Fall Newsletter
November 2026

Hospice
South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



As the leaves start to fall and we are experiencing another beautiful South Shore autumn, I am delighted to share my first message as Chair of the South Shore Palliative Care & Hospice Society.

I recently had the privilege of stepping into this role following the remarkable leadership of Trudy Johnson, who has given so much of her time, energy and heart to this organization. Over the past seven years, Trudy has been instrumental in helping the Society grow, building strong community relationships and championing the importance of compassionate, dignified end-of-life care. On behalf of the Board, I want to extend our sincere appreciation for her dedication and the lasting impact she has made. I know I have big shoes to fill!

For those I haven't had the opportunity to meet yet, I thought I would share a little about myself. I live in Bridgewater with my husband, Kris, and our two children, Elliott and Ruby. Professionally, I am a Partner with KBRS, where I lead our People Strategy practice and work with organizations and their leaders across Atlantic Canada. I've also had the privilege of serving on several community and not-for-profit boards over the years. Giving back to the community where we live and raise our family has always been important to me, and I am honoured to contribute to an organization whose work touches so many individuals and families across Lunenburg and Queens counties.

This is an exciting time for the Society. We recently held a successful Annual General Meeting, which gave us an opportunity to reflect on how far we've come and look ahead to the work still to be done. With the opening of the dedicated hospice beds at Fishermen's Memorial Hospital earlier this year and the addition of our first Executive Director, we are entering an important new chapter. These milestones reflect years of hard work, generosity and commitment from our volunteers, community partners, donors and Board members.

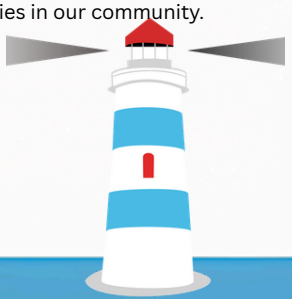
Of course, none of this would be possible without our community's tremendous support. Our planning committee is already hard at work preparing for the next Starry Night Gala, an event that has become such a wonderful celebration of community generosity and connection. Stay tuned for more details and ticket information in the coming weeks. We hope to see many familiar faces, and some new ones, there!

As I begin my time as Chair, I look forward to listening, learning, and working alongside our dedicated Board, staff, volunteers, and community partners. While we have much to celebrate, we also know important work remains to ensure individuals and families facing life-limiting illness have access to the care, comfort and support they deserve.

Thank you for the many ways you support the Society. Whether through volunteering, donating, attending an event or simply sharing our story, you are helping make a meaningful difference in the lives of families in our community.

With warm wishes and sincere appreciation,

Janice Tanner Ernst
Chair, South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society





A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since joining the South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society in August, I've been inspired by the kindness, generosity and commitment of people across Lunenburg and Queens counties. It's a privilege to be part of an organization that means so much to individuals and families in our communities. This work is personal to me. Having cared for my father at the end of his life, and more recently witnessing a friend's experience of loss and grief, I understand how important, compassionate care and strong circles of support can be. I'm especially grateful to the families, caregivers and volunteers who give so much of themselves to care for others.

We spend so much time preparing for the beginning of life yet often struggle to talk about the end of life. I hope we can help change that through education, open conversations and a better understanding of palliative care, hospice and the choices available to us.

Visiting the five hospice beds at Fishermen's Memorial Hospital was a meaningful experience. I'm grateful to everyone whose years of dedication and generosity made this possible. It's an achievement worth celebrating as we continue working to strengthen access to palliative and hospice care throughout Lunenburg and Queens counties.

I'm also learning that many people don't know what support is available or where to begin. Through our programs, volunteers and community partnerships, we're here to listen, offer guidance and help people connect with resources when they need them.

As we recognize National Grief and Bereavement Day on November 17, I'm reminded that grief has no timeline, and no one should face it alone.

My hope is that our Society continues to be a beacon of hope for every south shore community I'm grateful for the warm welcome I've received and look forward to listening, learning and working together to ensure individuals and families feel supported, heard and cared for.

Denise Green

Executive Director, South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society



MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At our Annual Meeting on September 15th, the members voted in three new Board members: Janice Tanner- Ernst, Pam O'Regan and Kathy McNally.

Special thanks was given to retiring board members Sally Oliver (Volunteer Coordinator) and Shelley Mann (Chair of Education Committee) who have made valuable contribution to the organization. Trudy Johnson will remain as ex-officio (and unofficial Historian) on the Board but will not longer serve as Chair after nine years in that role. All three have played an integral role in building the organization from scratch to that which it is today. They have worked tirelessly for the residents of Queens and Lunenburg Counties and we can not thank them enough.

