

# transitions

THE NEWSLETTER OF VICTORIA  HOSPICE

SUMMER 2024

## Lifting each other up: a rooftop ceremony

Hospice is often described as a place of love. When blessings and vows were exchanged on the Rooftop Garden on a Sunday afternoon in May, it was never more so.

Kim Veness's son, Andrew, knew his dad wouldn't be able to attend his wedding. So he brought the wedding to Kim at Victoria Hospice.

"Here I am at the end of my life, and I get one of the best days of my life – one of the most meaningful days of my life," Kim said. "My son Andrew was born into my hands, and he gives me this wonderful gift on a sunny day as I'm dying."

All Andrew asked was for Kim to give a blessing for him and his fiancé, Razan, at the ceremony. So, between rounds of medication, Kim wrote.

"I asked some of the staff to read over what I had written, because I wanted it to be just right, and my eyes are getting blurry now," he said. "I felt I could trust them with something that deep and personal."

Meanwhile, the team helped with some of the wedding details.

"Hospice has treated me so well and came right in – hammer and tongs – to help me pull off this one glorious day,"

Kim said. "They could have all backed off and let us do it all – which they didn't. They did everything they could with the resources they had available – and most of that was just simply joy. That's the best resource."

When it was time for the ceremony, Kim was ready to go up to the rooftop in his trademark Panama hat.

"The team helped me get dressed and brought flowers to place all around me."

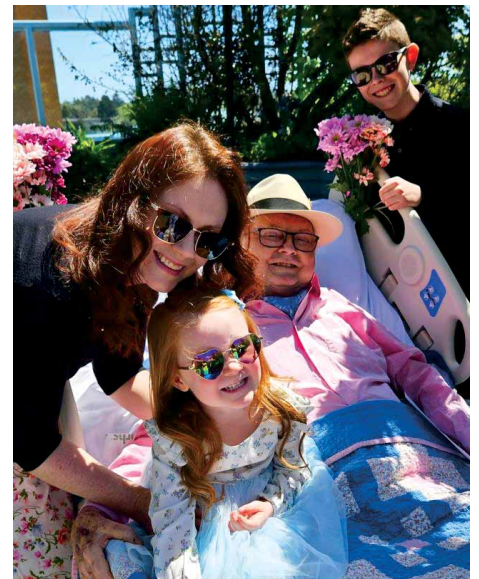
Andrew and Razan exchanged vows surrounded by family, friends, and a father's love.

Here is an excerpt from Kim's blessing for Andrew and Razan:

*"You choose happiness from the things that you experience that lift each of you up, inspire you and bring you joy and fulfilment. To find it, just pay attention to life, learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow, and never stop questioning and trying to grow."*

Upper: Kim Veness at Rooftop Garden, with Razan and Andrew

Lower: Kim with his daughter and grandchildren



**Tickets on sale now!**

## FASHION FOR COMPASSION

Join us **Sunday, Oct. 20** at the Delta Ocean Pointe Resort for a fun and elegant afternoon! Fashion for Compassion returns with a fashion show, delicious lunch, pop-up boutique, and more to support compassionate care at Victoria Hospice. Don't miss out!

Tickets available at [victoriahospice.org/events](https://victoriahospice.org/events)



# A ride to remember: Julie's journey

As Julie approaches the one-year anniversary of her husband Joerg's passing, she is taking on a new challenge. She will join 125 other cyclists in the Cycle of Life Tour July 20-21. It's a two-day, 200-kilometre ride to support hospice care on Vancouver Island.

As soon as Julie heard about the tour, she knew it was the perfect way to honour Joerg's memory. He was a long-distance runner, triathlete, and cyclist.

"I think he'd get a laugh because he knows I'm not that much of a cyclist. But he loved it, and he always wanted me to go cycling with him."

Julie and Joerg had 14 years together, filled with laughter and travel and adventure. They didn't make a bucket list. They just lived life to the fullest.

Now Julie is putting her efforts into training for her first long-distance cycling ride. Her goal is to help ensure other families receive the same kind of care hers did.

