



Langley Hospice News

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Langley Hospice Society, a community-based, non-profit organization, provides compassionate support to help people live with dignity and hope while coping with grief and the end of life.



When it's Cold Inside: Coping with Grief during the Holidays

For those already grieving the loss of a loved one, the holidays can certainly create additional pain and struggles. It is very common for one to be caught in an emotional tug-of-war; wedged between the need to grieve and the pressure to participate in the holiday spirit. More than often, it is the *anticipation* of certain celebrations/rituals that provide the most anxiety, and not the day itself. In the hopes of reducing holiday distress, the following strategies are suggested:

- ♥ Acknowledge that you will have emotional reactions to the impact of the holidays and **accept the likelihood of your pain**. Additionally, you may experience feelings of sadness, anxiety, fear, anger, guilt, or even apathy. Remember that you are human and your grief will express itself in different ways.
- ♥ It is important to **express your emotions**, as finding a safe release for your thoughts and feelings is vital to the grieving process. You are encouraged to cry, talk, write, listen to music, create art, etc. As long as you find a way that works for you and gives voice to your "soul".
- ♥ It may be beneficial for you to **plan ahead**. Identify possible parts of the holiday that may be more difficult and plan accordingly (ie. divide tasks, establish budget, etc). Additionally, give thought to the various choices you have in spending the holidays and give yourself the freedom to change your plans.
- ♥ When possible, **take charge**. Identify what aspects of the holiday are meaningful to you and decide if there are traditions that can be modified to fit the new circumstances of your loss. Try not to make drastic changes; however, some changes can be healthy and important.
- ♥ Don't be afraid to **turn to others for support**. You may have to let people know

how they can help. Utilize those who have been supportive; who will let you talk, or cry, or whatever it is you need to do.

- ♥ **Be gentle with yourself** and give yourself time to rest. It is imperative you be forgiving of yourself and give yourself permission to ease holiday demands. Set plausible goals and allow yourself to cancel plans if you need to.
- ♥ **Remember to remember**. You may decide to create a small remembrance area in your home or honour your loved one with a ritual of remembrance this holiday season. While it is healthy to remember, don't force yourself to remember if you are not comfortable with it – you'll know when the time is right.
- ♥ **Do something for others**; donate, volunteer, help a neighbour, or assist a stranger. The possibilities are endless.
- ♥ Always **embrace hope**. Stay open to the demands of this experience. There is hope for your healing and growth. Remember to stay present in the moment and accept the warmth that is yours to receive, however fleeting.

Without a doubt, the holidays are an especially difficult in times of grief, as they are occasions of great sentiment. In every day life, we are reminded that a loved one has died and our world is forever changed. However, it is important to remember that the holidays can also be a time of healing based on the choices one makes this holiday season. Allowing yourself, or someone you know and love, the time and space to grieve may be the greatest gift you give this year.

Reference: Miller, J. *How Will I Get Through the Holidays*. (2010). Hospice Care Online.

Shivani Kaushik, MSW, RSW
Bereavement Support Coordinator



Thoughts on Client Volunteering...

At the August potluck supper at the Hospice House, I was struck by how lucky I was to be a volunteer in the society. A group of hospice residence volunteers attended this annual event, each bringing some magic from their kitchens, or their favourite retail outlet, to share with each other.

We talk about life and have a chance to get to know each other in more depth, learning surprising facts about people we thought we knew. Terry loves gardening as much as I do, even growing dahlias; Egbert was a commercial fisherman for twenty years; I can relax amongst all these women when there are a couple of other men in attendance. Thanks, Mike and Egbert.

Laughter weaves through the fabric created by the twenty or so people there. I am always slightly amazed at the humour of the group; the ability to take the foibles of life, and oneself, with the help of wit and love. Then there is the way everyone listens to each other, fully and quietly. The interest in each other at the moment is genuine.

All of that is brought with us when we do our three hours at the residence. After eight years going to visit, talking with the patients and nurses, and lending a hand where possible, I realize that I have learned how to be present in the moment more fully. Each shift on Tuesday mornings, it is necessary to leave behind the ebb and flow of my life when I pass through the doors of the residence. These three hours are not about me, they are about the people living in those rooms.

I can now apply that ability better in my own life. As I grow older and begin to enter my own old age the ability to separate the flotsam and jetsam of daily living from the soulful gold is crucial. It's not always possible. As we all know "stuff" happens. Neighbours tick you off, the store is out of gluten-free bread, the price of gas went up even though the price of oil fell, etc. etc.

But I have more time to play the guitar, more time to garden, more time to spend with friends, go for long walks with the woman I love ... less money, but more time. (For me, humour about the vagaries of money in these uncertain times is difficult but necessary.) Sorting it all out can be tricky.

Being a volunteer in this group reminds me of the myth of Psyche and Eros. In one version of the myth, the first of Psyche's tasks is to sort a huge amount of mixed seeds before dawn or she will die. She knows if she attempts to do this job herself she will fail. Psyche collapses under the weight of this knowledge, and while she sleeps an army of ants do the job for her. Mission accomplished!

