



Vancouver  
**Hospice**  
Society



FALL 2018 - WINTER 2019 NEWSLETTER

## Inside a Bereavement Walk

It is a crisp, fall day in Vancouver. The morning sun is effervescent, as it filters through curved branches and brightly-coloured leaves. The Bereavement Walking Group is gathered in a circle near Vanier Park. The volunteer facilitator goes over group guidelines, and offers a brief check-in to open the walk. Other trained volunteers stand by, ready to lend a kind presence and compassionate ear.

They walk in pairs, winding their way along the ocean's edge. The air is mingled with the scent of autumn and fresh sea. They nod their heads as they walk; listening, talking. Their feet crunch along the gravel path blanketed with leaves.

This is no ordinary talk they are engaged in. They are sharing stories of the profound path each has been navigating in their own way, through the wild and unpredictable waters of loss and grief. The wind is infused with the sound of murmuring voices, and the comforting cadence of ocean wave and shuffling feet.

The Bereavement Walking Group is a long-standing program of the Vancouver Hospice Society (VHS). Founded by VHS volunteers Sue Wong and Sharon Harowitz, the walks have been offered 3 times a year since they first began in 2005.

Participants say they are drawn to the walks for the casual atmosphere, companionship, connection to nature, shared experience, and the sense of safety and support. For those who choose not to participate in a more structured support group or one-to-one counselling, the walks can provide an essential means of connection during what can be an intensely challenging time.

"The volunteers who facilitate these groups are incredibly kind and compassionate individuals who understand the profound impact death can have on those left behind," says VHS Clinical Counsellor, Kayla Hochfelder. Apart from offering on-site counselling



sessions at the hospice, Kayla provides educational and emotional support to volunteers who are involved with the walking groups. She is also available as a resource for walkers who discover they may need additional counselling or support.

Bereavement Walking Groups are offered on Wednesday and Saturday mornings at Kits Point in Vancouver, and run for 8 weeks in the spring, fall, and winter. There is the option to gather for coffee following each walk. (Juliet's Café in Kitsilano kindly reserves space for these post-walk gatherings).

There is no charge to participate, and walkers may join at any time (attendance at all walks is not required).

**For info or to register, contact:**

\*Sue Wong (Wednesday group) at 604-731-7805

\*Patricia Ryan (Saturday group) at 604-263-1325

If unsure of which day you're interested in, please call either number.

**To donate to the Bereavement Walking Program, contact Vancouver Hospice Society at 604-737-7305.**



### Volunteers Bring Pampering to Palliative Patients

The **Lipstick Project** is a compassionate group of certified professionals who provide free spa services to patients and families at the hospice. Their hope is to create brief moments of respite for those who are going through an incredibly challenging time. Services are available every 2nd Monday in the comfort and privacy of patient rooms, and include gentle massage, haircuts, and nail care.

The Lipstick Project was established in 2012 by a group of young women who wanted to bring dignity and beauty to those who are nearing the end of life. In a 6-month period alone, these amazing volunteers provided 27 manicures, 8 pedicures, 27 massages, and 10 haircuts to our patients and families – at an estimated value of over \$3,000!



“The Lipstick Project is a wonderful tonic for patients and families at our hospice,” says Pat Richardson, VHS Clinical Coordinator. We are so grateful for their kind attention, positive energy, and huge hearts!

### Bedside Singers Offer Circle of Support



We hear them first; the sound of their beautiful voices trailing through the hospice hallways, gently announcing their presence onsite.

For the past 4 years, the Compass Chorus has come to the hospice twice a month to sing at the bedside of those nearing the end of life. The group (consisting of 3 or 4 women at a time) sings simple and compassionate

songs intended to bring a sense of comfort and ease in the midst of suffering. “Music and song can surpass word and thought,” says Chorus member Corinne Thorsell. “This can open the space for connection, and for sharing this profound time in a calm and gentle way.”

The singers were drawn together 4 years ago by a common interest in the potential of the power of song, and the role it can play in supporting those going through the dying process. They formed a group and decided to call themselves “Compass Chorus” to represent a circle of support.

