

Compassionate care inspires fundraising success

The lasting impact of compassionate care at Victoria Hospice continues to inspire Alice Chan Pitman.

Nearing the end of life as a patient on the Inpatient Unit in 2002, her husband experienced some confusion and talked about wanting to go home, Alice says.

"I told him, 'Home is not the house. Home is not the furniture. Home is wherever I am. Now I'm coming to live here.'" The care team ensured both Lawrence and Alice were comfortable, and she stayed with him day and night.

"I'm really thankful for their loving care," she says. "Before people die, they need a lot of care. Hospice is doing a good

job, and we should support them."

She has expressed her gratitude in countless ways: as a volunteer translator, a volunteer at the former Victoria Hospice Thrift Boutique, and a long-time donor. This year, she made the extraordinary gift of matching donations up to \$50,000 at Fashion for Compassion.

Her generosity helped the event reach more than \$200,000 for compassionate end-of-life care.

"Alice's incredible donation and desire to inspire others to give reflects a lifetime of generosity," says Director of Development Wendy Innes. "We are grateful for her longstanding support for patients and families at Victoria Hospice."

Alice's compassion is deeply rooted. At high school in Hong Kong, Alice wanted to contribute to a fund for unhoused people in her community. "My mother already paid my school fee and my bus fee and my lunch. And I had four younger brothers in school. I just didn't have the courage to ask my mom for an

extra dollar," she says. So, she walked to save the bus fare and at the end of the week, she made her donation.

Hard work and thrift are important values for Alice. She received her teaching credentials, taught elementary school, and studied English before immigrating to Canada in 1973. She retrained as a hairstylist and launched a career as a self-made businesswoman in Victoria.

She saved to buy her first home shortly after completing her apprenticeship. Her colleagues were incredulous, she recalls. "They said, 'Alice, how in the world did you get the money to do that?' I said, 'My down payment is your pack of cigarettes and your beer.'"

Setting goals has been key to Alice's achievements. Walking to school to save the fare for donations, she dreamed big.

"I wished that one day, when I grew up, I could donate whatever I want."

Alice Chan Pitman has succeeded many times over.

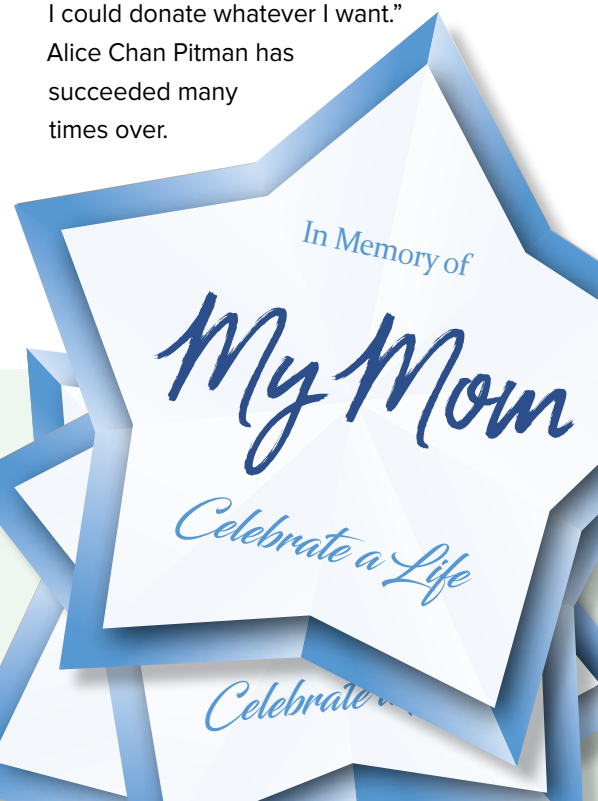


Alice Chan Pitman (R) and her niece Jennifer Chan at Fashion for Compassion 2025

Celebrate a Life * Dedicate a Star

You can celebrate the life of someone important to you by dedicating a star in their name or by making a donation in their memory.

Visit victoriahospice.org/celebrate to dedicate a star online, or stop by the Community Support Centre on Chatterton Way or the 4th floor of the Richmond Pavilion to hang a star on one of our Celebrate a Life trees.



Fashion for Compassion sashays to new heights!

The spirit of giving and glamour filled the room on Sunday, October 26, as the annual Fashion for Compassion fundraiser raised an impressive \$200,000 in support of Victoria Hospice. Held at the Delta Ocean Pointe Resort, this fourth annual fashion fundraiser event featured eye-catching collections provided by



local fashion favourite Turnabout Luxury Resale, and heartfelt stories shared by family members impacted by hospice care. Vancouver's well-known man-about-town Fred Lee kept the room energized and entertained as master of ceremonies.

