

Our Father lived a very full life...

Embracing the end at Hospice



Born in Windsor just before the depression, Donald, was the second of four boys. During World War II he enlisted in the Navy. While deployed he maintained correspondence with his sweetheart, our mother, Betty, whom he married after his honourable discharge. They had four children- two daughters and two sons- and were married for 44 years until mom's passing.

He was a strong supporter of his community and a hard worker. He was a charter member of the Chatham Good Fellows, named Mr. Good Fellow in 1969, all while working and eventually owning his own dairy. He had ambition and stamina that was nothing short of amazing; especially considering he was declared legally blind some 20 years ago.

He made the best of each day and always kept busy. In his words, "a daily accomplishment helps you sleep good at night".

Without question he enjoyed life more than most. He would often say he was blessed many times over.

Dad's end-of-life journey began in November of 2017 when he was diagnosed with bladder cancer. The following November he had a heart valve replacement. After Dad was discharged from the hospital he was admitted to a respite care facility in Chatham.

On a cold November morning I walked quietly into his room and he was awake. He said to me firmly, "Rob, I am dying." I responded that "I am, too, everyone is dying every day we grow older." Continuing, he stated that his bladder cancer had progressed and was invading his body. He humbly said, "I know my body very well. I need to go to one of those dying houses..."

So I replied, "You mean a hospice?"

He said, "I was awake all night trying to remember the name "hospice". Then he smiled and said to me, "I think the mind's slipping just a bit to boot." We both laughed and hugged. He was very matter-of-fact, not shedding a tear. Not so for me!

Later that very afternoon we were greeted at the front doors of the Chatham-Kent Hospice by a smiling

staff member, welcoming Dad to his very last five-star plus resort, ready to assist him -and our family- with this final journey of his 93-year life.

Much to our surprise, Dad seemed very comfortable and at ease in the beautiful surroundings and with the entire process of being taken to his room by the caring staff. Once the staff left us alone in his room, he said, "I am in the very best place I could ever wish for. I have no fear."

I could talk for hours on end about the incredible care and devotion our father received in those last 30 days from the entire Hospice team – from the medical staff, caregivers and volunteers.

“ Respect was shown for not only our father, but for all our family members. We were made to feel welcome. We were allowed to come and go at any time, and we were able to spend the night with dad in his room so he was never alone. ”

Although staff members regularly came by to check on us, they were not intrusive.

Never have we experienced such respect for life. Dad was such a stickler for hygiene and was a very proud dresser. After his passing he was bathed and fully dressed, right down to his socks and shoes...as he would have wanted.

Volunteer Spotlight

“ Hospice is such a peaceful and comforting place. When we walk into Hospice to volunteer, we leave our life behind so we can focus on serving the families and their loved ones. We have met so many nice people and love hearing their stories. ”

- DEBBY
Hospice Kitchen Volunteer since 2016

“ If you love to cook and are comfortable cooking at home you will be comfortable here. The kitchen is set up in an organized fashion and is well equipped. The team is so supportive; there is always someone who will help if you need it! We have learned so much since we started volunteering here. Being of service to others and sharing our skills in the kitchen gives us an opportunity to show compassion and kindness. ”

- CHERYL
Hospice Kitchen Volunteer since 2016

If Hospice sounds like the place you would like to volunteer your time, please visit: www.chathamkenthospice.com to fill out an application today!



VOLUNTEERS
Cheryl & Debby

Supportive Care

GRIEVING DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Grief is difficult on any day of the year. However, the holidays can be emotionally overwhelming and can intensify the pain and emotions you are feeling after the death of your loved one. There is tremendous pressure to be joyful and bright with reminders everywhere that this is supposed to be a time of togetherness and celebration. You may be carrying worries, fears, or doubts in a heart made heavy by grief. It is common for bereaved individuals to feel stressed, distracted, numb, or jealous of others who are celebrating together. You may also experience guilt because you don't have the holiday spirit you once had.

Our Supportive Care Team offers these tips which we hope may assist with your grief during the holidays.

Be compassionate with yourself – Grieving is very difficult and if you are getting up each day, getting dressed, bathing, and eating you are doing okay. Speak to yourself as kindly as you would someone else who is grieving the loss of a loved one.

Be realistic with your expectations of yourself – Acknowledge how you are feeling and set boundaries and expectations for yourself and others that fit where you are in your grieving process. It is okay to say no to an invitation or be honest with family and friends that you “hope to attend but will have to see how you are feeling that day.” If you do attend, it is also important to plan an exit strategy so you can leave early if you are feeling overwhelmed.

Ask for help – Reach out to others, including friends and family. Ask for help if you need assistance with something specific. Sometimes people really want to be there for you but don't know how they can be helpful.

The Well Within Supportive Care program at Chatham-Kent Hospice will be hosting a Grieving during the Holidays workshop to provide further tips on how to make it through the holidays.

