

Fall 2012
Issue #1



Upcoming Events

Sept. 25 & 26

Dr. Alan Wolfelt's presentation on grief and companioning at the Beach Club in Parksville

October 24

Presentation on Advance Care Planning, film "Consider the Conversation" at Parksville Community Centre

December 1

Memory Tree begins, Open House and Bake sale at Valhalla from 10 - 4pm

December 9

A Gathering to Honour a Life - 2pm at the Parksville Community Centre

Groups at Valhalla

End of Life Support Group Wednesdays
11am - noon

Coping With Grief Group Tuesdays Oct. 23 - Nov. 27 6:30-8:30pm

The Winds of Change: Message from the Executive Director

In the past few months, OHS board members and staff have been busy reorganizing. Our team has been examining our programs and evaluating our core services in relation to the perceived needs of the communities of Oceanside.

There were more than 200 responses to our end-of-life survey this summer, which will help to inform many of our decisions. And by updating our website and kicking off our newsletter, we are placing increased emphasis on communication with our community partners and valued volunteers.

Our website and this newsletter will feature ongoing information about new OHS initiatives. The addition of Counselor Diane Hancox to the Hospice team will address the need for more bereavement supports in our community. We are very excited for Diane to lead two new client groups - an End of Life Support Group as well as a Coping with Grief Group, both at Valhalla.

On October 24th we will have a community film showing and information night on Advance Care Planning. Too often family members are left with difficult choices when it only takes a few minutes to record your wishes now, in

case something happens and you are unable to make them known later.

We are very pleased to be sponsoring two information sessions by Dr. Alan Wolfelt: "Understanding Your Grief" and "Companioning the Bereaved." These sessions are open to the public, and you can still call us to book your seat at the Beach Club on September 25th and 26th.

We are also arranging a presentation by a member of the Qualicum First Nation about the local indigenous peoples' traditions regarding death and dying.

As well, our Meet the Author series will resume in early November with writer and publisher Ken Budd. We will update our site with more details!

On page 5 of this newsletter we have a few questions for our volunteers - please have a look and let us know what you think. Responses can be emailed or dropped off at our office.

If you have ideas about our services or would like to contribute in other ways to our operations, contact me at 250 752 6227 or by email at lynn@oceansidehospice.com.

- Lynn Wood



Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another.

- Erma Bombeck



We Are Celebrating! OHS Achievements of 2012 (so far)



Finance Coordinator Heather with husband John at the Golf Tournament

- * Welcomed new board of directors at April AGM
- * Enhanced training with volunteers
- * Began talks with the town regarding our long-term tenure at Valhalla
- * Divested society of Aurora House in favour of investing in a long-term base of operations
- * Delivered numerous successful fundraisers
- * Obtained Gaming funding to support ongoing programs and services
- * Obtained United Way funding to offer Bereavement Counseling and public education in 2012/2013
- * Obtained Newman's Own funding to continue offering Equipment Loan Program
- * Obtained VIHA funding to build program delivery capacity and introduce advance care planning to the community
- * Obtained sponsorships to support public educational event focusing on grief and companioning with Dr. Alan Wolfelt
- * Surveyed the communities of Oceanside with regard to EOL Services
- * Planned for 2013 reorganization to utilize volunteers as Project Team Leaders in fundraising and respite components of our operations
- * Planned 2013 Gala public information and fundraising event bringing the Welsh Men's Choir to Qualicum Beach.

Spiritual Care and the Hospice Volunteer by D. Willis

Involvement in an end-of-life experience, our own or that of another, is one of life's 'givens,' along with the hope that a sense of true peace will be part of whatever else happens. Many factors can be involved in making this hope a reality, but the things we lump under the heading of *spiritual care* have to be high among them.

There is a big difference between 'religion' and 'spirituality.' Properly understood, spirituality is not about church-going, or about any specific religion or faith. Those we reach out to through hospice are likely to come from many different places, and some will have no avowed faith background. But we all share the spiritually-inspired need to have things 'right' in our lives, and that involves some very down to earth

things that become especially important when time itself becomes limited.

The word "Shalom" comes to us from the Jewish faith, and roughly translated can be taken to mean "may all be well between you and others - may all be well with you in yourself - and may all be well with you and God." If *Shalom* is to happen, the real need is to address those various areas with compassionate practicality, and most definitely not with a religious or any other well-meaning platitude. The opportunity to bring that kind of compassion, sensitivity and ultimate peace into a difficult situation is surely one of the greatest gifts we as volunteers for hospice share.

It's not hard to see the minefields. Relationship difficulties with family members or friends that

appear intractable. Clients exhibiting a sense of worthlessness - of being 'down' on themselves - of guilt over issues they can no longer address. And always, of course, there are those who feel abandoned by God in their darkest hours. Is it right to even think about *Shalom* - being right with others, with self, and with God - at times like that?

