

Room to Grieve, Space to Heal

Support for people bereaved in toxic drug death crisis

Leslie Hogya's son Jean-Guy was creative and fun-loving with a larger-than-life personality to match his 6'5" frame.

He also struggled with addiction.

After Jean-Guy entered treatment in his late 30s, the family enjoyed five encouraging years together. They reconnected. "We spent

time as a family. He was always so gregarious, kind and loving, but this was a particularly sweet time."

Their extended family took a trip to Mexico in December 2019. "The day before my 76th birthday, Jean-Guy and I climbed up this huge hill in Puerto Vallarta," Leslie says. "What a joy."



Leslie and Jean-Guy

They were in shock when Jean-Guy died of a toxic drug overdose a week later. They hadn't seen it coming.

Leslie says she began to understand the nature of grief after with the help of a Victoria Hospice counsellor. "I was of the schooling that when you lost a loved one you got over it and moved on with life," says Leslie. "At Hospice, I learned that grief is a journey."

In August 2020 she joined Victoria Hospice's first support group for people grieving the death of a loved one due to toxic drugs. Facilitated by counsellors Heidi Wigmore and Sue McKenzie-Mohr, the group met in a quiet corner of a public park.

Heidi says the way participants developed trust and connected with each other was impactful for everyone. "This sharing was courageous for all of them. For some it was the first time they faced things like pulling out memento boxes or looking at pictures. It also opened a space of vulnerability in which some harder parts of their journey were shared."

"We were all moms at different stages of loss," Leslie says. "It was

and continues to be very healing."

Although the sessions ended almost a year ago, the five women still meet once a month in an outdoor setting or over Zoom. "I am so thankful for the deep connections and rich resources I acquired through Victoria Hospice."

Leslie says she has gained insight and strength from the hospice counselling sessions as she continues to learn to carry her grief.

She has also found that it takes a lot of courage to speak openly about Jean-Guy's addiction and sudden death. "There is so much stigma around substance-related death. It is starting to feel better for me to stand up and talk about it. People worry they will upset me if they say Jean-Guy's name but it is a gift to be able to talk about my son. I want to talk about him. I want to remember him."



Jean-Guy

Victoria Hospice memorial leaves

A unique way of honouring a loved one while supporting hospice care

As a soft breeze blows, several copper and stainless-steel leaves catch the light while swaying among the trees in the Victoria Hospice Rooftop garden. This special space is filled with a variety of shrubs, trees, and flowers that create a natural oasis for hospice patients and families. These particular leaves are distinct and deeply meaningful. Hand-cut by a local artist, each unique leaf displays the name of a loved one who has been in the care of Victoria Hospice.



Mike Ross became a Rooftop Garden volunteer a year after his wife Tara received hospice care. "For me it was a no-brainer. I wanted to give back to an organization that gave both Tara and our family so much care and support when we truly needed it," Mike says. He had a Memorial Leaf created in memory of Tara, which hangs in a special place. "I have put her leaf right where I can see it each time I come up to the garden. It means a lot to me, our kids and our grandkids to have a memorial leaf hanging here in honour of Tara, and to give a bit of the same comfort and support we received to others."

The Victoria Hospice Memorial Leaf program is a unique and meaningful way to support compassionate end-of-life care while honouring the memory of a loved one. Call Raisa at 250-519-1744 or email: donate@victoriahospice.org to learn more.



Mike and
Tara Ross,
and Tara's
Leaf

Hike for Hospice — FALL EDITION —

**From September 15–30,
hike or walk in honour
of your loved ones
and support end-of-life care.**

Walk or hike in your neighbourhood or on your favourite trail or join us for the physically distanced version of this meaningful event starting at the Community Support Center (dependent on public health orders).

Funds raised through Hike for Hospice help provide care and comfort for patients, as well as grief support and counselling through our Community Support Centre.

FOR FULL DETAILS, SEE INSERT

**Get your 50/50 tickets
for the Hike for Hospice raffle now!**

**The winner
takes half of
the jackpot!**



Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

Our new conversation game around living, dying, and what matters most

Conversations about death can be difficult to approach but we know that these discussions are important and necessary for clarifying values, wishes, and goals about future care. There are a number of tools such as advance care planning which help to achieve these goals, but often this planning is left until a person is ageing, or is diagnosed with a life limiting illness. To encourage destigmatizing these difficult conversations, Victoria Hospice has developed a series of conversation starters that you can use in your home with family, friends, and loved ones. Here Today, Gone Tomorrow is a deck of conversation cards that prompt meaningful reflection on life, death, and dying. This card deck is an easy, safe and sensitive way to reflect on what matters most in your life. It consists of 40 questions that encourage participants to begin thinking and conversing about the topics of death, dying, end-of-life care, relationships, and what matters most, as well as a number of trivia cards to support curiosity and learning. To purchase a set or to learn more, please visit victoriahospice.org/heretodaygonetomorrow



Volunteer spotlight

Volunteers are an integral part of our Bereavement Services, supporting bereavement groups and programs. As the province gradually moves forward with B.C.'s Restart plan, Bereavement volunteers are being welcomed back remotely. Seven-year hospice volunteer Kimberly Smit will be joining our Victoria Hospice counsellor Heidi Wigmore as a co-facilitator in the upcoming Room to Grieve, Space to Heal group. Meet Kim!

