

Greetings from the Valley Hospice Foundation!



ValleyHospice.ca

FALL/WINTER 2023



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Change! Just as the leaves are showing the hints of their fall shades and the inevitable change in their state, so are things changing in the Valley's Hospice and Palliative Care. The Hospice bid farewell and good luck to our energetic and innovative manager, Kate Mason, as she heads out for new health care projects. Her short stay was both inspirational and productive. Kate Garant takes over in the interim and has leapt into the management challenge with eagerness to continue the paths laid out. For Susan Miles, our longtime friend of the Foundation and stalwart Volunteer Manager, change is a relaxed and well-earned pursuit of retirement goals. We welcome Leigh Ann Febrey to this role and are excited to see what she brings to the Hospice and Annapolis Valley Palliative Care volunteer front. Here at the Foundation, Martha Stewart has handed over the reins after creating the vision outlined in her final newsletter last spring.

In this edition, you will be introduced to our new Music Therapist, Sarah McInnis, who is on site and hard at work bringing the joy and peace of music to patients, family, staff, volunteers, and visitors of the Hospice. Soon she will branch out to the Annapolis Valley Palliative Care community. To enhance our Grief and Bereavement project Sarah Scott is working to ensure we understand the needs, identify available resources,

and develop a plan to deliver sustainable support. We also continue to assist and support the care teams in their professional development. We remain responsive to unique opportunities to improve the comfort of the patients in Hospice through supplementary equipment such as bladder scanners and to the community palliative care team through ready use care items.

The challenges of this summer's weather have not prevented our wonderful team of volunteer gardeners from delivering a cornucopia of beautiful colours, scents, and shapes in the garden.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors and volunteers or the truly gifted and caring professional care team. Your support for our Spring events, and your individual donations have permitted us to bring these additional elements to our patients. We are planning for more programs to further the peace and tranquility of families on the palliative care journey. We hope that you will continue to find an opportunity to join us during one of our events or other offerings.

Thank you!

- Gerry Morey, Chair



THROUGH A SISTER'S EYES



A treasure is defined as something rare and precious and that is exactly how Margie MacIntosh thinks of her brother Andy MacNeil. Margie was the first born in a close-knit family. She was soon joined by brothers Dave, Andy, and Phil. Even with a spread of five years between them Margie remembers as a child valuing Andy's friendship and admiring his quiet, gentle nature and strong commitment to those he cared about. She felt early on that he was both a creative force and the "heart" of the family.

Andy knew that his gift was music. Margie recalls that he started playing the piano but when he got his hands on a guitar it was as if he "disappeared into his 'room' and came out able to play". Music was in his make up and it mapped out his life's path. As he developed his musical skills "young" Andy was impacted by popular musicians of the time- Elvis, Johnny Cash, Marc Boland (T. Rex) among many other reflective artists. Years later he developed an admiration and respect for the talents of artists such as Tom Petty, Aerosmith, Chris Isaak, Prince and the funkadelic talents of Sly Stone. Margie prides herself in introducing Andy to the music of Tom Petty's debut album, a gift he reciprocated by taking her to a Tom Petty concert in Halifax years later.

At the age of nine Andy created comic book called "Andy the Guitar Seller". Over his life Andy accumulated a huge collection of guitars, some of which he designed. As he approached his 60th birthday Andy took a giant step toward becoming the character he had illustrated at age nine by being accepted to the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery in Arizona which is world renown in teaching the construction, design and repair of guitars. Sadly, this part of Andy's journey was cut short by cancer.

Andy was always available to help friends and family. Margie recalls that his devotion to family was clearly illustrated when she became a single mom to two young boys and Andy stepped in to provide his strong and faithful support as a friend and uncle. It is of little wonder then that friends and family were committed to supporting Andy through his final journey. The daily care provided to Andy as his health deteriorated eventually became more than family members could provide and the suggestion was made that he and his loved ones might benefit from the care that could be provided at Valley Hospice. By the end of the conversation with his healthcare coordinator Andy and his family felt that Valley Hospice was the best next step.

Margie notes that "the comfort, warmth and compassion of the entire staff at Valley Hospice assured us (and Andy) that he was in caring, capable hands". "As we supported Andy to walk away from his home and his dreams, I knew the hospice was the only other place I'd want him to be."

Margie's family appreciated that they could come and go as they wished, and someone could always spend the night in Andy's room, so he was never alone. Margie commented that Andy's courageous heart was evident even in his last days. He had "accepted his fate" but he was clearly concerned about the impact that this was having on those who loved him. Margie shared that Andy's first words to his family after his diagnosis were about "how sad he was to be leaving us all behind in this troubled world".

