

Living Life at Hospice Peterborough

Don Shares Reflections of His Family's Time Using Supports and Services



The Herald family Don (L), Jordon (top center) and Marnie (R) surround Jan.

I write this on December 9th, 2022. It would have been her 78th birthday. She died at Hospice Peterborough on December 21st, 2021, just two weeks after our family, close friends and staff celebrated her 77th.

We had two other celebrations. Our son's 50th birthday and our 54th anniversary. And they were certainly parties – there's no doubt about that! Cakes. Balloons. Banners. Music, Laughter. Sharing of stories. Hugs. Kisses. Photographs. I'm sure you get the idea. The parties were much like our family would have done if Jan had not been in her final weeks of hospice care.

In 2018, like so many others in our community, Jan and I donated a modest amount toward the construction of the ten-bed residence and offices for Hospice Peterborough. A residential option for palliative care in our community was a top priority and we were delighted to help make it happen.

Jan and I never talked about the possibility that in the future, one or both of us might need the program.

Then, one day, we did.

Continued on page 2

On October 13th, 2021, Jan became a resident at Hospice Peterborough. Me, son Jordan, daughter Marnie and Jan's sister Joan – we all immediately became part of the daily life of the extended hospice family.

Looking back at those early days, I was definitely closed to considering many of the possibilities offered to us by the staff. I said a firm 'no' to a lot of the suggestions. I was only focused on Jan's care and the inescapable fact she was dying.

The staff learned our anniversary was coming up in early November. 'We can have a party, you know,' they said. 'No,' I'd say without too much thought. You see, I always believed that hospice care was all about the dying, not the living and certainly not about celebrating anything. 'How can we have a party, I said to my kids, 'when on either side of us, someone is dying, their families grieving?' In my mind, celebrating anything did not fit my picture of what hospice was all about.

'If you change your mind, let us know,' staff said. 'We celebrate lots of stuff here. It's just an important part of what we do. A fifty-fourth anniversary is a very big deal in your life with Jan. Just because she's here doesn't mean you have to deny what you would have celebrated anyway if she wasn't in this building; if all of this wasn't part of your lives right now.'

Marnie, who was staying with her mother twenty-four hours a day, told me it was important to celebrate, to have a party. She'd been talking to staff about other celebratory events at hospice. She was convinced staff would respectfully handle it with residents and families. 'Besides, Dad, it your fifty-fourth. That's a long time for a marriage these days. You guys really need to celebrate it.'

She convinced me. I checked with Jan. She gave me a thumbs up because spoken words had become difficult. 'Ok,' I said to staff. 'Let's make it happen.'

And they did.

If you or someone you know is grieving this holiday season, we encourage you to access the following resources:

'What Now? On the threshold of life, death and grief' podcast: what-now.buzzsprout.com

MyGrief.ca and its companion site Virtualhospice.ca are Canadian websites with modules and information on [grief in times of celebration](#).

Centre for Loss and Life Transition information on [grief and the holidays by Alan Wolfelt](#)

In the early morning hours of November 4th, the night staff quietly came and went from Jan's room. They decorated it beautifully. When Jan and Marnie awoke in the morning, our space had been transformed into a party room. Energy and anticipation were high for Jan, Marnie and the staff. Our neighbours on either side were curious about all the activity and the decorations. They gave us their congratulations.

We had that party. It was a lot fun for everyone who came or dropped in to say 'hi' and have some cake. There was music. There was excited chatter. There was a happy buzz in the air. At the end, Jan gave it a double thumbs up – the very best review we could have hoped for!

In the weeks that followed, we had two more celebrations. One for my son's 50th birthday and the final one for Jan's 77th. Each time, hospice staff helped us with each event. They celebrated with just as much enthusiasm as we did.

And so it is, fellow members of Hospice Peterborough's extended family, that when I remember our many weeks in that room, in that building, among the loving, supportive and authentically caring community of staff, doctors and volunteers, I often think of those three wonderful celebrations of our life together and not so much about Jan dying and our grief.

'Supporting you through life-threatening illness and grief.' That's the mission of Hospice Peterborough.

But now I know that those guiding words also include celebrating aspects of each resident's life and the family experience together.

My family's celebrations still bring joy and thankfulness into our lives now that our dear Jan is gone from us.

Written by Don Herald and published with his permission.



Staff Participate in the Season of Giving

Toys collected will be distributed to family's in the community

Hospice Peterborough staff have gotten into the season of giving, participating in the local toy drive again this year.

A collection gathered under the main tree in the Hospice café, with staff encouraged to donate a toy that they would have been excited to receive as a child.

More than a dozen toys collected will join hundreds other to be distributed through the Salvation Army's Toy Drive.