Victoria Hospice helped Julie after Joerg received a cancer diagnosis and gave Julie the outlet she needed to air her concerns.



Joerg lived life to the fullest, with Julie by his side.

Joerg felt strongly about dying at home. The Palliative Response Team checked in on him daily, provided on-call support 24-7, and coached Julie on how to administer his medication.

After Joerg died, Julie continued to receive counselling from the Bereavement Service team. "I was telling the counsellor all the feelings that I had, and she said, 'that's absolutely normal.'"

It was a message Julie needed to hear.

"Joerg always wanted to help others. Donating to my ride and helping Hospice will, in a way, be his way of continuing to give to others who need hospice support. I can't think of any other greater purpose of life than helping others. Joerg would agree."

You can support Julie and other riders at [cycleoflifetour.ca](http://cycleoflifetour.ca).

## Victoria Hospice RN honoured by Canadian Palliative Care Nursing Association



Terry Downing, a true pioneer in hospice palliative care, has been awarded the CPCNA's 2024 Palliative Care Nursing Leadership Award. She began nursing

in acute care hospitals in the 1970s and established herself as a force in promoting good palliative care after joining Victoria Hospice in 1986. As a clinician, Terry's expertise and compassion made her a trusted ally for those in need and an inspiration to her colleagues. Her advocacy knows no bounds, and she has been a fierce champion for patients and families, ensuring they received the care and support they deserved.

Forever the innovator, Terry helped initiate the Victoria Hospice Palliative Response Team – the first of its kind in Canada. Her participation in research projects, along with her eagerness to apply findings to practice, led to many publications and elevated the standard of care in various settings. As a teacher and mentor, she has made a hugely positive impact for care providers at local, provincial, and national levels, reaching across many sectors, from nurses to home support workers.

Her extraordinary leadership and unwavering commitment have propelled the field of palliative care forward in BC and beyond. Congratulations, Terry!

As a teacher and mentor, Terry Downing has made a hugely positive impact for care providers.





## Sounds of compassion

# Music therapy at Victoria Hospice

Music is what feelings sound like. That's how Maryann Burrows thinks about it. As the music therapist at Victoria Hospice, Maryann's job is to harness the emotional and neurological power of music. To break it down to its core elements, and administer it to meet her patients' needs, whether emotional or physical.

A patient's sharp pain may be best reflected by the sound of violins, while low drums may be just the right anecdote for a dull ache.

Music therapy is one of the emotional and spiritual supports offered at Victoria Hospice. It can reduce anxiety and perceptions of pain. It can also help patients process emotion.



"Some things are just unspeakable," explains Maryann. In those moments, music can come in and offer an indirect, gentle way in.

At Victoria Hospice, Maryann aims to capture her patient's feeling through music, reflect it back to them, and work with it. Sometimes it's joy, beauty, and humour. But other times, it may be pain, fear, or denial.

"I can verbally tell you that what you're going through is valid, but music can give this message like a warm blanket wrapping its comfort and care around you like nothing else can. And once we validate whatever the feeling is, we can transform it into something new, towards healing."

Music therapy can play a role as someone moves closer to death and their body begins to shut down. If shortness of breath occurs, Maryann provides a steady, gentle beat. It gives the body's rhythms the support they need to naturally align, regulating breath, heartrate, and blood pressure while calming the nervous system, making the physical process of dying more comfortable.

"Music has saved me a few different times," she says. "It is so effective, and so powerful. I want to connect people with that and help them feel resolved as they complete their lives and feel ready to transition to whatever comes next."

*Music therapy at Victoria Hospice is just one of the many vital programs made possible thanks to the generosity of donors and community partners, including the CRD Arts & Culture Support Service, and the Music Heals Charitable Foundation.*

Music Therapy at Victoria Hospice brings comfort, regulates body rhythms and decreases perception of pain.

## Hike for Hospice 2024 blew us away!

Huge thanks to everyone who participated in Hike for Hospice on May 5th! It was windy, but spirits were high for this wonderful community event. Hundreds of stalwart supporters raised more than \$69,000 for compassionate end-of-life care and bereavement support.