Many friends dropped by to visit Andy, some of them local and some from further away. One dear friend flew in from England. Each had the opportunity to spend quality time with Andy without having to worry about his care needs. The hospice staff were all so professional and accommodating considering that they had to work within COVID protocols that impacted the number of visitors and the frequency of visits. It was clear that they believed that at this point "everyone and every visit mattered".

As the end drew close Margie spent the night in Andy's room and she was there for him when he took his last breath. Margie had been told "by a very fine lady at Valley Hospice" that the residents of the hospice arrive through the front door and leave by the front door. This comment was clearly illustrated when Andy's family and friends joined the "honour guard" of hospice staff as Andy's body was wheeled out the front door of the hospice to the waiting White's limousine. "If you believe in Heaven", Margie mused, "this is Heaven's waiting room."

As the limo pulled away people noted that a single crow swooped back and forth over it escorting Andy to his 'room at the top'. Anyone who knew Andy was not surprised as he had a well-known interest in and respect for crows. In the end they also appeared to have respect for him.

On the head stone of this treasured brother and uncle the family chose to include two crows and a nod to Tom Petty lyrics "A Room at the Top" "As the Crow Flies"

INTRODUCING OUR MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAM

The Board of Directors of Valley Hospice Foundation are happy to welcome Sarah Catherine McInnis who has been hired to establish a program of music therapy for people being served by the hospice and palliative care teams in both Valley Hospice and their homes.

Playing and composing music and lyrics has always been an important part of Sarah's life. She knew that she would like to make music her career, but it was while playing music for her grandmother and other residents in a long-term care facility that Sarah saw the impact of music on this population.

In explaining the difference between the role of a traditional musician and that of a music therapist Sarah gives the following illustration:

"I write my own songs as a form of personal self-expression. I consider my own experiences and reflect them in the lyrics that I write. This can often be a cathartic experience for me as a songwriter and while it may or may not resonate with the experience of others it can be enjoyed by those who hear it.

If I was to write a song with a patient, with myself in the role of music therapist, I would be focused on supporting the self-expression of that person and giving them autonomy over the process in whatever way I could (control over the topic, the lyrics, the instrumentation, musical style), and ultimately I would support that person in conveying their own internal truth, outward."

Sarah believes that her response to death and dying is similar to most people. Death is still "the thing that people don't talk about and tiptoe around". This likely comes from peoples' fear of death and while she may share this fear, she also has a curiosity about death



and dying that has encouraged her to become "better acquainted with death". Sarah believes that "fear and curiosity can co-exist, and music can be the bridge to facilitate that coexistence." "Music has supported me in the past when I have experienced intense periods of grief and I hope to use my skills to bring a bit of peace or light to someone's final days."

Sarah appreciates that music therapy has the potential to address the whole person- mind, body and spirit. She would love for music therapy at Valley Hospice and in the community to be a core program which complements and supports the more traditional forms of care someone receives when dying. She also suggests that "it would also be ideal to have music therapy provided to those who are grieving following a death."

When asked about the impact of her work on her own life Sarah states, "My perception of life has changed because of my work. I am reminded daily how important it is to live in the present, express gratitude to loved ones, not wait to do things, and to be intentional about how I spend my time. I have been more conscientious of bringing joyful experiences into my life and taking time to reflect on what our experience here means."

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

VALLEY HOSPICE FOUNDATION WELCOMES NEW CHAIR

GERRY MOREY

We are pleased to introduce Gerry Morey as the new Chair of Valley Hospice Foundation.

A native of Quebec, Gerry joined the RCAF, and held a variety of command posts over 35 years of service. This concluded with the “best tour” as Colonel in command of 14 Wing in Greenwood, NS.

Gerry brings to this executive role recognized leadership experience throughout his RCAF career. He served on several not-for-profit associations and charities including the Board of the Nova Scotia International Air Show Association, completing multiple terms as its Chair. He also served as Vice Chair on the Board of Chisholm Services for Children.

Completing his tenure with both of those organizations, Gerry joined the Board of the Valley Hospice Foundation in the fall of 2019, and brings this familiarity with hospice and palliative care to the role of Chair which he assumed in June 2023.

See Gerry's full bio on our website: valleyhospice.ca



Leah Stirling, Banking Advisor, Sherri Walkinshaw, Financial Advisor and Brittany Ward, Financial Advisor

THANK YOU, RBC BERWICK!

We are grateful to the staff members of RBC in Berwick, who made application to the RBC Communities Together Fund which resulted in a gift of \$1500 to the Valley Hospice Foundation. The best part is that the program was paired with hands-on volunteer time at the Hospice.

What an amazing job they did decorating Valley Hospice just in time for Thanksgiving. This support also helped us provide a traditional dinner for visiting families who spent Thanksgiving at the Hospice. The warmth of your work is most appreciated by us and by our patients and families. Thank you.

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 Earncliffe Avenue, Wolfville, NS B4P 1X4