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Hospice Welcomes New Executive Director

From the moment Hospice Renfrew opened in 2008, Diane Caughey was its executive director and an unstoppable force in moving from initial first steps in a brand new facility to the highly successful home-like hospice of today.

Diane has now retired and on April 7, Hospice Renfrew welcomed Maureen Sullivan-Bentz as the new executive director.

Connie Legg, chair of the Hospice Renfrew board, said that a selection committee chose Ms. Sullivan-Bentz through an open competition that assessed a number of applicants from across Canada.

"Maureen has all the background, skills and experience to enrich Hospice Renfrew's solid reputation for providing quality palliative care", the chair of Hospice said. "I know she will be an excellent leader and mentor for our hospice community with its strong resolve to provide end-of-life care with comfort and compassion."

Ms. Sullivan-Bentz was most recently the executive director of the Arnprior and District Family Health team. In this position, she was responsible for leading the development and construction of this new facility and for the recruitment and implementation of the new multi-disciplinary team which now effectively provides a range of programs and services for patients in Arnprior and the surrounding area. She is also a part-time clinical professor at the University of Ottawa School of Nursing and provides health care consultation services for various institutions and academic centres across Canada.

Born and raised in Arnprior, Maureen brings to Hospice Renfrew 25 years of nursing experience in pediatric and adult critical care as well as community health. She has an extensive background in health care administration, health care program development and clinical nursing education. Maureen has served as a sexual assault program manager in Renfrew and at University of Ottawa as Collaborative Nursing Assistant Director.

On April 7, Diane Caughey welcomed Maureen to Hospice Renfrew and introduced her to staff. Diane reminisced about the many challenges the hospice has overcome since opening and then looked ahead to the future. "I know there will be many more hurdles and snags for Maureen to tackle. And I know she has the skills and know-how to solve them. I'm confident she will continue



Board Chair Connie Legg (left) and outgoing Executive Director Diane Caughey (right) welcome new Executive Director Maureen Sullivan-Bentz to Hospice Renfrew.

to advance Hospice Renfrew as a vital county hub for palliative and bereavement services. Like me, she is dedicated to our community and determined to improve the quality of living, and dying, for our residents and families. I am very happy to be passing the torch on to her."

For her part, Maureen spoke of why she wanted to lead the Hospice team. "I wanted to come to Hospice Renfrew because of its great reputation in our community for patient care. I want to be a part of that. I know my big immediate challenge will be filling Diane Caughey's shoes. As the hospice's first executive director she has had such a huge impact. Hospice Renfrew is all about caring for our families. I look forward to helping our hospice residents and their families come to a comfortable home-like setting for final closure, and as fully as possible living remaining precious moments without suffering."

"Connie's Crew" — a tribute

Connie Farquharson was an active, talented and fun-loving woman whose charm and sense of humour could light up a room.

She was our mom.

At the age of 19, she married Dad and together they raised five children on a farm in Admaston township. Mom was an incredible support for her family and friends, always willing to lend a hand, bake pies, and there when you needed her.

Dad passed away in 2000 and in 2006, Mom moved into an apartment in Renfrew.

In 2012, she was diagnosed with Pulmonary Fibrosis. This devastating disease caused her lungs to become inflamed and scarred, reducing her ability to breathe.

Over time, Mom was unable to leave her apartment and take part in the many activities she enjoyed, but with extensive support from family, friends, Community Care Access, Medi-Gas and her family doctor, she was able to stay in her home as long as she could.

In April 2014, Mom made the decision to go to Hospice Renfrew, which would be her home for her final three months. Under the exceptional care of Hospice Renfrew Medical Advisor Dr. Stephanie Langlois and the wonderful staff and volunteers, Mom's pain was controlled and she was made to feel right at home. Having such a beautiful facility with a homey atmosphere (a large kitchen and dining room where family could gather, and a living room with a toy box for the grandchildren) enhanced the experience for everyone involved.

She had a beautiful spacious room with a picture window. She enjoyed watching the deer, squirrels, birds and other wildlife meander outside. The volunteers thoughtfully planted her flowers just outside of her window where she could watch them bloom.

While in Hospice, Mom kept a small journal. She recorded the events of each day and this gave us some insight into the little things that meant the most to her.

