

BEACON

SOUTH SHORE HOSPICE PALLIATIVE CARE SOCIETY
REPORT TO COMMUNITY

2024-2025



About Us

Vision

Compassionate end of life care in an environment of choice.

Mission

South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society promotes compassionate, accessible end of life care through partnerships, education, advocacy, and the provision of resources.

The South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society formed in 2019, with vision for quality and compassionate end-of-life care for the residents of Lunenburg and Queens Counties. Through the generosity of our donors and in partnership with the Nova Scotia Health Palliative Care Services team, we support and promote compassionate care for those living with a life-limiting illness:

- Promote community and staff knowledge related to current palliative care practice and services.
- Promote expansion of existing palliative care services.
- Support individual needs of palliative care patients and their families.
- Promote and support creation of designated acute palliative care beds in South Shore Regional, Fishermen's Memorial and Queens General Hospitals.
- Promote and support establishment of a free-standing hospice.

Our Board of Directors

Trudy Johnson*	Chair
Marlene Wheatley Downe*	Vice Chair
Alan Scott	Treasurer
Sue Taylor-Foley	Secretary
Phil Bradfield	Strategic Planning
Liz Finney*	Communications
Michele Flack	Governance & Policy
Shelley Mann*	Education
Sally Oliver	Volunteers
Ruth Ann Zwicker	Fundraising

*Founding members

Cover: Starry Night Gala attendees: Gail Hatheway, Liz Rogers and Elspeth MacLean Wile

Education Committee

Shelley Mann, Chair	
Debbie Gowan	Donna Wentzell
Joanne Purchase-Renaud	Tammy Williams
Linda Thompson	Sandra Woodford



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A Message from *Our Chair*

As another year draws to a close, I would like to highlight key moments from the past year while also reflecting on our Society's progress over the six years since our incorporation. In our early meetings, gathered around a dining room table, it was evident that the room was filled with passion and positive energy. That same spirit has propelled us forward, supported and encouraged by the wider community.

The residents of Lunenburg and Queens counties face disparities in access to end-of-life supports and designated beds compared to other regions of Nova Scotia. Addressing this inequity is a driving force for us. Although the care from medical professionals is outstanding, we continually hear stories of experiences in hospitals lacking privacy, comfort, and dignity at end of life. We are dedicated to changing this.

The demand for palliative care in Lunenburg and Queens counties is steadily rising, increasing from 258 residents in 2016 to 344 in 2024. As a Society, we collaborate with healthcare providers who deliver compassionate and professional end-of-life care, offering resources, funding for professional development, and support for patients.

This year, has been one of connection and care. A few highlights include the launch of our Volunteer Visitation Program; the continuation of Coffee Clubs in Bridgewater and Mahone Bay; Cooking for Care; Beacon of Hope and Solace Funds to support families and loved ones; our second End of Life Expo; and reviewing and revising our Strategic Plan.

Our mission is powered by community spirit. Our two primary fundraisers, the Hope fore Hospice Golf Tournament and Starry Night Gala, were immensely successful, raising over \$100,000 for the Society. A number of fundraisers were held on our behalf as well. We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support from our community.

We continue to meet with Nova Scotia Health regional staff, our four MLAs and local leaders. Moreover, we've had discussions with the Premier to advance our case for hospice care.

As we commemorate the achievements of the past year, we acknowledge that none of this would be feasible without the support of our community donors and sponsors, our dedicated volunteers, passionate staff, and a volunteer Board that contributes both expertise and geographic representation. This year, we bid farewell to two Board members, Liz Finney and Alan Scott. As a founding member, Liz has shared her knowledge and expertise to advance our mission. Alan, as treasurer, has provided us with financial guidance and comprehensive reporting. We extend our heartfelt thanks to them.

To all our supporters, thank you for believing in our mission and for your unwavering support of our work. We will continue to strive toward our goals.

Sincerely,
Trudy Johnson, Chair



A year of *Connection & Care*

Promoting Knowledge

This past May, our second End-of-Life Info Expo filled the Bridgewater Baptist Church with conversation, learning, and compassion. Twenty-eight exhibitors and eight engaging talks offered a wealth of knowledge, and the community responded with enthusiasm.

"Very impressed with the scope of information offered as well as the presentations. Hope your group will continue to offer this important source of information."

-End of Life Expo attendee

Moments like these remind us why we do what we do — creating spaces where people can find answers, share experiences, and feel supported. We're always eager to partner with other groups to share our vision of enhancing life for those nearing the end of life.

In September, we joined the Alzheimer Community Awareness event in Bridgewater, connecting with families, caregivers, and professionals who are making a difference every day.

December brought another meaningful moment when our committee member, Dr. Debbie Gowan, spoke at Rosedale Home for Special Care in New Germany. Her talk, "What to Expect in the Last Weeks and Hours of Life," offered comfort and clarity to those navigating one of life's most tender chapters.

Beyond events, our commitment continues year-round. Through our newsletter, we share educational articles, and at our office, we maintain a library and resources for anyone seeking guidance or information.

Because at the heart of it all, our work is about more than information — it's about community, dignity, and walking alongside people when it matters most.



