



# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

## VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

### ZOOM GNOMES

Even though we couldn't get together for our regular Volunteer Holiday Celebration this year, we came up with a plan to meet virtually on Zoom to create sock gnomes. Many volunteers picked up their gnome kits at the House and joined us to create these cute little fellas. Others joined in-house to complete their Christmas craft. Thanks to all of you who participated in person or virtually and thanks to those of you who sent in a photo of your finished product!





Thanks to everyone who joined in on the Gnome workshop! The lucky prize winners were; Teresa A., Kathy G., Laura K., Diane T., Sandy D., Isabel P., Heather C., Judy O., Liz W. and Mary Ann P.

# A message from Kelly...



Hello everyone,

When asked to write a message for the January newsletter, I thought to myself...how do I best summarize 2020? The past year has flown by and has been full of challenges and uncertainty, mixed with extreme generosity and kindness. The unprecedented pandemic has forced us to make many changes to our personal and professional lives. We have faced our own fears and anxieties over what the future brings for our families and ourselves. Many of us sacrificed being with those we love in order to keep them healthy and safe. We have shared feelings of sadness, fear, and isolation while having feelings of love, joy and happiness.

I am incredibly grateful for the entire team of volunteers and staff! We have embraced new technology and learned important infection prevention and control practices. When the pandemic was announced in the spring the Community Programs team sprung into action and hosted their first client support meeting via Zoom on March 26th, 2020. A phenomenal task! After the lock downs and training was complete, they continued to visit clients in the home, have some face-to-face bereavement visits and host day programs. The residential team never missed a beat! They never missed a shift! They never wavered! They genuinely care about each other and are deeply dedicated to providing excellence in palliative end-of-life care.

With the support of volunteers, donors and the community, we overcame the lack of personal protective equipment with homemade masks, gowns and donations of alcohol-based hand rub and face shields from local businesses. Based on feedback we received, our clients, residents and families feel we provided the best care and support possible considering our limitations. We should all be very proud of our accomplishments! I know am!

Among all of the chaos of the pandemic, we continued to move the organization forward with our accreditation process, fund raising, partnerships and research. We had successful virtual onsite accreditation assessments with very positive feedback from the reviewers! We hosted a successful virtual AGM, "Hike for Hospice" and began our strategic planning. We launched a new role of Palliative Care Nurse Navigator in the Cancer Centre at RVH! We continue to advocate for palliative care and bereavement support through the development of the Ontario Health Teams. In addition, we started a Research Committee to lead local palliative care research projects, with the first project being launched in January 2021.

We are finishing the year by saying farewell to Lynda and Kathy who have both been pivotal in the success of Hospice Simcoe. We wish the two of them the utmost happiness and health in their retirement. We congratulate Teneal on the birth of her daughter and welcome Josie & Brittany back from maternity leave. We welcome both Susan and Marilyn to their new roles and are excited to have them join our Hospice family!

I think we can all agree that 2020 was a profound, life changing, human experience. As we all hunker down for the winter, we need to remain hopeful and remember we will all be together again soon.

Spring will come. We will continue to share feelings of sadness, fear, and isolation while having feelings of love, joy and happiness. We are kindred spirits. We are all in this together! Welcoming 2021.

Sincerely, *Kelly*

# VOLUNTEER FACES

## A Team Effort

Natalie and Laura Lee have been friends for years, took the Hospice volunteer course together and were looking for a volunteer opportunity. At the time we needed some kitchen volunteers so they gladly agreed to help - even though neither one felt that culinary arts was their forte. Since that time, three years ago, they have been spending Monday afternoons in our kitchen cooking and baking up a storm...and having fun.

Both women were happy to return to the house when regulations eased and they had taken the Covid training. And when Kathy Stewart made a special kitchen request they got right on it.

At the time there was a woman in the residence with three young children. One of her wishes, as she told Lori Scholten-Dallimore, was to have their favourite family dinner together. Lori got right on it and asked Kathy to connect with the kitchen volunteers.

When they were asked, Natalie and Laura Lee, of course, said yes. (They're not known as The Hurricanes for nothing!) Together they made, as per the family's request, fettuccine Alfredo, garlic bread, Caesar salad and to top it off, a homemade chocolate cake. (The salad wasn't requested but Kathy thought the meal needed something green!) The table was set up in the family room and Natalie and Laura Lee delivered the meal to the resident, her husband and children who were very appreciative.

This is not a rare event at Hospice Simcoe. The staff and volunteers often go out of their way to fulfil requests made by families because, as Natalie and Laura Lee were quick to say, "Everyone here is so caring." This dinner alone involved Lori, Spiritual Care Coordinator, Kathy Stewart, Volunteer Manager, the shoppers, Judy Brady and Sherri Taylor who keep the pantry stocked, and finally, Laura Lee and Natalie, who cooked the meal. Well done team! Added note... Laura Lee's butter tarts are a legend in the house now. Every week she bakes 142 - all different flavours. (She had never made a butter tart before volunteering here.)



