

HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



When the pandemic hit last year, most of the staff at Hospice Simcoe were asked to leave the building. Beginning mid-March, they communicated from home, learned to Zoom and adjusted to a different work lifestyle.

A few staff members, however, had to stay to make sure that Hospice Simcoe ran smoothly...even when the world around them changed so drastically.

Lori, our wonderful Spiritual Care Coordinator, was one of these staff members. We asked her how everyone has managed to keep their spirits up during the lockdown phases of Covid-19...

The Hospice residence has been very busy the last few months over the lock down and we are so grateful that we have continued to be able to offer a place of support for many residents and families. Throughout the end of December and into February, even though our volunteers have been limited in what they can do, we have felt their incredible support. The pictures along with this message is of the beautiful guiding star display in the hallway at Hospice. Since the beginning of January, the theme on our Reflection Board in the atrium has been: "What Are Your Guiding Stars?" Think for a minute about what gives you guidance and hope...what keeps you going and reminds you that, even in the hard times, life is good and rewarding and that what we do matters? Your answers could be as varied as the stars on the wall that you see here. We want to say thank you to Donna Greatrix for helping us to create this beautiful display and for the others who have contributed to it as well.

So let's continue to keep each other hope-filled and be guides for others who are feeling down...no matter where we are and what our limitations.



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; susan@hospicesimcoe.ca Thank you!

FINDING HAPPINESS IN TROUBLING TIMES

Let's face it, winter is here. With winter comes blistering cold, so much shovelling, and never-ending grey skies that contribute to vitamin D deficiencies. This year we have the added element of a rampant pandemic, and given that we are in the business of supporting people in some of their darkest moments, this can ultimately leave a number of us feeling bleak and helpless.

If you currently find yourself feeling down these days; know you are not alone. What is happening right now is awful and it's natural to feel depressed and upset. Acknowledging, and giving yourself permission to feel however you are feeling at this time is more important than ever. If you need a good cry, go ahead and let it out! Now, while it is important to let these negative feelings out, it also isn't healthy to dwell on them all the time. Doing so can lead to deeper despair. What's also important is to strive towards being healthy and finding some happiness; because you deserve to be happy.

Here are some tips that won't fix things, but could help increase your happiness during these trying times:

Binge Watching: Netflix and other streaming services are piling on the shows, so grab a snack and watch a season or two of your favourite show; no one is judging!

Get in touch with your inner child: Kids are experts in having fun and entertaining themselves. Whether it is doing a craft, going outside to play in the snow then coming in for a hot chocolate; get in touch with your childish self - some laughs and happiness are likely to ensue.

Read a good book: Reading a book we enjoy can help us take a break from reality. Fun fact: reading has been known to decrease stress and increase happiness.

Food: For those of you out there who love food, getting in the kitchen and making favourite dishes or branching out and trying something new can be good for the soul and belly.

Games: Board games, card games, apps where you can connect with friends virtually to play games (i.e.: house party), are all great ways to get in a couple of laughs and channel some happiness into your life.

These are just a few suggestions to help get out of a rut if feeling down. Remember, these tips are not a fix, but can help you experience some momentary happiness and even help put you on a path to feeling better.



Check out how some of our volunteers are making the best of pandemic times on pages 3,4 & 5

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO DURING COVID?

In last month's newsletter we asked you to share what you've been doing during the pandemic to make your days feel less like Groundhog Day? Thanks to all of you who responded.

If you have something you'd like to share please send it along to hospicesimcoenewsletter@gmail.com

From Darlene...

The new day dawns with yet another 24 hours of ... what's gonna happen today that gets importance in my evening journal entry? Since the first of the year ... we call 2021 ... the journal is looking extremely humdrum. My days are consumed with:

FaceTimes with my 87 year old Mama, who I haven't seen since Christmas and, who has made me proud of her abilities to embrace technology. Who ever said ... "I'm too old to ...?"

Turning up the volume on my soundbar to lose myself in a gift from Spotify ... a playlist they created of my Top Songs of 2020 with 6 hours and 22 minutes of music .

When not passing the day with music and dancing around my living room ... I've been binge watching Netflix and Prime Video. To date I can recommend: Bridgerton, The Wilds and Yellowstone. I haven't lost myself in any books of late but Kelly Hubbard recommended one on my last day of volunteering before we were mandated to stay home. It's titled ... Man's Search for Meaning.

I do get out to breathe in the fresh air with regular waterfront trail walks and the odd snowshoe with friends in my bubble.

Quite the different way of life ... but I can certainly come out of this pandemic with much pride in knowing that I did what I could to flatten the curve and help the world come to a better and safer place.



