



Langley Hospice News

Volume 24 Issue 4

20660 - 48 Avenue, Langley, B.C. V3A 3L6

December 2017



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.



With the holiday season upon us and as the year comes to an end, many of us take time to reflect. For me it is a time, not only for reflection, but a time of great admiration and heartfelt appreciation for the contributions and support we've received throughout the year from all of you. Your giving of your time, wisdom, and donations truly means so much.

The holidays can be particularly difficult for those grieving the loss of a loved one. Allowing yourself or someone you know and love the time and space to grieve and honour their person may be one of the greatest gifts you give this year. Through all our programs and services, including Second Story Treasures Thrift Store, we will always be here to help ease the stress of the holidays as you celebrate the season.

This edition of our newsletter highlights some of our recent "happenings", upcoming groups and trainings, as well as drop-in coffee mornings over the holidays. We've also included useful tips and information on coping with grief during the holidays for everyone grieving a loss.

This is a special and difficult time of year as good cheer and joy abound. Please take good care and we look forward to seeing you all in 2018! On behalf of the Langley Hospice Society Staff and Board of Directors, we wish you and yours the very best of the season.

Nancy Panchuk
Executive Director



Coping with Grief During the Holidays

Despite the joys of the holiday season, it can be a stressful time for many people, especially for families who are coping with the loss of a significant person. When families and friends gather to celebrate the holidays, the empty presence of a family member or a friend can weigh heavily on those left behind.

Children and teens grieve in the context of their families, which means that they learn how to cope with their loss by the way they see their families' members grieve. For families who do not talk about their losses or feelings, the children and teens are also less likely to talk openly about their thoughts and feelings. This could lead to suppressing emotions, which can be destructive later on in life, possibly leading to unhealthy ways of coping to numb the pain.

View the holidays as a time to honour your person. Many feel that it is not appropriate to talk about a loss during the

holiday season, believing that by mentioning or talking about a person who died will dampen the mood. Therefore, the topic becomes the elephant in the room, where people feel the presence of something large, but generally do their best to ignore or avoid it.

However, because a person has died, it should not mean that person was never a part of your life. It provides comfort to many children and teens to know that the bond between themselves and their person can continue, regardless of whether the person is physically there or not.

Holidays are sometimes seen as a time of celebration but they can also be an opportunity to honour the people who have died by acknowledging them in family gatherings or traditions.

Include the person in traditions. Some cultural practices include setting up a special place in the home to offer food or flowers to the person whom they have lost. At family dinner gatherings, set a plate for your person to remember and show your children that there will always be a spot for the person in your lives.

Encourage the sharing of memories. Sharing memories can often be healing, as many people tend to share the funny or warm stories about their person, leading to smiles and laughter. Many children and teens fear the loss of memories or not having memories about their person so it may give them comfort to hear the stories. It may also provide insight into how other people might have known this person.

Embrace "different". Although we usually attribute traditions to holidays, the death of a family member/friend has already brought on big changes to your lives. You probably already feel like things are and will be different, so it may be a good time to introduce new traditions into your holidays by honouring your person together. For example, instead of a traditional holiday dinner, prepare the favourite foods of your person, or, if your person really liked watching movies, go to the movie theatre as a family.

It is okay to cry. Usually holidays are associated with laughter and joy and many people who are grieving feel that they are not allowed to be sad, or many feel they will be criticized for being sad and bringing others down. However, many of the classic Christmas movies have some sort of tear-jerker moments, so why is it so wrong to be sad? For most people, we cannot sustain feeling sad for too long, so sometimes it is nice to feel refreshed after a good cry. Encourage your child or teen and even yourself to have your moments of sadness because it is a natural and normal emotion to feel, especially if you miss someone.



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Activities to do as a family to honour your person:

- Handout strips of coloured paper to each family member. Ask each person to write down a memory about the person who died. After each person has shared their memory, create a paper chain with the strips and hang it somewhere in the home.
- Place clothespins along a set of string lights. Have each person clip a picture or a small object that belonged to the person on the clothes pins. Hang the lights on the wall or on a tree.
- Hand out a ribbon to each family member and have each person write down a word that describes their person. Tie the ribbon onto a tree or a wreath.
- Keep a daily advent calendar starting on December 1st and write down one thought of gratitude about the person for each day.
- Go for a walk, each person wearing something that belonged to the person (ie. shirt, hat, scarf). Or if there is something your person wore all the time (i.e. a specific type of hat) have everyone wear a matching one for the walk.
- At a family gathering, have each person light a candle at the start of the meal. Make time for everyone to gather together at the end of the gathering so that each person can say a wish for the person before blowing out the candle.
- Get a blank t-shirt and have each person write down/draw something about the person on the shirt. Place the shirt on the chair at the person's place at the table or their favourite sitting spot.

