

# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

## The gentlest way for the worst to happen



Pam was an amazing wife, mother, sister, daughter and friend. She was a quiet and generous soul who listened with intent and, when she had something to say, you knew it would be worthy of your attention. Pam was an incredible role model and teacher, and she selflessly put others (notably, her family) before all else. She spent many hours each week ensuring that all the needs of her daughters were taken care of, even after they went away to school.

Pam grew up in Ridgetown. While Pam and Scott were working at Hyland Seeds, a summertime romance blossomed into a 40-year marriage, two wonderful daughters, Kerry and Nikki, and countless wonderful memories.

Over the years, Pam enjoyed an eclectic selection of favourite things: raising purebred dogs; reading with her book club; live concerts with musical artists, ranging from Josh Groban to Pitbull; favourite sports, including the Toronto Blue Jays and Professional Bull Riding. She lived life doing what made her and her family happy.

Pam's diagnosis was a shock to everyone. What began as headaches in late 2017, attributed to the stress of caring for her mother through her end of life, were investigated further in April 2018. In May 2018, Pam was diagnosed with Stage 4 bowel cancer that had spread throughout her body and was told that all treatment would be palliative. Her daughters immediately returned to Morpeth, and for as long as possible, the family cared for Pam at home.

In August 2018, when the at-home treatments were not sufficient to manage her pain, Pam decided she would like to move into an available bed at Chatham-Kent Hospice. Scott acknowledged that driving Pam to the Hospice was the most difficult thing he ever had to do.

**“Even as I was driving her to the Hospice, I wondered if we were doing the right thing,” shared Scott, “but once we arrived, I knew it was the right move. All of us felt a calm we hadn't felt in several months.”**

As a volunteer on the Hospice Board, Scott was familiar with the facility and the care that the Hospice offered. Scott shared, “However, when you become a hospice family, it changes your perspective completely. You truly cannot understand the full depth of the care provided until you've experienced it first-hand.”

Pam stayed at Hospice for 9 days. Her room was decorated with photographs of her beloved family, friends, dogs and flowers. She delighted in the amazing spa bathtub available to the residents and spent every afternoon enjoying the sunshine in a recliner chair by the waterfall. Her pain and comfort were expertly managed by the incredible doctors, nurses and personal support workers employed at Hospice.

While Pam was the official resident, the care and support provided extended far beyond her. The Hospice staff allowed her family to step away from the role of caregivers, and they were made to feel welcome and supported for every second of their stay. The family was able to sleep in Pam's room, they were provided with all the amenities available, food, and the utmost support in some of the most challenging moments of Pam's journey. The Hospice facilities allowed for a comfortable place to have family and friends around in the final days and hours of Pam's life. In short, the Hospice felt like a home away from home.

While Pam was actively dying, at the family's choice, they were accompanied and supported through the process by a Hospice nurse.



## Understanding the Impact of Supportive Care

Supportive Care services at Chatham-Kent Hospice have changed over the last year to respect the restrictions put in place for the safety of our community. Despite the need to change how services have been offered, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised new and complex challenges and the need for grief and bereavement services has been witnessed across the globe. Since March 2020, Chatham-Kent Hospice has offered individual Social Work and Spiritual Care Support both by phone and through a virtual platform. Group programs have been placed on hold with the exception of walking groups and virtual educational sessions. During this time of uncertainty, we sought feedback from a number of participants through phone interviews to learn how to improve our services and also how we are impacting the community. We have learned that many people look forward to group programs opening as soon as possible and we hope to do so as soon as it is safe. We have also heard many testimonials about how these services have helped people through a very difficult time. We'd like to share a few quotes from our participants to reflect what bereavement services at Chatham-Kent Hospice can offer.

**“For some the end of a life can be a relief and for others it takes you to a depth of sadness one never thought possible. It can make strong people weak and in some cases teach the resiliency of an individual's spirit.”**

“For me, this journey has been one of sadness, confusion and profound loss. After a year it was clear that this new territory I found myself in was not without challenges and one for which I was not prepared. At one of the most difficult times I reached out to Hospice and was welcomed without question. My grief journey has been one of new learning, challenge, and as time moves forward, acceptance. These transitions have happened with the care and specialized skill of the staff who are part of the program. Life is precious and a well lived life, a gift. I shall remain forever grateful for the opportunity to access this support without cost, without fear and in my home community.”

“I am a recent widow, having lost my husband in October 2020. The Chatham-Kent Hospice provided me with excellent supportive counselling by phone during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. The attentiveness of my counsellor, Melissa, was so comforting and essential to my grief journey. There is so much loss during this time and access to normal group counselling and other ways for coping with grief have been restricted. The support of the Chatham-Kent Hospice grief counselling service has been beneficial and appreciated.”