From Sandi... Thanks to the Duolingo App, I'm learning Spanish. (I'm on Day 175!)

And thanks to the Bridge Base Online App, I'm playing bridge with friends several times a week. I've also been walking and snowshoeing and knitting and we just finished our 10th jigsaw puzzle. Once a week we try to order in from a local restaurant because, as most of you are aware, this meal planning and cooking is getting very boring!



From Lee... I love my walks at Centennial Park or on the trails at Friday Harbour. I am learning Spanish...Hola, mucho gusto! (Hi, nice to meet you)
Yo también medito (I also meditate). Life is precious and it doesn't matter if we're in a pandemic ... enjoy every day with gratitude and love.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO DURING COVID?

From Margaret...

"I'm in a book club with a group of ladies that I golfed with. We call it **Books on the Go**. We meet outside, walk, snowshoe, and chat about the book."



From Laura... "I wanted to share that my daughter, Hannah, has been trying to teach me piano. Thankfully, all the years of lessons we dragged her to were embedded enough to attempt to help dear old mom."

I have been slowly working on a puzzle of planet earth. Finally completed section 1... only 5 more to go! (should have started with an easy kitten or puppy puzzle, lol).

Hannah has learned to crochet, 1 scarf down, she is now working on a hat."



- "My Covid experiences were very positive as I embraced technology.
- I learned:
- 1. How to use contactless payments with my watch to minimize touching
- 2. About podcasts, especially iHeart Radio for Stuff You Should Know (SYSK)
- 3. Zoom/Team meeting benefits for my various board committees
- 4. That Facetime is wonderful for maintaining family and friend connections
- 5. The Rocketbook Fusion is brilliant for sending 'stuff' to the iCloud
- 6. Kindle is the easiest way ever to read books."

"During this time of lockdown, I have worked on focusing my intent on practicing my mindfulness, a little yoga, staying positive and calm, as well trying, each day, to take a moment out of all the other distractions and be ever so grateful for all the small and large in my life. Lori's daily email inspirations and positivities have helped me set the tone for my day."



An Irish Blessing...
 May you always have walls for the winds
 A roof for the rain, tea beside the fire,
 Laughter to cheer you,
 Those you love near you,
 And all your heart might desire.



WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO DURING COVID?



From Sharron...

After using up the last of my yarn remnants knitting toques and scarves, and not wanting to go out to a wool shop, I made a list of the "I'll get to that someday" projects that now have my attention.

The freezer has been cleaned out. The stove is sparkling. Closets have been brutally purged (although the box of things not worn for a very long time is still sitting downstairs waiting for a place to go). I may be tempted to retrieve a few treasures that I might wear again...not! It wasn't nearly as stressful clearing out my husband's closet. Next on the list is paper sorting. Do I really need to keep receipts dating back to 2015, for a lot of things I don't even have any more? I've found that if I plan carefully it could take 2 or even 3 days to complete a project.

Once a week I meet with a couple of dear friends for a walk and chit chat. The chit chat is a little harder when we are fully masked, but we still manage to catch up with each other and have a giggle.

Phone calls with friends and people I've not seen in a while are happening more.

Every afternoon at around 2:00 my husband and I have a game of Scrabble. He keeps track by the month of the wins and losses. We tied in January but so far this month I'm down two games. I have to work on that!

And, of course, there are always good books to read.

As I read this over, I think to myself: Good grief, you are a dull woman; but also how fortunate I am to be able to do these things even if I hardly know what day it is anymore.

(You do not sound dull at all, Sharron!)

From Susan...

Always a good time to explore nature! This year, my family and I began winter camping! Truly a special experience as we became nested in nature...a hot tent, a warm fire and time to just *be!*



"We hiked off Nursery Street today and it was beautiful!! How lucky are we to have all these great trails in Simcoe County. A good thing that has come out of Covid is discovering nature around us."

- Nat

FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS

MARYANNE STRANO

Reach Out and Touch Someone . . .

Hospice Simcoe continues to be creative in how we offer programs and services throughout the pandemic with therapeutic touch being one of the most unique success stories. Hospice volunteer Maryanne Strano embraced the opportunity to offer *distance* therapeutic touch on clients she had not met, treating her first client last spring. (Perhaps AT&T's original slogan should be modified to 'reach out and touch someone virtually'.)

Each client is prepared for their treatment through either voice or text messaging which explains briefly the theory behind the practice, then instructs them how to put themselves into a relaxed state. Maryanne utilizes visualization to imagine her client in front of her as she mindfully meditates to create what she compassionately calls "a connection from the heart". Through this connection she works on rebalancing the energy fields often leaving clients feeling more calm and relaxed. She, along with fellow TT'ers, recently extended this treatment to the three Hospice staff who were providing their expertise at Roberta Place.

