



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

The House that Love Built

*By Christa Fox,
Chair, Cowichan Hospice House Task Force*



2019 was a momentous and historic year for Cowichan. It will be remembered both for the euphoria the community experienced as we gathered in July for the sod-turning for Cowichan Hospice House and for the phenomenal accomplishment of reaching our campaign goal to make 'the House that Love Built' a reality.

It has taken your amazing gifts of time, expertise and funds to raise this house! Thank you!

As the House rose rapidly from the ground in the second half of 2019, attention turned to planning the program of care. While Island Health will fund operations and provide the expert medical staff, thanks to your ongoing support, Cowichan Hospice staff and volunteers will provide emotional, spiritual and practical support to ensure that people can live well at the end of life, with those they love close by.

If you have not driven past Cairnsmore Place recently, I encourage you to see with your own eyes the beautiful work you have made possible. So much has happened since we turned the sod together. We will celebrate together, virtually or in person, on Opening Day coming up this fall!

Cowichan Hospice House will be completed by the development of beautiful gardens. Thank you to the five Rotary Clubs of the region for their ongoing hard work in support of this beautiful and thoughtfully designed space.

I hope all of you are safely home and healthy.
Please, take good care of yourselves.

We acknowledge the privilege of living, working and volunteering in traditional unceded Coast Salish Territory.



Eric and Carmen's Story

By Shelley Kuecks, Palliative Services Coordinator

We are incredibly privileged in our work at Hospice—the work that your generosity makes possible. We walk alongside those on their own journeys of death, dying and grief, and often get to meet people as their whole, unbridled selves. Being able to witness and honour people's sorrow and pain, as well as their strength, resilience and wisdom—from this we learn, and we grow too.

Eric* first called Hospice in 2015 on the advice of his doctor. He'd been diagnosed with a disease that would most likely progress slowly, but could also end his life quickly and without much warning. He didn't appear ill but came to find out what we offered in case he wanted support later.

He had been married to the love of his life for 33 years. Though their love story is not mine to share, I can share the words that inspired his quest to win her heart, for I will remember them always...

"Faint heart never won fair lady."

I was always a little surprised each time Eric came back to Hospice. He was, what you might call, a *man's man*. But the thought of having to leave his wife brought tears to his eyes. It was clear he wanted to make sure she would be okay after he was gone.

I often wondered what she was like, the 'fair lady' of his love story. Then one day he said she wanted hospice support, too.

And so I met Carmen*, the bright, spirited and force-to-be-reckoned-with woman of his heart.

In my sessions with each of them, we talked about how they were communicating (or not!), the different ways they were each dealing (or not!) with the idea of his death, the struggles to try to live a 'normal' life under the ever-present shadow of his disease, the constant changes to his health and the accompanying worries. Their sessions were separate not because they kept anything from each other, but because it was a safe place to sort

Their sessions were separate not because they kept anything from each other, but because it was a safe place to sort out their individual thoughts and feelings.

out their individual thoughts and feelings. It was also a buffer of sorts between the future that was looming and their struggle to be present in their everyday lives.

Over the four years we were connected, there were long periods of time where I didn't see them. There were

times when death felt very close and times when hope for life was reignited. During the good days they were busy living their lives and doing the things they wanted to do, together.

Eric died in 2019, with Carmen holding his hand.

He had always said he wasn't ready to die, but when the time truly came there was acceptance, humour, and immense love for his wife. Theirs is a love story I will not soon forget.

Thank you, Eric and Carmen, for allowing Hospice to be part of your journey and your love story. Thank you also to those who make this incredibly important work possible.

**Names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.*



YOUR GENEROSITY MADE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

In 2019, **909** people in the Cowichan Region were served by **one or more** Cowichan Hospice programs:

