

Greetings from the Valley Hospice Foundation!



ValleyHospice.ca

APRIL 2023



Photo Credit:
Terri Milton, Fund Development Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Spring is here and we, the Valley Hospice Foundation, continue to move forward with a sense of renewal and growth.

Valley Hospice Foundation is committed to working collaboratively with Nova Scotia Health to advocate for and support programs and public awareness around hospice and palliative care in our community. I can say with confidence that our partnership is strong, and together we stand firm in our commitment to those in need.

How the Valley Hospice residence fits into our community has become increasingly clear since opening in the fall of 2020. Patients and families are cared for in a supportive, homelike environment in their final days to months of living. It is with the support of our generous community, that we can continue to enhance this valued and caring place for the Annapolis Valley.

We also understand that Palliative Care happens from diagnosis through to bereavement. There is plenty that happens on either side of dying. It is through this lens that the Valley Hospice Foundation's focus for the coming year will include enhanced grief and bereavement programs, a new music therapy program,

communication and public awareness, and enhanced support for the Annapolis Valley Palliative Care Program.

Since our last newsletter, Foundation members have been pleased with the opportunity to meet with members of the Valley Hospice's care team and the Annapolis Valley's palliative care team who provide care in people's homes in our community. The Foundation provides support to our care teams for professional development, and we look forward to learning more about potential opportunities.

Over the past year we have been pleased to continue our support of the Friends in Bereavement Support Groups that take place in Kentville, Berwick and Bridgetown.

We believe that the spiritual, emotional and cultural aspects of care are best served in an environment that is home-like and comfortable. This winter the Foundation supported the addition of mini fridges for the bedrooms at the Hospice, along with upgrading the bedside tables and lighting. We now look forward to the return of the Hospice's volunteer gardeners, providing colorful annuals for our planters, and other things the gardens may need.

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We are grateful for the support of our winter fundraising that is allowing a new program in music therapy to move forward. In the weeks ahead we will be hiring a part time music therapist who will be supporting patients and their families both in the hospice and in their homes through our partnership with Nova Scotia Health.

As the Valley Hospice programs continue to grow, it has become necessary for the Foundation office to relocate to make room for staff who are needed by the patients and their families. We are grateful for all the efforts that have been put forward by Nova Scotia Health to ensure a seamless transition to the EKM Community

Health Centre in Wolfville. While we will miss seeing the Hospice Team, we welcome the opportunity to be near the Annapolis Valley Palliative Care team who also call the EKM their home.

We look forward to a bright future for Hospice and Palliative Care in the Annapolis Valley. We appreciate all the support we receive from our community. We hope that you will take the opportunity to join us for one of our coming events being featured in this newsletter. Thank you!

- Martha Stewart, Chair

WELCOME KATE!

On January 9th Valley Hospice welcomed Kate Mason as the new Manager of Health Services. Kate worked as an RN at Halifax Hospice and is completing her master's degree in health administration at Dalhousie. She is "excited by the opportunity to see hospice from the leadership/administrative perspective" and is also glad to spend more time in the Valley as she has long been a fan of this area.

Kate has been spending time since her arrival getting to know and supporting the team at Valley Hospice. She notes that because the 10 bed facility has limited capacity the staff has not been pressured in the same way that health care providers in other parts of the health care system are experiencing, but there is still concern about issues in the larger system.

A health scare in her late teens piqued Kate's interest in the dying process. Rather than avoiding the topic of death and dying because it scared her, she found she was drawn to reading books written by palliative care physicians and started volunteering with a local palliative care society. While studying nursing



she was again drawn to palliative care. She particularly liked this type of nursing because it was one of the few care environments where she found that she was able to, "take the time to build strong therapeutic relationships and support patients' needs holistically – social, psychological, spiritual as well as physical needs."

When imagining what she would like to see the hospice doing in the future, Kate mentions seeking out ways to maintain the connection with friends and family of the patients who have died in the hospice. These people have had a profound experience supported by hospice staff and "we need to find a way that they feel comfortable returning and engaging with the hospice".

When she is not working at the hospice you may find Kate outdoors with her dog, spending time with her partner, reading, listening to music, finishing her academic assignments or doing yoga.

Kate's feeling of comfort in her new position has been augmented by the relationship she is developing with the members of Valley Hospice Foundation. She expresses gratitude to them and the donors who support their work. She also appreciates the warm welcome she has received from the Hospice staff. Kate recalls that on her first day of work when she said who she was she was welcomed with a big hug. "I figured that if that was how the team welcomed a new co-worker then they likely also offer such a lovely welcome to their patients! I was also struck by the wonderful aroma in the air coming from the kitchen and the warmth of the building itself – so full of colour, music playing quietly in the background, and a fire in the fireplace".

"It is an honour to work with people who are at the end of their lives, and to support the patient and their family through that experience."

- Kate Mason

LIFE CARRIES FORWARD IN GOODNESS...

When the sudden news of a life limiting illness is presented to you, grief, shock, and realizations come in waves. Of course, there's the immediate grappling with our own mortality; however, for some the deepest pains are the realizations that the little day to day actions that give our lives meaning may not come to be.

