

FIRST PERSON

A Palliative Response Team counsellor's story

As a counsellor with the Victoria Hospice Palliative Response Team, I work alongside a registered nurse, with support from a palliative care physician, and visit patients in their homes at the end of life.



We complement what family members and other community resources, like Home and Community Care and family doctors provide to help people stay at home as safely and

comfortably as possible. We provide psychosocial support, education, and resource referrals for patients and families.

We go into situations where there is a crisis of symptoms: escalating pain, shortness of breath, an anxiety attack, or signs of delirium related to the end of life.

We see people at their best, wanting to show their love for one another and wanting to give their person—our patient—the best death they can. It's inspiring to see what people can do, even in the most challenging circumstances.

Many situations have touched me and kept me engaged in the work. A family who gathered in advance of their loved one's planned medically assisted death, and lovingly created special times together. Two young men who prepared their father's body for his funeral with care—and knew just what shirt would please their dad most. A man who cared for his mother with the loving sentiment, "she did the same for me." An Indigenous family's home vigil for their loved one.

It may sound sentimental, but it makes me want to be a better person when I see what human beings can be for one another. It reminds me that life is not all about war and violence and inhumanity.

Life can be tender, caring, sensitive, collaborative, creative, and resourceful. These are the words that come to mind when I think of the patients and families we see in Hospice.

Nancy Payeur, MSW, RSW

Read Nancy's entire story at victoriahospice.org/stories

Celebrating Rose Johnson

I keep this picture of my Grandma Rose on my fridge. She's holding my brother Duncan, and I'm standing next to them. We had taken her down to the Victoria train station (when that was still a thing). She had not travelled much outside of Courtenay, but she loved train travel. I have kept this picture because it brings me

joy as I pass by it, and it reminds me of her gentle teachings about life. Her calm presence eased any anxiety, it taught me that the world around us, although unpredictable, was manageable. When she transitioned from this earth, she left with the same grace she arrived to it with. — Parker Johnson

Read more on page 5 about *Celebrate a Life*, our gathering of memories and reflections.



Message from the Chair of the Victoria Hospice Society Board of Directors



Trudi L. Brown, QC

We hear it from our care team so often: it is an honour to support people at the end of life and their families. I'm proud to echo this sentiment as the new chair of the Victoria Hospice Society Board of Directors.

I am also honoured to count myself among you as a member of a caring community of people who are dedicated to the future of compassionate end-of-life care at Victoria Hospice.

As a Victoria Hospice donor, you help people through the hardest days of their lives. You stood beside us during the pandemic, and your continuing support in these challenging economic times is so greatly appreciated.

Long-time supporters may remember the organization's beginnings as a grassroots movement in 1978 and the genesis of Victoria Hospice in 1980. From the launch of the Palliative Response Team and the hospice facility, the accomplishments of our Education & Research and Bereavement Services teams, and the exemplary practice of our clinical teams – Victoria Hospice has always aimed high to provide the compassionate end-of-life care everyone needs.

We're aiming even higher now.

The possibility of a much-needed new facility is in our sights, and we continue to advocate and strive for the best possible environment for people who are dying, no matter where we are.

As a Board of Directors, we're also committed to ensuring our highly valued care teams have the resources they need to do

what they do so well: provide the very best care, with rare skill, dedication, and compassion.

We are delighted that the Ministry of Education has approved the sale of 1.3 acres of land adjacent to the South Campus of Lansdowne Middle School. It's still a long road ahead involving an in-depth feasibility study, but we are filled with optimism.

On behalf of the entire board, I am so grateful for your support as we write this next chapter at Victoria Hospice. I invite you to reach out with your feedback and reflections on how we can continue to provide the best possible experiences for patients and families. Thank you for being part of our circle of care.



L-R: Outgoing Board Director Marguerite Rowe, new Board Chair Trudi Brown, outgoing Board Director Terry Farmer, and Past Chair Paul Pallan.



We want to hear from you!

Victoria Hospice is proud to touch the lives of thousands of patients, families, and friends each year.

We regularly receive notes and letters from people about their hospice experience, often with thanks for the care and comfort we provide.

All feedback, whether compliments, comments, complaints, or concerns, is important to us. Sharing your experiences helps us to enhance our care, identify opportunities for improvement, and raise awareness of our programs and services to the community.

Please share your thoughts with us at contact@victoriahospice.org.

The priceless gift of compassion: a sister's story

When someone we love is ill or dying, we want to protect them. We would give anything to make sure they are free from pain, and at peace.

That's how Kerry Ann Vasey felt about her chosen brother, Shonan Dillon-Davis.

After many weeks in hospital for a complex illness, Shonan and his loved ones thought he was going to get better. They were devastated to learn his death was near, and apprehensive about coming to Hospice.

"I wanted so badly to protect Shonan. It was the only thing that mattered," Kerry Ann says. "The walk from Shonan's hospital room over to Hospice was the longest and scariest walk in the world."

But when the elevator doors opened on the Inpatient Unit, they started to relax.

"We were greeted with kindness by people I now refer to as angels. I'll never forget the gentleness in their eyes," she says.

"They moved his bed near the open window, and for the first time in so long, Shonan felt fresh air on his face, saw the sun and the trees."

The care team gave Shonan all the time he needed to express his wishes. They listened attentively and let him take the lead for what he needed to be comfortable.

"It was such a relief to know he was being heard," she says. "He needed expert pain management, and he got it. He wanted to know what medications he was given, and how much, and why. The nurses always took time for these conversations, never rushing."

Small but compassionate acts made a world of difference, Kerry Ann says.



Shonan Dillon-Davis had the rare gift of making everyone around him feel special.

