



The Volunteer Voice of The Dorothy Ley Hospice

May 2008



I Volunteer Because...

by Ron Morrow, Volunteer Advisory Committee Member



Recently, I was asked to consider how I would respond to the above statement. In preparing my response, I was surprised to discover that my motivation for volunteering is actually a complex combination of self-interest and connection to a higher purpose.

I made the decision to be a hospice volunteer after being laid off from my job. As part of my career transition, I wanted to explore a new direction and gain

some hands-on experience in the field. Two years later, I've learned what many volunteers know: You get far more from volunteering than you give. The question I ask myself is, "Would I keep giving, even if I wasn't getting anything back?" As I sit beside the bed of someone who's dying, I sometimes wonder whether anyone will be there to hold my hand or give me a drink of water as death approaches. Am I contributing to some kind of "karmic savings account"? Or, am I repaying a debt?

In the end, however, I believe connection to a higher purpose is the engine that drives my commitment to volunteering and "getting something back" is the fuel that keeps the engine running. I am blessed to live in this country and be in a position to help other people. It's a privilege to be able to support dying people and their loved ones in any way that I can. We all have "feet of clay" and yet, if we're willing to use them, we also have wings that enable us to soar to greater heights than we can ever imagine.

I hope others will share their own response to the statement, "I volunteer because . . .". There's a lot we can learn from one another.

Everyone has a reason and a story about why they volunteer. Why not share yours? volunteers@dlhospice.org



The Dorothy Ley Hospice



Events Calendar

Celebrating Mothers' Day—

Tips to Cope with Loss

Wednesday, Apr 30th

7:30pm-9:30 pm

Call the Hospice to register

Client Support Volunteer

Training Program

Weekly on Thursdays. May 1st to Jun

26th. 5:30pm-9:30pm. Mississauga

Room—Trillium Health Centre

Volunteer Appreciation BBQ

Tuesday, June 10th

5:00pm-9:00pm

Ursaki Patio & Auditorium

14th Annual Golf Classic

With NHL Legend Darryl Sittler and

Celebrity Chef Christine Cushing

Monday, Jul 7th

Mystically Mayan Adventure:

2008 Fall Gala

Friday, Oct 17th

6:00 pm Toronto Congress Centre

For details on these or other happenings, call us or check online at: www.dlhospice.org

Photo ID Update

Extended Deadline May 15th

Thanks to all the volunteers who've made the trek into the office to get their picture taken! For those yet to smile for the camera please come by at your convenience, during office hours and ask for Kristine or Chris. It will take just a few moments. If you cannot attend the office please call Kristine to make other arrangements. **We'll distribute the ID's at the Volunteer BBQ.**

Make a difference **Hike** for Hospice



Sunday May 4th
Colonel Sam Smith Park
(Kipling and Lakeshore)



Register on-line:
www.dlhospice.org
No fee to register.



Kristine's Message

by Kristine Gagnon, Volunteer Program Coordinator



April 2nd marked my one year anniversary at The Dorothy Ley Hospice. What an incredible year it has been! I remember, during my first interview, saying that I was seeking a role that would provide new opportunities for growth and challenge. This year as your Volunteer Program Manager has exceeded my hopes. I have truly been enriched by the opportunity.

As I'm writing, I'm aware that you will receive this edition of OFV during National Volunteer Week. This year's Volunteer Week theme is "from compassion to action". Nothing could be more fitting of hospice volunteers.

Some people work with their hands, others their heads, but in hospice I believe we work with our hearts. No one demonstrates this more than you, the volunteers. It's often said and it's so very true: Volunteers are the heart of hospice! The gifts of your time, energy, enthusiasm, life experiences, genuine care and compassion are priceless.

Since Volunteer Week is followed by National Hospice Palliative Care Week (May 4 – 10), it seemed to make sense, back in January, to merge our plans for recognition, celebration, and community awareness. And so we began planning for "The Big Cheer". The event intended to bring together everyone who contributes, be it their time, talent, financial support, or leadership. However in the weeks leading up to the event, the planning committee made the difficult decision to postpone the event. We realized that with so many other activities going on, hearing that many of you were unable to attend, and that others were still unclear about the intent of this gathering, it was best to consider another time.