Corinne says chorus members consider it a privilege to share this “most human and special time,” which has allowed them to reflect upon their own lives, while learning to become more comfortable with the process of letting go.

“Each person is on their individual path,” says Corinne. “We hope that our presence and our songs can support others in finding their own true north.”



## Townhouse Development Campaign Continues

Since we first learned of a rezoning application to build a townhouse development directly next to our hospice almost a year ago, VHS staff, volunteers and supporters have all been working hard to convince City Hall to reject the proposal.

If built, the direct proximity of this development to the hospice (see image) will severely disrupt the peace, privacy, and access to services for more than 150 individuals and their families who come to our hospice each year for end-of-life and bereavement care.

The application to rezone the current single-family home at 4575 Granville St. was submitted under the Interim Rezoning Policy for Affordable Housing Choices. While we support the City's initiatives to increase affordable rental housing units in Vancouver, at approximately \$3800 for a 3-bedroom unit, this development is neither affordable to the average citizen, nor is this location functionally compatible with the essential elements required for operating a hospice.

The development will include 21 units; 63% of which will be 3 bedroom homes. The 32-spot underground parking will require shared laneway access, causing a dramatic increase in traffic in the narrow one-car lane. This will block the ONLY access for ambulances, hearses, service vehicles, and families coming to the hospice. This will cause an overall increase in neighbourhood traffic, and a marked reduction in available street parking.

The peaceful view for patients and families from the entire



north side of the hospice will be completely obstructed. As well, the anticipated 2-year construction phase will severely disrupt patients and families, and may lead to a complete closure of the hospice, forcing patients to rely on emergency services and acute care admissions at local hospitals.

The transport of bodies from the back lane - an intensely private and emotional experience for loved ones saying their final goodbyes - may be exposed to additional onlookers.

Since the October civic election, we have completed a comprehensive report outlining our objections to the proposed development. This report has recently been sent to the new Mayor and all Vancouver City Councillors (the majority of whom have either toured the hospice, or are personally aware of our situation). The report not

only outlines our key issues, but also emphasizes the strong and widespread community support we have received from hospice patients and bereaved family members, volunteers, neighbours, the Seniors' Advisory Committee, Vancouver Coastal Health, local media, and thousands of concerned citizens of Vancouver.

Should the application go to a Public Hearing in 2019, we will re-strategize (which will likely include ramping up our PR campaign to increase public support).

To send a personal opposition letter (re. 4575 Granville St) to the Mayor and Vancouver City Councillors, go to: <https://vancouver.ca/your-government/city-councillors.aspx>

To sign our online petition, go to: <https://www.change.org/p/gregor-stop-townhouse-development-next-door-to-hospice>



## 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

We have been able to feature some amazing VINTAGE pieces on our BLOG, inspired by an increase in quality donations in recent months! We have also introduced new HOB Logo hang tags to better identify featured and vintage items throughout the store.

We continue to support slow fashion ideals of reusing, recycling, and repurposing vs. the fast fashion industry. Our campaign to go plastic bag free has been a great success thanks to our supportive customers who continue to supply us with gently used cloth and paper bags.

Be sure to visit the shop soon for our great selection of holiday bling-wear and classic winter coats. Happy Holidays!

Check out or follow the HOB THRIFT BLOG for featured stories from the world of HOB Thrift and Vintage at: <https://hobthriftblog.wordpress.com/>



## 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.





## New Year Brings New Home for Dunbar Stores

We are disappointed to announce that our landlord has given both HOB Too and HOB Too Furniture notice to vacate under the terms of our existing lease. We have been incredibly honoured to serve the Dunbar community since 2013 (HOB Too) and 2015 (HOB Too Furniture), and will be sad to leave in the new year.

While change can be challenging, it can also present new and exciting opportunities.

A search committee has been hard at work looking for a new location that is large enough to merge both stores into one! Stay tuned for an official announcement once we have secured a space.

Until then, it is business as usual as both stores gear up for the holiday season!

It has been a wonderful year at Hob Too and Hob Too Furniture, thanks to the incredibly generous

donations from the community, and support from our faithful shoppers. Revenues have exceeded projections; which means even more money was raised to help support end-of-life and bereavement care at VHS.