Janice is a Partner and Human Resource Specialist at KBRS with many years serving with community organizations, including Partners for Care, Health Services Foundation of the South Shore, Capital Campaign Cabinet for Redevelopment of the SSRH and TEC Canada Key Executive Group (NS). Janice makes people a priority and looks forward to building upon the mission and goals of SSHPCS. She lives in Bridgwater with her two children.

Pam O'Regan looks forward to bringing her passion for community and commitment to the SSHPCS and supporting the work of palliative and hospice care to indiiduals and families. She has been involved with a variety of organizations: Halifax Trojans Aquatic Team, Swim Nova Scotia, Parents' Guild, Souls Harbour, Harbour House, Feed Nova Scotia, South Shore Kids Triathlon, Women's Giving Circle, and Special Olympics Lunenburg/Queens. She is currently completing a Master of Adult Education degree.

Kathy McNally has recently joined the Board of the SSHPCS, although she has been actively involved in fundraising efforts for the organization since its inception. She is a retired Elementary French teacher and has called South Shore home for the past 33 years. Kathy is passionate about supporting all individuals and families through end-of-life care. She believes every person deserves to be supported and guided through this important stage of life with dignity, compassion and respect. Kathy feels extremely proud to contribute her time and energy to SSHPCS and its mission.



Trudy Johnson with retiring Board member Sally Oliver who served as Volunteer Coordinator for many years.



Trudy Johnson with retiring Board member Shelley Mann who Chaired the Education Committee. Shelley also serves on the Board of the Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Association.



2026-27 Board of Directors: (l-r) Sue Taylor-Foley, Phil Bradfield, Janice Tanner Ernst (new Chair), Michelle Wamboldt, Jessica Eisenhauer, RuthAnne Zwicker, Michele Flack, Kathy McNally (new), Marlene Wheatley-Downe, Rosalee Smith, Trudy Johnson (ex-officio), Michael Power. Missing: Pam O'Regan

SPECIAL THANKS



Janet Carver was presented with a gift to recognize her retirement from the Palliative Team.

(Janet Carver and Trudy Johnson pictured to the left)

PICTURES FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



In recognition of National Grief and Bereavement Day on November 17, we're partnering with the South Shore Multicultural Association to bring people together for something meaningful.

We're hosting creative collage-making workshops in local cafes across Lunenburg and Queens counties.

The idea is simple: grab a coffee or tea, join the table, and spend some time remembering someone who has shaped your life.

Through photos, memories, stories, and meaningful little details, we'll create personal Legacy Boards that honour the people who are no longer with us.

Find the workshop closest to you and reserve your spot by calling or emailing our office

The Trellis Cafe (Hubbards) Nov 12 @ 2-4pm

The Verni (Caledonia) Nov 19 @1:30-3:30pm

Riverbank (Mill Village) Nov 23 @ 1:130-3:30pm

To Register:

Phone: 902-527-000

Email: office@southshorehospice.ca

These events are free to attend and no experience is necessary





Starry Night Gala

Join us the evening of January 23, 2027, at the Best Western Plus Bridgewater for the 3rd Starry Night Gala!

As we gather beneath the magic of a starry night, let's brighten the January skies with an unforgettable evening of celebration, laughter, and generosity. Together, we can make a difference by continuing to support enhanced access to compassionate end-of-life care for individuals and families in our community.
One special evening. One caring community. A brighter tomorrow.

Tickets go on sale December 1, 2026 through our office in Bridgewater.
Please get your tickets early as they sell out very quickly.
For more information please stay tuned!



UPCOMING EVENTS

LEGACY BOARDS THURSDAY NOVEMBER 19 AT THE VERNI IN CALEDONIA

LEGACY BOARDS NOVEMBER 23, 2026 AT THE RIVERBANK STORE IN MILL VILLAGE

CHRISTMAS IN PETITE NOVEMBER 21,22 WESLEY UNITED CHURCH 10AM - 4PM

FATHER CHRISTMAS IN MAHONE BAY NOVEMBER 28, 2026

GALA TICKETS GO ON SALE DECEMBER 1, 2026

STARRY NIGHT GALA JANUARY 23, 2027



VOLUNTEER VISITOR PROGRAM

One of our volunteers Justin, and his therapy dog Spruce, had been matched with a client who was nearing their end of life and they were able to visit with him a few times before he passed away. They would often sit out on the deck, enjoying the sunshine together. During one of those visits, the client's spouse showed Justin a photo on their phone. It was a family photo that was deeply meaningful to both the client and their spouse.

After the client passed away, Justin went back another time to visit with the spouse. They were able to share memories of the client and provide the opportunity for some quality time with Spruce, who did a great job of lowering the spouse's stress and anxiety levels. It was at that visit that Justin asked if they had the special family photo printed and framed and learned that it was just on the phone.