Support for Those Who are Grieving

321

Support for People Living with Serious Illness

245

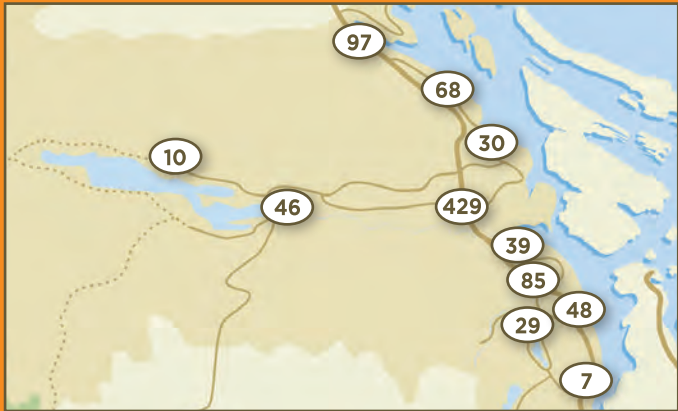
Support for Family Members

319

Support with Advance Care Planning

123

Where Your Support is Helping



- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 68 Chemainus | 429 Duncan | 48 Mill Bay |
| 85 Cobble Hill | 97 Ladysmith | 29 Shawnigan Lake |
| 39 Cowichan Bay | 46 Lake Cowichan | 10 Youbou |
| 30 Crofton | 7 Malahat | 21 Out Of Area |

Advance Care Planning Workshops

In 2019, we held nine ACP workshops in the community and at Hospice.

123 people talked about their wishes for care at the end of life and who they would choose to make health care decisions for them.



"I never thought about my future health care wishes before. I am ready to talk to my family about what is important to me."

"I want my doctor to know who I am as a person, not just as a patient."



VOLUNTEERS HAVE SERVED AN AVERAGE OF SEVEN YEARS EACH.



Dianne Whetstone has been contributing to Cowichan Hospice care for 22 years.



Thank You

to the Amazing Volunteers of the Cowichan Hospice House Task Force

Pictured above, top row from left: Dr. Susan Barr, Deb Henderson (in memory of her many contributions), Susan Beaubier, Dr. Mark Sanders, Don McClintock, Gretchen Hartley (ED)

Bottom row from left: Dorothy Johnstone, Christa Fox

Not pictured: Dr. Valorie Masuda, Rob Hutchins, Mona Kaiser, Jenn Woike, Helen Dunlop, Andrew Fox, Denise McKinlay, Rob Calnan, Steve Housser, Nancy Buan and Claire Wessan

Thank You
for Long and Dedicated
Service to Our Cowichan
Community:

5 YEARS

Beryl Mallinson • Dr. Susan Barr
Lyn Merryfeather • Natalie Weeks
Ronda Nicklen • Fran Milne • Victoria Mills

10 YEARS

Christa Fox • Francine Tournier
Joan Milne • Rose Wall • David Pope

Being at
Hospice is
personally
enriching,
comforting
and
joyful.

**Sneak peek
into 2020:**
A virtual
Volunteer
Support
Session



*Going through the
volunteer training was
life-changing.*

Advanced Volunteer Training Sessions

included suicide prevention, crisis compassion and personal boundaries, as well as traumatic loss facilitator training. In addition, nine new volunteers joined Hospice during our fall Deep Listening Training.



My Journey through Traumatic Loss

By Tonya Kilmer

Nearly two years ago, my husband, Ben Kilmer, went missing on Vancouver Island. The shock, trauma, and complete overwhelm were indescribable. There was no manual on how to navigate, no words of advice, no direction ... nothing.

It was total and utter chaos. I was living in a nightmare, but I was responsible to maintain the utmost strength, calm and poise for my two young children, no matter what.

Five months later, my beloved husband was found, deep in the wilderness. To our complete shock and disbelief, he had taken his own life—a reality that I never thought would be mine.

My husband was a man whom I loved deeply and who loved me. He was a man who always put me and our children first. He had a great zest for life and outdoor adventure, and he never suffered from mental illness—the most astounding part of this all.

So, to say that my grief was profound would be an understatement. How could this have happened? How is this my story?



Reflecting back, I am shown a picture of my acutely-grieving-self: someone who was fighting every day to process, to function and to heal. I was dealing with splitting headaches, an inability to multi-task, difficulty remembering and focusing, low motivation and exceptional 'heaviness' despite exercising, eating healthy, seeing a therapist and spending quality, tender time with my children.

I had been looking to join a support group for suicide survivors, but at this point, because Ben's disappearance was so public, and because I was still trying to process that he took his own life, I wasn't comfortable disclosing my identity and 'revealing what had happened' by joining such a group.

The Hospice traumatic loss group was offered, and I know now that it was Divine Intervention at work. It was exactly what I needed and truthfully, what our community needs.

It was a group where the 'pressure' to speak and to actively share our stories was non-existent. I could slowly let my guard down, knowing that I was not

alone. I could slowly unveil my story. It was a place that garnered trust and realization that traumatic tragedy is not just a part of my story, but a part of others' as well. It was a place where privacy and disclosure were held sacred, and friendships were fostered.