### Message from Kathy...

Thank you to everyone for your well wishes, cards, gifts and kind words as I celebrated 10+ wonderful years at Hospice Simcoe. It is bittersweet to be leaving such an amazing team of people who have accomplished so much! But-you have all assured me that retirement is the best!

*"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things.  
He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things"*

- Ronald Reagan.

Continue to do the "greatest things" for the families that need the gift of Hospice in their journey of life. You have a very capable leader in Susan and I look forward to hearing all of the new "greatest things" that you will accomplish together.

# Self Compassion

One of the true markers of the holidays wrapping up and a new year beginning, is people turning their attention towards the days following the stroke of midnight on New Years Eve. Resolutions are crafted in hopes that successful completion will result in a better year, and improved quality of life. Typically, these resolutions focus on things such as bettering one's outer appearance or finances. For 2021 I'm proposing something different; I'm proposing we incorporate self-compassion into our resolutions and way of being.



**Thanks Colleen!**

Self compassion is a practice where we develop and maintain a positive attitude towards ourselves, and includes bestowing the same kind of kindness you display to others to yourself. It's being able to acknowledge that, like everyone else, you are human and at times you will excel; while other times you won't, and during those times be able to extend forgiveness and acceptance to yourself. With the times we are living in, it is more important than ever to practice self-compassion. Currently we are living in a time where we do not know what is going to happen next, and more stress and expectations are being placed onto us (such as learning a new language in lockdown). Life is definitely not business as usual right now, and that is really hard to process and deal with. Add in grief and it can be easy for that inner critic to become loud and negative; chipping away at your well-being.

Unlike many other New Years resolutions, practicing self-compassion will not require you to sign up for some sort of gym/studio membership or hide away in your home for months so you don't spend frivolously. (If you have an Amazon account though...you still may be in trouble). Rather, all you need to do is allow yourself to be human and be nice to yourself. For some this may seem logical; second nature, but for many this can be really difficult. If you fall into the latter category there are some simple practices that you can implement to initiate working towards being more compassionate towards yourself. For instance, treat yourself like you would treat your friends. When that inner critic becomes loud or you find yourself being harsh on yourself, give yourself the same kind of pep talk you would give to someone you care about who is having a hard time. If you feel weird giving yourself a pep talk like you would a friend, try reframing the message so it is not. As soon as the harsh comments start floating through your head, challenge them and restructure them by putting a more forgiving and positive tone. Don't be afraid to put that critic in its place and embrace all the perfections and imperfections that make you, you. Lastly, when something comes up that causes negative feelings; allow yourself to be present with those feelings. In no way am I saying to dwell in these feelings incessantly; quite the opposite. Be mindful with these feelings, acknowledge them, process them and move forward.

Whether or not you decide to include self compassion into your resolutions is up to you, but no matter what please be kind to yourself because you deserve it.

All the best in the new year!

# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS



At this time of year many of us consider changes we want to make in our lives. Maybe shedding a few pounds is at the top of our list, or getting more exercise! With the happenings of the past nine months we might be facing the new year differently.

COVID restrictions might have us all looking at 2021 with an anticipatory anxiety and fear, in light of what we experienced in 2020. Let's set aside 'resolutions' and focus on committing to doing something for yourself daily, no matter how small, with the following suggestions:

- **Mindful meditation** helps you to quiet your mind and focus your breathing to reduce your stress and anxiety. YouTube has some great beginner meditations to get you started.
- Combine your new breathing techniques and get your body moving in the morning with **Qigong or TaiChi**, for very gentle movements to stretch and strengthen your body while improving your balance. Again, YouTube has great beginner programs.
- **Socialize** through social media, when we are not able to gather together. Set up time with friends to FaceTime, Zoom, or make a phone call and check-in often to take care of each other. Stay connected with friends through Facebook or Instagram and think about posting old photos to create new conversations and reminisce about memorable moments. Surround yourself virtually with people that make you happy.
- **Express an attitude of gratitude** to lift and fill your spirit. Being grateful for the blessings we have is doubled when we share with others. Lifting others spirits will transform your mental outlook.
- **Journal your journey!** Even one line a day to record your gratitude will generate a timeline keepsake to reflect upon 2021, make years from now.
- **Re-create yourself!** Search your inner-self and start something new that you've always wanted to undertake. Puzzles, painting, reading, crafts, baking . . . the sky's the limit!

Make yourself a priority, take a few deep breaths a day, so you can give the great gift to others . . . the gift of **'you'**.

**Happy New Year!**

*Thanks to Carol Holden for this article*

Let  
it  
Snow

Snow as a child.... it used to bring joy and wonder  
Now it brings dread and misery  
This winter try to rediscover that childish wonder  
throw a snowball,  
catch a snowflake on your tongue  
build a snowman with friends and family.  
Try to turn a little bit of dread and misery to joy



- Dan Elliott



# Book Review

## THE COMPANY WE KEEP By Francis Itani

A book review by **Donna Goodeill**



Thank you, Donna for  
this book review!

