You can purchase a live Christmas tree from 10am to 3pm on the following three Saturdays: November 28<sup>th</sup>, December 5<sup>th</sup> and December 12<sup>th</sup>.



Our thanks to the Barrie Rotaract members who are volunteering at this event on our behalf. This is the same great group that volunteer annually at our Hike for Hospice.

### Annual Appeal

Annual Appeal update – we are getting closer to our target of \$100,000 in donations. The \$100,000 in donations will be matched by an anonymous donor. If you would like to make a donation, please call or see Judi in the office, donate online at [www.hospicesimcoe.ca](http://www.hospicesimcoe.ca) or you can mail it in. Thank you so much for your support.

### Rotary Cash Calendars are back!

The annual sale of Rotary Cash Calendars is here. Calendars are \$20 each with 25% coming back to Hospice Simcoe. There is a cash prize available to be won every single day of the year. Please see Josie ([josie@hospicesimcoe.ca](mailto:josie@hospicesimcoe.ca)) if you would like to purchase a calendar. They make great stocking stuffers.

### From Lynda

*My sincerest thanks to the amazing team of volunteers at Hospice Simcoe that made my job easier to do. In addition to all the other great work you do for us, whenever I put out a call to help with one of our fundraising events, so many of you always came forward. Thank you for all you do. So long, Lynda*