“Though my mom was never admitted to the Chatham-Kent Hospice, I wouldn't have been able to navigate the loss without the support of your grief counsellor team. From the very bottom of my heart, thank you so much for everything.”

“These services were very helpful, fantastic. I realized I wasn't alone to work through the process of grief. My counsellor helped prepare me for the one year anniversary of my loss that I didn't think I would make it through.”

**If you or someone you love is coping with loss, we want you to know that support is available and that you are not alone. Please contact Sally Reaume at 519-354-3113 ext. 2406 or at [sreaume@chathamkenthospice.com](mailto:sreaume@chathamkenthospice.com) if you have any questions.**

# What would you do if you could have one more day with someone you loved?

Buy time for a Hospice family to simply be together.

While hospice care cannot extend the time a family has together, at Chatham-Kent Hospice, we help our residents and their family make the most of the time they have together to connect and say good-bye.

You can help them make the most of every day by supporting the care a resident and their family need during this difficult time. This care not only includes pain and symptom management for the resident, but emotional and spiritual support for the resident and their loved ones.



**Throughout the summer we are asking our community to donate a day (or more) of hospice care for a resident and their family. Our goal is to raise \$110,000 – one month of Hospice care.**

**COST FOR ONE RESIDENT & FAMILY\***

**\$362** One Day

**\$181** Half a Day

*\*We have 10 residential suites so total cost per day for all 10 suites is \$3,620.*

Each year, approximately 45% of our operating budget is covered by the Ministry of Health. That means we must fundraise 55% or approximately \$1.32 million per year (\$110,000 per month) to be able to offer residential hospice care to local families at no cost to them.

**Please consider supporting our Hospice families!**

Your gift will provide the care and support they need to make the most of the time they have together.

**Join us for some family fun!**

Through this pandemic, we have all come to realize how precious time spent with family and friends is.

Join us on **Thursday, September 23rd** at 7 pm from the comfort of your home for our Hearts Together for CK Hospice live stream where we will recognize the difference your kindness has made to Hospice families and play some light-hearted, fun games. All you need to tune in is your device (computer, iPad, iPhone) and an internet connection! Hopefully by then, you will be able to get together with a few friends and extended family members for an hour of fun and friendly competition.

**To make your donation, your options are:**

- Visit our website at [www.chathamkenthospice.com](http://www.chathamkenthospice.com) to make your donation online
- Complete the enclosed form and send back to us with a cheque
- Call us at 519-354-3113 ext. 2403 to make a donation over the phone
- Drop off your donation at Chatham-Kent Hospice, 34 Wellington Street E., Chatham (use visitor entrance off of Adelaide Street.)



**Thank YOU for helping our Hospice families make the most of the time they have together!**

## June Callwood Circle of Outstanding Volunteers Award: *Louise Stalleart*

“ I volunteer because I like to be of service and provide comfort through conversation. I genuinely like people and I enjoy listening to any stories they may wish to share. ”

- LOUISE STALLEART

Louise’s genuine and warm way of engaging with residents brings joy and healing while helping them contemplate their lives in a meaningful way. She has always been flexible and generous with her time, providing comfort care and companionship to residents when they are in need of extra support.

She also helped develop materials and policies for our “Living Memory” program which allows residents to reminisce about their lives and record memories to share with loved ones. She takes care to create

a comfortable and trusting atmosphere for the residents’ storytelling, resulting in their individualized “book”, complete with title page, written in the residents’ own words. Residents and families have been so appreciative of the gift that Louise has created – a special gift of remembrance.



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Nikki reflected, “We were given time to say good-bye and, afterward, we shared in a farewell ceremony, which included lighting floating candles in the reflection pool near the waterfalls,” where they had enjoyed sitting with their mom. “It was the gentlest way that the worst thing we could imagine could happen,” shared Kerry.

Since Pam passed away, several family members have taken advantage of the grief and bereavement services offered at Chatham-Kent Hospice. “As a Director I believed that the Supportive Care programs were important, but after utilizing the services, I realized that they are a critical part of the journey,” shared Scott.

We are forever grateful for the compassionate care our family received from everyone at Chatham-Kent Hospice. We are extremely fortunate to have these services in our community and encourage anyone who is dealing with end of life to seek out their support.

*Shared in loving memory of Pam by her family...  
-Scott, Nikki & Kerry*



**Chatham-Kent Hospice  
FOUNDATION**

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[foundation@chathamkenthospice.com](mailto: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](http://www.chathamkenthospice.com)

**Or call:**

519-354-3113

Please make cheques payable to:  
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