We are proud to be actively involved in the recycling movement – keeping items out of the landfill and giving much-loved household collectibles and furnishings a new lease on life.

We are 100% volunteer-driven, with over 150 volunteers contributing their time and energy to ensure the collective success of our Dunbar and Kerrisdale stores. We want to thank our wonderful volunteers and our amazing and loyal customers!

We look forward to embracing positive change and continued success as we enter 2019. We wish you much warmth and joy this holiday season!

## HOB Too Customer Hosts Garden Party

Volunteers who manage our Dunbar thrift shops (HOB Too & HOB Furniture) were treated to a lovely garden party this past summer hosted by Maureen MacIntosh; a generous thrift shop customer and loyal supporter. Maureen says she arranged the gathering for the group of approximately 30 volunteers as a way to show her appreciation for all that they do to support the Vancouver Hospice Society.

Our 3 thrift stores (2 in Dunbar, and The HOB in Kerrisdale) are managed completely by volunteers. The items they sell are donated by generous members of the public, and 100% of the proceeds raised support end-of-life and bereavement care. A whopping 35% of hospice revenue is derived from thrift shop sales!

Marilyn Davis, HOB Too volunteer, says volunteers on shift are always happy to see Maureen, who often arrives with a lovely bouquet of flowers from her garden. She says Maureen makes a point of viewing each new window display, and often purchases items from both HOB Too and HOB Furniture.



Maureen says she has been shopping at the stores for 3 or 4 years, and always manages to find little, collectible treasures. "It's a pleasurable outing," she says. "I am always greeted with such warmth and kindness. The work they do is so meaningful, and I can tell they all really want to be there."

"They are a wonderful group of volunteers, who I call friends," adds Maureen. "I am so grateful to them for what they do, and I feel by shopping there I am supporting such a great cause."



## Letter from the VHS Board Chair...



### A Time for Renewal

As we approach 2019, the start of a new year is also a time of renewal for all of us at Vancouver Hospice Society (VHS).

We have a number of directors stepping down after serving many years on the VHS board. This group has collectively carried the organization through some very challenging times; particularly the lead-up to obtaining funding from Vancouver Coastal Health for hospice clinical operations. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude for the many hours they contributed to the success of our Society. I would like to thank Pam Vidalin, Elaine Pritchard, Patricia Lloyd, Jonathan Ricci, and Birgitta von Krosigk for their dedication to VHS.

And while we are sad to see these individuals step back, their departures create an opportunity for renewal as we welcome new board members to the team.

With our operating funding securely in place, we undertook a broad strategic planning exercise this fall, bringing in VHS staff, volunteers, new board candidates, and sub-committee members to help us renew and refocus. We have identified several strategic priorities which, with the help of our supporters, we will be developing in the new year.

Our renewal as an evolving Society is critical as we face new challenges, expand and improve the scope of services we provide to the community, and maintain the high standard of care for which we have become known.

We are, of course, not without ongoing challenges. This year we faced (and will continue to face) the spectre of a large-scale development next to the hospice. This proposed project has caused us much anxiety in recent months, and has the potential to threaten the end-of-life and bereavement services we provide at the hospice, and in the community.

It has been encouraging to see how many supporters have stepped up to oppose the project and defend the hospice. As a result of positive media coverage, we have had hundreds of volunteers and neighbours attend public meetings and write letters to City Hall, and thousands of supporters sign our online petition. We remain hopeful for a successful outcome.

Our clinical team continues to provide excellent end-of-life and bereavement care at the hospice, and our expanding hospice volunteer team continues to offer compassionate support to patients and families both in the hospice and in the community. Volunteers who run the Hospice Opportunity Boutiques (HOB's) continue to deliver spectacular support to VHS. In 2019, we can also expect an all-new configuration of HOB Too and HOB Too Furniture. Stay tuned!

We are thankful for the year that has passed; and as we renew ourselves, we look forward to a positive and hopeful future.

Best wishes to you and your loved ones this holiday season.



Stephen P Roberts  
Chair, VHS Board of Directors