She wrote about times when she couldn't sleep, so she had French toast with one of the nurses. She made a couple of requests for special treats and she wasn't let down. From snacking on cinnamon buns to Chuck bringing her a fish, her heart was constantly warmed by the thoughtful gestures of the people who make Hospice such a special place. In her book, she even recorded who won the nightly hockey game.

She wrote about how she enjoyed the luxuries of having her nails painted and her feet rubbed. She enjoyed sitting outside in the sun. She loved having visits from volunteers, family and friends. The staff helped to arrange for Mom to play cards with her friends and go home to her apartment on four separate occasions. All of these efforts did not go without notice. Mom treasured each and every day that she had at Hospice.

As busy as the staff at Hospice are, they always had time for our family, and welcomed our large family — five

children, ten grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren — as we gathered to spend our last moments with our mom. Her sisters both travelled a great distance to be with her, and they were welcomed no matter what time of day they arrived.

Mom passed away on July 21, 2014, surrounded by love and family.

Our family is so grateful for the outstanding care

that Mom received. Her wonderful wit and sense of humour touched the staff and volunteers. Her memory will be treasured by the small stone that her name graces on the donor wall at Hospice.

As a tribute to the fine care that Hospice Renfrew offers, our family proudly participated in the 2015 Hike for Hospice fundraiser. We were "Connie's Crew".



A family affair: "Connie's Crew" hiked in memory of Connie Farquharson and raised almost \$2400 at this year's Hike for Hospice

Do you have a story for us?

From time to time, we use on our website, in our newsletter, or provide to the media, families' stories of their experiences at Hospice Renfrew — testimonials such as "Connie's Crew" (above), "A Family's Heartwarming Tribute to Hospice Renfrew" (the story of Teenie St. Louis), in our Summer 2014 newsletter, or CBC correspondent Susan Bonner's "The Value of End-of-Life Care", about her father's stay at Hospice Renfrew, in our Summer 2013 newsletter. If you have an experience of Hospice Renfrew that you would like to share with others, please contact Helen McGregor, Hospice's Administrative Assisant, at 613-433-3993, ext. 2229, helen@hospicerenfrew.ca.

"It Takes A Team" Increase in number and size of Hike for Hospice teams helps push Hike total to \$70,000

More and more teams are participating in the annual Hike for Hospice and this year, 25 teams with names such as the "Kick and Push Pedestrian Society" and "Shake a Legg" (chair Connie Legg's team) raised almost \$35,000 of the overall total of \$70,000. Leading the dollar "race" was Team Dunbar, with an amazing \$7,585 in pledges.

In The News at Hospice

Former Senator and palliative care advocate Sharon Carstairs speaks at Hospice Renfrew volunteer appreciation event

Every April, Canada celebrates National Volunteer Week. This year's celebration of volunteers at Hospice Renfrew included a well-known Canadian senator and palliative care advocate, retired Senator Sharon Carstairs, on hand to help pay tribute to the more than 5,800 hours of time donated by Hospice Renfrew volunteers.



Pictured, from left, at the Hospice Renfrew Spring Volunteer Appreciation Tea: Connie Legg, Hospice Renfrew Board Chair; special guest and speaker Senator Sharon Carstairs; Maureen Sullivan-Bentz, Hospice Renfrew Executive Director; and Darlene Meleskie, Hospice Renfrew Volunteer Coordinator. Photo courtesy Peter Clark/Metroland

Senator Carstairs has been a strong advocate for palliative care for many years. As Minister with Special Responsibility for Palliative Care, Carstairs authored the 2010 Senate report *Raising the Bar — A Roadmap for the Future of Palliative Care in Canada*. “What you have here is the gold standard of palliative care,” Senator Carstairs told her Hospice Renfrew audience.

“Hospice Renfrew has achieved something very special in bringing together several small communities to meet the needs of those at the end of life. This is the type of care that should be available to every Canadian, but sadly, this is not the case.”

Carstairs pointed out that an ongoing trend for charitable organizations in Canada is the decline in people volunteering. Only hospice care is seeing a steady increase in volunteer numbers due to the work being so meaningful and rewarding for both the recipient of care and the volunteer.

Senator Carstairs also commented on the recent Supreme Court ruling on physician-assisted suicide. In jurisdictions where this is a legal option, only 6% of palliative patients have requested it; of this 6%, only 1% actually go through with it. She urged that we use the 94% maxim: we need more and better palliative care for the huge 94% majority — more and better homecare, pain and symptom management, caregiver support and hospices.

