

Touch Base Newsletter

February, 2020

Lisa's Message

Death Over Dinner!

One of our Board Members, Lorraine Finn, shared an interesting article from the Toronto Star (Jan 27, 2020) about a new international movement of people hosting dinner parties to specifically have open conversations about dying. No area of death is taboo and it is explained that like Death Café, it is a safe and open environment for all ideas and points of view.

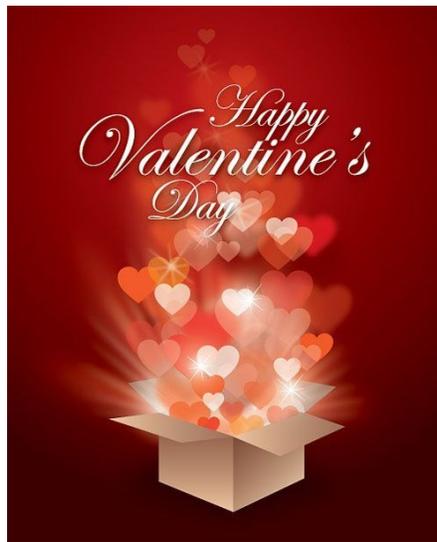
The founder of this idea quotes the dinners as “an uplifting, interactive adventure that transforms this seemingly difficult conversation into one of deep engagement and empowerment”.

I have been thinking that I would love to host one of these with friends because I think that many of us would love a safe space to talk about past losses, unresolved grief, how to plan for an unknown future, how to leave a legacy, fears around death, and much more. Also, for me, it would be a good opportunity to remind friends about updating wills and advance care health directives as I have current knowledge and resources that can be shared.

One of the participants interviewed made the following comment that I think was poignant: “It was actually pretty great to be able to discuss the topic in a way that was not in the

moment of a loved one's death, but as a life issue that all of us will face in one way or another.”

I believe if you create a space and place, people will be given permission to talk about things that are often considered not suitable as polite dinner chatter. I expect that at the beginning of the dinner it will be awkward for some, but I feel as each person shares, it will become normalized and easier for the group to really explore all areas of death and dying.



Sharing our thoughts, wishes, and directives for end-of-life is important and can save your loved ones anxiety and worry in an already stressful time, yet many people do not have the conversations. We see it here at hospice too often and we scramble to help families get the necessary

information they need prior to a death.

Through events like Death Café which MVHPC is hosting on February 25th (see page 3), and, maybe, some of you and I hosting a “Death Over Dinner” event, we can start to change the culture and normalize these conversations. We have many resources that can be shared, and we have a *Wishes and Legacy* deck of cards as a great starter at your event!

Highlights From Touch Base Meeting

Our guest speaker, Mary Prince, spoke extensively about the different types of dementia and the symptoms of each. She reminded us that regardless of the type of dementia, the brain is dying and what is lost can never be re-gained. She noted that regular exercise can be a great deterrent to vascular dementia.

As well, Mary shared some great resources and we have copies – Michele can forward these by email or via paper copies. We encourage you to check out the YouTube video recommended by Mary – *It Is What It Is*. This is the link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drgzhKe_YWI

Karen's Message

Loneliness



I was asked by a women's church group if speaking on Palliative Care would tie into loneliness. First I explained what palliative care is and how we provide supports for more than pain and other symptoms, then I probed deeper into loneliness and illness by giving examples.

One spouse told me, *"I've taken a leave of absence from work because my spouse needs me at home. Now we're together 24/7 and spend our time rushing here and there to appointments and treatments we don't have anything to talk about except illness, doctors and procedures. I just need someone to bring something new into the house to talk about."*

One Gentleman said, *"I sit here all alone and I think about my cancer. I'd like someone to come and play cards so I don't think about it all the time."*

When a spouse returned home refreshed from an afternoon out with friends, her husband said, *"The Hospice volunteers have given me the wife I need."* Volunteers provided assistance in the home while she was away.

A few days ago I heard, *"I'm going to go stir crazy. I haven't left the house in 5 days. I can't leave her alone because she might try to walk and would fall if she didn't have help."*

When illness invades, lives are changed. If we are the outgoing type of person involved in many activities it becomes a struggle to do the things that we enjoy and fill our core/spirit with things that bring light to our lives. If we were more introverted and fairly solitary we lack the social network of family and friends that can help us cope with all the necessities of survival — bringing in wood, getting groceries, having someone to drive us to an appointment, cooking proper meals, and much more.

Loneliness and isolation can leave you feeling empty and without hope. Feeling stuck in your own thoughts

and just wanting to be free of this pain, a pain that is not always physical. We often hear:

"I don't want to be a burden or a bother to my family." "I just want this to end." "When will God take me." or "I would like Medical Assistance in Dying."

Palliative Care is a team working together to provide supports to help individuals and families live well. It is not about dying but rather striving to alleviate the loneliness and despair that can invade when we feel isolated and overwhelmed by illness and fear of what may be ahead of us.

Each of us has the ability to touch another person, be it through a simple phone call, a visit, or an offer to be present to listen and hold a hand. I challenge you to set a weekly goal for yourselves — what can you do to ease the loneliness of others? And, I guarantee that you will be amazed at the richness it brings to your life as well as to the lives of the people to whom you reach out.



Connecting with our volunteers

Hospice strives to allow our volunteers a lot of scheduling freedom by not being rigid.

