



12/1/20

## HOSPICE HAPPENINGS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Most of us would really like to just forget 2020 ever happened. With the onset of COVID in March our world became a very different place to live. We saw the frustration and desperation of some and the unmitigated kindness and generosity of others. Throughout the past 9 months we at BDH have had to lock our doors but continued to serve all of our clients and their families. Throughout March to September the staff and volunteers prepared hot meals for the clients each week and volunteers delivered them throughout the area. We mastered the art of zoom and provided weekly education to our volunteers and counselling to our clients. Our many volunteers rose to the occasion and provided weekly calls to our clients to ensure their safety and to combat isolation.

As the weather improved, we provided PPE to our volunteer army and they commenced driveway visits in person with clients. We utilized our beautiful backyard to host a volunteer BBQ and socially distanced bonfire to ensure that we showed our appreciation to all our volunteers in these very challenging times. In October we welcomed back our Day Hospice clients in a distanced smaller format to ensure their safety and continued to support others in their homes.

We have learned to adapt our programming to continue to meet the needs of our clients. We have purchased a medical grade steamer to clean our loaned equipment and a fogger to eliminate germs in our indoor spaces for everyone's safety. We are so blessed to have such wonderful volunteers to help us make all this a reality.

We know that our programming will look different even when things do return to the 'new normal' however this is a good thing. We can reach out to those that cannot leave their homes; we can recruit more volunteers for additional home visiting; and we can broaden our reach for education utilizing the new technologies. So, although this has been a very difficult year there have been many silver linings that have allowed us to rethink how we do things to better serve our clients and their families.

As 2020 draws to a close we would like to thank all of you that helped us during this past year. We look forward to working with you in 2021 and know that you are a valued member of our team and we could not do it without you!

Sue Walker

Executive Director

Since 2020 has been such a difficult year for all of us, the team of staff and volunteers at Beth Donovan Hospice wanted to do something different to help our community members stay socially distanced, shop local for Christmas, and support the programs and services of Beth Donovan Hospice. So, they created *Everything Under the Evergreen!* This unique online auction event ran from December 1<sup>st</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> and offered a large variety of items for everyone on our shopping lists. We thank Rideau Auctions for hosting our auction. You may have also noticed some beautifully decorated Christmas Trees on display around our community. Thank you to the following participating merchants for supporting BDH through the Christmas tree draw: Catered Affairs, Escape Salon & Spa, My Local Markets and B&H Grocer. With these two fundraising events, we were able to fundraise \$2934! A BIG thank you to all the community members and local merchants that made these events possible.

**Together we all make a difference!**

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### **An Evening Walk Among the Stars: a December Remembrance Service**



Christmas can be a wonderful time of year, but it can also be one of sadness if you have lost a loved one. With this in mind, the Beth Donovan Hospice hosted “An Evening Walk Among the Stars”, a virtual remembrance service. It was an opportunity to hold our loved ones dear, honor the grief that accompanies loss, and be in community as we shared music, poetry, memories, ornament hanging and candle lighting.

The service was recorded and can be found on the Beth Donovan website for on demand viewing throughout the month of December for those who are interested.

<https://www.bethdonovanhospice.ca/>

### **Bereavement Counselling**

The hospice continues to provide bereavement support in the form of counselling sessions for individuals, couples and families who have lost a loved one, or are navigating a palliative diagnosis. In response to COVID-19, additional health and safety precautions have been implemented. Counselling sessions are now being offered via phone, video, or in-person and continue to be available to residents of the Leeds and Grenville community.

There has been a noticeable surge in the need for funded counselling in the wake of COVID-19. This increase in demand has invited us to think outside of the box and explore new strategies for delivering service. In response to this need, BDH responded by offering more frequent virtual group gatherings and

connecting individuals with a number of resources within the community and through phenomenal programming offered online through various agencies such as Hospice Palliative Care Ontario, Canadian Virtual Hospice and the Champlain Community Support Network.

It is evident that the need for mental health services is greater than it has ever been. Staff and volunteers at BDH have been engaging in conversations with others within the community and abroad in an effort to continue to serve the community to the best of our ability. These important conversations continue to be had as we all strive to stay connected and stay well.

