

Touch Base Newsletter

June, 2020

Volunteer Service Update, Resources, and Education

MV Hospice to Resume Volunteer Services

Coronavirus COVID-19 risks have not changed, however, our knowledge as an organization and as individuals has improved. Now, we need to put that knowledge into practice.

This edition of our newsletter focuses on Coronavirus COVID-19 and Educational opportunities for our volunteers. The COVID-19 information we have attached for your reference comes from the Renfrew County and District Public Health Unit < <https://www.rcdhu.com/covid-19-information-for-workplaces/> > and continue to check the RCDHU Website for regular local updates.

As we start to activate our volunteers, we will begin working with our team leaders to review how visits will proceed, and to update each care plan before we send it out to all team members.

Please remember that all hospice volunteers are required to participate in two educational sessions yearly to be considered current and active volunteers. This is an ideal opportunity to fulfill this requirement. Upon completion of an Education Session (see Page 6), send Michele a note indicating the name and date of the Education Session and she will record it on your file. Email to: michaelism@sfmhosp.com



2020 Annual Butterfly Release

COVID-19 has disrupted every part of our lives, forcing the cancellation of many events that we look forward to year after year.

The annual butterfly release hosted by Madawaska Valley Hospice Palliative Care (MVHPC) & St. Francis Valley Healthcare Foundation (SFVHF) has not been immune, and due to current public health directives, has been cancelled for 2020.

We understand how valuable this event is to our community, and how it has provided many with the chance to remember a loved one in a meaningful way.

You are likely aware that this was also an important fundraiser for MVHPC. Proceeds from the event support valuable hospice palliative care services, including support for our robust volunteer network. The money raised provides important training and ongoing education to volunteers who are the heart of our hospice, our home visit program, and our grief and bereavement program. In lieu of attending the event, please encourage donations to ensure that palliative patients and their families have the resources they need at one of the most difficult and challenging times any of us will face. *Many thanks!*



In Praise of MV Hospice Volunteers and Staff

Hi *everyone* at the Hospice. It's been a while, thank you again for everything you did for Denis a year ago. We know that with your loving care Denis was in the best place with the best people he could be. Ourselves being able to stay and be at his side then helped us transform a difficult time into a peaceful and positive one. Again, thank you, keep on the good work.

– Michel Jacques for Denis, family & friends



How In-person Volunteering Will Resume



On March 13th our world changed, and we need to adapt and decide how to resume with providing assistance to the families we serve. The safety of our patients, volunteers, and the communities we live in is a leading factor in our decision-making.

One thing that sets MV Hospice apart from other organizations is that we make decisions and establish a plan of care based on the individual needs of the people we serve. Providing “Individual Compassionate Support at Every Step” is our motto and this is much more time-consuming than providing identical service for every person.

So, as we restart volunteer services we will carefully assess the best possible ways to assist each individual family based on needs and risks as shown below.

Assess Need	 Consider Risks	Implement Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient is admitted into Hospice. • Family are not comfortable with being alone with patient or not comfortable with incontinent care. • Office staff cannot cover 13-hour / 7-days-a-week need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of family present with patient. • Have all tested negative for COVID-19? • Volunteer’s comfort level in wearing PPE – mask, gown, gloves as needed (case by case). • Volunteer’s ability to pass screening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask specific volunteers if they are willing to provide assistance in Hospice. • Volunteers can be tested for COVID-19. • Limit the number of people coming and going from Hospice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient and family request friendly visit to help pass the time. • Family are afraid to leave their loved one alone. • Family need to return to work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age and frailty of both patient and volunteer. • Have extended family of either patient or volunteer recently visited from one of Canada’s “hot spots”. • Number of people patient is exposed to, e.g., health care workers and family members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable client for outdoor visit. • Suitable client for through-window visit. • Continue telephone or iPad visit.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family wish to keep their loved one at home for end-of-life and patient is now 30% PPS. • Determine what needs the family have that Home Care cannot meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Additional respite hours. ◆ Delivery or pick-up of items such as groceries or loan equipment. ◆ Spiritual support. 	<p>Same as above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask specific volunteers if they are willing to provide assistance and define their role. • Family and volunteers may be asked to have COVID-19 testing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resuming Institutional visiting. • What is the institution’s policy for visiting? 	<p>Same as above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can visits be held outdoors? • Does PPE need to be worn?

Today

By Thomas Carlyle

So here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think wilt thou let it
Slip useless away.

Out of Eternity
This new Day is born;
Into Eternity,
At night, will return.

Behold it aforetime
No eye ever did:
So soon it forever
From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think wilt thou let it
Slip useless away.

This past week, I was fortunate to have two different people read poetry to me. The first was a gentleman who phoned hospice asking questions about palliative care and what books I would suggest to read. He discussed literature and quoted some poetry and then said he would be sending a book for our program.

The second person was someone who currently has incurable cancer and is unsure how long she has to live. She quoted the poem *TODAY* by Thomas Carlyle. It's a poem that she tries to live, by not letting any day slip away. As I read the poem, I can think of many reasons to have a Blue Day ... illness; fear of COVID-19; physical distancing; not able to be close to family members in LTC, hospitals, or retirement homes; not able to be present at the death of a loved one; limited people able to attend funerals or weddings; unable to gather in churches to worship; difficulties within families; loneliness ... and the list goes on.