In addition to the toy drive, staff also participated in Central Smith's *Fill The Truck* campaign where local businesses, organizations and schools collect non-perishable food to donate. Last year the campaign collected over 5000lbs of food and nearly \$10,000 in donations.

Hospice Peterborough feels blessed to be a part of a community that works so hard to support others in this season.



Stewart Family Foundation

Hospice Peterborough extends a heartfelt thank you to the Stewart Family Foundation for their support for the first local Children's Grief Symposium happening in 2023. Stay tuned for more details about this event!

Memory Tree Filling Up with Names of Beloved

Prominently displayed in the front room the Oasis Room, memory doves adorn the Memory Tree

This year the Memory Tree will be in the Oasis Room beside the front door of Hospice – the room will remain lit and the tree will be visible from the street. Doves will be available for you to decorate in honour of your person or you can print a dove using the template below.

Surviving the holidays in a time of great sorrow because someone you love has died? Facing the holidays can be a tremendous challenge. While there are no magical solutions, here are a few suggestions:

Talk About Your Grief - We often try to hide our feelings to put others at ease, but when doing this we're not honest with ourselves and the feelings never go away. It's important to share your feelings with caring family and close friends and encourage them to simply listen. Include the name of the person you are grieving, talk freely about that person which gives others permission to do so.

Be Realistic - During the holiday season, your sense of grief may be intensified. Grief plus the usual pressures of the holiday could make you feel more tired and stressed. Respect your need to slow down or build rest into your day. Be realistic about your schedule and think carefully before accepting invitations. Limited social events is better than being drained and anxious.



Click on the dove above to access the template to print and display your own dove.



The Memory Tree welcomes all community members affected by loss to write their loved one's name on a dove and hang it on the tree.

Don't Be Afraid to Be Alone - Well-intentioned people may encourage you to keep busy and not be alone. Often we're afraid that solitude. While distractions may be tempting, they only serve to postpone your feelings. Prioritize your to do list and postpone what you can until after the holidays.

Choose Your Company Carefully - Identify the family and friends who have demonstrated a caring response to you in your grief, the people who allow you to be yourself without judgement.

Make a Plan - Every person's grief is unique. Think carefully about what you need. Stick firmly to your plan. Do something just for you at least once a week or every day, this is not selfish.

Be Prepared - You may be tempted to avoid family traditions and gatherings because you are afraid of painful memories. Instead, think about how traditions can be continued in ways that incorporate the memory of your person. Consider starting a new tradition to help keep their memory alive.

Unwrap the Memories - Holidays are a natural time for sharing the treasure of stories and memories. While it may feel awkward or painful, share them and be open to whatever emotions may result. Sometimes they will lead us to laughter, other times tears. Memories are meant to be unwrapped and enjoyed with others. Encourage others to share their stories. Think about how to preserve memories for future times of reflection.

Remember - Grief can be an expression of love. Embrace it. Be patient with yourself. Accept your limitations and surround yourself with caring, loving people.

Hospice Treated to Beautiful Voices of AbZolutely Choir

Local choir brings the sounds of the season to Hospice Peterborough

Hospice Peterborough clients and staff were treated to a beautiful holiday concert from local choir AbZolutely.

The group spent an evening sharing the gift of music throughout the hospice building, including outside of resident rooms, in the courtyard, and in front of the Memory Tree.

There is plenty of research indicating music can be helpful for palliative's clients physiological, emotional, social, and spiritual care.

Thank you for bringing this gift to our building.



AbZolutely serenaded Hospice Peterborough clients and staff with their beautiful voices.

Holiday Episode Offers Support, Comfort

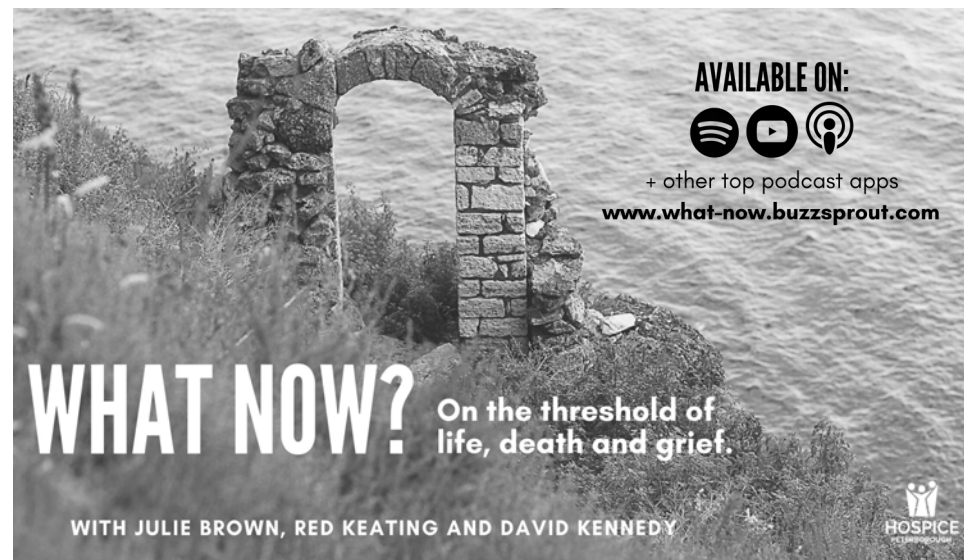
New 'What Now?' tackles grief around the holidays and strategies to help get through what can be a difficult time

