

# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

## VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



### A Message From Kelly

As we became aware of the outbreak at Roberta Place LTC Home we quickly formed a team from Hospice Simcoe to help. Danielle and Tammy went in on Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> to receive orientation and a tour of the facility. On Tuesday they worked off-site, preparing for the days ahead, and on Wednesday they hit the ground running - providing support palliative care delivery to the Roberta Place residents.

Tammy focused on completing pain and symptom management assessments, developing care plans and supporting and educating the nursing team. Danielle's focus was on connecting residents with their family members via virtual means, creating a memorial wall, and providing resident personal care packages and self care packages for the staff. Volunteer Eva assisted where needed, helping the staff with a variety of duties including helping to set up virtual visits with families, working on the memorial wall and providing support to residents and staff.

The outbreak swept through the long-term care home at an alarming rate infecting almost all residents and staff members. 23 days after the outbreak was declared, a total of 63 people have died. Because the infection spread so fast, samples were sent for genomic sequencing and were found to be a variant strain that spread faster and more easily. We were reassured by Public Health that meticulous PPE use with Droplet/Contact precaution continue to provide the best protection.

The team completed their term on January 26<sup>th</sup> and are in quarantine for 14 days.

Thank you to all who donated scrubs and provided support behind the scenes. We are an amazing team.

We are making a difference during this challenging time.

We will continue to support the team and each other.

A reminder to everyone to continue to wear proper PPE (mask, eye protection), keep 6 feet apart and wash your hands!

Stay positive! Test negative!



Memorial wall at Roberta Place

# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Exploring Grief of Children and Teens

Overall, childhood and the teen years are meant to be relatively carefree. It's a time where the main purpose of life is to explore the world and figure out who they want to be. Unfortunately, this care-free life is disrupted for many Ontarian children and youth as 77,000, annually, will experience the death of someone in their world. When children and teens experience a death in their lives, it has the potential to impact their development and alter the trajectory of their life. Receiving appropriate (in)formal support can be a key factor in ensuring that the impact of death and grief do not impede on healthy development and lifestyles. This February Danielle and Colleen will be hosting two in-house virtual training sessions to explore how we as individuals and volunteers can support the children and teens we know, or come across, that are grieving. If you are interested in joining the children and teen volunteer team, or curious about how best to support youth with their grief; please join us. The first session is available to all volunteers who are interested, where as the second session will be specifically for those wanting to join the team.

Session #1: "Exploring Grief of Children and Teens" - February 16th, 1 - 4 pm

Session #2: "The Logistics of Children and Teen Support" - February 23rd, 10am - 12 pm

Contact [colleen@hospicesimcoe.ca](mailto:colleen@hospicesimcoe.ca) to participate or for more information.



Calling all volunteers! Let us know how to get those creative juices flowing!

What have you been doing to let your days feel less like Groundhog Day?

Send your ideas to

[hospicesimcoenewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:hospicesimcoenewsletter@gmail.com) and

**Let's stay connected!**

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

If you are interested in learning more about how to become a registered volunteer, please contact Susan; [susan@hospicesimcoe.ca](mailto:susan@hospicesimcoe.ca)

# A STORY FROM THE HEART

## A Place of Love by Kathy French

*We all have different reasons for choosing to volunteer at Hospice Simcoe. Personally, I wanted to do something worthwhile in my retirement and had been told by many friends that Hospice Simcoe would be a good place to start. For others, the reason is more personal. That is the case for Kathy French - a new volunteer to Hospice. We asked her to submit her story - a story from the heart - for our February newsletter. Have some tissues handy. You will need them.*

The smell of freshly baked cookies. This was my first experience with Hospice Simcoe. As we followed my 87 year old mom being wheeled to her room, she smiled up at us and said, "I can't believe you girls got me here." If she couldn't be in her beloved home, this was where she wanted to be. And for three days, it became home for a large gathering of people. We are a large family and she was well loved, so the many, many visitors, young and old alike, were welcomed with open arms. It was February, the month of love and as Mom passed away on her wedding anniversary, it was a wonderful end of life experience for us all. Then, just three years later, we were once again to be welcomed into this building of love. This time we were saying goodbye to our 33 year old niece. This felt much more tragic and we were much more somber on this visit. Lyanne and her husband, Matt, have two very young children and this all seemed so out of order and so hard to understand. Just a short while ago, they had been looking forward to the birth of their second child, when Lyanne was diagnosed with melanoma, which very quickly became stage four.