"The way the care team always introduced themselves and spoke to Shonan, even after he lost consciousness. Knowing there was a volunteer to sit with him if I had to step out. Someone to give me a cup of coffee, a hug, a smile."

As a family caregiver, Kerry Ann had been intent on ensuring Shonan's safety.

"I had felt it was my job to keep Shonan safe. But at Hospice, I was able to let my guard down. I realized compassionate care included me too," she says.

"At Hospice, we all felt we were part of something special. Something priceless."

"I think we're all scared to die. But when my time comes, I know there is a village of people at Hospice who will protect me and advocate for me, because of donors like you."

A generous community of Victoria Hospice supporters makes experiences like Kerry Ann and Shonan's possible. Learn more and give the gift of compassion at victoriahospice.org/compassion.



Kerry Ann and Shonan

Support for strategic estate planning

One thing is certain, even in turbulent financial times. Sound planning makes a difference.

A strategic estate plan that maximizes tax advantages ensures you can support loved ones and the causes you care about.

You don't have to choose between loved ones and charity when leaving a gift in your Will. You can make a greater impact than



you may have imagined, without using any of the money you need now.

That's the subject of an informative webinar hosted by Will Power, a national movement inspiring Canadians to think differently about charitable giving. The session includes advice from a financial planner on how to set up your estate to support loved ones and charities, while reducing your tax bill.

We know Victoria Hospice supporters are looking for creative ways to support compassionate end-of-life care while navigating uncertain times. This webinar can help you to:

- ★ **See how you can leave part of your estate** to charity in your Will, and still take care of family.
- ★ **Understand tax and other financial strategies** so your Will works for YOU.
- ★ **Know what questions to ask** your legal or financial advisor about your estate.

It's free, and you can choose your preferred time to attend this 30-minute webinar at your convenience.

Register and view the webinar at willpower.ca/webinar

“ *I want to remember Victoria Hospice in my Will because of their kindness and the feeling of safety they gave me while I was caring for my mother at the end of her life. The people who came into my mother's home were all so very qualified, warm, and comforting—they were calm, and they kept me calm. They made me feel a little more secure, and not so alone. I was so appreciative of everything they did for my mother. I couldn't have done without them.* ”

JoAnn Hinchcliffe

Holiday gift idea!

The Teeny Tiny Garden Tour 2023 Calendar lets inspiration last all year long. Featuring exquisite blooms and garden hideaways, the calendar now includes moon phases for your lunar planting plans.

Calendars are \$25 (includes shipping) with all proceeds supporting compassionate end-of-life care at Victoria Hospice, thanks to the generosity of our sponsors.

Special thanks to volunteer photographers Lorna Shaw and Pam Irvine.

Order at victoriahospice.org or call 250-519-1744.



Celebrate a Life

Grief can be a lonely feeling at any time of year, but during the holidays, the loss of someone important to us can be even harder.

Whether your person died recently or long ago, experiencing heightened feelings during the holidays is a common and normal part of grieving. Sharing memories of the person who died can help.

Celebrate a Life is Victoria Hospice's gathering of tributes and reflections about loved ones who have died.

Celebrate a Life supports Victoria Hospice's commitment to care through Bereavement Services, which includes professional counselling, support groups, and resources for people who are grieving. Victoria Hospice Bereavement Services relies almost entirely on community donations to support hundreds of families each year.

Read more stories and dedicate a star in memory of a loved one at victoriahospice.org/celebrate.



Celebrating Doreen Borden

"Mom was a practical person with a nursing background. She loved to laugh and was always up for a practical joke. She found the good in people, always. Hospice offered us a holistic approach to this monumental yet precious task of showing Mom how much we loved and supported her." – Nancy Borden

Photo: Nancy Borden (L) and her sister Brenda Beaumont (R)



Celebrating Brodie Johnson

"Brodie had a lust for life, a love for his wife and girls, an open heart, and dedication to his friends and family. We had a bond that I can't explain. We liked our rum, playing guitar, listening to old country, and driving our wives nuts. When Brodie was admitted to Hospice, we knew he was going to be cared for by the best."

– Brian Mitchell

Your Donation Makes a Difference

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

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

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

Name

Address

City/Province

Postal Code

Phone

Email

Credit card type: VISA MasterCard AmEx

Card #

Expiry date: ___ / ___

My donation is in memory in honour of

Please send an acknowledgement letter to

Name

Address

City/Prov/Postal

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.

Compassionate end-of-life care at Victoria Hospice is made possible through the generosity of our community. The people named below have been commemorated in memory or in honour by friends and loved ones through gifts to Victoria Hospice between August and October, 2022.

IN MEMORY Sidney Alexander ♦ Edyth H. Arter ♦ Isobel Assad ♦ Laurie Auger ♦ Penny Authier
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IN HONOUR Judy D. Hobbs ♦ Calen McNeil ♦ Cara Saucedo

We'd love to hear your hospice story.
Please connect with us if you would
like to share your experience.

Contact Loralee Smyth
Philanthropy Coordinator
loralee.smyth@victoriahospice.org

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Ring out with gratitude

Our historic standing bell tower on the Rooftop Garden has been beautifully refurbished as part of efforts to beautify and maintain this tranquil space.

The bell was donated in 1997 by the family of Herman Bergink to show their gratitude for the compassionate care he received at Victoria Hospice. Herman was a well-known organist and choirmaster and served as the provincial carillonner at the Netherlands Centennial Carillon outside the Royal British Columbia Museum from 1968 to 1992.

Over last 25 years, many families have returned to the garden on the anniversary of their loved one's death to sit in quiet contemplation, write in the garden journal, or ring the memorial bell.