

Grief Groups Address Specific Types of Loss

When we gather in groups to share our grief, it can help us feel less alone.

While it's true that there are universal qualities to grief and loss, it may also be beneficial to connect with others who have experienced a similar type of death.

"I have received consistent feedback from individuals who say that being with others who have experienced a similar death is very helpful," says VHS Clinical Counsellor Kayla Hochfelder. "It allows people to enter a space where there is a mutual understanding of what experiencing the death of a specific relationship can mean in their lives. In order to meet this need," she adds, "we have expanded our grief support offerings to include groups such as adult child loss and spousal/partner loss."

The expanded program also includes specialized groups for children who have experienced the death of someone in their life. This is a highly underserved population in Vancouver, where there are limited opportunities for children to share their grief experiences amongst other children.

"Children express grief differently than adults" says Hochfelder. "Being in a group setting not only helps to normalize the experience for children, but also provides a safe space for them to express what can often be overwhelming and confusing emotions and thoughts."

Parents and caregivers will also have the opportunity to gather separately to receive tools and resources to better understand what their children may be experiencing, and discover additional ways to support them through the grief journey.

Another specialized support group we are offering is for loved ones of those who have chosen medical assistance in dying (MAiD). Recognizing that there are uniquely challenging aspects of grief associated



with MAiD, this program is designed to offer family members an opportunity to meet with others who may be experiencing ongoing grief, uncertainty or questions regarding the final choice of their loved one. Facilitated by a Registered Clinical Counsellor, this group is designed to offer a forum for information, helpful resources, emotional support and invaluable connection with those who are dealing with a similar loss.

All of our grief support groups are provided at no charge, and are open to anyone in Vancouver who has lost a loved one. For more information contact Kayla Hochfelder at 604-737-7305 ext 216.

We rely on the support of generous donors to operate our Bereavement Program, which includes counselling services, grief support groups, bereavement walking groups, and Healing Touch sessions.

This program is funded by generous donations from the community. To support the Bereavement Program contact Vancouver Hospice Society at 604-737-7305 or go to <https://www.vancouverhospice.org/>



In Loving Memory of Kitty White

Kitty White, a beloved member of the HOB Too volunteer team, passed away on March 5, 2019 (just a few days after the opening of the new store).

Kitty is described as a lovely, bright, spirited and sassy being; who emanated warmth and joy to all who knew her. She often mentioned how blessed she felt to have so many dear friends who showered her with love.

Kitty held a Master of Fine Arts degree and, after retiring from her job at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, shifted her energies toward volunteering at HOB Too.

Her team members say she was the ideal person to tackle their huge portfolio of art donations - and must have hung thousands of pieces during her years of volunteering at the store.

She was happiest working in the backroom sorting donations and pricing art, along with her favourite task of creating lovely, inspiring window displays. Her joyful enthusiasm and laughter kept many of her volunteer colleagues entertained during their shifts.

Before she died, Kitty purchased a chair from the store that she had planned to repaint. Her fellow volunteers have since painted it in her favourite colour, and added the silhouette of a white cat (Kitty White!) along the frame. In honour of Kitty, the chair now holds a permanent place near the window in their book area at the store. She is dearly missed by all, and will never be forgotten.



The Heart of a Hospice Volunteer

Chances are, when you enter the hospice you'll be greeted by one of our volunteers.

VHS volunteers are an integral part of the team. They offer a compassionate presence to patients and family members; which might involve listening to stories, chatting, watching TV, or simply sitting in silence. When not visiting patients, volunteers also cover the front desk, and help with odd jobs around the hospice. Many of our volunteers also work in other areas of the organization; such as the Bereavement Walking Group, Home Visiting Program, and Healing Touch.

Being around death and dying, they are regularly exposed to deeply

sensitive scenarios on a regular basis. Each volunteer is carefully chosen based on criteria such as background, life experience, and the ability to be present to the suffering of others. While it is the natural propensity for this disposition which makes one suitable for this work, all hospice volunteers attend a comprehensive volunteer training - which includes education in end-of-life and bereavement care, empathic listening, healthy boundaries, and self-care strategies.

