

Compassionate Connections



Hospice Calgary Newsletter | Winter 2023

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Charitable Impulse: **Al Kahanoff**

Al Kahanoff didn't know too much about Hospice Calgary's work except that his older brother Syd was a donor instrumental in Hospice Calgary's beginnings and later through his foundation. Al wants to carry on his brother's legacy through what he calls his "charitable impulse". He is "blown away" by the services at Hospice Calgary, especially the Children's Grief Centre. Maybe that's because Al is a former high school principal and teacher!



Al was born in Winnipeg and one of 4 children. He lived in many places growing up and eventually made Calgary his home with wife, Bernie, and their 2 daughters who are, as a proud father he shares, "very successful".

Al volunteers his time to make amazing culinary treats for our staff. He regularly drops off batches of warm-from-the-oven cookies to our offices. This past year he also treated our staff to 4 course home-cooked hot lunches exquisitely prepared and equally tasty. He does this because he feels it's important that staff get personal recognition for the work they do – something he remembers being meaningful when he and his staff at schools would be recognized by parents.

When asked about what people say is the best thing about him, Al shared that he's talkative and compassionate. We love when he stops by and shares stories from his past adventures that include movie making, stained glass, advocating for more Canadian literature in school curriculum, and golfing! Mostly we love the effort he puts into caring for our team through simple and delicious gestures.

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Hike FOR HOSPICE 2023 CALGARY



18TH ANNUAL EVENT



MAY 7TH 2023
AT FISH CREEK PARK*

REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 1ST

Hike for Hospice Calgary is a fundraiser open to all ages and abilities. The event provides participants with an opportunity to celebrate loved ones living with advanced illness and honour those who have passed away.

Each year, we walk a 5km route around Fish Creek Park to raise funds that support Hospice Calgary's mission.

***This year, with your help,
we hope to raise \$100,000.***

** option to attend virtually*



***become a sponsor
or event volunteer!***

contact us at hike@hospicecalgary.ca

hospicecalgary.ca/hike

Delightful Surprise at Rosedale

We are tremendously grateful to Parks Foundation Calgary for the grant we received to install outdoor holiday lights on many of the large trees at Rosedale Hospice.

The lights fit in beautifully on the quiet northwest street, and provide comfort and light during dark winter nights. One community resident remarked, "It is so nice to see the trees at Rosedale lit up this year! I imagine it makes the crescent feel more welcoming to families visiting their loved one, but it's also a delightful surprise for those of us living in the community."

Parks Foundation Calgary and the City of Calgary partnered to support outdoor improvements that allow Calgarians to embrace the outdoors. This improvement is a warm welcome for Rosedale Hospice and the community. Shout out to Ben and his team at Stella Lights for doing a fantastic job installing them.



Rosedale
Hospice



Lights outside Rosedale Hospice installed by Stella Lights

Jim Button's Rosedale Hospice Legacy

Jim Button was well-known and well-loved for his work throughout the Calgary community. He was a co-founder of Village Brewery and a leader in the marketing world for over 30 years. He has been recognized by the Top 40 under 40 awards and the Canadian Association of Fundraising Professionals.

In November 2022, Jim's battle with advanced cancer brought him to Rosedale Hospice. Many of the memories he created at our hospice are documented on his blog *Gather With Jim*. In the blog, Jim shares an incredible experience he had this past New Years' Eve.

Jim, his wife Tracey, and two other couples celebrated New Year's Eve in the Rosedale Hospice Fireplace Lounge. The three couples dined on Greek food from nearby Santorini's restaurant and talked for hours.

Jim and Tracey reserved the hospice guest room as a sanctuary for them to privately welcome in the new year. They were treated to a honeymoon-style setup from our team – complete with chocolates and champagne. For the first time in months, Jim and Tracey spent the night together in the same bed and in each other's arms, celebrating the start of 2023.

We know that spending time in a hospice can be challenging for families, especially so during the holidays. The staff and volunteers at Rosedale Hospice spend a great deal of time getting to know our patients and their family members. They do this not only to provide exceptional

medical care but also to offer personalized experiences and beautiful family memories.



Rosedale Staff receiving the Button Button award from Jim's wife, Tracey (right), and son, Jack (left).

Jim and Tracey recently recognized the entire team at Rosedale Hospice through the *Button Button Award* given out at this year's Dave Kelly Live Christmas Special at the Vertigo Theatre.

Sadly, Jim passed away on January 19, 2023. We would like to thank Jim, and his family, for allowing us to be a part of his journey. Jim, the light you brought to our hospice and to the needs of all hospice patients will never be forgotten.

Fun in The Village



The Village is a monthly evening drop-in program for client families. It allows client families to connect in a relaxed and supportive environment.