Acknowledge this holiday will be different – It is important to acknowledge concerns you have about the holidays so you can communicate with your family and friends to determine whether to keep or modify traditions to celebrate your loved one in a new way. Your family may choose to create a new tradition such as sharing stories about your loved one around the dinner table or bringing one of their favourite dishes to include them in your celebration. Expect that feelings of grief will be part of your celebration and support one another in grief. Remember, everyone's grief may be experienced differently.

Donate to a charity in honour of your loved one – As the holidays are often about gift giving, consider making a donation in your loved one's name honouring their memory.

Self Care – Take time to do what you need to get through the holidays. Grief is exhausting, so take naps or five minutes for deep breathing to ground yourself. Practice things that give you energy in difficult times.

To register for our Grieving during the Holidays workshop or for further support please contact Sally at: 519-354-3113 ext 2406 or sreaume@chathamkenthospice.com.

Want more tips? Visit our website: www.chathamkenthospice.com for other articles recommended by our Supportive Care team.



DONALD STRONG

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Although many family members were present when dad passed away, we were given all the personal time we needed to say our good-byes and wait with him for other friends and family to arrive. At no time did we feel rushed. A final ceremony was held to send off dad's spirit before having to send off his body.

I must humbly admit that prior to the building of Hospice, I, as a business owner and resident of Chatham, had been asked to donate to Hospice. Due to my ignorance of what an incredible service a hospice provides, I declined to offer a donation. As I now know what an amazing place this is, and what incredible people work and donate their time and effort, that is no longer the case.

In witnessing first-hand the devotion that takes place in the Chatham-Kent Hospice from its volunteers to the professional staff, on behalf of my family, I truly wish to extend our heart-felt thanks. I hope, through generous donations from our community, Hospice will be there for all those who will be facing this time of their lives and for their loved ones for many, many years to come.

Shared by Robert Strong

Your donations help families say good-bye...

Every family has a lifetime of milestones and memories they celebrate and share. When you donate to Chatham-Kent Hospice Foundation, you help people live their final days in comfort and peace, and you provide a meaningful way for families to say good-bye. These warm memories of a difficult time will help sustain families for years to come.

4 GREAT THINGS YOUR DONATIONS HELP MAKE HAPPEN...



DONALD WAS COMFORTABLE AND CONNECTED TO HIS FAMILY.

Our utility bills for gas, hydro, water, internet & phone are \$4,500/month.

ROB, DONALD'S SON WAS ABLE TO ENJOY A BOWL OF SOUP, FRESHLY BAKED MUFFIN AND A COFFEE.

Our grocery and dietary needs are \$750 per week.



DONALD RECEIVED THE CARE HE NEEDED & HIS FAMILY COULD GO HOME FOR A GOOD NIGHTS REST.

It costs \$349 a resident/day to receive specialized medical & social care.

FAMILIES, LIKE DONALD'S, WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE COMPASSIONATE, END-OF-LIFE CARE IN A LOVING, SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT.



Please consider donating today with the enclosed reply card and envelope. You can also make a donation with your credit card on our website (www.chathamkenthospice.com) or by calling 519-354-3113 ext. 2403. If you've recently made a donation Thank You! Please consider sharing this reply card and envelope with someone who might be interested in supporting our Hospice families.

“GRIEF IS AS UNIQUE AS A SNOWFLAKE”
GRIEVING DURING THE HOLIDAYS WORKSHOP

November 27, 2019 | 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Katheryn Clements Hall | St. Andrews Residence | 99 Park Street, Chatham

"It just feels good to give..."

John left a gift in his Will to his favourite charities, including Chatham-Kent Hospice Foundation and it makes him feel good knowing he is helping others.

After my wife Margory died 3 years ago, I updated my Will and included the gifts to my favourite charities as well as providing for my 2 daughters and their family. I don't consider myself wealthy but I am comfortable living on what I need. You can't take it with you and it feels good knowing I will continue to help others when I'm gone.

When you get old, you're not afraid of dying so much as you're afraid of how you'll die and where you'll die. If I can't die at home, the next best place is Hospice. I have known people who have spent their last days there and they were beautiful. I think it is really important that people who are dying have comfortable surroundings not only for themselves but for their families as well.

For people with limited or no family or for those whose family live far away, Hospice is even more important. It gives me peace of mind knowing my gift will help others have a peaceful end of life."

- John Burgess, Chatham, Ontario



Deciding to leave a gift in your Will may seem complicated but it doesn't have to be. We have put together a Gift in Will information booklet that will make it much easier. Request your FREE copy by sending an email to: foundation@chathamkenthospice.com or call us at: 519-354-3113 ext 2402.

**Be sure to check out our brand new website at:
www.chathamkenthospice.com**



We are grateful for your support of Chatham-Kent Hospice.
If you would no longer like to receive a copy of this newsletter or wish to receive an electronic version, please let us know by emailing: foundation@chathamkenthospice.com or calling 519-354-3113 extension 2403.
Charitable Status #: 809001597RR0001

Contact us to learn more or donate:

By mail or in person:

34 Wellington Street East, Chatham, Ontario, N7M 3N7

Online:

www.chathamkenthospice.com

Or call:

519-354-3113

Please make cheques payable to:
Chatham-Kent Hospice Foundation

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