*Kathy, far left, with her mom and siblings.*

Abby was delivered early so that Lyanne could be treated but her cancer was aggressive and, although she maintained an amazingly positive attitude and fought to reassure those around her, she lost her battle when Abby and Grayson were one and three, respectively. The Hospice experience was once again comforting. There were still freshly baked cookies for everyone, which was a hit with the children, but there was so much more. Arts and crafts to occupy children and adults alike, spiritual guidance, live music, places to sleep if required, outstanding nursing care, beautiful quilts and lots and lots of love. The honour guard as Lyanne left us was a wonderful way to say good-bye to this strong, lovely

woman who had touched so many lives.

I think it was the feeling of love, home and family that surrounded me on my two experiences with Hospice Simcoe that made me want to become a volunteer. I want to be come a part of something that can make a difficult time just a little easier for families. And the cookies are good too.



*Lyanne with her husband, Matt and Grayson and Abby*

# SINGING THE FEBRUARY BLUES

by Carol Holden

*In the movie Groundhog Day with Bill Murray, the main character goes to the small town of Punxsutawney to report on their local Groundhog Day. While there, he finds himself reliving the same day over and over again. During Covid, many of us are feeling the same. **Carol Holden** has some suggestions for those of us feeling this way.*

How does Wiarton Willie become a world famous albino prognosticating groundhog? Well, it started with a gentleman named Mac McKenzie who had this *new idea* to break the winter doldrums so he invited 100 of his closest friends to Wiarton for a little fun on Groundhog Day. A local reporter learning of the event came to uncover the story and capture the groundhog in action. After finding everyone in the local establishment, he asked where the groundhog was and Mac took off his fur hat and threw it in the snow. The picture was snapped and appeared in the paper and now you know, 'the rest of the story'. That was 64 years ago.

Today, every day feels like Groundhog Day as we continue to live under this province wide shut down. But, what if we were to initiate *new ideas* like Mac did, utilizing our gifts to with our family, neighbours, friends or our Hospice community? What would that look like? ***We would like to challenge all Hospice volunteers to unleash their imagination and take your creativity to infinity and beyond!*** Let's turn those February blues into singing the blues, where you take yourself on an adventure.

So, let's look at what's trending this COVID season. Music can be heard in many neighbourhoods throughout the day along with the crackling sound and smell of outdoor fires where the tastes of smores or hot chocolate are palpable in the air. Garages are being transformed into 'she sheds' decorated for social distancing gatherings where they are getting their creative juices flowing for distanced wine tasting neighbourhood tours. With only 5 able to gather outdoors and indoor contact with our family only, let's encourage and challenge our friends and neighbours to create their own unique and creative ways of surviving this pandemic. Let's share ideas with each other.

I'm sure everyone remembers Body Break with Hal and Joanne who promoted ParticipACTION? Outdoor activities like walking, snowshoeing, ice skating or cross-country skiing are a huge trend this winter. These outdoor activities bring us all back to the simple pleasures of fresh air and the picturesque community we are blessed to live in. There is even a free ParticipACTION app for your phone and/or website (participaction.com) that not only helps us get active, but also connects with your Fitbit, Apple watch or Garmin to get those steps in! The website slogan says it all: "Get Up. Get Out. Get Active"

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# SINGING THE FEBRUARY BLUES

What's trending with you, as a volunteer? A Harvard Health Publishing article connected volunteering with our heart health. "When you're more connected to your community, it's easier to get information on things like how to find the best deals on fresh vegetables" . . . "People also provide one another emotional support." Sharing our COVID adventures with each other creates *new ideas* and indoor trends, like supporting our small businesses with local curbside shopping; delivery of fresh produce or baked goods or revealing our own inner chef with new recipes on breads, baked goods, soups and other family favourites. With February being 'heart month' let's search and share our heart healthy produce finds in the community and the recipes we create with them.