Kimberly, why did you become a Victoria Hospice Volunteer?

I was looking for volunteer work in my community after leaving my job as a child protection social worker. I love meeting and talking with people and I missed that connection. Plus, I wanted to be part of something greater than myself and hopefully make a difference in a person's day.

.....
"Although I started volunteering to give back, I can definitely say that I leave every shift fuller than when I arrived. It is such a rewarding opportunity that I look forward to every week."
.....

What areas or programs are you involved in?

I have been a weekly clinical unit volunteer, a bereavement volunteer and co-facilitator and group assistant in bereavement groups. I have also volunteered for special events such as Celebrate a Life and Fashion for Compassion.

What is the best part of being a volunteer?

I love connecting with the patients and their families on the unit. Meeting them where they are at and taking their lead in our interaction. It is an honour to be a small part in their day.

Being of service and having the privilege of doing small gestures of kindness that may help a patient or a family member, in that moment, feel more comfortable or at ease.

I enjoy being part of the team at Victoria Hospice and doing shifts with kind, compassionate, thoughtful and high quality staff and volunteers.

What do you want people to know about Victoria Hospice?

Victoria Hospice is a very special place. It is the confluence of every individual's involvement that makes it what it is. Not the brick and mortar of the building. I love being witness to watching the transition of the (often exhausted) caregiver / family member back into their primary relationship of being partner, sibling, parent or friend with the patient and allowing the skilled staff at Victoria Hospice take over the caregiver role.



Victoria Hospice Volunteer
Kimberly Smit, at right

Become a monthly donor

Join our Hospice Hearts Club

When you join our monthly giving Hospice Hearts Club, you join a group of compassionate community members who, each month, help to ensure our patients and

families receive the best care possible.

Monthly donations are one of the best ways to support Victoria Hospice's work.

An automatic, monthly gift is an easy and efficient way to make a significant contribution to Victoria Hospice and ensure programs and services are

available for years to come.

Monthly gifts reduce the cost and time of processing donations, so more of your donation goes to where it is needed the most: providing quality palliative and end-of-life care for our community.

.....
"My wish is that all patients could receive the same type of intense and compassionate care my husband Ray received."

SYLVIA, MONTHLY DONOR

Hospice
Hearts Club
Member

VICTORIA
HOSPICE



\$10/MONTH

Helps run the Palliative Response Team vehicle for up to 24 home visits each year.



\$25/MONTH

Sponsors four one-on-one counselling sessions to assist a grieving individual's journey.



\$100/MONTH

Funds special quality-of-life programs on our inpatient unit, for up to 500 patients.

A GREAT GIFT!

2022 Teeny Tiny Garden Tour Calendar



With the holiday season just around the corner, pick up a copy of the 2022 Teeny Tiny Garden Tour Calendar!

This beautiful 14-month calendar features photos of the stunning gardens from previous tours and is sure to delight and inspire all year long.

The Teeny Tiny Garden Tour, which takes place every June in support of Victoria Hospice features some of Victoria's best backyard gardens.

Thanks to our generous community sponsors, 100% of the proceeds will go directly to providing end-of-life care for our community.

Order yours by calling **250-519-1744** or visiting **VictoriaHospice.org/teenytinygardentour**.

It can be shipped directly to you or to someone on your list.



Your Donation Makes a Difference

☐ **YES!** I will join the Hospice Hearts Monthly Giving Club!

My **monthly donation** will be: ☐ \$5 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other

☐ My **one-time donation** will be: ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1000 ☐ Other

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City/Province

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My donation is in memory of

Please send an acknowledgement letter to

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☐ Please send me Victoria Hospice Connections e-newsletters.

☐ I have included Victoria Hospice in my will.

☐ I would like to find out more about including Victoria Hospice in my will.

☐ I wish to remain anonymous.