For more information about the counselling services offered at BDH or resources within the community, please contact us.

### **Spousal/Partner Loss Grief Support Group**

Though grief is an individual experience, it does not need to be done alone. After a bit of an imposed delay, the 8-week Spousal/Partner Loss Grief Support Group took place this fall at BDH through zoom and in person gatherings. This psychoeducational group supported individuals in learning about their grief in a supportive group environment. Together participating individuals were present for one another as they addressed their grief and identified and established healthy coping skills, while exploring what a new normal in life may look like. Using a person-centred approach, BDH strives to provide support unique to the individual’s needs, while offering a community where people can openly share in their grief. We hope to offer this 8-week, small group annually so please contact BDH for information on upcoming opportunities.



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### Volunteers

The COVID 19 Pandemic hit everyone hard in March 2020 and the Beth Donovan Hospice was no exception. However, our strong and resilient volunteers stepped up to the plate.

-Our volunteers who were doing home visits switched to calling their clients for regular check ins.

-They attended online training and check-in sessions through zoom including volunteer refreshers over a 6-week period.

-They participated in zoom meetings covering Covid-19 updates and changes to our processes. They were instrumental in providing feedback and suggestions for programming and client-specific care needs.

In June when the restrictions softened, volunteers come forward to do porch/laneway visits allowing for successful and safe visiting. For many of our clients and volunteers this opportunity was the first time in months that they had contact with others. The impact was just amazing at lifting everyone’s spirits. As the weather cooled this fall, they returned to phone calls to ensure regular contact.

Volunteers participated in weekly Chair Yoga classes outside allowing for safe, social connection, physical activity, and relaxation.

In September with the COVID numbers rising we were not able to have our traditional welcome back meal for our volunteers. However, we knew how important it was for our volunteers to be able to get together and see others, so we planned a Bonfire for them. During this social distance bonfire, we had great fun playing charades and of course having s’mores and hot apple cider. Everyone enjoyed it so much we will be making this an annual event.



*We would like to take the opportunity to thank our volunteers for their continued support. You are the backbone of the hospice and we could not do it without you. Wishing you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

### VAC Committee

To help our volunteers stay engaged and involved in continuous learning, our ‘Volunteer Advisory Committee’ has planned a series of education workshops that started on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and will happen bi-monthly with special guest speakers until September 2021. Our first session was on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) presented by Dr. Zakhem. This session was highly informative and well attended.

**Upcoming Volunteer Education Workshops**

**MAID - Medical Assistance in Dying** - November 18, 2020  
5:30pm - 7:00pm  
Presented by Dr. Tania Zakhem

**Suffering and Joy** - January 20, 2021  
5:30pm - 7:00pm  
Presented by Megan Dillenbeck and Ruth Richardson

**Boundaries** - March 24, 2021  
5:30pm - 7:00pm  
Presented by Melissa Hill & Janet-lee Ferris

**Providing Compassionate Care** - Date to be determined  
**Advance Care Planning** - Date to be determined

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### **Volunteer Recruitment/Training**

The Beth Donovan Hospice is looking for volunteers to join us. We will be hosting a volunteer training session in January 2021. This 30-hour course is hosted by HPCO and a group of staff and volunteers deliver the content both virtually and in-person. We are recruiting for a variety of volunteer positions within our organization. If you are interested in knowing more about this amazing opportunity or know someone who would enjoy volunteering, please contact Janette Ferris at [program@bethdonovanhospice.ca](mailto:program@bethdonovanhospice.ca).

Greetings from the Board of Directors,

As we reflect on a very unique year, we are truly grateful for all of the support we have received from our community to enable us to continue to serve our clients and their families. We are proud to be part of such a special place and encourage everyone to continue to support one another, be kind and be proud of our community. On behalf of the Board of Directors, we wish to thank the team of staff and volunteers of BDH. They have been beacons of kindness, support and hope throughout the pandemic.

Wishing you a holiday season filled with peace and happiness.

*Peggy Vandervoort*

Board Chair