"I'd like to recognize the remarkable people who make this care possible—the hospice doctors and nurses, counsellors, volunteers and funeral professionals," said Trevor McCall, President of McCall Gardens, the title sponsor of this year's event. "Their compassion, strength and dedication bring comfort and peace to families when words often fall short. Their care is truly the heart of what we celebrate this afternoon."

Heartfelt thanks to our guests, volunteers, donors and generous sponsors including McCall Gardens, Amica Senior Lifestyles, BMO, Pharmasave Broadmead, Peninsula Co-op, Horne Coupar, and VandeRuyt Wealth Management for making it such a magical afternoon.

The models of 2025, featuring Victoria Hospice nurses, staff, volunteers and family members

When a child grieves: Finding a path through bereavement

Grief is difficult at any age or stage of life, but it can be especially isolating and overwhelming for a young person.

Losing a parent, a sibling, a grandparent—or any significant person—can affect a child's emotional and cognitive development. They will often re-grieve a death at each developmental stage.

Without grief-informed support, young people may have difficulty coping and experience mental health challenges now and in the future. That's why Victoria Hospice Bereavement Services is there to help, supporting children and youth as they learn to be in a world without their significant person who has died.

Victoria Hospice provides the only specialized bereavement services available in the Capital Region for children under 12, and the only in-person, bereavement-specific counselling service for youth in the area.

Like all bereavement services at Victoria Hospice, child and youth grief support is

funded entirely by community support. The generosity of donors ensures one-to-one counselling services are available for children and youth, along with workshop-style support groups for their parents and caregivers.

That same generosity enables Victoria Hospice to provide counselling for children and families free of charge, delivering on the commitment to accessibility and providing a path of support to a grieving child.

378 >

Total Child/Youth Counselling Sessions **(12.17% increase in child/youth sessions from previous year)**

156

Total Child/Youth Bereavement clients last year



Double your impact
for children and youth

Every gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$125,000, thanks to a group of generous donors. Make your donation before December 31 to receive your 2025 tax receipt!



Comfort in the darkness

An excerpt from Victoria Hospice Spiritual Health Practitioner Elizabeth Barnard's welcome at the 2025 Annual General Meeting. For Elizabeth's full welcome, visit victoriahospice.org/stories

Elizabeth Barnard brings comfort to patients and families in the darkest of times.

Tips for coping with grief over the holidays

- ♥ **Decide how you want to spend the holiday.** Allow yourself to think about what you most need and want to do. It's OK if you want to change things completely, just a little, or not at all.
- ♥ **Be flexible about holiday traditions.** Holidays are often spent with the people we are closest to and you are missing someone important. Without the person you've lost, you may not be able to do all the holiday things you'd normally do. You might reconsider activities that aren't essential, and ask for help with anything you'd like to continue.
- ♥ **Plan your activities in advance.** Before the holiday season is in full swing, make plans that can be adjusted according to your needs. Let people who are important to you know what your plans are and if you are open to invitations.
- ♥ **Take time to care for yourself.** Allow yourself to feel whatever you feel and to spend time alone or with others as needed. Rest and breathe deeply. Try to add some physical activity and spend time in nature.
- ♥ **Give to others.** Sometimes the sadness and loneliness of grief during the holidays can be lightened a little by caring for others. Consider hosting a pre- or post-holiday gathering for friends and family or perhaps volunteering with your charity of choice.
- ♥ **Do something to remember your loved one.** You may want to continue a favourite tradition or start something new: take a walk in a special place, create a special ornament or decoration, or perhaps make a holiday food item that your loved one particularly enjoyed.

"We who work in hospice know that endings are as important as beginnings, just as we know that, with love, comes grief."

The natural rhythms of the earth teach us to honour the darkness as well as the light, for darkness and endings can also be times of reflection, of new creation, of gestation. Time in the darkness is often fruitful, even if it doesn't feel like it when we're there.

One of the things I love about hospice is that it's a place where we still know how to treasure the darkness as well as the light. Much of our medical system is focused on fixing and changing, on clinging to the daylight even as the sun sets. But in hospice we know that the darkness has its own songs to sing. We know there is much value in bringing loving, compassionate presence to what we cannot fix or change.

There's a beautiful Inuit word, "qarrtsiluni." It means "sitting together in the dark, waiting for something to happen." Much as the poet Rainer Maria Rilke wrote, "I love the dark hours of my being...there I can open to another life that's wide and timeless."

In hospice we know the value of sitting together in the dark. When we encounter people who find themselves in the darkness, we meet them there, bringing our compassion, our listening, our palliative tools and our abiding presence, because we know that the darkness is a lot less lonely and scary when someone is holding our hand. Now more than ever, the commitment we have at Victoria Hospice to provide compassionate, skilled, whole-person and family-centred end-of-life care is essential in a system in which more and more patients feel like numbers, not people. As one person said to me recently, "Here, I feel like I matter."

Compassionate end-of-life and bereavement 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 August 22 to November 9, 2025.

