

HOSPICEHAPPENINGS

Family time in the Hospice Courtyard filled with sun and peace



N. Jane Rivers grew up in a family of six children – five girls and one boy. The ‘Booth Kids’, as we were often called, were no strangers to loss, losing both parents at a young age and then two siblings, David and Dianne. Despite these losses, or perhaps because of them, we had a closeness as siblings that was supported by the caring community of Erie Beach until we were grown and launched our own careers.

Jane was second born and the one we liked to remind was the shortest. Her hair was a lifelong experiment – from long to short, curly to straight, blond to red and every shade in between. Every style and colour fit her vibrant personality and moniker of ‘little spitfire’. Jane was our tireless organizer – whether planning family trips for Joe and Chris to Pine Grove or the “Golf Girls” to Florida and beyond. But most importantly, Jane was the sister who was kind, compassionate and caring. It is impossible to count the lives she touched with her warm smile and endless generosity.

When we learned a short few months ago of Jane’s cancer diagnosis, we braced ourselves for what we had experienced too often before in hospitals. Our experience this time, however, was entirely different. Jane was privileged to spend the last week of her life at the Chatham-Kent Hospice. As the remaining three ‘Booth Girls’, we felt it important to reach out to Hospice and attempt to put into words what we experienced that week. It was truly profound.

“ It started with being able to park our cars near the entrance to the hospice without a parking meter or time limitation in site. Upon entry, we were warmly greeted by a receptionist who completed our COVID-19 testing in the gentlest of ways. She also encouraged us to try a bowl of home-made soup made fresh every day by volunteers and at no cost to visitors. As we stepped further into the building, we were awed by its beauty. It was light-filled with a central courtyard and a feeling of being more a home than any type of care facility. ”

A nurse then met with us before we saw Jane to explain how she was doing and what we could expect. Entering Jane’s room was not easy knowing what we were facing but seeing her sitting up in bed with her flaming red hair making a perfect halo made it more joyous than sad. We chatted about anything and everything while sharing many a good laugh.

We returned on Saturday, the first warm, sunny day that spring. To our surprise, the staff suggested Jane spend the day outside in the courtyard where she could enjoy the sunshine and host a bit of a party. We sat there for hours entertained by Annie, Jane’s three-year-old granddaughter. Jane never took her eyes off her. Someone brought wine for a shared toast – and a little Scotch for Joe. The afternoon ended with popsicles, Jane selecting the blue one and then showing us her blue tongue just as we had all done as kids.

Sunday morning started with a call from Hospice; it was time to come. Again, the staff told us exactly what was happening and what to expect. Jane had told them after her party that she was tired and ready. She had fought the good fight and now it was time to go. We shared our collective tears in her beautiful room and we each said our own goodbyes as she took her last breath.

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*Shared in loving memory of Jane by her sisters...
-Patricia, Catharine and Berta*

What happened next was totally unexpected. We gathered once again with Jane in the sunny courtyard for a private service. One of the nurses said the most touching words and helped each of us light a candle in Jane's memory while listening to her favourite music. We were given beautifully hand-crocheted hearts, no doubt made by hospice volunteers, which we could take or place over Jane's heart. We followed behind as she was taken out to the hearse. Just before it departed, however, Greyson, Jane's eight-year-old grandson, expressed his need to go with her. The funeral home director immediately said he could ride up front with him, which he did.

Words cannot express our gratitude for those who created the Chatham-Kent Hospice, for those who continue to support it today and for those who choose to work and volunteer there. We know Jane and Joe were donors who also gave of their time in supporting the annual gala and auction. As the three remaining Booth Girls, we feel privileged to make a donation in her memory.


Chatham-Kent Hospice
FOUNDATION

**Hospice Benefit
Gala**

Friday, October 21, 2022
The Chatham Armoury
44 William St N, Chatham

6:00PM Cocktails | 7:30PM Dinner

Mitton's Jewellers Diamond Draw
Silent Auction | Live Auction

Tickets: \$175 (donor receipt \$75)
Tickets are available by calling 519-354-3113 ext 2300 or online at www.ckhospicegala.com
(additional processing fees will apply)

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Grant Acknowledgement

Thanks to a 2021 Ontario Trillium "Resilient Communities" grant we were able to address increased resident and family needs throughout the pandemic by hiring an additional social worker and provide staff and volunteer's resources to support resiliency as they continue to provide quality end-of-life care.