How do we continue to emotionally support each other during lockdown when we are unable to volunteer? Let's take advantage of Family and Valentine's Day to remain connected, by lifting the spirits of others. Doing that will not only fill our hearts, but contribute to our own heart health, as the Harvard survey indicates.

Do you remember that childhood feeling when you hand picked and prepared your valentines and the excitement you felt receiving valentines from others? Let's re-create that happiness this year for your family, friends and neighbours. Perhaps you know of seniors who are living alone and would be thrilled with such a gesture. If you are creative, make your own valentines. You can even add to your daily heart health by hand delivering to your neighbours!

Alive magazine uses the term 'helpers high' to describe the feeling we get when we perform a good deed. This positive feeling is experienced when endorphins are released; it can reduce pain and lower stress levels. The bottom line: we feel good when we do good things". Let's start a trend this year to show our family and friends how much we love them in a safe, yet simple and special way. Speaking of special; why not plan a Fabulous Family Day or a Vacation Valentine's Day for your household this year, where you prepare a full menu dinner together, with candles, decor and music; followed by an evening walk and your favourite 'feel good' love story movie or games night . . . and yes, you have to get out of your PJ's! Dark chocolate is also heart healthy and full of anti-oxidants so make sure you add that to your dessert!

We, as Hospice volunteers are full of heart so let's remain connected and set new trends this month that will share our hearts, connect our hearts with others, and keep our hearts healthy and full of joy.

# VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Darlene Botman is a Take Charge kind of person - of that there is no doubt. A relatively new volunteer at Hospice Simcoe - she joined just a year and a half ago - she has already demonstrated that she really wants to help. Her enthusiasm for our virtual hike led to a wonderful contribution from the team she assembled, and her willingness to take on whatever task is asked of her is terrific.



Darlene



A few weeks ago, Darlene was volunteering at reception and a member of the community dropped off some (very cool) hand knitted socks. When Darlene asked what she should do with them, she learned that there had been several other pairs donated as well. She came up with a plan and, after asking for permission, went to her Facebook account and posted the following:

*"Daisy, our resident pooch, and I would like to offer up beautiful homemade knit socks, made lovingly by amazing people in the community, at \$20 a pair.*

*All proceeds received from the sale of these socks will be donated to Hospice Simcoe."*



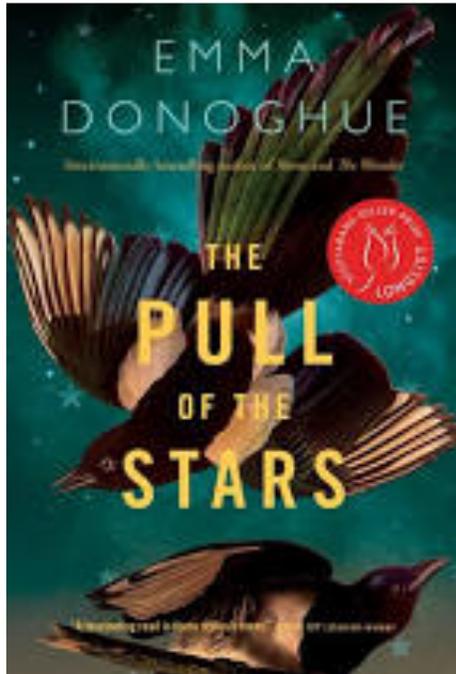
Darlene has a lot of Facebook friends and, within a few hours she had sold all of the socks and raised \$500 for Hospice Simcoe. (Luckily I'm a Facebook friend and snagged a couple of pairs!) In total 20 pairs were sold and someone gave a \$100 memorial donation. As well there are six people on a wait list should we get more socks.



Thank you Darlene for taking the initiative and doing this quick fundraiser for Hospice Simcoe.

(Any knitters out there?)

# BOOK REVIEW



## THE PULL OF THE STARS, by Emma Donoghue

Emma Donoghue began writing The Pull of the Stars in 2018, one hundred years after the Spanish flu pandemic. The book was published in the spring of 2020 just as we came face the face with the current pandemic.