Well, experience shows that it most definitely is. Space is limited here, but I believe there are many of those experiences, and many helpful thoughts, among our group. Given the importance of the subject maybe we can find a way to share some of those things in the days to come.

Don Willis is a hospice Board Member, an Honorary Priest at St. Mark's Anglican Church in Qualicum Beach, and a former spiritual care team member at two residential hospices in Vancouver.

Volunteer Spotlight: Kiwi Stanners



Kiwi Stanners might not be someone you would think of as a usual hospice palliative care volunteer. The Nanoose resident retired from traveling the world as a pilot with the air force and commercial airlines.

Having previously volunteered with the Kiwanis, CNIB, and as a Block Watch Captain, Kiwi applied to work with hospice in 2005. Kiwi cited the sudden loss of both of his parents through motor vehicle accidents, as well as the death of a good friend in the early 2000's as part of his affinity to the Hospice work. He felt his calm nature and sense of humour might help those facing end-of-life bear the changes they would experience.



Kiwi and his wife Barb

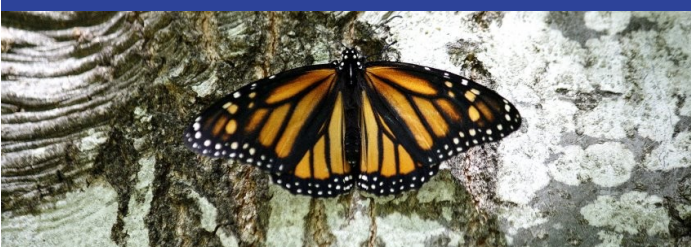
Since 2010, Kiwi has volunteered 800 hours of his time in the palliative care unit of Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, responding to the support needs of residents of Oceanside and the Nanaimo region who are referred there during the last days of life. His volunteer work involves supporting palliative patients through companionship, reassurance, and activities. Kiwi may be scheduled to sit with persons who are comatose or semi-comatose, being available during this sometimes isolating time.

Kiwi also works with families who have a palliative patient at home or who are in need of a break from caregiving, and he also supports family members after the death of their loved one.

In 2012, Kiwi led the volunteer group, which organized the Hike for Hospice, starting months ahead of the May 6th event. He contacted local walking groups and community clubs to get the interest started. Kiwi chose the route, walked and measured it, called all of the volunteers who would be at the event, and organized the registration team and walk supervisors on the route. Kiwi personally assisted with the set up and clean up for the reception held at Valhalla.

Through Kiwi's efforts and the work of his Hike team, \$4000 was raised for hospice programs and services. Kiwi continues to engender what is amazing about Hospice volunteers - an openness and caring for those struggling with end-of-life and a joy in living life to the fullest. A quiet yet effective presence, much valued by our hospice and its clients!

We would love to feature the stories of more of our volunteers ... If you are interested in being interviewed for a future newsletter, contact Lynn at 752-6227 or lynn@oceansidehospice.com



As long as there is someone who loves us, we will remain alive. Memories make us immortal. In truth, love will outlive even memories.

- Leo F. Buscaglia



Thoughts from a Summer Student by Michelle Kalmokoff



Michelle will graduate from VIU this Spring, with a BA in First Nations Studies and History.

I really enjoyed my summer working with the Oceanside Hospice Society. Almost 7 years ago I had a significant loss in my life – my sister Candace. For me, it felt like I had no choice but to enter a dark and heavy forest, and I was very lonely.

I wasn't introduced to Hospice until last Fall, with the death of my "Grumps" from cancer of the duodenum. I was impressed with the amount of help my family was given and at how quickly equipment deliveries were made to my grandparents' house. I didn't realize the extent of volunteer effort behind Hospice services until my time here, though.

I think what I will take away most when I go back to school this Fall is an awareness that one is not actually alone in the 'dark forest.' Yes, the forest *is* dark and you *are* lost – but there are people who try to hold up a light – and they are often Hospice Volunteers, and that is what Hospice is about.

My Hospice Experience by Nicole Dudek



Nicole has a BSc in Psychology from VIU. She has been working for the OHS since 2011.

Since the spring of 2011 I have had the honor of being a part of this important organization as it continues to expand and provide a vital service to the Oceanside Community. I began here as a Summer Student while working on my Bachelor of Science and becoming very interested in Psychology. I have now completed my degree in Psychology and am planning to pursue a Masters in Counseling Psychology.

As part of the Society I have had the opportunity to work with many truly amazing individuals, and have witnessed profound healing and growth in clients through the love and care provided by these individuals. In a society that tends to overlook the processes and emotions associated with death and dying, it has been inspirational to bear witness to the Hospice environment, which enables people to safely experience what they are feeling and journey through their own process. It is through this safe environment that letting go and healing can occur.