David Maginley, AGM speaker and Shelley Mann, SSHPCS Board Member and Education Chair.

Hello From the Other Side

Hospital chaplain, cancer survivor and near death experienter, David Maginley shared his story and insights from his books *Beyond Surviving* and *Early Exits*, with those who attended our 2024 AGM.

"Challenges aren't just obstacles. They're invitations to deeper wisdom, resilience, and authentic growth."

Opposite page - Top left: South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society with Queens General Managers and Auxiliary members with the new cuddle bed. From left to right: Trudy Johnson, Jennifer Clattenburg, April Klassen, Ruth Anne Zwicker, Sally Oliver, Karen McGee, Linda MacKinnon. Top Right: John Muise and Sue Knopp at Cooking for Care





Supporting *Patients & Families*

A New Way to Care – Together

This year marked the launch of our Volunteer Visitation Program, led with dedication by coordinator Tara Jaskowiak. At its heart, this program is about people — neighbours reaching out to neighbours, offering time, kindness, and a listening ear.

Our volunteers completed specialized training to become friendly visitors for palliative patients, whether in their homes or in hospital. Each volunteer is thoughtfully matched with someone who shares similar interests, creating space for genuine companionship and meaningful conversation.

The impact has been immediate and heartfelt. Families, patients, and volunteers alike have shared how these visits bring comfort, connection, and moments of joy during challenging times.

A Gift of Comfort for Queens

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we supported the Queens General Auxiliary in purchasing a cuddle bed. These specialized larger hospital beds allow patients and loved ones to be close — sharing comfort, touch, and connection — while still meeting all medical needs. In palliative care, that closeness can mean the world.

Your kindness makes moments like this possible. Thank you for helping bring comfort and dignity.

People are our Programs

Throughout the year, we've continued to walk alongside those experiencing grief. Our Coffee Clubs in Bridgewater and Mahone Bay remain warm, welcoming spaces to share stories and find understanding. Our Cooking for Care initiative brings people together in the kitchen, nourishing both body and spirit.

Through the Beacon of Hope and Solace Fund, more families received help as they navigated the end of life of a loved one.

At our office, we offer ongoing opportunities for connection and growth — from technology support, to creative meditation and Art As Part of Healing, which provide space for reflection and expression.

We also deliver tangible comfort to palliative patients, whether at home or in hospital, through comfort care kits and mouth care kits. Many also receive the warmth of a small quilt or lap blanket — each one lovingly crafted and donated by our talented local quilters and knitters.

Together, we are building a community where care is shared, hope is nurtured, and no one faces life's challenges alone.



Promoting Expanded Palliative Care

We have had meetings with Nova Scotia Health staff to discuss the expansion of program offerings in support of patient care. We have met with the Premier, our four MLA's in Lunenburg and Queens counties, and representatives of all levels of government to emphasize the need for equity in palliative care services across the province, advocate for the opening of the beds at Fishermen's Memorial, and push for recognition of the need for a free-standing hospice. We have shared ideas and resources with other palliative societies and associations provincially.

We are one of the only two areas in Nova Scotia without designated palliative beds and with our elderly and growing population we need more dedicated palliative care supports in Lunenburg and Queens counties. The demand for palliative care in Lunenburg and Queens counties is steadily rising, increasing from 258 residents in 2016 to 344 in 2024.

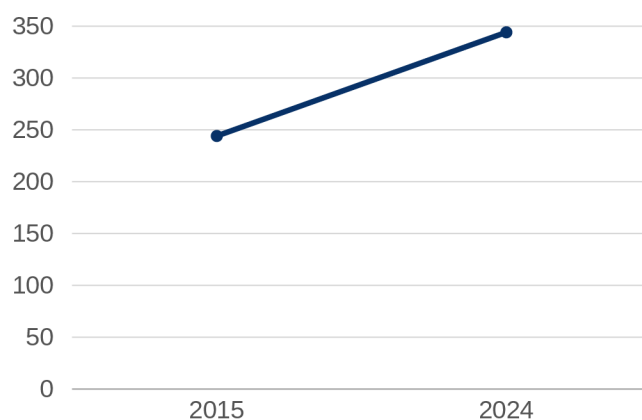
Celebrating Volunteers

The South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society is proud to celebrate our nominee for the Town of Lunenburg's Volunteer of the Year—Ruth Anne Whicher!

Since our founding in 2019, Ruth Anne has been a dedicated champion of our mission through her work with Caico-Mae Clothiers. Her creativity, generosity, and deep commitment to community have brought vibrant energy to our fundraising efforts, always finding new and joyful ways to support our cause.

Ruth Anne, we are deeply grateful for your unwavering support and thrilled to also celebrate Caico-Mae's 10th anniversary—a milestone that reflects your passion and vision. Congratulations, and thank you for being such an inspiring force in our journey.

Referrals to Palliative Care Team



Above left: Honourable Becky Druhan, Trudy Johnson, Marlene Wheatley Downe, Premier Tim Houston. Bottom: Nova Scotia Health's South Shore Palliative Care team at a professional development retreat sponsored by South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society.



