



## Comfort Inside *and* Out

**It is the time of year that we all long for – warm weather, more time outdoors and the enjoyment of nature's beautiful surroundings. One of the important planning pieces for Hospice Cape Breton was to include a serene garden where patients could experience nature whether in a bed or a wheelchair. In the time since the Hospice opened, that very experience has taken place.**

The award-winning garden surroundings, created by Sydney Landscaping and supported by a donation from the Sisters of Saint Martha, has brought great comfort to patients and families. Hospice staff often comment that patients and families enjoy being present near the leafy trees, blooming flowers and natural landscape. The Society has the good fortune of a hardworking group of volunteers who maintain the garden to offer the most enjoyable experience possible.

As the garden flourishes so does the work of the Hospice Palliative Care Society. This year has been one of transition and growth for programs, events and plans supported by the Society. Committees are close to launching new programs for family caregivers and the next significant project in the coming year will be a major refresh of the An Cala Unit in the Cape Breton Regional Hospital.

As I finish my term as Board Chair, I thank board members, staff, volunteers and NHS palliative care staff for the dedication and passion they bring to the work they do on behalf of patients and families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jane E. Lewis".

**Dr. Jane Lewis, Past Chair**

**It is indeed my pleasure to begin a two year term as Chair of the Hospice Palliative Care Society. I welcome both continuing and new board members to the board table and know that the great work will continue for patients and families.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cheryl Read".

**Cheryl Read, Chair**



## Strawberry Tea

The essence of Hospice Palliative Care is offering patients and families a sense of home.

On Friday, July 21st, with strawberries at their peak, a group of wonderful baking volunteers and additional helpers created a Strawberry Tea for patients and families in the An Cala Unit and the Hospice.

Special thanks to Dena Pruski, Linda VanSchaayk, Pam Lavatte, Patricia Jackson, Dale Orychuk, Kathy Forsey, Danny Patterson and Lisa-McNeil Campbell.

With tasty strawberry shortcake, tea, conversation and pleasant music provided by Donnie Campbell and Jinks O'Neil, patients, families and volunteers enjoyed a lovely time outdoors in the Hospice Garden. There was a special feeling in the air that indeed felt like home to one and for all.



## Golf for Hospice

June 16th proved to be a sunny day on the well tended links at Bell Bay Golf Club for teams participating in the 2023 Together We Care Golf Tournament.

With more than 30 teams participating and multiple volunteers sporting orange around the course, a good time appeared to be had by all. Special recognition to tournament co-winners, Breton Tire with Gary Lewis, Dave Pyke, Bernie Chiasson and Dennis MacDonald and CBU Team 2 comprised of David Dingwall, John MacKinnon, Doug Connors and Chris Bell.

This tournament is one of the Hospice Palliative Care Society's longest standing fundraising events and over the years has raised \$732,000. The results of the 2023 event will see almost \$50,000 added to that total making it one of the most successful golf tournaments in the Society's history. This is accomplished thanks to the generosity of community partners/sponsors, members of our new 500 Club, auction and prize donors and of course, our many participating teams. Many thanks to Committee Chair Herb Martell and committee members for creating another great golf day for all.

**GOLF FOR HOSPICE**

Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County Fundraiser

Mark your calendars for the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Tournament on **June 21, 2024!**

## Room to Grieve

**There is no timeline on grieving. That's according to Pam Lappin, Bereavement Coordinator with the Hospice Palliative Care Service. Pam believes that as a society in general, we need to move towards grief literacy, where we can talk freely about death and the fact that it is very much a part of life. "The more we talk about grief, the more we allow those who are mourning to carry the loss" says Pam. "And that's crucial as the problems that can arise if grief is unresolved can affect virtually all aspects of life."**

Research indicates that about 60 percent of the population are able to process grief relying on their own resources and those around them. About 30 percent need additional support, such as support groups or supportive counselling, while about 10 percent need clinical support to help them through the grieving process.

"When an individual contacts us, we really listen to them, to gauge what may be best for them," says Pam. "Sometimes the person will simply want periodic supportive phone calls, others will want in-person visits, it's really as unique as the individual." The program provides a safe space for people to talk about their grief, but also helps them to understand what to expect as they move through the process.

