

Building A Legacy - One Bear At A Time

When Kristen Bach raised the idea of recording her father's voice, one of the most popular and poignant projects of the Music Therapy Program was born. Thanks to the germ of this idea, Music Therapist Jill Murphy has helped individuals record their voice and place it in a teddy bear as a legacy for their families. Known as the build-a-bear program, Jill has helped to provide this cherished memento to about 15 families to date. The program is made possible through the equal support of the Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County and the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation.

Murphy recalls the original request from Darryl Bach who thought Kristen's idea was a great one, and wanted to surprise his two daughters, Kristen and Julia, with this precious gift. The voice box is placed in the bear's hand and can record a ten-second message. "I usually counsel individuals to say the name of their loved one, to say I love you, and remind them I'll always be with you," says Murphy. She has noted the profound impact it has on those receiving the bear, and those who are giving it. "Many individuals wonder if loved ones will remember the sound of their voice, this helps to ensure they always have a reminder close at hand."

This simple concept has provided comfort to a range of patients and families. A grandmother recorded a message for the granddaughter she would never meet. She told her "I'll always be love you and be watching over you." Murphy has also acquired a stethoscope as part of the program, and has recorded the heart beat of patients which can be interwoven with a favourite piece of music. The grandmother was able to hear the baby's heartbeat and subsequently recorded her own so her grandchild would always have the sound of her grandmother's love with her. And, the bears are for more than children. One individual recalls receiving a teddy bear from her brother when they were children,

which remained with them through the years. It sparked the idea to provide another bear for her loved one, saying "you took such good care of the first one, here's another for you to cherish."

Jill makes a point of backing up the recordings, and holding on to them for safe keeping, so individuals don't have to worry if something should happen to the bear's voice box.

"Having the support of the Society really allows us to touch people's lives in a profound way," says Murphy. She still recalls the look of relief on the face of one patient when he learned there was no cost to create and provide the bear to his family members. "We work with some very brave people," says Murphy. "This isn't always an easy thing to do but allows families to treasure the voice of their loved one, for years to come."

Darryl's wife says the original idea came from her daughter. "Kristen discussed it with Darryl, but he had enlisted Jill's help and surprised the girls, Sheena Bach says. "This is such a special treasure for them to have. I'm so happy it's helping others too."



Dad Darryl with daughters Kristen and Julia—and bears!

THE HOSPICE SOCIETY MISSION

To support and promote compassionate care for individuals and their loved ones who are living with a life-threatening illness. It takes a supportive community to deliver the mission of the Hospice Society of Cape Breton County. We anticipate and appreciate your continued support, enabling us to fulfill an important role in our community.

Paying it Forward

Darren Smith was working in Northern Ontario when he was diagnosed with cancer. The news brought him back to his parents who had moved to Cape Breton. During his first visit to the Cape Breton Regional Hospital he learned that his cancer was far more advanced than he had imagined. It was stage 4 and terminal and he was given six months to live. Darren passed away 18 months later.

Darren's Mom, Brenda Burton speaks of the experience at the Hospital and the An Cala Unit as nothing but positive. "On every step of our journey, the care and support was excellent," says Burton. Being new to the area, Darren and his family didn't know a lot of people, and she says the staff and volunteers became extended family.

Darren spent time on the unit on a few occasions and was always appreciative of the fact he had his own space and his own TV. His last visit to the unit was in December and his Mom remembers how wonderful it was to be able to take advantage of the near by kitchen to enjoy coffee or some home made baked goods that were offered daily.

She remembers getting a picture of Darren by the tree and how much the family appreciated the home-like atmosphere around them. "On the unit, they thought of everything," says Brenda noting how appreciative the family was of the available play space on the unit for Darren's niece and nephew. "They had a chance to see their uncle, then they could go and play freely." She recalls how much the flowers, little gift bags and simple acts of kindness meant to Darren. "He was young, but those gestures meant a lot to him."

Burton also recalls how important it was for Darren to attend Rotary's Ribfest. For three years, the Hospice Society benefitted from the proceeds given at the gate. Even when

he wasn't feeling well, he wanted to attend so he could contribute to a cause that had become so important to him.

During his stay, Darren and his Mom spent time watching the World Junior hockey tournament together. He wondered if others were as lucky as he, with a television and the space to enjoy their favourite shows as a family. As the two were enjoying the games, Darren said "we have to pay it forward Mom, can you do that for me?"

Darren was always sensitive to the needs of others. As the disease and the medications began to alter his personality, he would apologize for his inability to settle. Brenda is so grateful for the care he received, and takes comfort in the fact that her son did not suffer.

Brenda took Darren's words to heart, and provided a very generous gift to the An Cala Unit. As a result, the Society was able to purchase new televisions for several of the rooms on the unit, so that others can enjoy their favourite shows as Darren did.

Darren had asked his Mom to keep paying it forward, we are so grateful to Darren and his family for doing so.



It's always fun to bust a move, especially when it's for a great cause. Over the past six years, the Society has hosted Shake, Rattle n Roll. Each year, the amazing musicians make everyone want to dance like no one is watching.

