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What Matters Most

The musings of a hospice chaplain by Paul Rumbolt

It's 7:30 a.m. and there's a gentle buzz happening at the Rosedale Hospice nursing station. Brenda, the night nurse concludes her 12-hour shift by briefing the incoming team on what we can expect for the day ahead.

Vince, one of our chefs, stops by with a cart laden with coffee and cinnamon buns. Oscar Wilde wrote, “I can resist anything but temptation”. Tell me about it.

As Hospice Calgary's spiritual care coordinator, I spend my days connecting with our end-of-life cancer patients and their families. When invited, I listen to their stories and in return offer back a gift of music.

I love it when I see the patients' feet start tapping and their eyes light up. Maybe I'm playing a favourite tune that hasn't been heard in a long time. Music has a way of reaching into the crevices of our memories and touching the core of our being.

My work also involves caring for our volunteers and staff. I'm here for every one who passes through our doors. Sometimes, all we need to know is that someone is there to listen.

When friends find out that I'm now a hospice chaplain, the response is almost always, “That must be so hard”. Actually, I love what I do! It is an absolute honour to care for people at the end of life.

Perhaps the greatest life lessons I've learned have come from the patients. They teach me that in the end, what matters most is how well did you live? How well did you love? And how well did you learn to let go?

I, in turn, am grateful to be part of the team that offers our patients and their families the opportunity to live as fully as they can during this time of transition.

“How well did you live?
How well did you love?
How well did you learn to let go?”



Spiritual Care Coordinator, Paul Rumbolt, sings to a Rosedale Hospice patient and a member of her family.