Some tips to remember when doing memorial activities:

- ◆ Involve your child and teen by encouraging them to initiate or plan activities.
- ◆ Role model by doing the activities yourself and having the children and teens see you do it.
- ◆ If you would like to do the activity together as a family, make sure to plan the time and space for it by limiting distractions and to avoid feeling rushed.
- ◆ Keep the activities simple so that all age ranges and abilities can participate.
- ◆ If your child/teen does not want to do the activities, give them the option to pass. Sometimes children and teens may want privacy to do it, so give them the space but have the materials readily available so they can do it on their own time.
- ◆ Remember to take care of yourself so that you can be available to listen and support your child or teen if they want to talk about their person and their feelings.

Saying good bye to a loved one is not an easy task, and grief is a very personal journey, but that doesn't mean it must be travelled alone. The Langley Hospice Society offers loss support programs for adults, children and teens, free of charge through its Supportive Program Centre in Langley, including one-to-one and group support, outreach programs and seasonal day camps for grieving children and teens. No referral is needed. For more information please visit: www.langleyhospice.com.

Wendy Sashikata
Child/Teen Program Coordinator



Happenings...

Summer 2017 Children's Camp

Our "Intergalaxy" themed **Camp Chrysalis 2017** was a huge success! Blasting off on August 17th to 19th, 35 campers and 13 volunteer leaders enjoyed three sunshine days at Camp Elkgrove in Abbotsford, filled with space-themed activities such as a scavenger hunt for Martian gifts, astronaut training, alien smiles, galaxy jars, costume runway, and water play. Once again, camp achieved its main goal of providing a space for campers to connect with others who are grieving a loss of a significant person, by seeing re-connections between past campers as well as the formation of new friendships.



Many thanks go to our energetic volunteers (Alexis, Rajani, Adrienne, Brendan, Chiara, Dominic, Rubina, Mira, Konnor, Rachel, and Jasmine) for being great, caring leaders for the campers! In addition, 10 junior leaders, comprised of teen participants of the Langley Hospice Child and Youth Program, led sharing circles and a powerful lantern ceremony for the campers to talk about and honour the person who died. We were very impressed by the superb mentorship and leadership the junior leaders provided for their younger peers, demonstrating that it is okay for kids to have fun and not feel alone in their grief. We at LHS feel very lucky and grateful for everyone involved in camp who shared their time and wisdom with us!

Thank you to the Langley Soroptimists, the Aldergrove Elks, and all the caregivers for their contributions and support for Camp Chrysalis! Thank you to Jaclyn Carmichael for the delicious meals and treats that we all wanted seconds (and thirds) of! To Ria Brand, our Child and Youth Support Worker, congratulations on a great debut as Co-Camp Chrysalis Coordinator!

Sip 'n Stretch Yoga Fundraiser



Adrienne, a certified yoga instructor who teaches drop-in yoga for teens and adults at LHS, hosted a Sip and Stretch fundraiser to benefit the teen bereavement program. The fundraiser was held at Newland's and raised a total of \$435! Each participant was guided through an hour of gentle yoga and then got to sip on a drink after. Adrienne has a big heart and has generously given her time to support grieving teens in her community. Thank you, Adrienne!

The 7th Annual West Fine Art Show ~ "Remembering" Edition

moved to a new location this September, hosted by the Dejong Family at their Glass House Estate Winery in South Langley. The show opened with a VIP Reception on the Friday evening, where guests were the first to view the works of some of Western Canada's finest artists while they enjoyed the fine wine bottled onsite, musical entertainment by Ross, with food provided by JD Turkey Farms and Bonetti Meats. This unique partnership between the West Fine Art Society and the Langley Hospice Society saw more than \$6,000.00 in

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partial proceeds from the weekend show, benefitting the Langley Hospice Society, and bringing the total funds raised to date to \$50,000 over the last five years.

The **Cedar Rim Fall Fashion Show & Ladies Night** was a brand new partnership for the Langley Hospice Society and Cedar Rim Nursery. This event happens annually in October, and brought out over 200 guests to enjoy wine and appies, a phenomenal fall fashion show, gardening and fashion demonstrations, a private discounted shopping experience, and more throughout the evening. Over \$10,000 was raised through tickets sales, a live and silent auction, 50/50 raffle, and private donations. A fabulous time was had by all, and our staff and volunteers were grateful for the opportunity to work with the Bruce family, and the entire Cedar Rim team.

Spirituality Training

A number of our adult client volunteers took part in the Spirituality Training that all volunteers working in the hospice residence attend. The fall session included eleven palliative volunteers and one of our children's program staff members.



Children's Grief Awareness Day happens the third Thursday in November and this year, with some help from our donors and supporters, the Langley Hospice Society painted the town blue on November 16th by lighting up our Supportive Program Centre in Langley in **BLUE LIGHTS** and inviting the community to join us by **WEARING BLUE** in honour of the grieving children and teens in our community. Our Child & Youth Bereavement Program staff hosted an Open House in the afternoon and welcomed the community to stop by and find out more about the programs and services available to support grieving children and teens.