The Big Cheer experience is one example of the challenges we face during this is a year of transition. Meeting them requires all of our patience and adaptability to change. I know many of you are anxiously awaiting the opening of the Centre and you may be wondering about what new opportunities it will present for volunteers. Similar to the first months of construction, where everything happens underground, behind the scenes development is underway to lay the necessary foundation for our programs and services to expand. With so many things still in the draft stage, we do not want to confuse you by saying one thing today based on what we envision and then another thing tomorrow as it more clearly develops. Please bear with us and know that our commitment is to roll out detailed plans once finalized. Thanks for your patience.

In closing, I offer kudos to each and every volunteer! I am inspired each day by the dedication and generosity you show in all you do. I look forward to seeing you at the volunteer appreciation BBQ on June 10th.

With caring thoughts,

Kristine



Accreditation: What's all the fuss about?

Many of you may know that in 2005 we achieved Level 1 Accreditation with the Hospice Association of Ontario, an achievement of which we are very proud.

Now we want to reach even further and achieve Level 2 Accreditation. Why are we striving for that?

First and foremost we are doing this for our clients. By achieving and maintaining Level 2 Accreditation, we demonstrate to our clients and our community partners that we are holding ourselves accountable to a high standard. It will not only show that The Dorothy Ley Hospice volunteers and staff are committed to excellence in the training and support of our volunteers, it will also assure clients and community partners that these standards will translate into excellent and safe care.

In order to reach our goal we will need to implement some minor changes which will demonstrate that we are accountable.

One new initiative will be an annual volunteer review which will allow us to meet with you one on one to explore volunteer satisfaction and best fit for volunteer engagement as well as ongoing educational needs. Liana Mihai, a student from Humber College, doing her field placement with DLH, has been developing the format and we hope to implement this process in May of this year.





Therapeutic Touch: An Enriched Volunteer Experience

by Susan Keith - RN, TTRP/T



Volunteers are a privileged group who are allowed into the lives of people when they are at their most vulnerable. They work from a heart centered place that fosters compassion and an honest desire to help those in need, but what they get in return cannot be measured.

Volunteering at the Day Program for many years now has been a most rewarding experience for me and I feel, as many do, that I get much more out of it than I could ever give. Our clients are the best teachers we can hope for. They allow us into their whole lives, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. As a Therapeutic Touch practitioner, my experience with hospice clients is enriched even further on many levels.

Therapeutic Touch is a complementary therapy that is offered at the Day Program at this time. It is an energy field modality that is a consciously directed process, using the hands as a focus for facilitating a restorative process. It is a holistic practice that can be administered in any position and can have a positive effect on clients from diagnosis through to end of life care. It promotes a deeper connection between volunteer, client and families.

Published research indicates that when Therapeutic Touch is provided, it elicits a strong relaxation response which is well known to improve system function by lowering blood pressure, improving circulation, lowering the heart rate, promoting deeper respirations and relaxing smooth muscles. It has been shown to alter the perception of pain so that clients feel they have less pain or that they are better able to cope with their pain and often use less pain medication. It can be helpful in reducing the nausea and general fatigue caused by chemo and radiation therapy and it gives a boost to the immune system.

As we all know, hospice care is more than physical care and so is Therapeutic Touch. Clients receiving this therapy often report experiencing less anxiety and a deeper sense of feeling supported and cared for at a time when they have been feeling isolated and alone in their disease process. It can reduce the

agitation that can occur at the end stage of life and create a sense of peace in the dying process. Families will remark on how peaceful the room feels when Therapeutic Touch is being given.

The benefits then, extend beyond the client to include families and caregivers. Family members who also receive Therapeutic Touch often report feeling "lighter" afterwards, and more able to cope with their own grieving. At a time when families might be feeling helpless, they can be taught to do simple Therapeutic Touch for their loved one. This initiates a non-verbal connection that can heal family relationships by creating a powerful non-verbal communication of love and compassion that is not always easy to put into words. Both client and caregiver experience the restorative process of "inner healing" as opposed to "curing". It assists them in finding meaning to the end of life process.

Therapeutic Touch practitioners work from a focused, centered place of peace and compassion that creates a deep level of connection with our clients. This enables us to provide more sensitive care with a deeper understanding of our clients' needs. It enhances the volunteer's ability to be fully present with and listen to the client on a much deeper level and in all aspects of their being.

This comment from a hospice client says volumes: "I have experienced feelings of peace, relaxation and strength of spirit after the Therapeutic Touch session. These have given me a lot of help and comfort. You have become a most important part of my support system".