The Company We Keep is the latest novel by Francis Itani, a gifted Canadian writer. Itani has authored an impressive list of books, including Deafening and Remembering the Bones, two of my other favourites. Before launching her writing career, Itani had been a nurse as well as a nursing instructor in Montreal. Perhaps it is this background which has given her a deep understanding of the human spirit.

The references and settings in Itani's books are uniquely Canadian, and this story includes a parrot who is fond of listening to CBC radio, and in particular Michael Enright's Sunday Edition.

The Company We Keep is an especially good fit with our work at hospice as it chronicles a small group of people who meet informally for a discussion about grief. All of the characters have experienced the loss of a spouse, parent or friend and are finding their way through the complex changes in their lives.

The Company We Keep is a funny, moving and ultimately hopeful book about friendship and new beginnings.

## 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.



**Danielle:** This Is Us CTV, past seasons on Netflix.

**Will the Cat Eat My Eyeballs:** Big Questions from Tiny Mortals About Death, book by Caitlin Doughty

**Cathy C.:** The Spoon Stealer. Novel by Lesley Crewe

**Susan:** Podcasts: Feel Better Live More – Dr. Rangan Chatterjee & Dream Big Podcast by Bob Goff

**Tonya:** Evermore, Taylor Swift's new album. Virgin River on Netflix

# What's Happening?

## ZOOM Lunch & Learn

Topic: Palliative Care Nurse Navigator Role for the Oncology Symptom Management at RVH-Community Circle of Care



Monday, January 25th  
12:00pm - 1:00pm

## January Volunteer Support Meeting with Susan & Lori

Thursday, January 28th @ 1:30pm

For future Lunch & Learn and Volunteer Support meeting suggestions please submit ideas to:  
[susan@hospicesimcoe.ca](mailto:susan@hospicesimcoe.ca)

## Volunteer Hours...

From April 1<sup>st</sup> - Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> we have recorded **8227** volunteer hours!!! Thanks to everyone who has been able to volunteer in this very unprecedented year.

Of course our volunteer hours are less than previous years and we are so grateful to have 143 various volunteers record hours in Better Impact. What a wonderful statistic to report to our community!

## FROM THE BOARD....

Hello Everyone,

Well, as I write this, today's breaking news is that the Province will move into an entire lockdown on Christmas Eve!

Extremely disappointing, however, necessary to hopefully turn things around. At the same time there was a gathering of 500 people today in Toronto holding a Santa Claus parade in protest of current restrictions. I don't understand. Perhaps I am from a different generation, as many of you are, when there was respect for authority and we followed the rules. When we are hearing the impact the pandemic is having on Long Term Care, Hospitals and that our health care workers are exhausted, depressed and have no hope for any vacation over the Holidays, it makes me feel irate towards those who are behaving so irresponsibly without conscience. Times are so different.

Fortunately, Hospice Simcoe has been spared and continues to provide exceptional residential and community care. We are very pleased to let you know that we are in a positive financial position, with a hugely successful annual appeal. We are so grateful to our generous donors. This speaks to the reputation of the organization and the wonderful work of staff and volunteers.

The Board recently met for an evening to discuss future direction and update the strategic plan. You will be hearing more about this through a process of consultation with all key stakeholders. All board committees remain active and meet regularly.

I know that we all hope for a new and improved New Year. It's important to remain optimistic and focus on the positive. Try and stay active, get fresh air when possible, enjoy hobbies, games and keep in touch with loved ones.

Sending thanks and warm wishes your way.

Sincerely, Chris



# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

## In our Community...

### ANNUAL APPEAL

Our Annual Appeal was a great success! We are so pleased to announce that, thanks to the donation of many, and the \$100,000 match donation of an anonymous donor, we were able to surpass our goal for this year. Thank you for your generosity!



### NOELLA CHRISTMAS TREE LOT

Thanks to the Downtown Barrie Business Association for choosing Hospice Simcoe as the charity recipient for the proceeds from this year's Noella Christmas Tree and Wreath Lot at Meridian Place in downtown Barrie. Together with this year's tree lot sponsors, Dr. Brad Dibble and Katherine Elphick, and Arnott Construction who loaned their fencing to the tree lot, the Downtown Barrie Business Association (BIA) presented Hospice Simcoe with \$3,000. Our thanks as well to the Barrie Rotaract members who volunteered their help at the lot.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Normally at this time of the year we would be busy planning our February Gala. Like many events, we have been forced to postpone until things are settled and it's safe to gather. We will keep you posted as events like our Gala are back on the calendar.

### COMMUNITY THIRD PARTY EVENTS

If you know of any individuals, service clubs, organizations or businesses that will be hosting an event this year, we would appreciate them considering Hospice Simcoe as the charity recipient. For more information, contact our Fund Development Team. On average, these events collectively raise approximately \$100,000 each year for us.

On a personal note, **THANK YOU** to everyone – staff, volunteers and of course Lynda – who've made me feel so welcomed in my first month here at Hospice. As Lynda's heads off to enjoy retirement, I am excited to continue the great fundraising work she has done for Hospice Simcoe. - Marilyn Guest

Special thanks to Sandi P and Carol H for all of their work putting the volunteer newsletter together each month, and keeping us connected.



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