"We believe it's vital that we shift the conversation away from expected timetables and behaviours," says Pam. "It's important for people to know they have room to grieve, that they can talk about it over time. It's about normalizing the experience and offering tools and support to help them carry their grief" says Pam.

Losing someone through death affects our relationship to ourselves and the world. Knowing you can access tools to help you through grief can help. There are resources available through the Nova Scotia Health Authority; you can access them here at <https://www.nshealth.ca/bereavement>. Help is always available through the Bereavement Program supported by the Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County.

Pam Lappin

Hospice Palliative Care Bereavement Coordinator



## Hospice Harmonies

Spring time in Cape Breton is the newly minted Hospice Harmonies song written, recorded and performed by Hospice patients Rae (Rachel) MacKillop, Dina (Rhodeina) Hawco and volunteer Lorette Cormier.

Working with Music Therapist, Jill Murphy, with assistance from Lisa McNeil-Campbell, the group chose 130 staff and family photos to accompany the words to their song. To experience the results of the tears, love and laughter they brought to this very special piece, it can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXuaoSNY4v4>



# dancing with the stars FOR HOSPICE

Thank you to our Stars, Dance Pros, community, sponsors, and you for your support as we continue our Circle of Caring for patients and their families.

**We raised  
\$240,000**

## Congratulations to our Winners!

People's Choice Award  
**Annette Verschuren and Wesley Colford**

Judge's Award  
**Saneea Abboud and Lyndsey Fitzgerald**

Most Inspiring Performance  
**Wanda Earhart and Kyle Hunter**

Most Energetic Performance  
**Brian Howley and Breagh MacInnis**

Most Elegant Performance  
**Jeff Ward and Paige Westbury**

Most Daring Performance  
**Brian Shebib and Denise Jardine**

Most Creative Performance  
**Johnathan Passerini and Susan Gallop**

Most Intricate Performance  
**Katherine van Nostrand and Juris Lazovskis**

*A big shout out to all those who held watch parties; the Cape Breton Own Line Dancers who raised \$2,000 and the In Step With Cape Breton Dance Festival for the contribution of its 50/50 draw proceeds!*

*Special thanks to DWTS Chair Debbie Keating and committee members Danielle LeVangie, Diana MacKinnon Furlong, Eileen Bruleigh, Heather Grant, Ida Marie Steeves, Kathleen McCluskey Mojeiko, Liz Healy, Nicole MacCormick, Darlene Boone and Corrie Stewart.*

## A New Visual Identity

You may have noticed that the Society has introduced an updated logo to all materials, print and/or electronic. A decision was made to retire the existing logo after a 35 year life span and move forward with a visual identity that is more contemporary, keeps a form of the sunflower and always reflects the values and importance of the Society's desire to support patients and families in the Nova Scotia Health Palliative Care Service when it is needed most.

We also have a new and informative website that we encourage you to visit at [www.hospicecapebreton.org](http://www.hospicecapebreton.org)



## Welcome to New Board Members

At the June 26<sup>th</sup> AGM, thanks were given to retiring board members and a warm welcome extended to five new individuals who have committed to a three year term. They include Linda Van Schaayk, Kirk MacRae, Mora Giovannetti, Dominic Gaduto and Sabrina MacDougall-Forgeron.

## Infused with Love

Sometimes all you need is a good hug. And, when that hug is from a cuddly bear designed especially with you in mind, that hug is even better. For Linda Fudge's four grandchildren, their tailor-made teddies will be a reminder of the love felt for them by their grandmother. Linda worked with Jill Murphy, Music Therapist for the Hospice Palliative Care Society, to create special bears for her four grandchildren, Judah, Kai, Matthew and London.



Linda says she did not know a lot about the music therapy program at first, but as she got to know Jill while staying at Hospice Cape Breton, she learned more about the various

aspects of the program. "At first I thought that music therapy was about easing the journey, infusing the final days with as much hope and joy as possible, says Linda. It's more than that." Linda was able to create and record special messages that are contained within each bear. The messages are all about the love Linda feels for her grandchildren, aged 2, 4, 6 and 8 as well as the hopes she has for their future.