In return we are kindly asking:

- ◆ Volunteers notify us if they are going away, even for a long weekend. It saves us from phoning with a request and waiting and assuming you will answer shortly.
- ◆ Volunteers please respond to our e mail requests. It is very disheartening to send out a request for assistance to over 100 people and not get one reply.

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING (ACP) DAY

APRIL 16, 2020



For Ontario ACP resources, visit the *Speak Up Ontario* website www.advancedcareplanning.ca

THERAPEUTIC TOUCH® (TT) COURSES

Easy to learn and available to everyone, Therapeutic Touch (TT) offers knowledge and empowerment for self-healing and supporting others.



TT is a unique and deceptively simple energy technique that facilitates healing and relaxation.

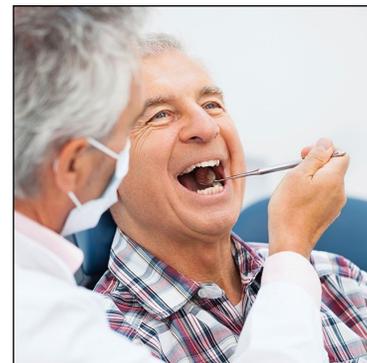
MVHPC has seen the benefits of using TT with clients. The clients currently receiving regular TT sessions do not want to stop. A complementary energy-healing modality, TT is well recognized and accepted and has been in wide use in hospitals and hospices throughout Ontario since the early 1990s.

Volunteers pay only \$25 per workshop with a full refund after attending 2 Practice nights.

For more information about Level 1 & Level 2 Therapeutic Touch workshops or to register, contact MVHPC, or Patricia Tamosetis (613-625-2277 or earthwalks@distributed.net).

NEW Public Health Dental Clinic - Barry's Bay Area - Spring 2020 -

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) is pleased to announce a new senior's dental treatment clinic coming to Barry's Bay in the Spring of 2020. Through funding by the Ontario Ministry of Health and working in partnership with Rainbow Valley Community Health Centre, the clinic will be located at St. Francis Memorial Hospital (SFMH).



Through the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP), RCDHU will offer routine dental care for *eligible low-income seniors*:

Ontarians aged 65 and over; with an annual net income of \$19,300 or less, or couples with a combined annual net income of \$32,300 or less; who do not have dental benefits.

The OSDCP includes a range of routine dental care such as: cleanings, fillings, extractions, and more.

For information about the OSDCP services visit:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/dental-care-low-income-seniors>.

Seniors can apply for the program:

- online at: <https://seniors.accerta.ca/application/en>
- by picking up an application from the Renfrew County and District Health Unit or Rainbow Valley Community Health Centre (Killaloe).

More information is available through RCDHU:

Tel: 613-735-8661 or 1-800-267-1097 Ext. 661

Website: www.rcdhu.com.

*The more we talk about death and dying,
The more we learn about life and living.*



= Death Café

You are invited to join us for refreshments and the opportunity to discuss death and dying in a relaxed, open, and respectful setting. There is no agenda, and the lively conversation is discussion-based rather than a grief support group. Facilitated by Dawn Cruchet of MV Hospice Palliative Care.

When: Tuesday, February 25th
From 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Where: Heartwood Restaurant
39280 Combermere Road, Combermere

Support Heartwood Restaurant who have offered their space by buying a dessert. Please arrive early to get your treats.



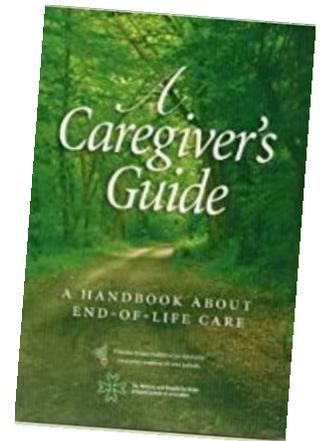
Death Café is an international movement that began in the UK in 2011 and over 10,000 Death Cafés have been held in 69 countries.
www.deathcafe.com

Let’s choose today to quench our thirst for the good life we think others lead by acknowledging the good that already exists in our lives. We can then offer the universe the gifts of our grateful hearts.

- Sarah Banreathnach



**Book Pick
in the
MVHPC
Library**



• *Important Dates and Upcoming Events* •

DATE & TIME	TOPIC	LOCATION
February 25, 2020 2:00 - 4:00 PM	Death Café	Heartwood Restaurant, Combermere
April, 2020	Volunteer Touch Base	<i>Details will follow at a later date.</i>
April 16, 2020	Advance Care Planning Day	
May, 2020	HPC Education Day.	<i>Details will follow at a later date.</i>

BLIND IN ONE EYE



I am blind in one eye
I just realized
Cancer has affected the nerve
There is a cataract
I can only see light
But I have one eye left
I have everything I need!

In Praise of MV Hospice Volunteers

I’m so grateful for the access to Touch Therapy. It’s a way to increase or to level my energy and keep in touch with my inner life. The volunteers I work with are very special and I appreciate their kindness and their tact. Thanks for this generous gift. Hope to benefit from it as long as it will be possible.



- Francine Paquine

MV Hospice Palliative Care

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We are always looking for ideas for our newsletter.
Please contact Michele with your suggestions.

Year-to-date Statistics

Active Volunteers	118
Total Reporting Hours	2,724
Total Reporting Kms	33,117
Total # of Individuals Served	125