



Vancouver  
**Hospice**  
Society



FALL 2017 - WINTER 2018 NEWSLETTER

## Home Hospice Program Expanding



**S**tudies show that of those who require end-of-life services, only 16% - 30% receive them. Even fewer are able to access grief and bereavement support, and - despite the fact that there is increased need for palliative services in Vancouver - only about one-third of individuals are able to die at home.

Studies also indicate that volunteer visits during the last month of life greatly reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety for both patients and family members. The result is fewer Emergency Room visits, reduced hospitalization, improved ability to plan for end-of-life care, better quality of life, and - most importantly - extended time palliative patients are able to remain at home.

The Vancouver Hospice Society provides the region's only Home Hospice Volunteer Program.

This program is a valuable community service that offers companionship visits to individuals in their homes. Our volunteers provide much-needed respite for caregivers, and a kind and compassionate presence for those in need of support.

Volunteers undergo a comprehensive hospice training course that teaches skills such as active listening, and empathic communication. They are also equipped to offer practical support; from advance care planning, and

navigating palliative resources within the community, to helping with small tasks such as writing letters, or going for walks. Above all, the volunteer is someone who will listen; someone who can provide compassionate emotional support.

The program has grown exponentially since its inception a decade ago, when VHS was designated by Vancouver Coastal Health to manage the program in Vancouver. In 2016 alone, our volunteers made approximately 900 visits to patients and their families. However, we recognize the potential to help even more individuals and families in Vancouver. We understand how challenging it can be for some to access the resources and full range of palliative services required to support someone with a life-limiting illness. Our volunteers can help bridge this gap, and directly meet some of these needs.

Last year, we received a grant from the BC Centre for Palliative Care to expand the program and improve access to home hospice volunteers for immigrant communities. Integral to this initiative was the recent hiring of Program Coordinator, Janice Oakley. A large component of her job is to liaison with home care nurses at local health centres, families and clients in the community; letting them know that we have a wonderful team of volunteers in place ready to offer their time and support. She is also available to support the volunteers, who often carry out this service in isolation.

"As awareness around the need for end-of-life care begins to deepen in the public consciousness," says Janice, "we are bound to be called upon more for these invaluable services." She adds, "It is a privilege to be part of the team at VHS; to build on the original vision of home hospice, as well as to foster connection and support in the community."

We currently rely on funding from generous donors to sustain this program. Now that we have a program coordinator in place, we can work toward compiling solid research and data to reflect its many positive outcomes in order to secure long-term funding for the program.

**To donate to the Home Hospice Volunteer Program, contact us at 604-737-7305**



## In Loving Memory of Helen Roelofsen

Helen Roelofsen, a much-loved member of our HOB Too Furniture volunteer team, passed away peacefully at her home on September 15, 2017. She was a vibrant woman who was passionate about her family and friendships, her work as a teacher, and her many volunteer commitments.

VHS volunteer, Lorraine Mcleod, says Helen was well-liked by volunteers and customers of the furniture store, and was a dedicated and hard-working member of the team. "When we experienced start-up problems, rather than complain, Helen would announce: Well, that was good learning! She would then motivate the team to come up with solutions.

She exemplified good sense, strength, resilience, and a positive outlook to the end."

Lorraine says that Helen always entered the shop with a big smile on her face. "She had a wonderful, wry sense of humour," she says. "We shared many laughs." She adds: "I remember Helen, perched like a model on an orange velvet chair in the store; stylishly dressed, elegant scarf, perfectly coifed, wearing her signature blue-framed glasses. I tried (unsuccessfully) to convince her to buy the bright orange chair - but she didn't think it matched her outfit!"

Lorraine speaks for the entire team at VHS when she says: "We will miss her dearly."



## Card-Making & Camaraderie

If you've been to our hospice or one of our thrift shops (HOBs), you may have seen the beautiful photo cards offered for sale. The cards are composed of more than just beautiful paper and engaging imagery, however: they represent friendship, connection, and support.

At least 4 or 5 times a year, a group of VHS volunteers and friends gather at Liz Will's house to make the beautiful cards. The card-making sessions originally started as a tribute to Linda Sloan, VHS volunteer, who passed away May 1st, 2015. Linda was a tireless advocate for the hospice, and an avid photographer. In order to honour her legacy and support the hospice, the group gathers again and again to make cards from her photos.

