

Johnston Family Was Able to be a Family Again

Life-Long Nurse Receives “The Best of Care”



The Johnston family found peace, compassion, and laughter in their final days together at Chatham-Kent Hospice. Most importantly, they rediscovered the essence of being a family after more than a decade of illness.

Rose Johnston, a beacon of kindness with a vibrant sense of humour and a lifelong nurse herself, encountered ‘the best of nursing’ during her time at Hospice.

Throughout her nursing career and personal life, Rose used her humour as a healing balm, uplifting spirits and touching lives with grace. Despite battling various health challenges, including a heart attack, breast cancer, and COPD, Rose faced each hurdle with resilience, embodying the values she imparted to others.

Coming from a large family of nine children, Rose cherished the importance of family. Married to her teenage sweetheart, John, she raised two sons, Byron and Brandon, and reveled in the joys of grandparenthood. When illness struck, Hospice provided the haven of care she and her family needed.

“Hugs, jokes, singing, dancing, and meals,” reminisced her son Brandon, echoing the sentiment that Hospice allowed them to be a family again, unburdened by the roles of caretakers.

The transformation was palpable as they entered Hospice, transitioning from apprehension to relief and from fear to peace. Brandon recalled, “After so much worry and fear, it was just peace the minute you hit that door.” Thanks to the warmth and compassion of the staff and volunteers, a weight was lifted, allowing them to focus on being present with Rose, cherishing each moment.

“After years of taking care of Mum, Hospice allowed my Dad to just be himself again. To be a husband and a father again. I got to be a son again. It allowed all of us to just be a family.”

Rose and the Johnston family attest that the soul of Hospice lay in its ability to blend the best elements of nursing, home care, and hospital care while eliminating the negatives. Every detail, from the physical layout to the personalized gestures of care, spoke volumes of the dedication of the entire team. For Rose, it was a reunion with the spirit of nursing she cherished, where human touch and compassion reigned supreme.

“Every little subtlety showed care and compassion,” added Brandon. “It could be as simple as spending one-on-one time with Mum or asking her for advice from her years in the field. It was getting her morning coffee, bringing the therapy dogs to her bed, going through old pictures, or knowing she loved hard candies. That’s who Mum was as a nurse, and that’s what surrounded her every day at Hospice.”

Rose’s final days were filled with laughter, love, and continued peace for both her and her family members. Her passing, though somber, was filled with tranquility, offering comfort to her loved ones. As they navigated the difficult terrain of end-of-life care, the Johnston family was deeply moved by the unwavering dedication of the entire Hospice staff.

“They are not staff. They are truly angels,” they remarked, acknowledging the impact each member had on their lives. From the moment they arrived, the staff and volunteers’ genuine compassion and commitment to their well-being was evident, creating an environment where they felt supported and understood. The family was struck by the level of personalized care and attention to detail they received at Hospice.

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“Every single nurse, personal support worker, direct support worker, social worker, volunteer, and staff member went on Mum’s list of favourites,” they shared, highlighting the connection that was forged between Rose and her new caregivers.

Reflecting on their journey, the Johnston family extends a heartfelt message to others considering Hospice care: “Don’t hesitate.” Their experience, characterized by love, respect, and inclusivity, transcends boundaries of background or belief. At Hospice, they found not just care but a sanctuary where families are embraced as cherished members, where burdens are lifted, and where love abounds.

The Johnston family’s story weaves a poignant narrative of love, laughter, and the enduring spirit of compassion, handed down by Rose. Through their experience, they testify to the transformative power of hospice care, affirming that even in life’s most challenging moments, there exists a place where families can find solace, support, and the freedom to simply be together.

“It’s the biggest weight off your shoulders instantly. It’s the most loving, kind, caring, respectful, peaceful environment you could ever ask for. You walk through those doors and you’re family. Hospice is the best thing that has ever happened to Chatham-Kent.”