Maryanne's first experience with Hospice was years ago in Huntsville where she had the feeling of home the moment she entered the facility and where she watched her dear friend and family be cared for as a whole. She knew she would be volunteering at Hospice someday and we are blessed to have Maryanne with Hospice Simcoe now where she offers reflexology to clients and family and even nursing staff on Monday afternoons. That has since led Maryanne to learning therapeutic touch from our own Hospice volunteer, Arlene Cugelman.

Maryanne's COVID ventures this winter have included hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing; discovering new nature trails around Barrie while exploring her love of nature with her husband, Bob and cockapoo, Zoe. Maryanne is grateful for the opportunity to learn distance therapeutic touch as well as Zoom technology to stay connected in a different way. She is taking an online course, has resurrected her crocheting skills with the start of a scarf; continues with her love of reading and, of course, seeing grandkids whenever possible. Maryanne is delighted that her son will be joining the volunteer team and Hospice Simcoe is excited for another family member to join the roster. She describes Hospice Simcoe as a magical, peaceful place where she gets so much more out of the experiences than she went in with! She reflected on the comfort of knowing that at the end of life, 'If we are lucky enough, Hospice is there for us'.

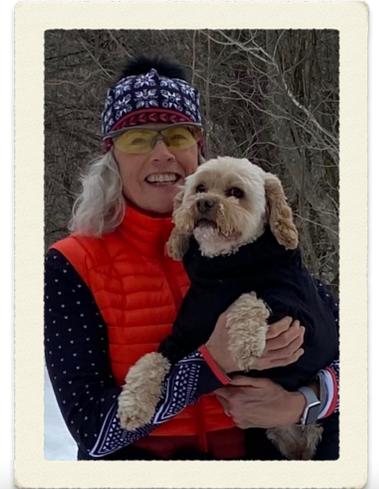
Thank you, Maryanne, for sharing your Hospice story and your inspirational pandemic story.

Thanks to Carol Holden for this article.



"I think we dream so we don't have to be apart so long.
If we're in each other's dreams, we can be together all the time."

Winnie-the-Pooh



ST. PADDY'S DAY

In our Western culture we 'go green'... from parades to clothing to our bevvies of choice for St. Patrick's Day. With celebrations cancelled both last year and this year, I thought I would ask my dear friend Moira, who I worked with for 6 ½ years here in Canada, to provide her reflections of St. Patrick's Day growing up in Ireland. This is her story.

Growing up in Ireland, there were always serious traditions that we all stuck to, and most were wrapped around the Church, to be honest.

The Feast Day of St. Patrick, our patron saint of Ireland, is a holy day of obligation and as such we were always off school on that day. We sang lots of Irish songs and for that week (prior to 17th March) we all tried to speak in Irish. The entire mass for that day would be in Irish.

It was very important to go out and find a shamrock (which is different to a clover; smaller and does not grow in abundance). As a child, I remember going on a mission the week before to find the right area to cut the shamrock for the day. All presenters on television and every person had to pin a shamrock on, in the same way as the poppy is used in Canada.

Green food dye was used to colour water in our local fountain and one thing is for sure, never was it used to colour beer, ever! The first time I saw green beer was in the US, it's just not done here.

Every village and town had a parade filled with floats themed around St. Patrick and all of the bands and dancing groups, like parades today, would walk in the parade, along with local firefighters, police, etc. If you were in the parade it was a big deal! I was a Brownie and can remember the first time I was in the parade, too!

The pubs were closed on that day up until the 1970s and when it became a lent free day, all . . . well, it all broke loose! St. Patrick's Day is half way between Lent starting and Easter Sunday so on that day you could break your fast, which generally meant those who had given up alcohol could break it on the day. Paddy's Day is one of the biggest pub days of the year where celebrations can start as early as 9 am in the morning (that includes the parade at 11 am and pub fun for the remainder of the day,) right into the *next morning!*

Leprechauns are more for the tourists, but we were more about fairies. We have fairy forts (rings of trees) that will never be because of our superstitions. We have a middle earth, similar to The Hobbit, where all of our stories and superstitions come from.

We shorten St. Patrick's Day only to St. Paddy's Day, nothing else. Patty is not a word we use here in Ireland. The short name for Patrick is Paddy or Pat or Patsy, so if anything, it would be these three, but it's only Paddy!