We were back in person for **The Village** in 2022 and hosted a ton of fun activities including BINGO and festive sweater making.

Kari Hoellwarth, Intake Coordinator, said, "One family shared how meaningful the program was to them after not being in for counselling in a while. They had two deaths close together last year. The night of the Village Bingo event was the first anniversary of one of the deaths. The other families showed love for them, helping them acknowledge what hard days anniversaries can be and thanked them for showing up and sharing the anniversary with everyone. It was one of the beautiful moments that make your heart fill with pride and love for what we do here".

If you are a current Children's Grief Centre family and you would like to learn more about the upcoming Village activities, please contact us at info@childrensgriefcentre.ca.



Mathison Program Room

Our largest program space has a new name! The Mathison Program Room is home to our child and teen grief groups and educational workshops. This space is named to honour Ron Mathison's generous donations to our programs over the past several years.

Ron is a notable entrepreneur within Calgary, spreading ties throughout the Oil and Gas and financial sectors. He is also a significant supporter of the community. Thank you, Ron, for supporting the children and teens of our Children's Grief Centre.



*Family's taking part in our December Village event:
Festive Garment Decorating*



Call for Volunteers: Telephone Grief Support

Families connected with our services through either the Living With Advanced Illness Centre or Rosedale Hospice can receive monthly **Telephone Bereavement Support** following the loss of their loved one.

This service matches trained volunteers who have also experienced the loss of someone close to them with caregivers or family members looking for support. The consistency of the volunteer creates a long-standing, trusting relationship.

Volunteering with this program is incredibly rewarding, and you can be a part of this impact.

Have you lost a loved one, and would you like to help support someone else through the grieving process? We are currently recruiting new Telephone Bereavement volunteers. Although not essential, having experience in counselling or nursing is a great compliment to the position.

Please reach out to info@hospicecalgary.ca for details on how to volunteer with us today!



Dying To Know: Upcoming Online Seminars

February 21

Cross Cultural Beliefs, Traditions, and Funeral Customs

Learn about the basic beliefs, customs, and traditions of other cultures that may be unfamiliar to you. Kathy Cloutier, Manager of Community Relations with McInnis & Holloway Funeral Homes, will share her extensive experience with the human need that crosses all cultures – the need for understanding in the sorrow of death.

March 21

Being with Uncertainty and Finding Wholeness

One of our greatest challenges may be finding peace in times of uncertainty. Dr. Allen Donsky, Psychiatrist and Professor, will show us how choosing compassion can help us be with uncertainty and find joy in the midst of suffering.

REGISTER
FOR FREE

hospicecalgary.ca/events

Living with
**Advanced
Illness**
Centre

A Welcoming Wait

Hospitality is a long-standing Hospice Calgary practice, so we were excited to re-open the reception space in our S.E. location this fall. The waiting area is intentionally set-up for fun and engagement for those waiting for their counselling appointments. It has been a delight to see families connecting and competing together with foosball, tic-tac-toe, and ring toss. Clients have filled sketchbooks with inspiring art and messages about their grief to share with others.

We have heard that when in the waiting area, people are reminded and relieved to see their family is not alone and that others are navigating grief in similar ways. People have also shared how good it feels to laugh and play for a few minutes without tending to other responsibilities. Posted in the waiting area is a reminder to our clients that grief support is not only about what is hard to carry but it is also about being seen and supported through it all as they explore, in their own unique way, the changing shape of their identity and family after a loss:

May I laugh if I want to laugh

May I cry if I want to cry

May I be quiet if I want to be quiet

May I know I have permission to be



Neon-Dreams Come True for Children's Grief Centre

This past fall, Willow Park Wine & Spirits hosted its 29th annual Charity Wine Auction. Since its inception, the Charity Wine Auction has donated over \$5 million to local charities. This year, the event committee chose the Children's Grief Centre as one of many charities to benefit from this exclusive event.

"Upon learning of the incredible support, stories of hope and joyful moments created through the Children's Grief Center, we felt this was an extremely valuable organization in the community." -Karen and Reid Henuset

On October 1st, guests gathered at the event decked in their brightest attire to enjoy the Neon-Dreams themed event. Whether it was the laser tunnel entryway, the live music, or the impressive sampling of food and beverages, this year's event

offered guests a treat for the senses at every turn. Guests supported the community happily, as they participated in the live and silent auction. As a result, **the 2022 event raised \$25,000 for the Children's Grief Centre.**

We are incredibly grateful that the children, teens, and families from our centre will benefit from the proceeds of this exciting event.



Hospice Calgary Volunteers at the Neon Dreams Event - Photo by Phil Crozier