Shared in loving memory of Rose by:
The Johnston Family

Volunteer Spotlight: *Janet*

“Being a volunteer at Chatham-Kent Hospice is so rewarding, no matter what area you decide to volunteer in. I have been a kitchen volunteer since 2019. The most important thing to me is to positively contribute to the Chatham-Kent Hospice team and their mission to provide excellent service and support to the residents and their families who come to Hospice.

When I was a new volunteer in the kitchen, the most challenging thing was remembering where to find certain items. Thankfully, the kitchen is well organized and everything you need is there, you just need to look. In a very short time, the kitchen soon become as familiar as my own kitchen!

The kitchen team is a hardworking, fun group dedicated to the mission of Hospice. Join us and be a part of our team; you won’t regret it! ”



Janet
Kitchen Volunteer Since 2019



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Pre-order your Hike for Hospice T-Shirt or Memorial Sign before April 1st!

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MAY 5, 2024



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Supporting Care: Helpful *Coping* Strategies When *Grieving*

Grief is one of the most difficult things that a person can experience in life. We grieve because we love, and after the death of a loved one it can be difficult to navigate life moving forward. Combine grief with the grey-days of winter and we can find ourselves struggling, even with the anticipation of warmer spring days. Here are a few coping strategies that we hope can help you navigate your grief experience.



Give yourself permission to grieve. Allow yourself to feel what you feel. Grief encompasses a multitude of strong emotions that can take a lot of energy; as a result, a common reaction is to try to suppress emotions. However, this can be counter-intuitive as we experience these emotions for a reason and it is important to feel. Find a safe place that brings you comfort and give yourself permission to feel – go ahead, cry, scream, work out your frustrations, etc.

Connection. Find a person (or persons) that you feel well supported by in your grief. Someone who will sit with you in silence if that is what you need, or provides a listening ear when you need to talk. Make plans on a regular basis to meet up, go for coffee, spend a night-in watching a movie together, or do something you both enjoy.

Back-to-Basics. Eating healthy meals, staying hydrated, exercising, getting plenty of rest, trying a new hobby, practicing relaxation techniques, reaching out and asking for support, setting small achievable goals to work toward. All of these tasks may seem ordinary, however it provides a healthy foundation to have the energy and ability to cope with one's grief.

Sense of Humor. Laughter can sometimes feel impossible when grieving. However, as the saying goes, sometimes 'laughter is the best medicine' and finding humour, here and there, throughout one's day can make a big difference. Remembering funny moments you shared with your loved one, reading the comics, or watching a short humorous video clip can brighten the day.

Be Gentle with Yourself. Grief is exhausting. Take time for yourself when you are able. Do something that you find comforting. e.g. enjoy a cup of tea, take a nap, journal, do a mindful meditation. Build time for self-care into your daily routine.

Lastly, be curious. Ask yourself 'what do I notice about my grief today?' and 'what do I need for me today?' Remember, there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to grieve. Take some time to navigate different coping techniques and finding healthy strategies that work best for you. Go ahead, get creative in finding a meaningful outlet for your grief that not only helps you but can also leave a lasting legacy of your loved one. It is normal to feel a wide range of emotions when grieving. Be patient and kind to yourself.

Want more tips? Visit our website:

www.chathamkenthospice.com/resources for other articles recommended by our Supportive Care team.

Be A #HospicetHero

Join the Chatham-Kent Hospice
Monthly Giving Program and
your donation will be **MATCHED** for
12 months, **DOUBLING** your impact!

Monthly Giving Matching goal
of \$25,000 made possible by:



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OR CALL 519-354-3113 EXT. 2403 TO SIGN UP TODAY!

Shape the future of Chatham-Kent Hospice by becoming a Board or Committee Member

New directors and committee members are needed for Chatham-Kent Hospice. As a volunteer board or committee member, you play a key role in building and sustaining Hospice care in our community.

We are looking for individuals with:

- Experience and/or affinity for organizational governance practices
- Strong leadership potential
- A desire to give back to the community

Building a diverse and inclusive team is important to us and therefore candidates from equity-deserving groups in our community are encouraged to apply.

To see a full role description visit our website,
www.chathamkenthospice.com.

Deadline to apply is:
April 1, 2024



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