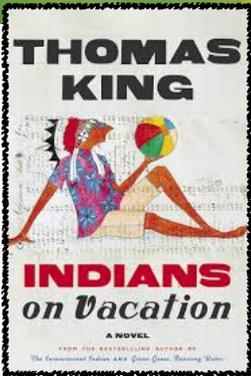


Today, it is more for children than adults but remains a day off. The Irish are in awe of how the world celebrates more than Ireland does now! The Dublin parade, however, is still absolutely huge and well celebrated - most of us watch it on television."

Thank you, Moira (left) for sharing your St. Patrick's Day memories and thank you, Carol Holden (right), for going to a true Irish resource!



BOOK REVIEW BY KATHY JENKINSON



I must confess that I have always enjoyed Thomas King’s quirky humour, from his CBC Radio program a few years ago called, “Dead Dog Café”, to his more serious Massey Lecture on “The Truth About Stories”. A previous book, *The Inconvenient Indian*, was a thoughtful look at the history of Native peoples, how they are portrayed in the media from Hollywood to the news, and his own experiences in both the US and Canada.



With *Indians On Vacation*, King uses a lighter touch to chronicle the adventures of middle aged couple, Bird and Mimi, as they make yet another trip to Europe, searching for the family medicine bundle that Mimi’s wayward Uncle Leroy took with him when he joined a wild west show many years before. This time they go to Prague. As events unfold in real time and flashbacks, we are treated to more of King’s sardonic wit, as well as his pithy insights.

This is a good read for the dull days of winter during a pandemic.

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Many, many thanks, Kathy, for finding good book choices and for sharing them with our volunteers in Hospice Happenings. As well, your editing skills have been much appreciated as we have prepared to go to print. We are sorry to see you go and we’re all going to miss your friendly face at reception! All the best!
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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.

- Sandy Dudley: 7500, Movie on The Boy Who Followed His Father Into Auschwitz, A true story by Jeremy Dronfield.**
- Sherry T.: The Book of Names by Kristin Harmel**
- Sandi P.: The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett**
- Peaky Blinders, Netflix, Renegades Podcast with Obama and Springsteen on Spotify**
- Sam: The Sinner, Netflix**



What's Happening?

Lunch & Learn

Mon. Mar. 29th

12-1pm



Volunteer Support Meeting with Susan & Lori

Thursday, March 25th @ 10-11:30am

Bereavement 101

No matter what the role at Hospice Simcoe, we are all confronted with grief and loss in our work. In this three-part training, we will address some of the basics of grief, including: debunking common myths and misconceptions, how to support a grieving person, and what to do when grief gets messy.

Delivered through Zoom, videos, and reflective exercises, this program offers an opportunity to explore grief and loss through the lens of our own experiences and through the stories of others.

The three dates that we've landed on for the training are:

Wednesday, March 17th @ 10-11:30am

Wednesday, March 24th @ 10-11:30am

Wednesday, March 31st @ 10-11:30am

For more information or to register, please contact Colleen by email:

colleen@hospicesimcoe.ca

From the Chair.....

Hello Everyone,

I am finding it quite amazing that during this pandemic, with a lack of the usual hustle and bustle, time still seems to fly by. With each passing day we have more hours of light and are getting closer to Spring. There's lots of good news as well with the arrival of more vaccines and lower case numbers. No doubt, caution is still required but looking at the positive side is much better for our Mental Health.



Despite some earlier challenges, Hospice is operating smoothly, thanks to our exceptional team. Another great news story is that the Volunteers can come back to work. I know you have been missed and also the other way around. Of course we are so proud of our Hospice heroes Tammy, Danielle and Eva who took huge personal risks to assist staff, patients and families at Roberta Place. Just incredible.

On the Board-front things have been pretty quiet. We have just recently approved the budget for the upcoming year. Due to the unusual circumstances it was a bit trickier to predict some costs. The Finance Committee led by our Treasurer, Andrew Matthews, and Kelly do a fantastic job to ensure Hospice Simcoe remains financially solvent and accountable.

Well, I hope you and your loved ones are well and managing to cope the best you can. Hope to actually SEE you soon.

Sincerely, Chris

HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

In our Community...



WALK a little ... JOG a lot, BIKE, CLIMB STAIRS or SKIP ROPE
 ...or do whatever other activity you enjoy doing

Beginning **SUNDAY, MAY 2ND**, and throughout the month of May, join hundreds of others in our community to **remember loved ones and help raise funds for Hospice Simcoe and our Community Programs.**

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, our 2020 virtual event raised over \$80,000.

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU THIS EVENT HAS BECOME OUR BIGGEST ANNUAL FUNDRAISER!

Stay tuned on our website and watch for our Facebook Event Page for more info.

Please remember to adhere to public health guidelines regarding the number of people who can gather together.



**HOSPICE
SIMCOE**

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