IN MEMORY Sidney Alexander • Edna Auld • Penny Authier • Jeannette Ballard • Rheal Bard • Joy E. Barnett Pamela Barry • Robert E. Bearpark • Cindy Belcourt • Patricia Bell • Bonnie Bell • Ronald Blasner David Bone • Bella Bourakovskaia • Pauline Bourdon • Arthur R. Bryant • Jo-Anne Bryden • Bob Buckingham Margaret E. Campbell • Douglas Campbell • Lorraine Campbell • Keri L. Coles • Bernice Cooper Jenny Cox • Peter Dance • Barry Daniel • Julia Darley Laver • Sharron Dezell • Sandra Duchene David Dunlap • Judy Dupuis • Barbara Eldred Manuel • Jayne Ellis • Claire Eraut • Stephen Fincham Margaret A. Ford • Susan Fritz • Marlane G. Fuller • Donald Gajda • Norman P. Gaudard • Fraser T. Gibson Christine A. Godfrey • Shirley Goodwin • Phyllis Gray • Marguerite Green • M. Gropp • Robert Guskey Bunny Hawkes • Ernie Hawkins • Hugh H. Hayes • Garry Hayes • Peter Haylett • Dan Henigman Iris Henslowe • Lawrence J. Hesketh • Donna Hooper • Taryn L. Hudgins • Joan Huzar • Don Irish Mary Irish • Charlie James • Dave Jones • Janice Kraft • Allan Kraft • Jack Krahn • Ryan C. Krisher Jerald Kustaski • Pui Kwun Kwan • Florida Laforest • Middleton Lambert • Valma L. Lanceley • Lavone Landie Penny Latham • Diane Laurin • Kenneth C. Lawrence • William Lawson • Lisa J. Layton • Dolores Leavitt Miriam Li • Victoria Lindgren • Violet G. Logan • John MacEdward • Ruth Mackie • Judy MacLachlan Caroline Manson • Barbara J. Marykuca • Linda Maxie • Brian McCarthy • Hazel McCoy • Hazel McCudden Elizabeth McFadyen • Janice McIvor • Anne Marie McLaughlin • Nan Millham • Elinor Mix • Tara Mogentale • William F. Moore • Terry Morrison Elizabeth Mudie • Angela Murphy • Eissa Nafisi • Pamela Newberry • Larry Nickolchuk • Robert Noble • Eliane Nugent • Darrel E. Nute Michael O'Fallon • Brenda O'Connor • Gail Owens • Herb Painter • Mary Painter • David Parry • Evalyn Partridge • Robert M. Paterson Alan Paterson • Rita J. Paulhus • Albert E. Peeling • Paul Perry • Kevin Peterson • Maria S. Picone • Dennis Ping Yong • John Plumridge Dennis Powell • Gordon Quan • Lily Quan • Ailsa Quann • Donald A. Rahrlick • Norma Randle • Catherine Reece • William Reece • John Robertson Allan Roger • Milforde Rose • Tara S. Ross • Robert Rouse • Ron Rubin • Donna M. Schaddelee • Ceri E. Smith • Patricia Smith • Sheryl Steeves Linda Stern • Sandy Stewart • Dorothy Stirling • Velma Stober • Mary Stone • Emmett Stone • Howard Swift • Edna Szabados Virginia Taylor • Peter Tennent • Isobel A. Thicke • Ralph Torney • Mary E. Verpoorte • Alice Vesprini • Patricia D. Vinden • Michael Wainwright Michael D. Walker • Patricia M. Weeks • William J. West • Jean L. Wilson • Joyce Woods • Wendy E. Wyles

IN HONOUR Barry Ewacha • Frankie Elder • Ken Karmona

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

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Remembering Santa Al: A Legacy of Love, Laughter and Giving

Victoria Hospice is deeply saddened by the passing of Alan Paterson, lovingly known as Santa Al. Santa Al brought joy and comfort to thousands across Greater Victoria, embodying the true spirit of

giving—not just during the holidays, but all year round.

Santa Al's journey began many years ago when he first donned the red suit to bring smiles to children and families. But his mission took on deeper meaning after the loss of his beloved wife, Sharon, in 2009. In gratitude for the compassionate care they received from Victoria Hospice, Al began donating all proceeds from his Santa appearances to support Victoria Hospice services.

From shopping malls to airports, and even private home visits, Santa Al raised close to \$90,000 for Victoria Hospice. His presence was more than festive—it was healing. He comforted kids going through all sorts of challenges, listened with

empathy, and created moments of magic for families navigating difficult times.

Though he is no longer with us, his legacy lives on in the hearts of those he touched—and in the continued support for the cause he held so dear. In honour of his incredible life and legacy, his family invites you to make a donation to Victoria Hospice and help Santa Al surpass the \$100,000 milestone.

Let's keep the spirit of Santa Al alive—through kindness, compassion, and the gift of giving.

*Scan QR code to
donate or call
250-519-1744.*