I could speak to all the other incredible services and resources that Hospice delivered to me and my family. I could speak to the beautiful, love and comfort-wrapped packages for my children that met them in their grief and helped them to 'feel', to express and to process the loss of their daddy. I could speak to the therapeutic touch offerings that helped to ease my mind, my tension and overwhelming stress ...

But, I would have to write a novel.

I would not be where I am today without Hospice's support.

"Not all of us can do great things, but we can do little things with great love." – Mother Theresa

I believe that Hospice can, and has, done both.

Profound Connections

By Cheryl Cameron



When I first met Martin, he was skeptical about how a Hospice volunteer might help him. We only got the chance to meet twice, yet our brief relationship solidified something immense in both of us.

We spent part of our limited time together recording stories of his life on his tape recorder. He had a small book of questions that I would ask, one-by-one. He was anxious to complete this project as a gift for his young grandchildren.

But before we could chronicle all Martin yearned to say, I was called away to care for my mother in Alberta, who was moving into a Hospice herself. While my brother and I focused on spending quality time with her, I couldn't help but think about Martin. I stayed in touch through email.

Two weeks later, my mom's palliative doctor recommended that I return home briefly for a break. Mom would be stable for a few weeks. During my drive west, the Cowichan Hospice team called to tell me Martin had suddenly taken a turn for the worse. I immediately called his wife and asked her to pass along my wishes for peace.



*I had to accept
that life, illness,
and death
have their own
trajectories in
all our lives.*

Martin died a short time later, the night before I arrived home.

The next day I called, and had a good, long visit with Martin's wife. She told me he had hoped I would be there during his passing. This really touched me. Even though our time together was brief, we'd made a profound connection.

I wrestled for a long time with guilt that his project did not get completed and that one of his final wishes, my presence during his passing, wasn't granted either. Though he was expected to live longer, I had to accept that life, illness, and death have their own trajectories in all our lives.

Martin emailed me while I was away in Alberta. I will cherish this lovely message from him. It serves to remind me why I am a Hospice Volunteer.

Here's a small excerpt:

"... I am blown away with your dedication to the volunteer program. And finally, you should know, your support to me is a treasure I never expected but is valued more than I have verbalized. See you when you get back."

Thank you,

Martin

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To learn how you can support hospice care in Cowichan,
visit cowichanhospice.org or call 250-701-4242

We have done our best to include everyone who made a contribution of \$200 or more between January 1 and December 31, 2019.

We apologize in advance for any errors or omissions.

Thank you for supporting the Cowichan Hospice House campaign in 2019



\$100,000+

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A Special Thanks

to the Cowichan Valley Regional Hospital District and the City of Duncan for their generous contributions

Dear Friends,

How wonderful to join with so many of you to celebrate breaking ground for Cowichan Hospice House this past July. Thanks to your wonderful contributions this is truly becoming ‘the House that Love Built’.

*A*s the house becomes a reality, Cowichan Hospice grief and palliative programs continue to evolve and grow to meet current community needs. None of this—strengthening existing programs and building anew—would be possible without your support.

Your contributions in 2019 supported a new traumatic loss group. We are honoured that Tonya Kilmer chose to share how this group facilitated change in her life as she faced the sudden death of her husband and took care of her grieving children.

Cowichan Hospice House will provide more than excellent pain and symptom management to help people live well at the end of their lives. Your support will enable connections with family, the pleasure of a taste of familiar food, or listening to a beloved piece of music. Thanks to you, a daughter recently arrived from out of town will be able to talk about her fears with a compassionate listener, and a friendly helper will encourage children to find the playhouse in the garden.

Writing to you during the COVID-19 pandemic we are filled with gratitude for all who have stepped up to the challenge of finding new ways to support people seeking hospice care, while keeping them safe. New programs will reflect this ever-changing reality.

With your ongoing contributions, compassionate and life-affirming support will always be available to people during difficult transitions in their lives.



Gretchen
Hartley
Executive
Director



Jamie
Goodman
Board
President

Thank you always, for the difference that you make.

Jamie and Gretchen

Jamie Goodman
Gretchen Hartley

Our Vision:

Compassionate,
person-centered,
end-of-life and
bereavement
care available
to anyone,
anywhere in the
Cowichan region.