Sue Hurd, hospice co-founder and card-making group member says that Liz Wills deserves recognition for much of the work. "Of course she would protest that it's a team



L to R: Kate Levi, Sue Hurd, Dell Whelan, Liz Wills, Paula Coughlan, Carole Shaw

production," says Sue, "but she does all of the work of sorting and printing the cards, buying specialty stock, and arranging dates for the sessions. When we arrive, she has coffee, tea and freshly baked goodies available. She even distributes them to the stores and the hospice."

So, we would like to take this opportunity to officially say THANK YOU to all of you wonderful card-makers: especially the amazing (and ever-so-humble) Liz Wills ... *but sshhh, don't tell her we said that!*



## Dedicated to Giving Back

One can't describe Vancouver Hospice Society without recounting the incredible support we've received from generous donors. One such donor is Terry Wilkinson, who has been a long-time contributor to VHS.

We are chatting over tea at the hospice while her sweet dog, Susie, snoozes comfortably on the floor. While I am meeting Terry for the first time, Susie is well-known around here. Terry's niece, Alison King, is a Deskside Volunteer who brings Susie along for her weekly shifts. (As you can see, the theme of giving runs in the family!)

Terry first became involved with VHS when she met hospice co-founder, Sue Hurd. When Sue shared her vision to build a free-standing hospice, Terry knew she wanted to help. When asked what compels her to give, she says, "I've been very fortunate in my life. I've always felt I should give back. It's a responsibility one has."

Terry has also had a personal experience with hospice. Her late husband's half-sister died at Cottage Hospice years ago. Terry says she saw how beneficial hospice care could be; providing a warm environment, and a high degree of specialized end-of-life care. She also saw her brother die of cancer at a local hospital, and felt the care could have been better in a hospice setting.

We talk about how far the organization has come; from that initial shared vision, to a fully functioning 8-bed hospice, with strong ties to the community. I describe our intention to expand both the Bereavement Support Program, and the Home Hospice Volunteer Program - neither of which has ongoing funding. I share how, while we can breathe a little easier since our partnership announcement with Vancouver Coastal Health, we still need to be proactive about raising funds for these and other valuable services we provide.

At VHS, we are incredibly grateful to supporters like Terry, who have become part of the fabric of this organization. She serves as an inspiring example of what good can come from looking beyond one's own needs, to respond to the needs of others.

"Death is a part of life," says Terry. "We're all going to be there one day. Hospice care can help make the end of life as peaceful and dignified as possible."



*Terry Wilkinson*

ARE-YOU-  
PREPARED?



Give the  
"Gift of Survival"  
this holiday season!

With the holiday season around the corner, Are-You-Prepared.ca has survival kits for the client, colleague, or employee who has "almost everything". Whether it is a kit for the home or vehicle, you can give the "Gift of Survival" and make a difference in someone's life.

It's a "Win-Win"! Each time a kit is purchased, **\$25** goes to the Vancouver Hospice Society. The person you purchased the kit for wins, and so does VHS!

[pam@are-you-prepared.ca](mailto:pam@are-you-prepared.ca) | 604-763-6777

[www.are-you-prepared.ca](http://www.are-you-prepared.ca)

## Chamber Music Fundraiser

On Saturday, November 4th concert-goers gathered at the Unitarian Church in Vancouver to enjoy beautiful and moving performances by The Microcosmos Quartet, accompanied by special guests Milan Milosevic, Jesse Read, and Warren Long.

The event was organized by Lilliana Merler, wife of a patient who passed away at the hospice, as a way to say thank you for the compassionate end-of-life care her husband received. Lilliana and her team set a fundraising goal of \$10,000 for the hospice, and they surpassed that goal by raising just over \$11,300!

We are so grateful to Lilliana, Lorenz von Fersen, and Jesse Read for organizing such a beautiful event! We also want to thank the incredibly talented musicians, as well as those who donated money, purchased tickets, and bought cookbooks, CDs and silent auction items. We are also grateful to all of the volunteers who helped make the event a success. Well done, everyone!



# THE SHOPPING CORNER



## THE HOB

2236 West 41st Ave · 604-733-1412

Open: Mon-Fri, 10-5:30 Sat, 10-5:00 Sun, 12-4

The HOB Boutique has been at our Kerrisdale location for almost 3 years now. We continue to be amazed at the community support and quality of donations we receive! Our sorting room sees a steady stream of bustle and activity: from holiday glitter and fun furs, to Burberry and Irish Tweed coats, to Tiffany diamonds!

