

Reflecting on National Hospice Palliative Care Week

By Margaret Paan

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National Hospice Palliative Care Week was celebrated from May 5 to May 11.

This year's theme was "Palliative Care is for You?", highlighting how a life-limiting illness, caregiving and bereavement touch us all in some way, and that supports are available for those in need.

Bethell Hospice is a community organization committed to supporting those with a life-limiting illness, those who care for them, and those who have experienced the death of a loved one.

Support is provided both within our Hospice Residence program, and within our Community Hospice Program. We work with our local Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team partners to bring our expertise and services out of the walls of Bethell Hospice and into all the spaces where those with palliative care needs reside, including personal homes, retirement and long-term care homes, and the hospital.

Within our community program, we offer support groups, one-to-one counselling, art and music therapy, therapeutic touch, and in-home volunteer visiting. There are supports appropriate for all ages, including children and youth. We recognize the incredible diversity of our community and the need for inclusive customized care, welcoming people of all backgrounds, cultures, and religions.

Our expert team of Social Workers and Spiritual Care & Grief Counsellors are passionate about

personalizing a care plan that addresses the uniqueness of each person's needs. For example, our In-Home Volunteer Visiting Program is designed to support both the individual with palliative care needs and their familial caregivers. Built around the person's unique needs, trained volunteers are matched to provide companionship and caregiver respite.

Our 10-bed Hospice Residence in Inglewood offers 24/7 expert clinical care for those who are in the last weeks and days of their lives. Our staff consists of nurses, physicians, personal support workers, spiritual care & grief counsellors, social workers, housekeeping, facilities, and many other back-office support roles. In addition to our staff, our team includes hundreds of specially-trained volunteers who help with both direct and indirect roles, ensuring our residents, their loved ones and visitors are offered an exceptional experience.

All our Bethell Hospice services are provided at no cost, supported by funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health and augmented by very generous donations from our community. We are grateful for this ongoing support and will continue to advocate to our government to ensure that our critical services are sustained and available for all.

The Mission of Bethell Hospice is to provide compassionate specialized care for quality living, dying and bereavement. This is not possible if we remain the "best kept secret" in Caledon and so we focus on stretching, reaching, and boldly sharing who we are and what we do to serve the communities of Caledon, Dufferin, Brampton and beyond.

Living and dying is a universally-shared human experience. As such, palliative care is for you. Please join us in reflecting on, and celebrating, National Hospice Palliative Care Week and know that hospice palliative care will be here when you, and those you love, need it the most.