Chatham-Kent Hospice is grateful for the opportunity to access this funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation to promote wellness and resiliency in our staff and volunteers who feel that they "were cared for too" during this difficult time.



How to Talk to your kids or grandkids about Dying and Death

“The greatest gift you can give your children is not protection from change, loss, pain or stress, but the confidence and tools to cope with all life has to offer them.” -DR. WENDY HARPHAM

Death is a part of life and yet it is something as a society we struggle to talk about. In particular, many people ask us how to talk to their children about terminal illness and death. We'd like to share some facts about children and grief and how you can talk to them in a supportive and helpful way.

Share information early

Children are smart and they recognize when something “different” is happening in their world. When we don't give them information and they know something is wrong, their imagination will cause worry and stress. You also want to prevent them from learning about the illness or death from someone outside their safe circle.

Be honest

Be honest and clear with them while taking into consideration their personality, age and maturity. If you are feeling overwhelmed with your own emotions it is ok to ask for help in sitting down and having these difficult but honest conversations with your children.

Listen

Once you have shared information with them about the illness or death - listen, listen, listen. Listening may be your most effective tool in helping them through illness and/or death. Encouraging children to talk about their feelings and express their fears will help them begin to manage whatever situation they are facing. It also allows you to answer any questions with accurate information.

Validate your child's feelings

You can do this by responding to their words with statements that clearly show your understanding and acceptance of their feelings. “I can see you are upset.” “It's normal to be frightened or sad when you hear this news.” Help them to understand that it is normal and “ok” to express these feelings of grief.

Continue open conversations/encourage your child to come back with questions

This allows them to grieve with you and to feel less alone. It teaches them that talking about death and feelings is normal and healthy. It can also help you support them in finding coping strategies that help them manage their feelings throughout the illness of their loved one.

Understand that children grieve differently than adults

Children may express intense feelings one minute and then go and play the next minute. This does not mean they are not grieving but they may process their grief in bursts. They also often express their feelings through behaviours so it is important to observe them and try to understand why a behaviour is occurring. They may also experience physical symptoms which are part of their grief. You may have to ask questions to understand what is happening for your child at that moment.

Reassure your child

When dealing with grief, children often require a great deal of reassurance. It will be helpful to let them know that grief is a natural part of life, that you are always willing to listen even when it is difficult, that their feelings will not be a burden to you and that their feelings are normal.

Communicating with children about dying and death can be challenging but can have an incredible impact on their well-being and development of life-long coping skills.

More information and resources are available at www.virtualhospice.ca and www.kidsgrief.ca.



Keeping you in the loop...

Please see the inserts that share what was achieved last year thanks to your support, an overview of our financial position and a summary of the updated Strategic Plan for the Hospice. If you have any questions, please give us a call.

June Callwood Circle of Outstanding Volunteers Award: *Kerry Cowan*

“ I believe in making each day worth living. Volunteering at CK Hospice has given me the opportunity to be part of an amazing team who truly know how to provide end-of-life care the right way. It is an honour to be involved with those who are experiencing a very emotional and difficult time. ”

- KERRY COWAN

Kerry can always be found where there is a need. Whether someone needs a laugh, or a listening ear, Kerry gives of herself in the service of others.

A passion for palliative care, Kerry joined the Volunteer Advisory Committee in 2014 to assist with the development of the volunteer program for the new Chatham-Kent Hospice. Since then, she continues her committee role and has been very active in supporting the residents and their loved ones. Adding to Hospice's home-like atmosphere she is a welcoming presence to visitors at reception, assists with holiday decorating and

so much more. She is a friend and mentor to the team. During the pandemic, she was among the first to return to her role, taking extra shifts in order to support the staff team and those receiving care.



Monthly Giving Testimonial *Janis Taylor*

“ Starting to donate monthly last year was an easy decision. As a weekly volunteer at Hospice for 6 years-since it opened, I can see the need and how families and residents are so appreciative of the amenities they find as comforting as home. None of the food, heat, A/C, wifi access and other comforts are government funded but completely rely on donations to cover the cost.

The biggest incentive was when I saw that my donation would be matched by another generous donor. I was all the more willing to provide a donation monthly. This was exciting news and it is being offered again this year for new monthly donors.

The hospice philosophy of end-of-life care makes it a little easier for families dealing with this hard time, and monthly donations make it all possible.

I hope you can join me and become a monthly donor. Any amount pledged will be matched for a full year, doubling your impact, and providing comfort for families during a difficult time. ”

- JANIS TAYLOR



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:
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