Our generous sponsors help to make it all possible, as do those who take the time to buy the tickets. This year, more than **\$20,000** was raised, bringing the grand total to **\$100,000**. Now, that makes us want to boog-a-loo!

Memories Cast in Stone

On June 4, 2018 a Memorial Service was held to remember patients in the Palliative Care Service who passed away between September 2017 and March 2018. It was one of two services held annually, with the other taking place in November. Upon arrival, each family member was asked to choose from a range of unique stones to hold on to during the service, and take with them upon leaving.

The service honoured 297 patients with the stones, in song and in quiet reflection.

The "Significance of the Stone" was read by one of the palliative care nursing staff:

*As you came in the door this evening each of you selected a stone.
Each stone is unique. Some are weathered and worn and others are
Smooth and delicate. Its journey to get here was as varied as the paths that have
Led you here this evening.*

*This stone is a symbol of strength and endurance, qualities many of you
Displayed throughout your loved ones' journey. As we move
Through this service, we ask that you hold onto the stone and think
of your loved one.*

*We hope that you will keep this stone at home or in a special place and at a moment
When you may need a bit of strength, take comfort in knowing that your stone endures.*

Taking the Plunge, For a Good Cause!

The folks in Port Morien always like to ring in the new year with a 'splash', and not just of the bubbly. The annual Port Morien Polar Bear Dip is growing more popular with each year, and 2018 was no exception. This event acts as a fundraiser with proceeds shared between the Branch 55 Legion and a local charity. For the first time, the Polar Bear Dip Committee chose Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton as the beneficiary. Committee Chair Katherine MacDonald says "we chose the Society because of the significant work that is carried out in the community. Our committee members had experienced first hand the kindness and compassion this service provides to patients and their families, and we wanted to help the service continue their important work."

The Port Morien Polar Bear Dip was thrilled to have the biggest total raised to date, at **\$5,200**, with **\$2,600** going to the Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County. Now that's refreshing!



Pop Up Shop a Success!

From May 4-6th, the Sunflower Treasures Pop-Up Shop was blooming with trinkets and treasures of all sorts and sizes. The amazing generosity of the community allowed us to offer a full range of beautiful items to suit every taste. The event, organized and run by a large group of dedicated volunteers, raised **\$27,000** for the Society! The funds will go towards the much needed community Hospice Residence. It also allowed people like Olivia Matheson to find that very special gift for one special person—her Mom!



Here, Olivia is pictured searching for that special something, using her own money, with grandparents Valerie and Lynn Matheson.

Giving Back

When you give to the Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County your generosity has a profound impact. The money helps us to provide comfort and care for those facing life limiting illnesses. And, that comfort and care can take many forms. As Patricia Jackson, Chair of the Society, says “any immediate need is met immediately.”

The Society provides **financial assistance** to those within the service, both in hospital and at home. That assistance pays for the unique and personal health related needs of individuals at a time when they are most needed. For some wishing to stay at home, it could mean oil in the tank that ensures the home stays warm. For others wishing to see their loved one, it could mean the fare that brings them to their bedside. In some cases, it has meant enabling that special celebration, whether it's a birthday, graduation or a wedding, making for lasting family memories.

The Society will step in to help when medical and nursing staff alert them to the needs they encounter for the individuals and families in their care. For example, the cost of ambulance transfers has been covered, as have parking passes, or the cost of a trip to the hospital for much needed treatment. Family members have received gas cards to enable a visit to a loved one, groceries when the cupboards are bare, and blankets and books for someone who needed both. Whatever is needed to help someone stay in their preferred environment, it is done.

Any **equipment** needed to make it possible for individuals to stay at home is provided. In this way, they are surrounded by the people and in the environment they are most comfortable. Sometimes, the funds will go to renting hospital beds, or equipment to modify the washroom, hygienic products for adults—whatever is needed to ensure the comfort of the individual.

Additionally, when **noel nursing care** is needed for a night or two to provide rest for the family when a loved one is in the last stages of life, the Society can help to provide it.

The dedicated medical and nursing staff who provide care to individuals both in hospital and at home are able to stay current and can take advantage of **professional development opportunities** thanks to the support of the Society. Staff are able to attend conferences, or take in courses that ensure they have access to the most up-to-date practices within the spectrum of palliative care.

For families who are left to mourn after a loved one is gone, **bereavement support** can be extremely critical. Knowing that you are not alone when you are grieving, that there are places to turn, can provide a vital lifeline at a time when emotions can feel overwhelming.

Music therapy is also funded by the Society and the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation. This program brings the gift of music in many forms, whether as a legacy cd, through the build-a-bear program or through the simple joy of hearing your favourite song when you need it most. Recently, Music Therapist Jill Murphy learned one of her clients was a big Johnny Reid fan, and wondered if attendance at an upcoming concert could be arranged. Thanks to Hospice staff, this individual was able to not only attend the concert but had an opportunity to meet the singer, receive a kiss and a cuddle and get a photo with him! For her it was a truly magical night and provided an immeasurable amount of comfort and joy.