Linda says she thought it would be a nice legacy for her family who live in Arizona and with whom she face-timed frequently. Since the bears would be ambassadors for Cape Breton, they also have special touches donated from the community. The bears wear tartan donated from the Cape Breton Curiosity Shop, while Rivers End sewed the scarves and Lisa McNeil-Campbell tying the bowties. Each bear is personalized using a Cricut machine, through the generosity of Shalese Kelly, who is a family member of a former patient. Since Linda used a daisy as her signature sign, (also another meaning for her second name—Marguerite), the bears have a daisy on one paw, and the initials of the recipient on the other.

To remind her grandchildren of their uniqueness and individual strengths, the messages were carefully crafted by Linda. Even the appearance of each bear was well thought out. For Judah, the youngest, she chose a furry, lion-like look to match his bold, brave and rough and tumble personality. To ensure the messages contained in the bears continue to last, they are also recorded on a USB as a back-up.

"I was hugging the bears to infuse them with love," says Linda. "And I hope they know that every time they hug their bears, they're really getting a hug from me. I really hope they will be well loved." No doubt they will, Linda, for years to come.

“ The arrival of patients within Hospice was a pinnacle event. It speaks to the unique partnership that exists between the community volunteer-based Society and Nova Scotia's Palliative Care Service encompassing the joint commitment to dignity and respect for the wishes of those facing end-of-life. This is realized through the knowledgeable and compassionate care of staff and physicians, the many kindnesses of volunteers, the programs that support families and loved ones, including an amazing music therapy program. Equally as important, is the generosity of many donors who contribute the funds that expand programs and sustain the needs that are as unique as the patients themselves. Dying is part of life and hospice palliative care cannot add days to life but can ensure there is life in one's days.

– Dr. Jane Lewis

Past Chair, Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County





## A Precious Gift

A life time working in the coal mines will take its toll. That was the case for Vernon MacDonald, a proud father of four who lived in his home for 88 years. As his health continued to fail and his lung capacity weakened, his two daughters knew that their Dad needed more care than they were able to provide. While Vernon was reluctant to leave his home, a conversation with palliative care physician Dr. George Burns helped him to see that a move to Hospice would be beneficial for everyone.

"Several months of antibiotics and lows in his health allowed Dad to come to the decision that he didn't want more tests and he didn't want to be in a hospital. None of us knew what to expect with Hospice and what happened was that he flourished," says daughter Nancy Hopkins.



"He was like a kid in a candy store, with all of his requests being addressed; he was cared for so well. It really allowed us to spend time with him, and to simply be his family, and that was a precious gift."

Nancy recalls receiving a phone call from her Dad. "He was so excited, that he had been in a 'cuzzi'. Nancy was a little confused at first, but soon understood that her Dad had been in the Jacuzzi that morning. "My Dad thought he'd died and gone to heaven with how luxurious the experience had been." Nancy was also grateful for the careful attention her father received at Hospice. She says the cook would come to his room every day to see what he wanted to eat. "Often coconut cream pie or apple crisp was on the menu," says Nancy. "And when my Dad wanted clam chowder, the cook was happy to provide it once he secured the clams."

Nancy says her Dad was kind to everyone he encountered and that kindness came back to him tenfold. He thought the staff and volunteers connected with Hospice were exceptional. "They made every one of his days special, and the medical care he received was outstanding," says Nancy. "As a retired nurse, I'm familiar with the importance of pain management, but this was a whole new level. His breathing and his pain were well controlled, and he was so much more comfortable and able to have short conversations with everyone."

Nancy says that because of the care her Dad received at Hospice, it made the family feel at ease knowing he was so well cared for. While Covid prevented some family members from visiting, particularly his great granddaughters, they were able to go to the window to interact and send Poppy their love. Nancy recalls one of his great granddaughters saying "let's go visit Poppy in his hotel," she says.

