

The PCSBV Bulletin

SEPTEMBER 2021



Palliative Care Society
of the Bow Valley

John and Josee's Story

John's last wish was to die where he lived

John lived in Banff for close to 40 years and was very attached to his community, which he called home. His dying wish was to stay in his community in his final days. It was always understood that this is where he would eventually want to spend his final days. However, it turned out that without a community-based residential hospice, his end-of-life request would not be granted.



Josee's favorite picture of her and John

John had already had a brush with cancer in 2012, but was cleared in 2017. So, John and Josee were not prepared for the news that his battle with cancer was not over. John received the devastating diagnosis that his melanoma had returned in March of 2019: a new round was just beginning. Following the news, he began cancer treatments, but shortly after, he was told that the cancer had spread quickly into his brain, making it untreatable. Sadly, he passed away in September 2019 - a few short months later.

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Having a residential hospice option available in the Bow Valley is important and necessary. - Josee

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STORY CONT'D ON PAGE 2 ...

JOHN AND JOSEE'S STORY CONT'D ...

As Bow Valley residents, John and Josee had to travel to Calgary regularly for his cancer treatments but when it was determined that the treatments were not working, they were put in touch with AHS palliative care services in Bow Valley. John stayed at home as long as he could because he was averse to the idea of dying in hospital, and dying at home was not an option "The home is for the living..." he said.

As Josee shared, "John did not want to be in hospital from the very beginning. He wanted a place that was more home-like, but there were no options. He ended up in hospital because he was too ill and needed more help and support than I could provide. A local hospice would have been better for him, and more helpful for me as his caregiver too."



A room has to have somewhere comfortable for the person staying with the patient to get some rest, have some privacy. There was not a lot of quiet or privacy in the hospital setting we were in. That is the nature of that environment," Josee shared.

It is important to have a hospice or palliative care centre in the Bow Valley so patients can be nearer to friends and family, and caregivers are able to have access to their home, their clothes, their friends and be in a familiar environment in the community.

- Josee



The availability of a hospice was a preferable choice for John and Josee; instead, he was hospitalized for the final 10 days of his life.

While providing care and comfort, a residential hospice – like that envisioned by the PCSBV – would offer respite for the patient, caregiver, the family, whether their needs are emotional, physical or spiritual.

"Travelling back and forth between Banff and Calgary was difficult, stressful and costly. We were travelling during summer months primarily and making that trip in the winter would have been horrible for John and me. Having a residential hospice option available in the Bow Valley is important and necessary," said Josee.

"End of life care is complex. Palliative care information is often overwhelming."

Josee believes a rural residential hospice facility in the Bow Valley with proactive, supportive programming to assist patients and their families through the journey would have made a difference for John's end of life experience.

"John would have been able to die in a place of his choosing, in an environment that could have supported us both – before, during and after."

Thank you to Josee for the submission of her story and her willingness to share it with us.



GETTING BACK TO "NORMAL" POST COVID

TIPS TO ENJOY LIFE POST-COVID-19

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact on us all. With everything re-opening again, many may feel anxiety around returning to a new normal. Remember that it is ok to have reservations or fears coming out of the pandemic. However, it is important to prioritize your mental health and self-care.

NOTE: Please follow local and provincial COVID-19 guidelines where appropriate.

Ease back in

You can ease back into your previous habits without pressuring yourself to go right back to the way things were.

First off, you don't want to rush back into things too quickly, especially if you are a little hesitant to start in the first place. By easing yourself in, it will open your eyes to the world that we are starting to live in today as we say goodbye to COVID a little more each day. You could start with seeing one friend in a setting where you could be a little more socially distanced than if you were sitting right next to each other. This will give you the sense of being outside your house with a friend that you haven't seen for some time, while also being a little more cautious as things are starting to open back up.

By refraining from pressuring yourself, or giving in to social pressures, you can take care of your own needs while still beginning to connect once again with those you may have missed during this time.

Be patient with yourself and with others

We've gone through "a traumatic period," and there is going to be residual stress and uncertainty as people readjust, particularly given the new social norms we have adopted during lockdowns. While it's good to rediscover the joy of being together once again, don't jump back into pre-pandemic socializing before it's safe or expect others to move at your pace. Everyone in your life may have different needs and expectations during this time. Be kind to yourself and understanding of others as we all begin to reacclimate ourselves to the social world we previously lived in.

Get outside

After being cooped up in your house for so long, get outside. Go to a park or go for a walk. By getting outside and enjoying nature, you boost your mind and re-energize your body and spirit, and ultimately help yourself enjoy life just a little bit more. Although you may have done this to an extent while in quarantine, Perhaps you can go with a friend and walk with them while catching up on the past year.

Be active

Along with getting outside, being more active is also a great way to start to enjoy life post COVID-19. Being active doesn't just mean exercising, it could also mean hanging out with other friends or family members going out to a restaurant or going for a bike ride or a run. By getting active again and doing more things that you love to do, it will bring you back to the time in your life where there was no COVID-19, and you were living the best life you could.