Of course on the **An Cala Unit**, there is a range of services and supports the Society provides, including managing the volunteer program that makes a difficult time a little easier for individuals and their families. The volunteers provide home made baked goods, soups and nourishment, brighten rooms with flowers or simply provide a warm smile or a compassionate touch. As Greg Boyd, said, “our family was blown away by the care my father received recently.

The facility, the staff and volunteers allowed us to enjoy much of what would otherwise have been the worst two weeks of our lives. Thank you.”

Your gift means so much to so many. Your generosity helps us to touch lives with comfort, care and compassion. Because you give, so can we.



Debbie Wingate, Anne Louise Sharpe and Allie MacIntyre

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Hospice Residence Update

With the emergence of spring, we look forward to new growth and the development of our Hospice Residence project. Many of you, who are our dedicated supporters have been inquiring as to how close we are to seeing the new Hospice Residence open its doors. We would like to take this opportunity to update you on the work of our volunteer board and staff and introduce our “Strengthening Circles of Care” Campaign Chairs.

During the last year, our business model for bringing this project to completion has changed and we are pleased that we are getting closer to fulfilling our dream of building a Hospice Residence.

The Society is delighted to be working in partnership with Membertou Properties and the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA). The Hospice Residence will cost \$5.2 million. Membertou Properties is providing the land and site preparation valued at \$1.2 million and the Society is committed to raising \$4 million to cover the cost of construction and furnishings. Negotiations with the NSHA are ongoing regarding the assumption of the operations budget.

The Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County plans to raise the \$4 million through the ongoing generosity of our community, friends and supporters. To lead our fundraising efforts, we are pleased to welcome and introduce our Campaign Chairs, Monica and Brian Shebib. Monica is well known for her dedication and volunteerism especially in the area of Hospice Palliative Care. When Monica isn't busy volunteering with Hospice Palliative Care at the Northside General, she is active as a director with the Society's board as well as engaging in

numerous other community organizations. Brian is also active in the community and after retiring from M.V. Osprey he continues to be involved in development projects throughout the CBRM. We are grateful to have such a dynamic couple leading the Society's fundraising efforts. The campaign is still in the early stages of development and we will keep you informed as we progress with both our fundraising and construction plans for the Hospice Residence.

We wish everyone a wonderful summer and look forward to sharing additional details about this exciting community partnership in the near future.

- Patricia Jackson and Nancy Dingwall



**Monica and Brian Shebib,
Campaign Chairs**



Our community partners are truly amazing!

When these classic cars roll into town, people take notice! These cars are true classics, as are they people who so generously share them with the public. This year, the Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County benefitted from the **Classic Cruisers** car show in May at Centre 200 with a donation of **\$4,300**. They have also generously donated the funds raised from their displays at Ribfest. Now, that's one class act!

For the past three years, the **Rotary Clubs of Cape Breton** have sponsored one of the biggest events of the summer, the Sydney Ribfest. The event was recently recognized by the Sydney and Area Chamber of Commerce as the Philanthropic Organization Event of the Year. Over three years, the event raised **\$209,588** for the Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County. We are grateful from the bottom of our hearts (and ribs!).



Event Co-Chair Kevin Armstrong formally presents the cheque to Hospice Society Chair Patricia Jackson.

The **Old Sydney Society** understands the spirit of giving, and we were fortunate to have been the beneficiary of the proceeds raised from the Christmas tree decorating contest.

The **Cape Breton Credit Union's Management and Staff** have long been supporters of the Society. Thanks to community volunteer committee members and original organizer Gary Forsey, the Together We Care Golf Tournament has been teeing off for 21 years! The countless hours of CBCU volunteer staff time has provided support for our many community events and resulted in more than **\$50,000** raised for the Society. Now, that's the kind of support we can bank on!

The **Women of Peace and Hope** for Hospice have been creating a network of support for many years. These talented women create beautiful arts and crafts and sell them at various events, along with tickets on special hand crafted items—as they did at this year's Pop-up Shop—with all proceeds going to Hospice Palliative Care. Founded by Margaret Cusack, this incredible group of women have raised close to **\$80,000** for the Society. Their generosity is matched only by their creativity!



Debbie Lewis and Mary Black are pictured hard at work at the Pop Up Shop.

Bringing young men and women together to discuss topics important to them is the mission behind **Breakthrough**. Volunteer facilitators lead discussion groups, bring in speakers and arrange for service activities to support community organizations. This year, the group raised **\$800** for the Society after a group member spoke of the positive experience she and her family experienced with hospice palliative care.



Breakthrough members relaxing after staging a dinner to support Hospice Palliative Care

Who knew motorcycles can take on more than the open road. Thanks to the generosity of the **Cape Breton Free Wheelin' Motorcycle Association**, **\$7,550** has been raised over the past several years. That gets our motor running!

Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

☐ Yes, I would like to help support the Hospice Palliative Care Society

Please find enclosed my gift of: ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____

☐ I have enclosed a cheque, payable to Hospice Palliative Care Society

☐ Donate online at hospicecapebreton.org

☐ Donate by phone: 902-567-8584

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Card Number _____ Exp Date ____ / ____

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