Special shout out to top fundraising team Goldstream 161, featured here in their playoff hockey regalia, who captured the trophy for the second year in a row!





## The gift of time and comfort

Sharon Lam's mother, Margaret Ng, spent the last six weeks of her life receiving care at home and at the Victoria Hospice Inpatient Unit. Sharon shared her experience in our recent fundraising appeal. Here is an excerpt from Sharon's story:

*If you have spent time with a loved one during their final days, you understand what the gift of time and comfort means to people who are grieving.*

*The gift of time together was made possible because of the special services provided by Victoria Hospice. I cannot express enough how important this was to our family.*

*Throughout her illness, Mom fought hard to continue living life on her own terms. She loved watercolour painting and never let her illness stop her from doing what she loved. She had always encouraged me as an artist, and only Mom could inspire me to start a project during a time when everything felt like it was ending.*

*The day after Mom was transferred to the Inpatient Unit, I began drawing all of our favourite places – our old family restaurant, the coffee shop down the street or the soccer field behind our house. I wanted to celebrate and show her how*



*grateful I was for the life she had built for us. Towards the end, when it felt like there was nothing left that we could do for her, I learned to just be there with her and enjoy our final moments together.*

Read more at [victoriahospice.org](http://victoriahospice.org) and see the work Sharon's Mom inspired at [artbysharonlam.com](http://artbysharonlam.com).



## The gift of music

Volunteer Manny Fritsch offers the gift of music in the family lounge on Sundays. He's pictured here with his 1966 Martin Classical guitar, a mandolin made in Duncan, and his new acquisition: an 1890 mahogany Arion guitar made in Chicago.

Previously the medical director of a long-term care facility and palliative care physician based in Ladysmith, Manny began his career delivering babies.

"When I first interned in 1977, I delivered babies on the third floor of the Richmond Pavilion [the current site of the Victoria Hospice Inpatient Unit]," he says.

"I have the same feelings about a patient having a good death as I do the delivery of a baby if everything goes well. Hospice is the best part of the hospital."

You can catch Manny with the old-time fiddlers' music group at the Spiral Café in Vic West on Monday nights.



# Anneswer to Cancer does it again

The World Cup Soccer Camp's annual Anneswer to Cancer Soccer Tournament has brought friends, families, and soccer fans together to support Victoria Hospice for 12 years. They have raised an amazing \$655,000 for compassionate end-of-life care, with a record-breaking \$70,053 this year!

Co-founder Brett Hyslop's life was forever changed when his mother, Anne, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. "My mum only spent 12 hours at Victoria Hospice, but I am forever grateful to the staff who cared for her—and me—with such a deep level of compassion," he said.

In gratitude and as a tribute to Anne, Brett and his colleague Steph Steiner launched Anneswer to Cancer. Since 2011, the event has grown substantially, thanks to a team of dedicated volunteers.

The one-day event, always held on Mother's Day weekend, is now Victoria Hospice's largest third-party fundraising event. Huge thanks to everyone involved!



# Save the date!

## Victoria Hospice Shred-a-thon

Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024  
9 am to noon

Reynolds School  
Parking Lot  
at McKenzie and Borden

Join Victoria Hospice  
and RecordXpress  
for confidential shredding  
by donation.



## Give the gift of time and comfort

☐ **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

- ☐ Please send me Victoria Hospice Connections e-newsletters.
- ☐ I would like to find out more about including Victoria Hospice in my will.
- ☐ I have included Victoria Hospice in my will.
- ☐ I wish to remain anonymous.

Name.....  
Address.....  
City/Prov/Postal .....

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 from February 14 to May 30, 2024.