Increase your self-care

It's easy to assume that as you make room for more joyful and exciting experiences in your life and crawl out from what might have felt like monotony, that your mind and body will automatically take care of themselves. You might assume that you won't need as much sleep, downtime, healthful eating, or attention to your mental health.

Actually, the opposite is most likely. A disruption to what you've grown accustomed to can take a toll on the body and mind, even if it's a welcome disruption. Prioritize all the same self-care techniques that were important during the initial stress of lockdown and find new methods of self-care that you may have enjoyed previously. Ease yourself into it, but find an added appreciation in restarting the things that brought you joy previously. From going to a farmers' market, people watching in a café, or enjoying a patio with friends, allow yourself to begin reintegrating previous methods of self care that may have fallen to the wayside over this period.

Sources:

[5 post-COVID social tips for awkward talks, unsafe situations](#)

[5 Tips for Easing Into Post-COVID Life When the Time Comes](#)

IT's Trivia Time!

How much do you know about PCSBV, hospice care, and palliative care in Canada?

Question 1

What month of the year do we hold our Hike for Hospice fundraising event?

- a. March b. May c. June

Question 2

Palliative Care is recognized as a universal health right by the World Health Organization.

True or False?

Question 3

How many Hospice Homes are there in Canada?

- a. 80 b. 86 c. 88

Question 4

How many Canadians believe in incorporating palliative services into the Canada Health Act?

- a. 37% b. 62% c. 85%

Question 5

When did hospice care first begin? At what point did it become a more significant part of the medical system?

Question 6

How much palliative care is provided by informal caregivers such as family, friends, and neighbours?

- a. 50% b. 75% c. 80%

Question 7

80% of people in Canada think it is important to do Advance Care Planning. How many people in Canada have an Advanced Care Plan?

- a. 1/3 b. 1/5 c. 1/10

Answers:

Question 1 - A: May. This year, thanks to all our supporters, we raised more than \$15,200 for programs and services in the Bow Valley.

Question 2 - True. The World Health Organization's Resolution 67 in the year 2014, asks governments to integrate palliative care in the mainstream health care system.

Question 3 - C: There are 88 residential hospices in Canada. (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2018)

Question 4 - C: 85% of the public support for integrating national standards for palliative healthcare services into the Canada Health Act

Question 5 - The first hospices date back as far as the 4th century in when Christians in Europe provided care to the sick and destitute. In the 1960's, Dame Cicely Saunders revived the hospice tradition in the United Kingdom out of a need to provide terminally ill patients with end-of-life services.

Question 6 - 80% of care is most often provided by informal caregivers like family, friends and neighbours

Question 7 - B. Less than 1 in 5 people in Canada have an Advance Care Plan





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SPEAKER SERIES 2021



PALLIATIVE CARE BOW VALLEY - SPEAKERS SERIES

We are always expanding our Speaker Series and information sessions are available to anyone in need of support. Let us know if you want us to join you for an information session.

Reach us by email: info@psbv.ca
Phone: (403) 707-7111

We're also on social media!



In 2021, we will be continuing the speaker series. Each series will cover relatable and relevant subjects that will help us learn and expand our horizons on palliative care. Every month, we will focus on a different theme in this newsletter.

Please join these amazing sessions by registering at our [website](#).

We want to hear from you! If you have any topics or suggestions that you'd like us to talk about, let us know.

PALLIATIVE CARE BOW VALLEY - CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley is a not for profit, community-led group of volunteers working to improve the Palliative and End of Life experience for individuals and their families who call the Bow Valley home.

As a community-led non-profit, we thank all the compassionate and caring people who invest their time and energy into helping our organization.

We are committed to our volunteers and working with them to ensure a fulfilling volunteer experience. If you would like to join our volunteer team, please [contact us](#) to learn more about available volunteer roles and our upcoming training events.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM

PCSBV is launching a Volunteer Training program for client-care volunteers. The first of the two-part training is October 1 to 3 in Banff, Alberta, followed by part two October 16 and 17 in Canmore, Alberta.

Our client-care volunteers are people with listening skills, who are compassionate, and who have the courage to walk alongside those who have a life-limiting illness, those actively dying, and those who are grieving. As a PCSBV volunteer, you will be well-trained and provided ongoing support for your chosen role. PCSBV has established high standards of excellence in our programs, endeavoring to ensure care for both our clients and volunteers.



HELP TODAY FOR SUPPORT TOMORROW!

WE NEED YOUR HELP – GIVE TODAY!

It will take financial support from people like you to reach our goals.



You can donate online or you can mail a cheque to us directly to:

Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley, PO Box 40113, Canmore Crossing, Canmore, AB, T1W 3H9.

Specify if you want to contribute to our projects: General or Building. Donations of \$25 or more will receive a charitable receipt.

Your donation will contribute to the amazing work done by our volunteer teams, including the efforts towards building our future rural residential hospice right here in the Bow Valley.

Contact Kristin Fry at (403) 707-7633 if you would like to help.



WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!



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