For many, it's not the most wonderful time of the year. Those living with life threatening illness (and their families) might be entering this season with awareness this could be the last Christmas. For others, if grief is "raw" and new we may be wondering how to survive the holidays. If our grief is historical, then we may find the holidays trigger our grief. It's a challenging time of year!



Use your smart phone camera over the QR code to listen to 'What Now? On the threshold of life, death and grief' now!

In this episode the hosts give space to all of these realities, recognizing there isn't a solution to any of this but there are ways to approach the holidays that are compassionate and caring of ourselves and our loved ones. The theme of the episode is giving ourselves permission to let the holidays be what they need to be; reducing the pressure and letting go of the expectations for making it special and perfect.



What's your Legacy?

For more information, contact
Alison Casey at
acasey@hospicepeterborough.org
or call 705-742-4042

CARING FOR THE FUTURE

Partnership with Hospice Norwood Announced

New partnership with Hospice Norwood marks beginning of increased support in Peterborough County

Hospice Peterborough is thrilled to announce a partnership with Hospice Norwood. Hospice Peterborough will support Norwood to begin offering community programming at Stewart House.

The programming will focus on people living with a palliative diagnosis, caregivers of people living with a palliative diagnosis and people experiencing grief due to the death of a significant person in their life.

The partnership is made possible thanks to provincial funding which also include renovations to make accessible meeting spaces and the hiring of a Rural Outreach Coordinator.

Taking on the role of this Coordinator is Carolyn Parkes. Carolyn has years of Hospice experience having started as a volunteer at Hospice Maycourt in Ottawa and then working as a Volunteer Coordinator at Hospice Kawartha Lakes and since August 2021 as Volunteer Lead at Hospice



Hospice Norwood is expanding their program offerings with a focus on those living with a palliative diagnosis, caregivers, and people experiencing grief.



Carolyn Parkes' role will evolve to include the Rural Outreach Coordinator position at Hospice Norwood.

Peterborough. Carolyn will be an employee of Hospice Peterborough but will spend time at Stewart House. This fall many of the Directors and some other Hospice Norwood volunteers took Volunteer Training with Carolyn.

"It is an exciting opportunity for Hospice Peterborough to increase their presence in the County and partner with a smaller, rural hospice. I'm looking forward to spending time with their passionate Board and volunteers." Carolyn shared,

We are excited to continue to share details and the progress and programming as they progress.

Stay tuned!

Grief is the struggle with the end – never seeing a person again, hearing their voice, and never getting the opportunity to experience those anticipated life milestones.

It is also the painful adjustment to walk on this new journey, which doesn't mean forgetting someone, or ending the love. It is closing the physical relationship, and finding new ways to remember and honour a loved one in a way which adds meaning and comfort in their physical absence.

One parent summed it up best "Hospice doesn't have all the answers, but it does have the tools, so that we can do the work to find our way through". **This is the gift of Hospice Peterborough – to listen, embrace and hold the pain, when there are no answers.**

Every person deserves to be listened to, acknowledged and honoured.

It truly is **your community hospice**. While staff play a role it is donors, volunteers and our community who made this building possible and support this privileged work.

As a donor myself, I ask you to make your donation today to support individuals and their families who will seek help from Hospice Peterborough in the coming year.



How you can help

YES, I want to support vital hospice palliative care!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Amount:

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$200 Other: _____

I would like to make my gift by:

Cheque (payable to Hospice Peterborough)

Visa MasterCard AMEX

One-time donation Monthly donation

Card #: _____

Expiry Date: _____ CVV: _____

I would like to be an anonymous donor

This gift is in memory of: _____

Please contact me to discuss my legacy gift to Hospice Peterborough.

For your safety, and the safety of our residence and staff, please consider donating online, or through the mail. We appreciate your understanding.

Registered Charity No. 11947 8964 RR0001 Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20 or more.

Donate online at hospicepeterborough.org Or mail to 325 London St Peterborough, ON K9H 2Z5

THANK YOU! Donors make our care possible!



325 London St
Peterborough, ON K9H 2Z5
705-742-4042
admin@hospicepeterborough.org

Keep in touch:

@hospiceptbo

@HospicePeterborough

@hospiceptbo