Senator Carstairs' 2010 report sums up the importance

of hospice volunteers: “There are no words, in any language, which can convey the extent of the gift they give of themselves. They define our most human values, and remind us that the most basic and important value in life is to care for each other.”

Volunteer inducted into June Callwood Circle of Outstanding Volunteers

At the same celebration, Hospice Renfrew volunteer co-ordinator Darlene Meleskie offered special congratulations to Ruth Stiefelmeyer for her induction into the June Callwood Circle of Outstanding Volunteers at the 2015 Ontario Hospice Palliative Care Conference in Toronto in April.

In honouring Stiefelmeyer, Meleskie said, “Ruth was nominated for this award in recognition of her dedication to Hospice Renfrew as a Resident and Family Support volunteer and active member of the gardening team. She demonstrates compassion, gentleness and kindness in her interaction with the residents and families during her hours in Hospice. She can be seen working in the gardens on hot summer days, weeding and caring for the gardens with the other team members, or on a cold winter day decorating trees for Christmas. All this is done freely and willingly to promote the core values of our hospice and keep it looking beautiful. Congratulations to you, Ruth and thank you for your dedication and support through your volunteering.”



Callwood award recipient Ruth Stiefelmeyer

Hospice welcomes new Board



Hospice Renfrew is governed by a volunteer board of directors that represents the interests of our residents and their families from across Renfrew County. Pictured at left are 2015/2016 board

members (from left): Rob Dougherty, Advisory Member Jim MacKillican, Treasurer Bill McMahon, Chair Connie Legg, Doug Hewitt-White, Leo Hall, Executive Director and ex-officio member Maureen Sullivan-Bentz, Owen Snider, Secretary Donna Anderson, Vice-Chair Don DiSalle and Medical Advisor Dr. Stephanie Langlois. Missing from the photo are Karl Murphy, William Briscoe and Honourary Member Dr. Arthur Dick.

Advance Care Planning: ensuring others know your wishes for end of life care

It is never too soon begin a conversation with a loved one about their wishes for end of life care - or it might remind you to review your own plan. This is termed advance care planning.

What is Advance Care Planning?

Advance care planning is a process of reflection and communication, a time for you to reflect on your values and wishes, and to let others know your future health and personal care preferences in the event that you become incapable of consenting to or refusing treatment or other care. Advance care planning means having discussions with family and friends, especially your "Substitute Decision Maker" – the person who will speak for you when you cannot. It could also include writing down your wishes, and may even involve talking with healthcare providers and financial and legal professionals.

Who should make an advance care plan?

Every adult should make a plan. You can't predict how or when you will die, so having a plan ensures that others know your wishes and that your voice will be heard if you cannot speak for yourself. It's also important to name and talk to your substitute decision maker about your wishes for care. If you have a written plan, your substitute decision maker should have a copy.

When is an advance care plan used?

Your plan is only used if you are unable to make your own health care decisions (e.g. you are in a coma or your illness has impaired your ability to make decisions). Your



substitute decision maker can use it to guide your care and to express wishes on your behalf.

Can an advance care plan be changed?

Our lives — and the people around us — change over time. You will want to review your advance care plan regularly and revise it to be sure it reflects your wishes, and to talk to your substitute decision maker about these changes. Remember, your substitute decision maker will be consulted and your plan used only if you cannot speak for yourself.

Is an advance care plan the same as a Living Will?

A living will is a form of advance care planning, but it is very important to have a conversation

with those who will make decisions about your care so they know your wishes. You should also review your advance care plan regularly to be sure that it still reflects your feelings, beliefs and values about end of life care. Each province and territory has specific legislation to support the documentation of advance care plans.

For more information on advance care planning, visit:
www.hpco.ca/lets-talk-about-dying-in-canada/



Your Donation Makes A Difference

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Only 50% of Hospice Renfrew's operational funding comes from the government. The remainder of the more than \$1,000,000 we need to operate yearly comes from the generosity of people like you. Please consider making a donation today or including Hospice Renfrew in your will and estate planning.

Enclosed is my donation of: \$ _____ in the name of: _____

If you would like the recipient and/or family notified of your gift, please fill in their address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____ PC _____

Please send receipt to: (a complete, legible address is required for a tax receipt):

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____ PC _____

You can also donate on-line at hospicerenfrew.ca. Click on the "Donate Now" button on the front page.