Vernon passed away on Miner's Memorial Day at 6pm while his grandson was on his way home from Fort McMurray. Knowing he would want to see his grandfather one more time, staff assured Nancy they would keep Vernon in his room until his grandson was able to be there. They travelled from the airport to Hospice after midnight and were able to say their goodbyes together.

"My Dad received everything he asked for, any issue he had was dealt with immediately," says Nancy. "We can't say enough about the positive experience we encountered at Hospice. It's a huge comfort to the family to know he was comfortable. While it wasn't home, it was the next best thing."

## Swingin' into Spring Second Wind Community Orchestra

The Second Wind Community Orchestra has been supporting the Hospice Palliative Care Society Music Therapy Program for several years pre-Covid and returned this year to offer a lovely spring concert for the local community, held at CBU.

Monies raised this year amounted to \$1,633 and as always are greatly appreciated by Music Therapist Jill Murphy and the many patients she works with at home, in hospital, in the An Cala Unit and Hospice Cape Breton.



You have to admire the enthusiasm of **Cape Breton's Own Line Dancers** who arranged to gather in a local hall, dance the night away and raised \$2,000 to the bottom line of Dancing With The Stars event. Thanks to the dancers and their supporters!



## Cape Breton Classic Cruisers

Community partnerships are important and the Cape Breton Classic Cruisers are an excellent example of that. Having selected the Hospice Palliative Care Society as their charity of choice, members raise funds year round at every event they attend. In this photo, members visit Hospice Cape Breton to make a recent donation of \$10,000. This brings their contributions over the years to \$35,000! Always grateful, the Society acknowledged their on-going support with the Hospice Society Award at the June 26th Annual General Meeting.

## Giving Thanks

Thank you to In Step with Cape Breton Dance Festival group for the proceeds of their 50/50 held during their annual dance competition which co-incided with the Society's Dancing With The Stars major fundraiser.



They raised \$1,000.00 in support of the Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County and seeing these young dancers and their parents contribute brought a smile to our faces!



Thank you to **KOC Council 9476** for their lovely donation. Francis Sampson & his daughter Lynette stopped by with a cheque for **\$2,000.00!**





## Refreshing the An Cala Unit

Fifteen years ago, the Hospice Palliative Care Society raised over a million dollars to create the nine-bed An Cala Unit on the fourth floor of the Cape Breton Regional Hospital. Working with hospital administration, great thought was given to the first palliative care unit of its kind in Cape Breton.

Over the years, thousands of patients and families coping with life-limiting illnesses such as cancer or chronic disease, have received compassionate care, comforts, and support in these nine rooms.

The society and the palliative care service recently agreed to update and revitalize the unit. This project includes things that are truly important for patients and families like upgrades to the patient rooms and the kitchen that's used by families and volunteers. The society is fundraising for their portion of this project which totals over \$200,000 and includes enhanced furnishings, an updated kitchen and other items. Room updates will cost approximately \$18,000 per room and the kitchen will be approximately \$50,000.

Once again, the society will be seeking support from the public and welcomes donations of any amount, from sponsorship of a room to a general donation for this project. Those wishing to make or discuss a donation can contact Corrie Stewart, the society's executive director at 902-567-8584.

## Annual General Meeting

The Society is most fortunate to have two long-term volunteers who have been committed to the "Together We Care" Golf Tournament since inception, 24 years ago. Debbie Walsh below (L) is seen accepting the Carol McKeen Volunteer Award for her longstanding involvement in this annual fundraising event, Jane MacKenzie (R), who along with Debbie is also an award recipient for her dedication and support to the planning and organization of this important event is pictured below holding her award.

The Hospice Palliative Care Society has long enjoyed the creativity and talent of a group known as "The Flower Ladies".



They prepare attractive floral arrangements for patients in the Palliative Care Service weekly and personally deliver them to their rooms to brighten up their space and offer some light conversation. The organizational work and group efforts have been co-ordinated by volunteers Bev Archibald and Heather Dunn with grace and kindness for countless years and consequently, both women were awarded the Margaret Cusack Award on June 26th of this year.

Lifetime Member awards were presented to Monica Shebib and Gary Forsey.

☐ Yes, I would like to make a donation to the Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County

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