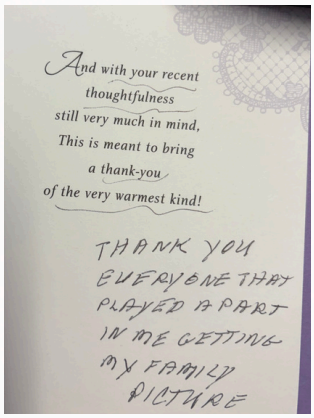
We were able to quickly print an 8x10 copy of the photo and frame and when I delivered the framed photo, the spouse immediately broke down in tears of gratitude. They expressed how helpful this program was and that they will never forget the kindness we showed them.

Another legacy project came about when a volunteer learned that their client never had a family photo taken. Her husband had passed away years ago and she hadn't had a photo with him and her children, nor had she had a family photo taken with her 4 children. When the suggestion was made that we could help with arranging having the photos printed and framed, the client's face lit up. We even offered to have a professional photographer come and take their photo, but the family opted to coordinate themselves and take their own photo.

For the photo, the client sat with a framed photo of her husband in her lap and her four children standing behind her. On one of their visits, the volunteer showed her some options for frames, and she picked out a simple 5x7 black frame and white mat for each child and one for herself. When we delivered them, the client was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude.

I noticed that they were holding the photo out a bit and suggested that perhaps we should get her one that was a bit larger, maybe an 8x10 size. I could see the hesitation in her face, a person who has never asked for more that they needed and lived a simple life to the fullest. Always showing up for others and making sure she was never a burden for others. After a few minutes, she agreed that yes, we could print her one that was a bit bigger. When I went to visit her a few weeks later, I noticed that her 8x10 frame was placed directly across from where she sits – her whole family, together.

These experiences are a beautiful example of the impact that can come from simply paying attention and listening. Each volunteer noticed something that was meaningful to the family, asked a simple question, and created an opportunity for us to provide support that impacted not only the client, but their extended family members. These are just two examples of the legacy work we are able to do with clients.

- 



ARTICLES

WHO KNOWS MY PASSWORDS?

PLANNING FOR THE END OF OUR LIFE IS A TASK THAT NONE OF US WANT TO THINK ABOUT. MOST OF US DO NOT KNOW WHEN THAT TIME WILL BE. HOWEVER, PLANNING AHEAD ASSURES THAT YOUR WISHES ARE HONOURED, AND IT LIGHTENS THE LOAD, PRACTICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY, FOR THOSE WHO ARE LEFT TO DEAL WITH YOUR AFFAIRS.

THOSE PLANS SHOULD INCLUDE AN ADVANCE CARE PLAN (CHOOSING SOMEONE TO MAKE YOUR HEALTH CARE DECISIONS IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO), PLANNING A CEREMONY THAT REFLECTS YOUR LIFE AND VALUES IF YOU WISH TO HAVE ONE, AND HAVING A WILL TO DEFINE WHERE YOUR ASSETS – PROPERTY AND FINANCES, ARE TO GO. FOR THIS ARTICLE, WE WILL FOCUS ON THE ONLINE ACCOUNTS AND DIGITAL INFORMATION THAT WE HAVE.

THE AVERAGE INTERNET USER HAS APPROXIMATELY 100 ONLINE ACCOUNTS. I KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO MANAGE MY OWN ACCOUNTS LET ALONE SOMEONE ELSE'S!! A DIGITAL LEGACY IS A LIST AND PLAN FOR YOUR ONLINE ACCOUNTS SO THAT THE PERSON YOU TRUST TO LOOK AFTER YOUR AFFAIRS KNOWS WHAT ACCOUNTS YOU HAVE AND CAN DEAL WITH THEM APPROPRIATELY. THIS PERSON MAY BE YOUR POWER OF ATTORNEY (WHILE YOU ARE ALIVE) OR EXECUTOR (AFTER YOUR DEATH).

THE FIRST STEP IS TO CREATE A LIST OF ALL YOUR ONLINE ACCOUNTS.
THIS MAY INCLUDE: EMAIL SOCIAL MEDIA
UTILITIES MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTS
SUBSCRIPTIONS INSURANCE
COMMUNICATION (ZOOM, WHATS APP)
ENTERTAINMENT
SHOPPING BANKING
CRA

DON'T FORGET YOUR PHONE. MANY BANKS AND WEBSITES SEND A SECURITY CODE TO YOUR PHONE WHEN YOU SIGN IN, SO YOUR TRUSTED PERSON MAY EVENTUALLY NEED TO KNOW HOW TO ACCESS IT.