Giving Tuesday Langley...You've all heard about Black Friday...and Cyber Monday...well now there's Giving Tuesday...a civic movement that is growing annually, and providing an opportunity to celebrate and promote volunteerism and philanthropy in the community. The Langley Hospice Society joined the local **#LangleyGives** team and hosted a number of activities throughout the community on Tuesday, November 28th. Highlights included an early morning pancake breakfast at the Langley Events Centre with TOL Firefighters, the Vancouver Giants, Save-on-Foods Stores, Township of Langley Mayor Jack Froese, and staff from Langley MLA Rich Coleman's office, followed up by participating in the puck drop with Langley Volunteers at the Vancouver Giants win against Seattle that evening!



Mark Your Calendar...

Society Office Christmas Hours The Supportive Program Centre office will be closed on **Monday, December 25** and **Tuesday, December 26**, as well as on **Monday, January 1**. Office hours on **December 27, 28 and 29** are **9am - 3pm**.

Second Story Treasures Holiday Schedule The Thrift Store will be closed for the holidays and seasonal maintenance from **Saturday, December 23** through **Tuesday, January 2, reopening at 10:00am on Wednesday, January 3**. We will be open to accept donations only from **11am-3pm** on **December 27, 28, 29 and 30**, as well as from **9am-3:30pm** on **Tuesday, January 2**.

Drop-In Coffee Mornings Over the Holidays There will be two drop-in coffee mornings over the holidays: on Wednesday, December 13th and Wednesday, January 3rd from 10am – noon, for anyone who is grieving, and who would like to stop by for a chat.

Bereavement Support Groups Two grief support groups will be starting in mid-February: a morning group for general support—days to be decided—and a Thursday evening group for parents who have lost an adult child to overdose or suicide, starting on Thursday, February 15th. If you are interested in joining either of these groups, or accessing any of our adult grief support programs, please contact Linda at 604-530-1115.

Basic Training will be starting on Wednesday, February 13, 2018; this 10-week Langley Hospice Certificate Training Program covers issues on life and death, as well as grief and loss and related skills. Fee is \$150.00; for more information or to register, please contact Fernande at 604-530-1115.

Thank
You

A **HUGE SHOUT OUT** to the many volunteers who've helped us out with a couple of new initiatives over the past few months, including an annual appeal and our new residence campaign, in addition to our regular events and activities. We also want to thank Langley Volunteers for connecting us with new volunteers to help us through what has been a very busy November this year. Thank YOU!!! We have the best volunteers anywhere!

Many thanks to **Cedar Rim Nursery** for their generous donation of mature plants—pansies, cabbages and Dusty Millers—and **Botanus** for their kind donation of bulbs which will bloom in the spring. Thank you for helping us to create a more welcoming and beautiful place for the comfort of our residents and their families at a difficult time in their lives.

Thanks to generous funding from the **G & F Financial Group**, the Langley Hospice Society will continue to offer our new Adult Bereavement Program, Supporting Traumatic Grief – a loss support group for parents who have experienced the traumatic loss of a child of any age. These include losses as a result of suicide or overdose. For more information about this and other loss support groups, please contact Linda Sheridan at our Langley Hospice Society Supportive Program Centre by email: adultgriefsupport@langleyhospice.com or by telephone at 604.530.1115.

We'd like to express our gratitude to the **Living Waters Church** in Fort Langley and their **Social Justice Network**, for their continued support and annual contribution to funding of the programming we offer through our Supportive Program Centre.

It is because of support from local businesses and organizations like these, as well as individual donations and community support, that we are able to be responsive to the needs of our growing community, and ensure access to important palliative and bereavement care and support for individuals and their families - at the time they need it most. Thank you to all of our donors, volunteers and friends!

**October—November, 2017
Donations Made in Memory of:**

*Rose Abernethy
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Langley Hospice Society
 langleyhospice.com
 Providing compassionate care and support since 1983

The holiday season can be especially difficult for those who are grieving the loss of a loved one...

Allowing yourself, or someone you know and love, the time and space to grieve may be the greatest gift you give this year.

We hope as you make your plans this holiday season, that you will consider a gift to the Langley Hospice Society to help fund important palliative and bereavement care and support for individuals and their families at the time they need it most.

www.langleyhospice.com



Wander through four Christmas-themed light gardens and one 210-foot musical light tunnel and be overcome by the warmth and wonder of the season. Kids can help Santa find his misplaced presents while adults, sit, shop and eat.

Give in to the wonder of the season this year at Glow.

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Please note: A charitable tax receipt will be issued for donations of \$25.00 or more. Registered Charity # 11900 5353 RR0001

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