I want to thank all of the staff, volunteers and community members of Oceanside Hospice for the opportunity to be a part of this incredible team and for the sense of community I feel. Through my experience at Hospice I have gained a sense of what is possible when people get together from a place of deep understanding and a desire to help. Thanks to all!



*I think of the trees - and how simply they let go,
let fall the riches of a season.
how without grief (it seems) they can let go
and go deep into their roots for renewal and sleep
Imitate the trees.
Learn to lose in order to recover,
and remember that nothing stays the same for long,
not even pain,
psychic pain.
Sit it out.
Let it all pass.
Let it go.*

- May Sarton

Attending to Grief Together by Diane Hancox

Our death and grief-avoidant society results in many of us not fully understanding what grief is and what it means to 'die well.' Some try to deny, control or even rush through grief because this is how our family-of-origin modeled grieving. We may think of grieving as a sign of weakness, and understandably fear the pain involved when we grieve. For many, the grief around death has been pathologized – deemed bad or unhealthy – when in fact, it is a normal and necessary part of the human experience. As author Stephen Levine stated, "Attending to our unattended sorrow opens the way to new life."

The courage to face death and dying and to realize their significance is an opportunity for personal growth and the deepening of relationships between ourselves and others. Yet, most of us are not practiced in how to handle the intense feelings and foreign situations that accompany the dying and grieving processes. What is normal? What do I talk about with this person? How do I make the remaining time meaningful? What next?

At Oceanside Hospice, individual and group counseling is offered to help people understand these processes, and to address their accompanying emotional, social and spiritual impacts. I am honoured to facilitate the provision of these services.



Diane Hancox is Oceanside Hospice society's Counselor. She holds an M.A. in Counseling Psychology with an Emphasis in Depth Psychology.



Actions and words are the windows through which the heart is seen.

- North American Proverb

Gift: A Message from Program Coordinator Jean Wilson

My very favourite poet Mary Oliver, in her simple brilliance, was able to capture in her poem 'Philip's Birthday' what I am called to remember every day in my work and also in my life.

The gift that we receive... in the face of courage as we humbly listen to the challenges that confront those around us.

I am often told that the Hospice Training could be 'sold' as Life Training... it reminds us in our lives the importance of paying attention to the Swan and to take in its beauty. Simple!

Blessings,
Jean

*I gave,
to a friend that I care for deeply,
something that I loved.
It was only a small
extremely shapely bone
that came from the ear
of a whale.
It hurt a little
to give it away.*

*The next morning
I went out, as usual,
at sunrise,
and there, in the harbor,
was a swan.
I don't know
what he or she was doing there,
but the beauty of it
was gift.*

*Do you see what I mean?
You give and you are given.*

- Mary Oliver



Gratitude



Thank you to all of our amazing fundraising volunteers! The Coast Realty volunteer team and the OHS Hike for Hospice volunteers made this year's Hike for Hospice a big success. And the entire Riley family spent hours organizing and delivering the 15th Annual Golf Tournament. With their efforts both of these events were fun, meaningful, and contributed greatly to the work of the Oceanside Hospice Society.

With a small part-time staff, it is only through the continuous dedication of our volunteers that we are able to deliver the events and services that we do. All of our volunteers; and notably the Palliative Vigil and 1 to1 team, Equipment Delivery Team, Self Care Friday group, and Palliative Care Unit volunteers form the heart and soul of our Society.

We would also like to thank all the sponsors within the community who make so much possible; and our donors—thank you for thinking of us.



*I have arrived, I am home
In the here & in the now
I am solid, I am free
In the ultimate I dwell.*

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Volunteer Voice: Please take some time to reflect on these questions and let us know your thoughts!

1. Do you feel like a member of the “team”?
2. Do you have any suggestions for changes to improve the organization’s volunteer program?
3. What skills or talents do you have that we have never asked you to apply on our behalf?
4. Are there other areas within our organization in which you would like to volunteer?

Board of Directors

- Ian Mackay Chair
- Jim Grant Vice Chair
- Ruth Vandekamp Secretary/Treasurer
- Don Willis Director
- Patricia Buswell Director

Staff

- Lynn Wood, CAE Executive Director
- Jean Wilson Program Coordinator
- Heather Fraser Finance Coordinator
- Rachel Tranberg Executive Assistant
- Nicole Dudek Program Assistant
- Diane Hancox Contracted Counselor

Call for Submissions

We want to put together a cookbook! We are looking for recipes that will provide warmth, comfort, and nourishment. Drop off your best recipes in person, or via mail or email below.

If you have questions, suggestions, comments, or contributions, we want to hear from you:

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