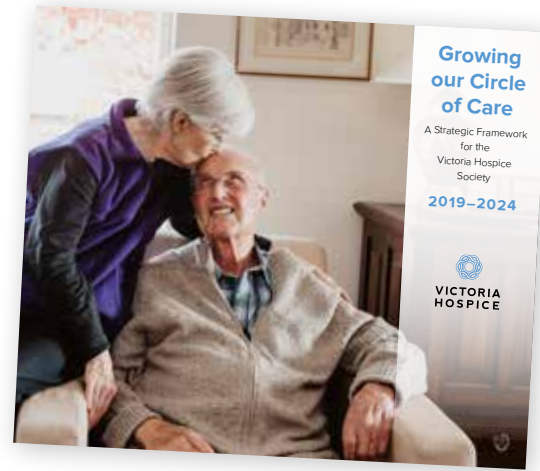
Our commitment to compassion

This past pandemic year tried us all in ways we couldn't have imagined. But its challenges and obstacles were no match for the commitment of Victoria Hospice staff and community supporters.

Our care teams showed up with tremendous devotion and endurance. The stalwart support of people like you lifted us up in heartfelt and practical ways. We've shown we can do so much together.

This year we further strengthened our commitment to compassionate end-of-life care in the future.

We know changes are coming to the population of the Capital Regional District. With the number of people over age 65 expected to increase more than 50% by 2038, we will see new and increased demands on palliative and end-of-life care programs and services.



We're anticipating how Victoria Hospice can meet the need. Since January 2021, a planning committee convened by the board of directors has explored the future state of our community and the programs and services we will all need at the end of life or in bereavement.

The committee conducted a review of palliative care programs across the sector, interviewed program directors, and held focus groups with internal and external stakeholders this spring. The committee's report was presented to the Board of Directors and we look forward to sharing future plans with you.

With your help, we're moving forward the priorities established in our 2019-2024 strategic framework, Growing our Circle of Care. We are committed to comprehensive patient navigation, expanding interdisciplinary community care, increasing education programs, standing as a centre of excellence for bereavement care, and pursuing a new care and support facility.

Our circle of care will expand with the needs of our community, as it has for more than forty years since the inception of Victoria Hospice. The circle of support for hospice patients and loved ones, for our mission to provide quality palliative end-of-life care, and for our care teams has radiated in the most heartening ways this year. Thanks to you, we are ready to meet the challenges ahead.

Thank you for standing with us.

Kevin Harter
CEO, Victoria Hospice

Heartfelt support for Cycle of Life

When we had to make a heartbreaking decision to postpone the 2020 Cycle of Life Tour, it was troubling to think what that might mean for hospice care on Vancouver Island. But a global pandemic didn't dampen the spirits of the cyclists.

The two-day group cycle tour presented by Think Communications became a one-day virtual challenge. Riders pedaled in their own communities to raise funds for their local hospice and raised a record-breaking \$307,437 for end-of-life care.

For many, like Graham Hales, the ride is also a way to honour the memory of

a friend or loved one. He completed an astounding 200-km ride in just one day!

Heartfelt support was also provided by sponsors and local businesses. Hoyne Brewing created a special brew in partnership with Liquor Plus, Country Grocer raised \$13,500 through in-store promotions, and Big Wheel Burger donated two dollars from every feature burger sold in July.

Thank you to the 2020-2021 Cycle of Life Tour riders for pedaling with all your hearts to keep Vancouver Island hospice care in motion.



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

POWERED BY  **think**
great people. great ideas.

FUELLED BY 

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- ▶ Big Wheel Community Foundation
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Compassionate care at Victoria Hospice is made possible through the generosity of our community. The individuals listed below have been remembered by friends and loved ones with gifts to Victoria Hospice, In Memory and In Honour. These meaningful gifts honour precious lives and help to enhance quality of life for other patients and families in need. Gifts made In Memory or In Honour between May 4 and July 31, 2021:

IN MEMORY

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Neville Williams
Freda Wilson
Barbara Woodruff

Tyler Wormell
Jörg Wybraniez
Wendy E. Wyles
Shane Yada

IN HONOUR

Malca E. Casiro
Steven Goodchild
Katy Nelson
Cynthia Smith

Victoria Hospice Vision

Quality palliative and end-of-life care for all

Victoria Hospice Mission

To enhance the quality of life for those facing life-limiting illness, death and bereavement, through patient and family centred care, education, research and advocacy

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THE NEWSLETTER OF

VICTORIA  HOSPICE

Would you like to share your Hospice story? We would love to hear from you.

Contact Carlie Curry
Annual Giving Officer
at 250-519-1744 or
Carlie.Curry@VictoriaHospice.org
Thank you.

3rd Floor, Richmond Pavilion
1952 Bay Street, Victoria BC V8R 1J8
250-519-1744
info@VictoriaHospice.org
www.VictoriaHospice.org

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