How have we been living our days?

As we think about volunteering for hospice in our new world and our changed role as volunteers — especially as we begin to reopen volunteering — will we let new opportunities slip away?

- Karen



Thank You to Our Crafty Gang!



The beauty of the hearts and the cards we received and the talent of our volunteers is amazing. Thank you so much for sharing your gifts, time, and talent.

The Hand-Heart Connection was developed by a hospice nurse and therapeutic touch practitioner. This technique is a way to “be with” someone who has suffered a loss such as health or a relationship, or is at the end of life. Simply being next to the person and using your hand to connect to their heart and be present is a powerful way to send compassion. It benefits both the recipient and the person offering the hand-heart connection.

During this Coronavirus Pandemic, many cannot physically be with their loved ones and so our volunteers are working to make pairs of hearts — one for the person isolated in a nursing home or retirement home and one for a loved one. They fit in the palm of a hand to be able to connect hand to heart. We hope this brings a sense of connection to those you love.



Thanks to Lois Cybulskie, we have a new greeter as you enter Hospice. This adorable welcomer reminds everyone they must self-screen and use hand sanitizer before entering.

What could we name our newest addition to our Hospice program? Email your suggestions to Michele at < michaelism@sfmhosp.com >.

Coronavirus COVID-19 Updates

Ontario to Resume Family Visits in Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, and Other Residential Care Settings

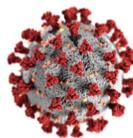
Ontario Premier Doug Ford made the announcement during a news conference on Thursday, June 11, 2020, saying that starting on June 18, families may be able to visit their loved ones in congregate living settings, but with strict guidelines in place.

Strict Health and Safety Guidelines Will Be Required to Protect Residents, Visitors, Volunteers, and Staff

In order to visit, a person must have tested negative for COVID-19 within two weeks of the visit, they must pass an “active screening questionnaire,” and they must wash their hands upon arrival and departure, as well as wear a mask and maintain physical distance.

For long-term care homes, Minister Fullerton said the province is “allowing one visitor per resident at a minimum of one visit per week for an outdoor visit only.” Retirement homes, she said, will have “indoor and outdoor visits with the number of visitors being left to the discretion of the home.”

Ford also said that homes have the final say on whether or not they are ready to allow visitors.



COVID-19 Testing In Renfrew County

The Ministry of Health has announced that in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, testing is now available for symptomatic and asymptomatic people.

This includes people who have at least one symptom or are concerned that they have been exposed to the virus. It also includes patients and families who enter our Hospice and can also extend to volunteers wishing to resume active volunteering and wish to ensure they are COVID-19-free. Repeated periodic testing may be required.

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit posts a two-week schedule of the dates, times, and locations of testing sites on their Website at < <https://www.rcdhu.com/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-2/> >. An example of the testing sites information document is found in the attachments.

Please call the listed phone number if you wish testing or require further information.

Along with our newsletter, we are attaching the following documents from the Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) that you may find helpful in addressing your questions or concerns:

- **COVID-19 Testing Schedule** with dates, times, and locations – two-week schedule which is available from the Renfrew County and District Health Unit Website.
- **Chlorine (Bleach) Solution** – for disinfecting commonly touched surfaces in different situations.
- **Do’s and Don’ts of Using Non-Medical Masks.**
- **Mask Use When Visiting a Public Space/Shopping** – how to use a non-medical mask (donning and doffing).
- **Hand Hygiene Factsheet** – how to wash hands and how to use hand sanitizer properly.
- **Requirements for Transportation Services** – how to operate safely during the pandemic.



For COVID-19 Information for Workplaces, visit the Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) Website at <https://www.rcdhu.com/covid-19-information-for-workplaces/>

Sending Condolences



When someone you know dies, you are affected in one way or another. The depth of your relationship with the person who has died or their family or friends affects

how you might offer support. By offering condolences, or expressions of comfort and support, you reassure those who are grieving that they are not alone. Your words and gestures can help them through the grieving process.

Many people struggle with knowing 'the right thing to say' when someone close to them dies. Some people worry that their words may not truly express their sentiments or sound insincere. One of the most thoughtful and caring things you can do to support a friend is to be in touch and acknowledge their loss. The way you choose to make contact will vary depending on your relationship. There is no one right or wrong way.

- **Sending a card or letter:** Traditionally, people have sent a handwritten card or letter to offer condolences. Many individuals still prefer this approach as they see it as more personal.
- **Electronic messaging:** With the increased use of electronic media, you might find it appropriate to send a text message or email, or to post a message on a Facebook page or an online memorial site affiliated with a funeral home or newspaper. Use what seems to be the best 'fit' for both of you.
- **Other ideas:** Some people send flowers, fruit, or a gift basket. Delivering home-cooked or commercially prepared meals which can be saved in the freezer is also a thoughtful option. Attach a card or note with cooking or reheating instructions, including whether the item can be frozen. Add a few words to express your care and support. In some circumstances, you might want to make a donation to a charity in the name of the person who has died or to a fund for dependent children.