Our volunteer Hobbit staff look forward to helping you choose a special outfit for the festive season from our large in-store selection of very gently used holiday wear. Watch for notices of upcoming sales on Facebook and via emails sent to our growing list of shoppers - and don't forget to leave your email address the next time you're in the store.

Happy Holidays!



## HOB TOO

3470 Dunbar St · 604-737-7304

Open Mon - Sat, 11-5

HOB Too is truly a new store every day, filled with wild, wonderful and sometimes wacky treasures! Pictured is a selection of just some of our beautiful pottery for sale, all at excellent prices. Please keep us in mind for your holiday entertaining and gift giving. We are guaranteed to have some unique items in-store!

We are 100% volunteer run and managed. We like to think we are the friendliest little store around! You may have heard that our building has been sold, but don't worry: we have secured a three year lease on the existing building, which we are incredibly thankful for. We're not going anywhere until at least 2020, if not longer!

We are very appreciative of the many beautiful donations we receive. The wonderful work we do would not be possible without these generous donations. Feel free to drop by, say hi, and start shopping!





**HOB TOO FURNITURE**

3458 Dunbar St · 604-738-2066  
Open Mon – Sat, 11-5

Hob Furniture is thriving! Our customers tell us we are one of their favourite places to hunt for treasures. Since July, 2016, Hob Furniture volunteers have been gratefully receiving generous donations of once-loved home furnishings, art and accessories.

Martha Miller and Kitty White are our Art Curators, who price and display works of art for sale in the shop. Come visit us at Hob Furniture, and discover your treasures!



**We need Your Support**

**I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT VHS WITH ...**

Annual Membership [ ] Individual \$20 [ ] Corporate \$250  Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Monthly Donations of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**METHOD OF PAYMENT**

Cheque enclosed (payable to Vancouver Hospice Society)  VISA  Mastercard

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry \_\_\_\_\_ CVR # \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Donations can be securely made online at [www.vancouverhospice.org](http://www.vancouverhospice.org)**

Please mail your completed form to: Vancouver Hospice Society, 4615 Granville Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3M1

A tax receipt will be issued for donations over \$20.

**Yes!** I would like to receive semi-regular communications from VHS like newsletters, updates and invitations to events.

VHS is a Registered Charity #867021206RR0001. Privacy Policy: I understand the VHS will keep my personal information confidential and will never sell it to third parties. I consent to collection, use and disclosure of the information I provide in order that the VHS may provide me with the member services and donor recognition, including newsletters and information updates about programs and fundraising activities.



## Letter from the VHS Board Chair...



As we approach the end of another year, it is time once again to pause, reflect, and take stock of where we are. This is an opportunity to think back on all that has transpired over the past 12 months.

To start, VHS finds itself in arguably the best financial position since the hospice opened in April, 2014. Our financial future is assured through the operating agreement we now have with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). While there is still much work to do, and the expansion of our mission to consider, we can all rest assured that the future of the VHS Granville Street hospice is secure.

This assurance allows us to consider further ways to serve our community. We are in a position to expand and bring a renewed focus to existing programs; such as the Home Hospice Volunteer Program, and our Bereavement Walking Program. We can also consider the establishment of new programs that bring our mission of excellent hospice care to even more individuals and their families in our community.

We remain, at our core, a volunteer organization. Our volunteers have brought us to this point in time, and will be needed to carry us forward as we work toward our next set of goals. In fact, our partnership with VCH would not have been possible without all the hard work and incredible dedication of our volunteers. The life and contributions of one such individual who we lost recently - Helen Roelofsen - is honoured in this newsletter. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Helen, and each and every one of our volunteers, for the success VHS has achieved.

We are also immensely grateful to our donors who have supported us over the years. One of these generous individuals is Terry Wilkinson, who is profiled on page 3. We also want to thank Lilliana Merler, the wife of a patient who passed away at our hospice this year, for organizing a beautiful chamber music concert in support of VHS.

In the year ahead, we look forward to new challenges and new opportunities. We have a renewed board of directors, all of whom have great energy, enthusiasm, and time to dedicate to the governance of VHS. At our September AGM, we passed new bylaws to bring us in line with the new BC Society Act. The HOB, HOB Too, and HOB Too Furniture are all doing tremendously well in their consistent support of the hospice. Our focus will be on ensuring their continued success in 2018.

Thank you for your support of VHS, and for bringing us to where we are today. The New Year will bring new opportunities to further our mission and expand hospice care in our community. We look forward to your continuing support.

Best wishes for the holidays, and for the year ahead.

Stephen