The setting is 1918 Dublin. The city is overwhelmed by the flu, World War 1 and the Irish uprising of 1916. It is a world filled with fear and uncertainty.

The story takes place over three days in an overcrowded and understaffed inner city hospital. A former supply room becomes a three bed maternity/delivery room. Julia Power is a nurse midwife who works alongside two other women in this makeshift ward. Dr. Kathleen Lynn is an actual historical figure and Bridie Sweeny is an orphan who has been sent by the nuns to do grunt work.

Over the three days these women change each other's lives in unexpected ways. They lose patients, but with tireless tenderness, humanity and on the spot decision making, they also, in vivid and graphic detail, bring new lives into the world. This book is not light reading but it had my attention throughout.



*Thanks to Sharron for her contribution this month*



# What's Happening?

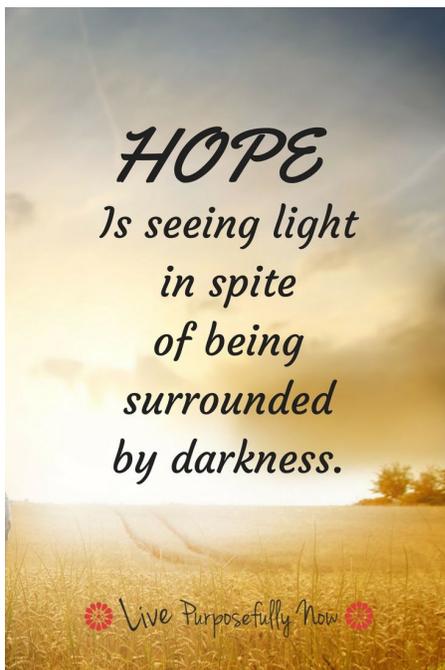
**Zoom Lunch & Learn**  
**Monday, February 22**  
**@ 12pm**

Topic: Social Isolation during Covid-19.



**Zoom Volunteer Support & Innovation Team meeting with Susan & Lori**  
**Tuesday, February 23rd @ 10am**

Zoom links will be sent to you via email with our Weekly Updates.



“There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.”  
 — John Holmes

## From the Chair.....



Hello Everyone,

I hope this note finds you and your loved ones well. The Board of Directors held our regular meeting via zoom recently. Although the impact of Covid-19 dominates, regular business occurs as well. We were very pleased to welcome Marilyn and Susan, who provided us with some information regarding their areas of expertise and some future initiatives they intend to implement. Very impressive indeed.

This will be a brief update but I want to take this opportunity to recognize staff and volunteers who have been assisting at Roberta Place. Such a tragedy. So impressed with the selflessness, dedication and adaptability demonstrated by these and all those who work and volunteer at Hospice. Very proud and humbled to be part of such an incredible organization.

Take good care!

Sincerely, Chris



# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

## In our Community...



### HEARTS FOR HOSPICE VALENTINE'S BRUNCH

Enjoy a delicious Valentine's brunch in the comfort of your own home.

**Pre-ordered brunch boxes for two will include:**

- Quiche with Roasted Red Peppers, Broccoli & Cheddar (V)
- Home Fried Breakfast Potatoes
- Breakfast Sausage & Bacon or Vegetarian Patties
- Homemade Chocolate & Cranberry Scones with Preserves & Butter
- Mimosas (Prosecco & Orange Juice)

**\$60 FOR TWO + TAX**

**LIBERTY NORTH**

Place order online at [www.libertynorth.ca](http://www.libertynorth.ca) by noon on Thursday, February 11, 2021.

Pick up on Saturday, February 13, 2021. Delivery available.

Proceeds go to support



## THANK YOU!

On a daily basis I am reminded what incredible donors we have. 2020 was a challenging year to say the least...and, although we are hopeful, 2021 will not be without its challenges also. Sincere thanks to those of you who have been so generous in supporting us through the pandemic.

### 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.



336 Penetanguishene Rd  
Barrie, ON L4M 7C2  
705-722-5995

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

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