For many, we find our greatest Spiritual connections through our interactions with the natural world. Standing at the shore of the ocean. Walking under a canopy of the forest. Sitting with a fishing line in a secret brook. Those moments are the ones where we often feel the most ourselves, at ease, and connected. Then suddenly and unexpectedly, that proverbial rug is pulled out from under us, and we find ourselves confined to a room, to a bed, to an unfamiliar place of care.

One patient shared with me their tremendous grief when they realized that they wouldn't be putting in their garden this year. As the days lengthened and their normal patterns of poring over seed catalogues were disrupted, they realized that their hands would never again meet the soil, tend the earth, retreat to their sacred space.

As a Spiritual Care Clinician hearing this, I hold two ideas at the same time. On the one hand, I seek to journey with the person in that suffering, for the grief needs not to be avoided or replaced but understood in a

deeper way for healing to take place. And the second, the therapeutic action of looking at that activity and seeing how life meaning can be sustained and legacy passed forward. Hunting through the aisles of gardening supplies, recognizing my own gratitude in being able to do this, I spotted these small and narrow little kits which would fit a windowsill perfectly. My first thought was for this one patient, but then I realized many of our patients of varying interests and abilities may appreciate these- and I knew the Foundation would support the idea without even asking first. So, I scooped up a pile with some water sprayers to bring back up the hill to Valley Hospice on the first day of Spring. A rebellious action against the lies of winter, and an embracing of the invincible resurrection of life in Spring.

Patients can take part in any way they choose- having conversation alongside planting, simply misting each day their little greenhouse, or just being close to the slow awaking of germination- and these little plants perhaps will be watched by the Patient their whole way up, perhaps passed on to their loved one, perhaps planted in the Hospice kitchen garden. But the one thing we know for certain: life carries forward in goodness.

- Sarah Scott, Spiritual Care Clinician



3RD ANNUAL HOLISTAY RAFFLE

We are excited to be bringing back our HoliStay Raffle with 10 incredible prize packages valued over \$10,000, featuring Nova Scotia getaways, fun experiences, and quality leisure products. **Tickets go on sale in September 2023!**

Draw date is November 18, 2023 during our Holly Days Holiday Party!

Yes, I wish to support the Valley Hospice and Palliative Care in the Annapolis Valley!

I would like to make a one time gift of:

☐ \$1000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other: \$ _____

☐ I wish to make my gift monthly (please see reverse of this form)

☐ Cheque is enclosed payable to: Valley Hospice Foundation

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

☐☐

Card # _____

EXP _____

CSV _____

Cardholder's Name _____

Signature _____

☐ I would like my gift to remain anonymous

Charitable registration number: 894902923RR0001

HELPING TO FIND THOSE “LITTLE BITS OF BEAUTIFUL”

Valley Hospice Foundation supports aspects of both Valley Hospice and the Community Palliative Care Team. The Community Palliative Care Team consists of a small group of interdisciplinary health care professionals who provide holistic palliative care to patients living at home with life limiting and/or life threatening illnesses and to their families. One of the members of that team, Tara Dubuc, shared her passion for her work as a palliative care nurse. “I don’t take lightly that patients open their door and their life to me. The level of trust developed in this environment allows us to have really profound discussions.”



While many believe that palliative care is provided at the end of life, Tara explains that she may see patients early on in their journey with a life limiting illness or she may be called on for support later in the disease process; it all depends on the unique circumstances of the patient.

Tara says that the focus of the team is to, “ease suffering and optimize the patient’s quality of life. This involves facilitating discussions about advanced directives and the goals of care, managing symptoms, and allocating or advocating for resources. Our focus is always on helping the patient to live every day while also recognizing that dying is part of life. I like to think that I have a role in facilitating positive and happy memories even as the patient is approaching the end of their life.”

The Community Palliative Care Team aims to support a “good death” which Tara defines as “one in which the patient experiences a peaceful passing and where the families have felt supported.”

“For me there are little bits of beautiful in palliative care and it’s helping families and patients to recognize and hang onto those.”

-Tara Dubuc



MAY 7, 2023

Lions Hall - Kentville

1 pm – Social & Registration

2 pm – 3 km or 5 km Group Hike

(Miners Marsh and Harvest Moon Trail)

The Valley’s Hike for Hospice returns for the 11th year of coming together to raise funds, and to recognize hospice and palliative care in the Annapolis Valley.

- Join us at 1pm for Lion’s Club bbq, live music, free t-shirts and more.
- Meet Tina Boyd-Fuller for an introduction to the practice of Grief Yoga
- Join the group hike (walk) that gets underway at 2 pm.
- Hikers and not-hikers are welcome!

Register or donate online at

Valleyhospice.ca

Sponsored by:



CIRCLE OF CARE – MONTHLY GIVING

I would like to join the Circle of Care by making a monthly gift of:

☐ \$100/month ☐ \$50/month ☐ \$25/month ☐ \$15/month ☐ other \$_____ /month

☐ I authorize the Valley Hospice to debit the amount indicated from my bank account each month.
I have enclosed a cheque marked VOID for bank coding.

☐ I authorize my monthly gift with my credit card. Please see information on the reversed side of this form.

Signature: _____

You may change or cancel your monthly gift at any time by calling **902-679-3471** or emailing info@valleyhospice.ca.

Valley Hospice Foundation, **23 Earnscliffe Avenue, Wolfville, NS B4P 1X4**