**IN MEMORY** Rabea Al Doori • Sidney Alexander • Michael Ash • Penny Authier • Gordon Ayre • Jeannette Ballard Pamela Barry • Patricia Bell • Bonnie Bell • James T. Black • David Bone • Bella Bourakovskaia • Arlene J. Boyden Hazel Brooks • Bob Buckingham • Margaret E. Campbell • David Chu • Michael L. Chupick • Valerie Clark • Jeffrey R. Clarke Anne Cook • Angelo Coppola • John P. Corak • Deborah Cormier • Helena Courville • George Cowman • Jenny Cox Glenn Darling • Sharron Dezell • Mike Dohm • Sandra Duchene • James Estock • Ann Ferreira • Alan Filmer • Gerry Fisher Gail Fleury • Margaret A. Ford • Roger Francis • Stephen A. Freeman-Ward • Susan Fritz • Donald Gajda • Sergei Gibson Shirley Goodwin • Phyllis Gray • Marguerite Green • M. Gropp • Douglas Grove • Robert Guskey • David Harper • Bunny Hawkes Hugh H. Hayes • Rosemary Hayes • Garry Hayes • Jonny Henriksen • John Herbert • Theresa Hiebert • Gordy Hobday Donna Hooper • Lesley Hulme • Don Irish • Mary Irish • Jennifer Karmona • Edna Kilner • Ryan C. Krisher • Jerald Kustaski Florida Laforest • Lavone Landie • Kenneth C. Lawrence • William Lawson • Lisa J. Layton • Dolores Leavitt • Joan Leighton Josephine Lim • Victoria Lindgren • Leslie B. Lohr • Frank Lylock • Paul Mably • Robin MacDonald • John MacEdward Ruth Mackie • Judy MacLachlan • Hugh MacPherson • Carolyn Malcolm • Margaret Mallory • Ian Manners Barbara Eldred Manuel • Kathleen Marshall • Barry Mayhew • Barbara McCall • Hazel McCoy • Hazel McCudden Donna McDowell • Allyson McGrane • Joe McGregor • Janice McIvor • Colin A. McNeil • Mario Migliarese • Tara Mogentale Christine E. Molnar • John Motala • Shirley Mulholland • Mary K. Mullane • Cyril T. Mullane • Douglas Needley Fred A. Neveaux • Howard Newell • Eliane Nugent • Michael O'Fallon • Jason Ogden Coe • Pat Owen • Gail Owens Mary Painter • Herb Painter • Marie Pakes • Manfred Pape • David Parry • Evalyn Partridge • Rita J. Paulhus • Paul Perry Kevin Peterson • Jacqueline Poole • Barbara Poole Lane • Ailsa Quann • Donald A. Rahrack • Sherman Rapaport Allen Robb • Edna M. Robbins • Diane Roberts • John Robertson • Freda Roer • Milforde Rose • Tara S. Ross Robert Rouse • Anne M. Roy • Bruno D. Ruffolo • Yvonne Sanders • Betty Silvers • Narindra Singh Sehmi • Suzanne Skedgel-Hill Ceri E. Smith • Mark Sondheim • Sheryl Steeves • Dallas Stober • Denise Sturmwind • Alan Sullivan • Howard Swift • Edna Szabados • Francis Taylor Dennis Todd • Ralph Vance • Lois Verchomin • Denise Voss • Michael Wainwright • William J. West • Shirley Westaway • Maxwell White • Jennifer Whybrow Roger Wigmore • John Wilcox • Lewis K. Wilson • Jean L. Wilson • Donna Wood • Joyce Woods • Linh Wu • Wendy E. Wyles • Penelope M. Young

**IN HONOUR** Elizabeth Doherty • G. Phyllis Fatt • Brett Hyslop • Patricia Peddle • Carol M. Poole

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

Contact Lorealee Smyth  
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Victoria Hospice respects your privacy  
and we do not sell, trade, lend, or rent  
your personal information.

## New equipment supports safety and independence

New equipment on the Inpatient Unit allows patients to retain independence longer and enables a caregiver to transfer patients safely and with ease. Victoria Hospice purchased the Sara Steady Stand Aid with the support of a generous grant from the Victoria Commandery of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller.

The new equipment allows care teams to provide personal care safely and contribute to the patient's comfort and sense of dignity. It promotes independence by allowing patients to focus on mobility instead of the overexertion of effort. By minimizing fatigue, leaves patients more energy to focus on the things that matter most, such as visits with family members.

We're grateful to the Sovereign Order for their ongoing support.

Agnes (HCA) and Mikaela (RN) demonstrate the Sara Steady Stand Aid