They each have unique personalities and come from all walks of life, yet common to all is a kind heart and an innate willingness to learn, grow, and be of service. They are incredibly



humble individuals - but we know that it takes a special person to do this type of work. Their kind and loving attention is truly a gift during what can be an incredibly challenging and emotional time.



I Got to Hold His Hand

In Memory of Walter Ng (1933-2019)

By Tonya Ng

When I told my mom that staff at Vancouver Hospice had invited me to write something for their newsletter, she said: "As far as I am concerned, Vancouver Hospice was the best thing that happened to us. I got to hold Dad's hand. I am still holding his hand."

Mom and Dad were married for 54 years. They literally and figuratively walked hand-in-hand throughout their marriage - in sickness and health, in joy and sorrow - until Dad's very last breath.

Dad was sick for many years. We came to the realization early this year that he was nearing the end of his journey. By then, Mom and I were utterly exhausted from years of being his primary caregivers.

When the Vancouver Hospice bed became available, though we arrived sight unseen, our trepidation quickly disappeared. Never could we imagine a place so beautiful and staff so welcoming and caring. We could let go, not because we had given up on Dad, but because we knew he would be well looked after. I could finally simply be his daughter. Mom could simply be his wife; to love him and hold him.

Dad was not afraid of death. "Cool as a cat," he described himself. Because of his faith, he was certain that with God's grace he would reach heaven. Mom was confident that she and I would be by his side when he died. Her prayer was answered on Mar 2, 2019. She held his hand and sent him off singing Ave Maria.

Vancouver Hospice is a place for the living. It is a place where each life is valued - no matter how faint or weak - and each family's physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs are acknowledged. Dad's month at



Photo (L to R): Helene (Clare) Ng, Tonya Ng, Walter Ng

the hospice, though painful for our family, will always be remembered as a beautiful and cherished time. It gave us the space to talk, sing, laugh, cry and pray.

Dad's death was merely the closing of one chapter of his storybook. His passing brought forth friends and former students from as far back as the class of 1962. They shared stories of gratitude and raised money for Vancouver Hospice in memory of him. Every life lived leaves an imprint on this world.

Mom and I miss Dad tremendously, but we feel his presence every day as we continue our own journey; till we meet again.

Did you know:

Each year, approximately 150 people receive end-of-life care at Vancouver Hospice.

Referrals are made through care teams in hospital or in the community. At VHS, we also provide bereavement support for those who have lost a loved one. Our bereavement services can be accessed by contacting the hospice directly at 604-737-7305.



THE SHOPPING CORNER

THE HOB

2236 West 41st Ave · 604-733-1412

hobboutique@shaw.ca

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

We're approaching nearly five years at our Kerrisdale location! A good move? You be the judge.

In 2012, we had only two months with sales over \$20,000. This year, we have more than doubled that each and every month, occasionally even surpassing \$50,000!

This kind of success depends on many factors: Great community support in the form of donations and patronage, increased social media presence - attracting a varied clientele of all ages and backgrounds - and the hard work of our many talented volunteers (affectionately known as "Hobbits"). One need only see the stunning selection of clothing, unusual vintage pieces, and artistic displays at the store to see why we are such a hit!

Pop in as the holiday season approaches to discover that unique gift or special outfit. You will find friendly, knowledgeable Hobbits happy to assist you. You might even be inspired to become a volunteer yourself!

Best wishes for the holidays! Follow us on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/hobthriftboutique/?hl=en>



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

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.





HOB TOO COLLECTIBLES & FURNITURE

3626 W Broadway · 604-737-7304

hobtoothrift@shaw.ca

Open: Mon-Sat 11-5:00, Sun 12-4

After many years in Dunbar, HOB Too Collectibles and HOB Too Furniture are now under one roof! We have a beautiful, newly-renovated store on West Broadway near Alma.