Our Values:

Compassion
Respect
Integrity
Collaboration
Honouring Life

2019 FINANCIALS

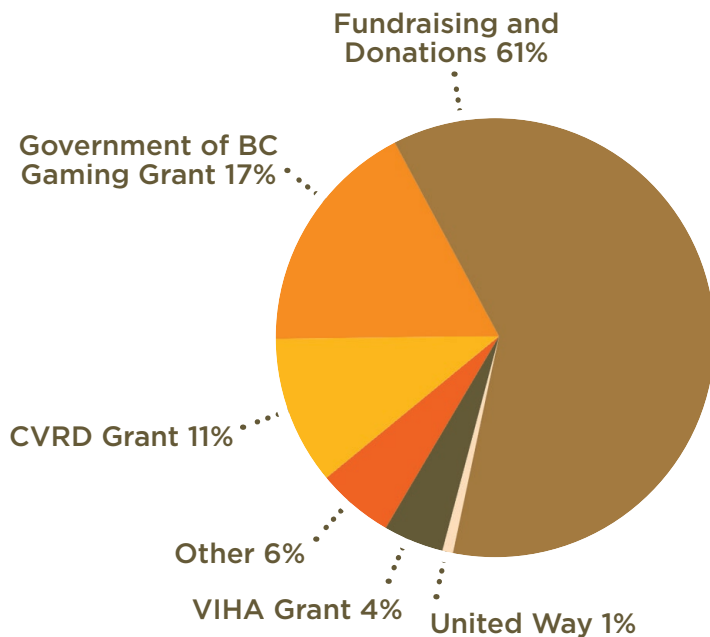
Balance Sheet

	Operating Fund 2019	Capital Fund 2019	Hospice House Fund 2019	Total 2019	Total 2018
Current Assets	\$ 476,057	\$ 219,352	\$4,758,448	\$5,453,857	\$1,757,691
Current Liabilities	\$ 235,085		\$4,758,448	\$ 4,993,533	\$ 1,364,241
Net Assets	\$ 240,972	\$ 219,352		\$ 460,324	\$ 393,450
Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 476,057	\$ 219,352	\$4,758,448	\$5,453,857	\$ 1,757,691

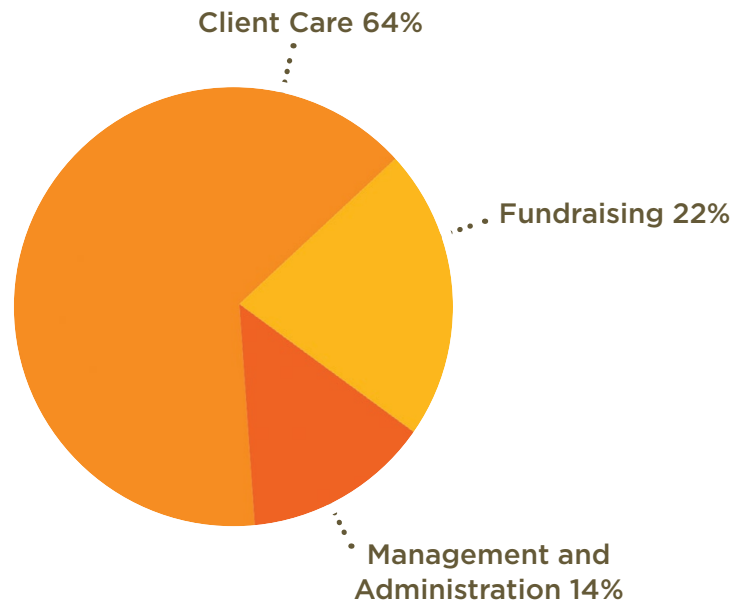
Income Statement

Revenues	\$ 561,468		\$ 371,786	\$ 933,254	\$ 628,877
Expenses	\$ 495,598	\$ 7,542	\$ 371,786	\$ 874,926	\$ 614,030
Excess Revenue Over Expenses	\$ 65,870	\$ (7,542)		\$ 58,328	\$ 14,847

OPERATING REVENUE*



OPERATING EXPENSES*



*Volunteers contributed a \$198,340 value in 2019 when calculated at \$20 an hour.



Open your **Heart** to Hospice.



3122 Gibbins Road • Duncan BC V9L 1G2 • 250-701-4242 • 1-888-701-4242

cowichanhospice.org • frontdesk@cowichanhospice.org

Cowichan Valley Hospice Society • Charity BN/Registration number: 11887 8388 RR0001



*All photos on this page, except with *: Lyf is Grand Photography*