As a volunteer, the level of connection with clients that Therapeutic Touch has given me cannot be measured. Clients tell me how much they appreciate the treatments they receive, and I am humbled because I receive so much more.

If you are interested in more information about Therapeutic Touch, contact Susan at ch.concepts@sympatico.ca



Lunch and Learn

Spend some time with your colleagues and friends... and learn something too!

Mondays at 12:00—1:00 pm

May 26th

Public Speaking Tips

June 23rd

Report from the Provincial Palliative Care Conference

July 21st

Privacy legislation and the impact on Hospice

**RSVP to the office at:
416-626-0116**



An Exciting New Vision for the Future

You're probably aware that we've been very busy over the past while getting ready to open the new Dorothy Ley Hospice Palliative Care Centre. It has been a wonderful journey and there is still lots to do before we move in. Once it opens, there will be even more to do as we expand our programming, train and integrate more volunteers and help our clients understand new options. To help us through the process, we are developing a new strategic plan that will guide us through the next three years. As part of that process, we have revised our Vision and Mission, to more accurately reflect our role in the community.

For our Vision, we wanted to be more forward thinking and imagined the ideal world. The Mission captures the essence of the work that we do. It is very important to us that as we look to the future, we retain the essence of what has made this a vital organization – the teachings of Dr. Dorothy Ley. They continue to be the cornerstones or pillars that guide us as we move forward. We also looked at the Values that instruct our actions. They reflect both our belief in Dorothy's teachings and recognize our hopes for the future. The most important change is the recognition of the role of volunteers.

And because volunteers are so important, we wanted you to see the updated Vision and Mission as soon as possible. On the next page we've included a handy copy that you can print out and put in your Volunteer Binder.



Greener Pastures?

The "Lure of Retirement" has beamed and Paula Biksa answered. As Coordinator of the Hospice's Day Program, Paula has been with us for the past four years.



Her gentle spirit, kind touch and thoughtful nature have endeared her to the hearts of many clients, the volunteers of Day Program and all other members of the hospice team.

She will be dearly missed! We wish her the very best as she embarks on her new career as a full time retiree. Paula plans to be at the Volunteer BBQ, so come out and wish her well.

Congratulations to our Newest Volunteers!



We are thrilled to announce that we have 10 graduates from the winter training. Please make them feel welcome by introducing yourself at the Barbeque. Welcome to the team: Cheryl Browne, Lynne Birnie, Linda Pearce, Michael Willard, Lenore Mills, Peter Roman, Lynda Simpson, Dawn O'Hearn, Elizabeth Klimkiewicz, and Marjorie McGuire.

Staff who participated include Natalie Dzudovich, Rachel Hollingshead and Board Member Alison Morton. This class was eager to participate in discussion and kept us challenged with their feedback and questions. There is no doubt that they will be valuable additions to our In-Home Program volunteer team.

OFV (*Only For Volunteers*)

is the Volunteer Voice of Dorothy Ley Hospice. It is issued quarterly (or at least we try) to a team of more than 300 dedicated and passionate individuals who support DLH in countless ways. If you have contributions for OFV, please e-mail us at: volunteers@dlhospice.org or call 416-626-0116. You can also write to us the old fashioned way at: OFV c/o The Dorothy Ley Hospice, 170 Sherway Drive, Suite 3, Etobicoke, ON M9C 1A6 *Please let us know if your contact information has changed.*





The Dorothy Ley Hospice

Our Vision

A world which understands and embraces hospice palliative care.

Our Mission

We foster hope and dignity through exemplary care, advocacy, education and research for individuals living with the challenges of life-limiting illness or loss.

Our Values

Those of us who are part of The Dorothy Ley Hospice believe, share and commit to the following values:

Accountability

Holding ourselves accountable to the highest standards of stewardship, transparency and governance in all aspects of our work.

Achievement

Striving to achieve our best in all that we do, in a supportive environment.

Compassion

Expressing compassion in action by creating and nurturing a foundation and framework of sensitivity and fairness for all.

Innovation

Moving to the future by way of innovation as we build on the teachings of Dr. Dorothy Ley.

Integration and Partnership

Working with others, as a leader and as a partner, to maximize resources and the benefits for those we serve.

Social Inclusion

Respecting diversity in all of its expressions.

Volunteerism

Honouring the contribution of volunteers as an essential part of our charitable organization.