THE SECOND STEP IS TO WRITE DOWN ENOUGH INFORMATION SO THAT SOMEONE ELSE CAN FIND AND DEAL WITH THESE ACCOUNTS. FOR EACH ACCOUNT, CONSIDER RECORDING:
THE NAME OF THE BANK, COMPANY OR SERVICE
WEBSITE ADDRESS
EMAIL ADDRESS OR USER NAME THAT YOU USE TO SIGN IN
WHETHER BILLS OR SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE PAID AUTOMATICALLY
HOW SOMEONE COULD GET ACCESS IF NECESSARY
THIS CAN BE A PHYSICAL DOCUMENT BUT MAKE SURE IT IS IN A LOCKED CABINET AND THAT POWER OF ATTORNEY/EXECUTOR KNOW WHERE IT IS (AND WHERE THE KEY IS LOCATED!)
MANY OF THE MAJOR BANKS HAVE A TEMPLATE CALLED AN ESTATE INFORMATION ORGANIZER.

IF YOU ARE COMFORTABLE USING TECHNOLOGY, ANOTHER OPTION IS A PASSWORD MANAGER . THERE ARE DIGITAL PASSWORD MANAGERS (WEBSITE OR APP THAT SECURELY STORES YOUR PASSWORDS) AVAILABLE TO STORE ALL YOUR ACCOUNTS AND PASSWORDS. THESE ARE EASY TO ACCESS ON YOUR DESKTOP OR PHONE AND GENERALLY SECURE. THEY REQUIRE ONE PASSWORD TO ACCESS ALL YOUR ACCOUNTS. SOME PASSWORD MANAGERS ALSO ALLOW YOU TO NAME A TRUSTED PERSON WHO CAN GET ACCESS IN AN EMERGENCY.

SO MUCH OF OUR COMMUNICATION AND BANKING/PAYMENT OF BILLS/INVESTMENTS ARE NOW ONLINE. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THIS IS PART OF OUR END-OF-LIFE PLANNING. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER AS WE GET OLDER AND PERHAPS SOMEONE ELSE IN OUR FAMILY LOOKS AFTER OUR FINANCES.

WRITTEN BY: SHELLEY MANN, EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REFERENCES: DYING WITH DIGNITY CANADA – PREPARING A DIGITAL LEGACY



RESOURCES

About Grief: Information for those experiencing grief or supporting someone who is.
About Grief Interactive Programs and Support Map Find programs and services in your province or territory.
MyGrief.ca by Canadian Virtual Hospice
What's your Grief?
Grief and serious illness: Support for caregivers – Canada.ca
Lillian's Story (Video) Palliative care: Making space to grieve – Canada.ca
Educational video: Grief support through a palliative approach to care – Canada.ca
Good Grief: Virtual programming and family support
Grief Stories
The Healthy Mourning Revolution: Creating compassionate communities by teaching the keys to healthy mourning
Canadian Healing Quilt: When someone important to you dies, the grief can feel overwhelming. Finding ways to honour their memory can help. Create a lasting tribute for someone important to you.
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Canadian Healing Quilt: When someone important to you dies, the grief can feel overwhelming. Finding ways to honour their memory can help. Create a lasting tribute for someone important to you.
calmhearted.ca: Calm-hearted is a pregnancy and infant loss platform offering lived-experience writing, practical support, and workplace guidance for grieving parents and the people around them. It is designed as a personal complement to the clinical information, community events, and services provided by Canadian nonprofits, charities, and healthcare organizations

https://www.chpca.ca/education/last-aid

Serious illness, dying, and grief are profound experiences. The Last Aid course equips us with knowledge and confidence to support those at the end of life and navigate our own mortality with greater understanding and courage.

EI caregiving benefits - Canada.ca

Provides information on care giver financial assistance.

https://www.everydayhealth.com/emotional-health/grief/healthy-grieving/



ABOUT US

Our Vision

Compassionate end-of life care in an environment of choice.

Our Mission

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

Our Goals

- Promote the enhancement of community and staff knowledge related to current palliative care practices.
- Promote the expansion of existing palliative care services,
- Support the individual needs of palliative care patients and their families.
- Promote and support the establishment of a free-standing hospice for Lunenburg and Queens County residents.
- Promote and support the creation of designated acute palliative care beds on the South Shore.

HOW TO MAKE A DONATION

The South Shore Hospice Palliative Care Society is a not for profit organization that relies on donations and support from the community.

By phone, In person at the office

We accept cash, cheques, credit cards, securities, and electronic funds transfer (treasurer@southshorehospice.ca)

CONTACT US

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Bridgewater, NS B4V 1V9

Office Address:
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Bridgewater, NS

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