We sell nearly new, high-quality housewares, linens, furniture, artwork, cards & jewelry – along with vintage & antique items. The store relies on generous donations from the public, and all proceeds support end-of-life medical care of hospice patients, and bereavement care of family members provided through Vancouver Hospice Society.

Our wonderful window displays, created by talented volunteers, are a big draw for customers. Watch for a different display every 2 weeks, each with its own theme such as; Bizarre Bazaar, Music and Books, etc. Items can be purchased from each display and are available in-store when the window is dismantled.

We have also been showcasing some of our incredible donations through social media; with a few posts per



week on both Facebook and Instagram at:
<https://www.facebook.com/HobTooThriftShop/>
<https://www.instagram.com/hobtoothrift/?hl=en>

The success of HOB Too is based on our generous donors and loyal customers, as well as the efforts of an amazing team of dedicated, hardworking volunteers who spend countless hours running the shop. If you haven't already seen our new space, please drop by and visit.

Who knows - you may even find a treasure or two while you're here!

To donate items for a great cause, please contact us.

Two Little Thrift Shops. One Big Mission.

Our thrift shops are no ordinary stores.

Managed completely by volunteers, the HOB and HOB Too stores have helped build and sustain programs and services at the Vancouver Hospice Society; enabling us to provide compassionate end-of-life and bereavement care to individuals and families in Vancouver. The items they sell are donated by generous members of the public, and the warm and welcoming atmosphere provided by volunteers have made them an essential part of the community.

Shopping at one of our thrift stores is not only easy on the pocketbook, it's also good for the environment. In buying gently used clothing and household items, you are helping alleviate over-consumption by keeping things in circulation and out of landfills. Also, in donating items you no longer



need to support a good cause, you are actively putting the 3 R's (reduce, reuse, recycle) into practice – while helping build and sustain community.

We are grateful to our donors and shoppers for making our two little thrift shops – and our great big mission – a reality!

Letter from the VHS Board Chair...



The Beautiful Cycle of Giving and Receiving

For many, the Christmas and holiday season at the end of the year is a time of giving and receiving. Although we often say it is better to give than to receive, I'd like to reflect on some of the gifts we have received this year at VHS.

Perhaps the biggest gift we received was the decision by Vancouver City Council to turn down a development application directly to the north of our hospice, thereby ensuring our continuing operations and provision of care for those at the end of life.

It was never going to be easy to turn down a proposal for new housing in a city that has a dire need for more. Council, however, also realized that the number of hospice beds in our city is very limited, and Vancouver has a critical need for these beds. We are grateful for this recognition and value the gift we have been given; not only by Council, but by the volunteers, donors, speakers, letter writers, protestors, and media personalities who worked so hard to support the hospice, and those most vulnerable in our community.

Another gift, back in March, was the opening of our new HOB Too thrift shop on Broadway. From day one, this expanded premises has gone from strength to strength with ever-rising sales and donations. Our team of HOB Too volunteers is a gift in itself. None of this success would have been possible without the extraordinary dedication of these volunteers, who have been nothing short of amazing throughout the big move and into daily operations.

Our first thrift boutique, The HOB, has also had another successful year, with ever-increasing sales and donations. Now, after five years at the Kerrisdale location, a renewed rental contract has just been negotiated. It is a gift to be able to stay put and continue to build on the phenomenal success of the tireless team of volunteers at The HOB.

Inside the hospice home, we saw the retirement of our Clinical Coordinator Pat Richardson, but found her replacement right there among us in one of our own. What a gift for everyone! Thank you Pat for your service, and congratulations Tamara Tang on your new role.

I truly believe that these gifts are in direct response to the importance of the work we do at VHS. And of course, the gifts that we receive are returned ten-fold to our community through the exemplary end-of-life care that our staff and volunteer team provide. It is this beautiful cycle of giving, receiving, and giving again that starts with each of us. We have so much for which to be thankful.

Best wishes to you and your loved ones through the holidays and into a bright new year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Roberts'.

Stephen P Roberts
Chair, VHS Board of Directors