Now I'm not literally comparing my fellow volunteers to ants, but for me the metaphor applies. On many occasions

these lovely people help me "sort", as do the residents who live next to Maple Hill.

Getting back to the lucky thing that I started with at the beginning of this piece - at the potluck, I won both draws at the end of the evening. Fernande actually pulled my name out of the bowl twice. Talk about a sign.

Emil Johnson, Client Volunteer



Happenings...

Annual Dignity Memorial Golf Tournament

The Langley Hospice Society was delighted to receive \$6,200.00 from the 2011 Dignity Memorial Golf Tournament. Our sincere thanks go out to **Dignity Memorial Service Providers**, and **Henderson's Funeral Home** in Langley. The tournament proceeds were divided among hospice societies in the Fraser Valley.

Support Groups for 2012 We will be starting up new **adult support groups** in the New Year ~ groups are offered free of charge at the Society office, but pre-registration is required. Please call Shivani at (604) 530-1115 to register, or for more information.

Langley Hospice will be offering **support groups for children and teens** in 2012. The groups will be open to children and teens. We will also be offering **day camps for bereaved children and teens**. For more information, please contact Jane at 604-530-1115.

facebook

Find Us on Facebook!

Look for us on Facebook—just search for “Langley Hospice Society” from your Facebook page, and don't forget to press the “Like” button in the top right-hand corner of our page! Get up-to-the-minute information on the latest Society and Second Story Treasures Thrift Store events, support groups, and volunteer happenings!

Volunteer Corner



Congratulations to our Fall 2011 Client Volunteer Training Class ~ we wish you much success in your future volunteering endeavours!

Volunteer Hours January 1—October 31, 2011

- ♥ Client Volunteers 6,897 hours
- ♥ Store Volunteers 14,874 hours
- ♥ Office, Events, Board
 Newsletter & Other 3,534 hours

Thanks to all of you for your generous commitment to Langley Hospice!

Celebrate a Life Christmas is a time filled with warm memories of family and friends, near and far, past and present. It is a special time to honor those we love or who have touched our lives in a special way. We invite you to commemorate a loved one this Christmas, by writing their name on a memorial ornament, placing it on our tree, and writing a special message in our Memory Book. We will be at Willowbrook Mall (in the mall close to the Santa display) from Saturday, December 3rd through Saturday, December 17th. Please call us at 604-530-1115 for more information.

There are still shifts available for those wishing to volunteer at Celebrate a Life - if you'd like to help, please call Denise at 604-530-1115. A big thank you to those who are already helping out at the mall this year!



Heartfelt thanks to all of our dedicated volunteers for their continued commitment and support. We couldn't do it without you!

Celebrate the Season ... Make a Gift to Langley Hospice

Donated by _____

Address _____

City _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone (____) _____

Amount of gift: \$ _____

Type of payment: Cheque Visa

Visa Card No.: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please make your cheque payable to:
Langley Hospice Society.

Donations over \$10.00 will receive a tax receipt.

Donations (including Mastercard and Debit) can also be made online by clicking the "Donate Now" button at www.langleyhospice.com.

Memorial or Honor Gift:

In Memory of _____

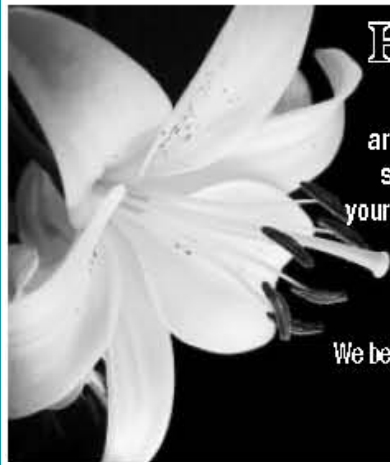
In Honor of _____

Notification of my gift to:

Address _____

An acknowledgement of your gift will be sent to the family.

Your generous donation helps support hospice care and bereavement support in our community. Thank you!



Henderson's Langley Funeral Home

No one wants to think about their death any sooner than they must, but making your arrangements in advance, called "preplanning," is a responsible, caring act that can reduce stress for your grieving loved ones. It's easy to understand how making decisions now about your final arrangements can help assure those left behind that your wishes are being honoured.

For a limited time we are offering a 12% discount.

We believe each family is special in their needs & we are committed to "Serving Beyond Expectation".
We invite you to stop by, see our location and meet our staff.

20786 Fraser Highway, Langley, 604-530-6488



September—November, 2011 Donations Made in Memory of:

*Ralph Beatch
Jean Beaumont
Sylvia Bovair
Bernadette Brandle
Laura Burzuk
Pieter de Boer
Anita Deighton*

*Edna Fjordbotten
Jean Head
Johanne Healy
Jo-Anne Hnetka
Howard Jackson
Les Koroscil
Margaret Logan*

*John Lukas
Violet McFarlane
Janet Neilson
Jacob Peterson
Bessie Jean Szakacs
Allan Tottenham*



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