



2025-26

Annual Report

valleyhospice.ca



Report from the Chair

What did frequent flyers, Halifax Harbour and the Valley Hospice Foundation have in common in our last year? The year was marked by many departures and more arrivals.

Our two longest remaining Foundation members retired after many teens of years of outstanding service to the community and to the Foundation. Our arrivals included an Executive Director and an Office Coordinator as we adapted our management model to reflect increasing focus on Programs and their effective management.

Our Directors increased in number with other new arrivals generously committing their intellect and effort throughout the year. We welcomed them eagerly and they have already changed us in very positive ways with their new energy and ideas. As with all active organizations, we also lost some Directors through the year to retirement. Their contribution was significant and we wish them the best opportunities as they move into new phases of their lives.

Continuing the theme of change, our Hospice has a new manager, and the Community Palliative team has new doctors and nurses, some who have come from lands far, far away and brought new learnings and skills to our care delivery.

Change has been challenging but good for the Foundation as we look at our Vision and Mission through fresh eyes. We recognized the need to conduct a thorough review of the 2024 Strategic Plan, with a view to assessing those aspects of the plan that have been accomplished, those that are in process, and those that have not been initiated. We worked to design a process to update the 2024 plan, with a primary intent of creating a collaborative session where all members of the Board can discuss and provide input on a new Plan.

And like the poor mechanic tasked to change the tires on a moving bus, our everyday support to our loved ones in Hospice or Community Palliative care has continued and evolved while remaining responsive to the needs identified by our care providers. We also continued to support the continuing education of our care providers.

We were able to do this because of the continued generosity and support of our donors as was reflected by our most successful Hike for Hospice. It is hard to describe the joy and celebration of lives loved in the coming together of a community finding hope and comfort with each other. We are deeply grateful and humbled to be able to share these moments with them.

Our next year will bring many of these threads together with increased focus on making the palliative experience better for all involved.

~ Gerry Morey, Board Chair

Finance Committee

The 2025/26 fiscal year was marked by strong financial stewardship, reporting and legal compliance under the oversight of the Finance Committee. The Valley Hospice Foundation adheres to a Board approved annual budget. The budget process that is led and monitored by the Finance Committee, and involves input from the Executive, Fund Development, and Program teams.

The Valley Hospice Foundation's audited statements are available to the public for review.

Our 2025/26 financial results reflect that the Foundation is succeeding in the support of Hospice and Palliative care services in our community. Please view the audited financial statement for complete details.

The Finance Committee plans for the efficient and effective use of donated funds in the delivery of administration of the Foundation and of expanded programs under development as a result of the 2024 Strategic Plan. VHF is in a strong financial position to support initiatives that may arise from our Strategic Plan review that will occur this July.

Finance Committee: Mike Townsend, Chair

Highlights of 2025-26

2025 Hike for Valley Hospice and Palliative Care



VHF Programs

The Valley Hospice Foundation (VHF) supports Hospice and Community Palliative Care programs and provides community-based education, research, and support for people at end of life, their caregivers, and the broader community in the Annapolis Valley. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we can provide comfort and help ensure patients and their families are treated with dignity, through a wide range of grant and contribution programs. In doing so, we work collaboratively with healthcare and community partners to identify needs and deliver assistance.

Programs Committee

In the fall of 2025, the Board established a Programs Committee to develop a coordinated approach to the development, delivery and monitoring of VHF funded programs. While the Committee is in the early stages of organizational development, work is proceeding to establish policies and practices to support the effective management of our program delivery.

Task teams have been created to lead the management of existing programs as well as to lead research and development into gaps and opportunities in selected areas of priority. They will consult and collaborate with partners and stakeholders and report their findings and recommendations to the Board. Their work will continue into 2026-27 and will help to inform programming for the Foundation going forward.

- Grief and Bereavement Team, led by Jane Lutes
- Volunteer Programs Working Group, led by Susan Miles
- Hospice at Home, led by Dr. Louise Cloutier
- Patient Navigator, Lead TBD

Palliative Care

The Foundation continues to support both hospice and community patients and their families. In Hospice the Foundation provides funds to:

- provide comfort items to accommodate personal needs and specialized practices that contribute to patient comfort but are not covered elsewhere;
- stock the family pantry; and
- provide beautiful garden spaces.



Stock photo

Similarly, we provide targeted assistance to patients in their home who are under the care of the Community Palliative Care Team (CPCT). Based on referrals and requests from the Team, financial assistance can be provided for:

- Urgent Care recognizes that financial pressures sometimes result in immediate needs, such as for groceries, transportation and other requirements.
- Comfort Care can include required items such as a lift chair, new glasses or specialized equipment.
- The CPCT can also request funding to support unique or exceptional needs beyond those considered Urgent or Comfort Care.

The Foundation also provides funding for a full-time music therapist who provides music-based interventions in both the Hospice and for community palliative care patients. These include listening and or playing preferred music, songwriting, creating a playlist that captures important moments in a person's life, and audio recording including memory bears, heartbeat recordings and storytelling. Music therapy can help ease pain, soften fears and raise spirits.

This year marked the first year of a two-year pilot to increase funding to provide a full-time Palliative Care Volunteer Coordinator in collaboration with Nova Scotia Health (NSH). Volunteers are a key component of frontline palliative care within NSH, both within the Hospice as well as the home setting. The vision for the Volunteer Coordinator position is to ensure volunteers visiting patients in either Hospice or the community are well trained and feel supported and valued as members of the health care team. As capacity builds, there is also potential to develop volunteers who wish to support grief and bereavement programming in palliative care.



Board member Leo Glavine with Palliative Care Volunteer Program Consultant Jo-Ann Mead

Ensuring excellence in palliative care is part of the mission for the Foundation. To this end we continue to fund professional development opportunities for Hospice and the Community Palliative Care Team.