Powered by *Community Spirit*

This year, our community came together in extraordinary ways to support our mission. From the greens to the gala, neighbours, friends, and local businesses poured their energy and generosity into making a difference.

Our two signature events — the Hope fore Hospice Golf Tournament and the Starry Night Gala, featuring our Hospice Art & Experience Auction — were a resounding success, raising over \$100,000 for the Society. These achievements reflect not just the funds raised, but the shared commitment of a community that cares deeply.

The spirit of giving continued through the Voices for Hospice Concert, led by Bob and Peggy McCalla; Art in the Barn, held in loving memory of artist and hospice supporter Linda Roe; and the Dave Gunning Concert, organized by Gary Lohnes. We are also grateful for the creative fundraising efforts of Caico Mae Clothiers and the heartfelt card sales by Irene Hirtle.

Together, these contributions help cover our operational costs, while additional donations move us closer to our long-term goal of establishing dedicated hospice beds.

Every ticket purchased, every item donated, and every hour volunteered is a reminder of how strong a community effort can be.



Top Left Kim Carlow Berkeley and Joanne Purchase Renaud at End of Life Expo
 Top right: Starry Night Gala Guest speaker Andrea Bolivar Weagle and Board Member Michele Flack. Middle: Alice Sorensen and Stephanie MacLeod, Caico Mae staff at High Tea fundraiser. Bottom: Gala planning committee: Michele Flack, Kathy McNally, Trudy Johnson, Marlene Wheatley Downe, Dawn Curry, Jacky Cooper.

Financial Report



Thanks to your continued support, this year we saw growth in our revenues through both fundraising events and personal donations — a clear reflection of the care and commitment that lives here.

At the South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society, we honour the trust you place in us. We are committed to respecting the wishes of every donor and ensuring that funds are directed exactly as intended, so your contributions make the difference you envision.

Revenue	2024-2025	2023-2024
Donations	\$104,174	\$96,110
Fundraising & Events	\$127,489	\$115,254
Grants	\$2,000	\$1,000
Interest income	\$5,943	\$22,224
Total Income	\$253,681	\$234,588

Expenditures

Wages & Benefits	\$58,984	\$44,384
Community Support Programs (Beacon of Hope, Cooking for Care, Solace Fund, etc.)	\$24,940	\$20,937
Office, Rent & Utilities	\$21,881	\$19,323
Fundraising	\$24,976	\$12,175
Insurance & Fees	\$5,742	\$6,709
Subscriptions & Memberships	\$4,098	\$2,319
Advertising & Promotions	\$1,997	\$1,310
Total Expenditures	\$142,618	\$107,157

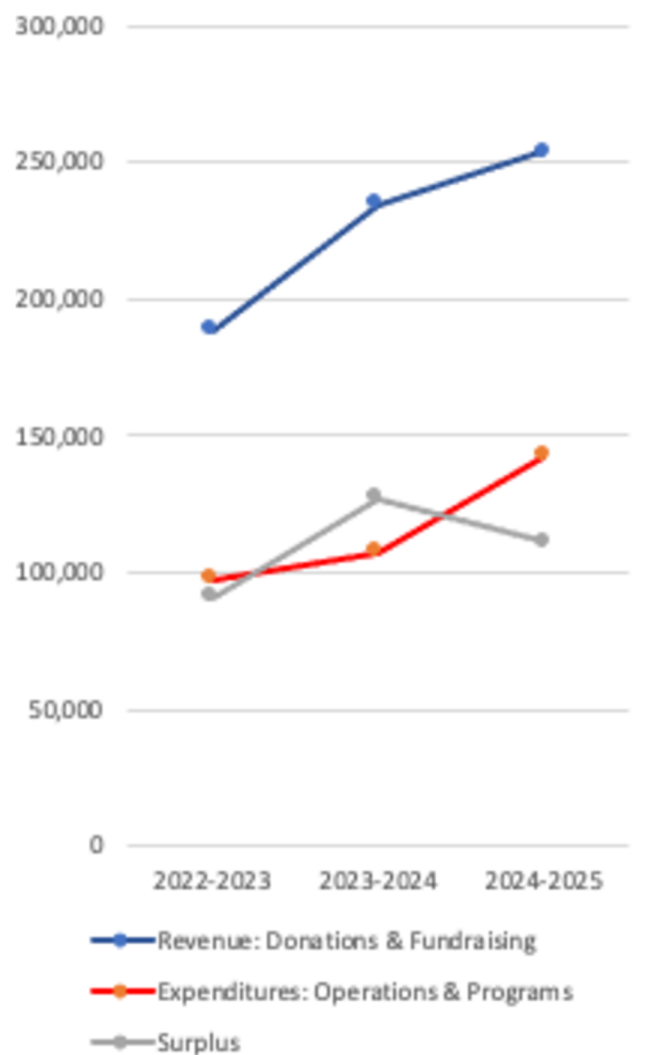
Surplus

Revenue Over Expenditures	\$111,063	\$127,133
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Net Assets

Operating /Unrestricted	\$67,450	\$33,985
Capital Reserve/Restricted	<u>\$660,000</u>	<u>\$582,402</u>
	\$727,450	\$616,387

Revenues & Expenditures



Full financial statements available on request