Regardless of the method of communication or support that you choose, a few lines expressing your sympathy, sadness or concern can be very comforting.

Use language that your friend or family member would be comfortable with. Some people prefer terms such as 'passing' when referring to someone's death. More and more, however, those who study grief and loss recommend the use of plainer language (e.g., 'death', 'dying') as a clearer way of acknowledging someone's loss.

- **Acknowledge the loss** of the person and include the person's name. For example, 'I am sorry to hear of the death of your brother, Tom.' Naming the person specifically makes your note more personal and heartfelt.
- **Be sincere.** Your message does not need to be lengthy to express your feelings of sympathy. Simply write what is in your heart.
- **When in doubt, keep it simple.**
 - 'I/we are thinking of you at this difficult time.'
 - 'You are in our thoughts and prayers.'" (If you and the recipient are of a religious faith.)
 - 'We will miss your mother dearly.'
 - 'We are saddened to hear of the death (passing) of your mother.'
- **Share a special memory** of the person who has died and consider including how this memory makes you feel. Hearing or reading about your memories reassures loved ones that their family member will not be forgotten. It can help those who are grieving to reflect on their own memories and work through their grief.

Offer your time or assistance with the many tasks and errands faced by someone who has lost a loved one. Sometimes, those left behind just need someone to talk to about their experiences and feelings. If you are comfortable being available to babysit, go for a walk or provide a shoulder to cry on, offer this in your note. Just be sure you are offering something that you are truly prepared to do.

...continued on Page 6

"Sending Condolences" is excerpted from:
www.virtualhospice.ca


**CANADIAN
VirtualHospice**
*Information and support on advanced illness,
palliative care and grief.*

Sending Condolences (cont'd)

Sending Condolences — *continued from Page 5*

Things to avoid writing

- **Avoid giving advice** or saying things such as ‘I know how you feel’, even if you have experienced the death of a loved one yourself. Every loss is unique and we never truly ‘know’ how someone else feels. These words are meant to express understanding and bring you closer but can have the opposite effect.
- **Avoid using words such as ‘you should’ or ‘you will’.** Strong statements that begin with ‘you should’ or ‘you will’ may be perceived as unwelcome judgments of their feelings and decisions. Everyone copes differently with death and dying, and the decisions they make are usually what they feel to be best for them. Being supportive of decisions, as long as they are not harmful, is usually the best approach. If you want to engage someone in a conversation about their loss, consider asking open-ended questions that offer an opportunity to share thoughts and stories.
- **Avoid talking about yourself.** Keep the focus on your friend. If you were also especially close to the person who has died and are overwhelmed with your own grief, providing support can be challenging. You will want to offer condolences, but you cannot expect your

friend to comfort you. Seek support for yourself from other friends or support systems.

- **Avoid trying to write about the positive aspects of the person’s death.** Sometimes in trying to make someone feel better, people may say things such as, ‘They are in a better place now’, or ‘At least they are not suffering anymore’. This is seldom helpful and may be perceived as minimizing the loss of the loved one.

When you have forgotten to send your card

Life is so busy that you might not send a card or note as quickly you would have liked. When this happens, you may feel that by sending a card later, you are only stirring things up for the family by bringing up memories of their loved one’s death. In reality, when you lose someone through death, they are never really forgotten.

Friends and family may have appeared to have moved forward and be carrying on with their lives, but their loss will be with them always. Even though they may not be talking about it, the memories and grief can continue for a long time. Your thoughts and support will be appreciated at any stage. It is never too late to send a card, letter or message to offer support and condolences to your friend or family member.

Content reviewed by Canadian Virtual Hospice, May 2019.

Educational Opportunities During Physical Distancing

<p>Meaningful ideas for funeral services, Memorials, and Celebrations of life during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Compiled by Heart House Hospice in Alberta. Ideas for grieving together and having virtual funeral services that you can share.</p>	<p><i>RIGHT CLICK</i> to open the following link: Meaningful ideas for funerals, memorial services, or celebrations of life during the Covid-19 pandemic (Adapted from What’s</p>
<p>Long list of topics from which to choose.</p>  <p><small>Information and support on advanced illness, palliative care and grief.</small></p>	<p>An excellent Palliative Care education site which includes short videos on a wide variety of topics – Advance Care Planning, Grief and Bereavement, COVID-19, Youth and Teens. Also “how-to” videos – Giving medication, Assisting movement, Changing a bed with</p>	<p><i>TYPE IN</i> Canadian Virtual Hospice Click on the area of interest</p>
<p>Psychosocial and Spiritual Support During COVID-19</p> 	<p>Series of online sessions to discuss emotional, spiritual, and compassionate care regarding COVID-19. Ten (10) sessions to help us manage the overwhelming world pandemic and how it affects our care. Contact Michele for links that are archived.</p>	<p><i>RIGHT CLICK</i> to open the following link: https://www.hpco.ca/psychosocial-spiritual-support/ Other educational opportunities are available under their COVID-19 Resources tab at the top of the Web page.</p>