Number of Grief
Library book loans

298



Number of counties in
Nova Scotia where
patrons live

11

Grief and Bereavement

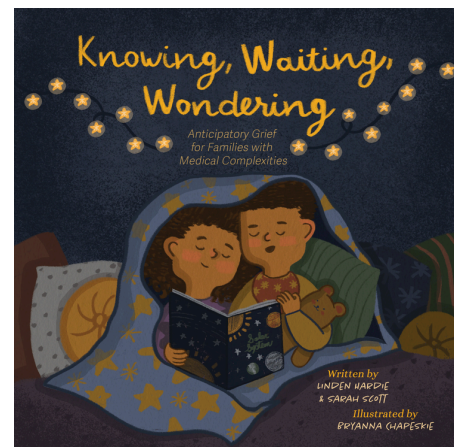
The Foundation continues to provide funding for the Grief Library, now located at the PeopleWorx facility in Coldbrook under the capable leadership of volunteer librarian Terri Milton. Terri has taken the Library on the road to various events during 2025-26 and always attracts considerable interest from other communities with its innovative and successful approach. From April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, the Library made 298 loans to patrons in 11 counties of Nova Scotia, and 58 new borrowers registered.

A collaborative initiative with Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education placed a beautiful book written and illustrated by Holly Carr called *The Comfort Tree* in schools across elementary and middle schools in the district.

Funding continues for Friends in Bereavement, a long-standing and successful program of support offered in group settings throughout the Valley. We are pleased to recognize and support Jennifer Longley in her work.

VHF was pleased to receive approval for three grant proposals, funded through the Healing Pathways Community Fund for Grief, Loss and Emotional Well-being.

- VHF Grief Specialist Sarah Scott, and IW/K Bereavement Coordinator Linden Hardie received funding to write, illustrate, and distribute freely across Nova Scotia a children's storybook on anticipatory grief. The book is illustrated by Brianna Chapeski of Halifax and published by Nimbus Press. ***Knowing, Waiting, Wondering: Anticipatory Grief for Families with Medical Complexities*** is scheduled for release in June 2026.
- The VHF Grief Library was approved for funding to develop Grief Kits for those experiencing recent grief and bereavement. Three types of kits were developed; giveaway and library loan kits for kids and teens and library loan kits for adults experiencing pregnancy and infant loss.



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- The Grief Library was also approved for funding to develop a **Grief Club in a Bag**, modeled on the provincial library Book Club in a Bag. Twelve bags are available on loan from the Grief Library.

The entire "Grief Literacy Collection," which resulted from the latter two Healing Pathways grants, is available to SamePage borrowers across Nova Scotia. by visiting the [Annapolis Valley Regional Library website](#).

Programs Committee: Dr. Louise Cloutier, Jane Lutes, Susan Miles, Sue Thomas, Cheryl Thompson, Dawna MacIvor, Gerry Morey (ex officio), Jeanne Douglas (Chair)

Highlights of 2025-26

Celebrating the Valley Hospice's 5th Anniversary

In November 2025, Valley Hospice Foundation and members of the hospice community gathered to celebrate five years since the opening of Valley Hospice, and to reflect on a journey that began a quarter of a century ago. Every step along this journey has involved hard work and dedication. Those who were part of different stages of the hospice development were recognized and thanked for being a vital part of this incredible project, and also honored those strong and committed leaders who guided the journey but are no longer with us.



Succession Planning and Nominating (SPAN) Committee

This year the Valley Hospice Foundation was sorry to lose Directors Jocelyne Dumaresq and Angela Fraser early in the annual working session, and Chris Maynard and Anita Nickerson earlier this year. In addition, Mike Townsend has decided not to reoffer for another term. We are deeply grateful for the significant contributions of all our departing Board members.

Thanks to the tireless recruitment efforts of existing Board members, the Foundation was fortunate to receive expressions of interest in joining the Board from a number of highly qualified community members. Blaise MacNeil, Cheryl Thompson, Susan Miles and Karen Corey were invited to join the Board to fill existing vacancies. They have already brought fresh eyes and energy to our volunteer Board. The Committee is also nominating Adam Smith to join the Board at this meeting.

The SPAN Committee continues to search for qualified individuals in the areas of accounting, palliative care practice, communications, event planning, and law as well as representatives of the business community and First Nations. The Foundation is particularly interested in having representation from the western portion of its region, that is, Western Kings County and Annapolis County. This search will continue, and candidates may be proposed to the Foundation through the year as we continue to have Board vacancies.

If the Committee recommendations are approved, the Board for 2025-2026 will be:

Continuing Board Members	End of Term on Board	Re-Offering Board Members *	End of Term on Board
Louise Cloutier	AGM 2027	Gerry Morey	AGM 2029
Leo Glavine	AGM 2028	Joining Board Members	
Sue Thomas	AGM 2028	Adam Smith	AGM 2029
Jeanne Douglas	AGM 2028	* Note: Directors are eligible for re-election in accordance with Article 5.1.2 of the By-Laws of the Valley Hospice Foundation	
David MacKinnon	AGM 2028		
Jane Lutes	AGM 2028		
Blaise MacNeil	AGM 2028		
Cheryl Thompson	AGM 2028		
Susan Miles	AGM 2028		
Karen Corey	AGM 2028		

Succession Planning

The committee is also responsible for identifying needs for Officer positions including Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

Our current Chair Gerry Morey, is completing his third year as Chair and is willing to stand for another year in the absence of another candidate. Under our bylaws, officers may serve a maximum of three consecutive one-year terms in any position. Individual terms may be extended on an exceptional basis by Special Resolution of the membership.

SPAN Committee: Leo Glavine, Sue Thomas, and Gerry Morey (ex-officio)



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