



# Hospice Whitby

ROGER ANDERSON HOUSE

## Our Journey

April 2025



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## A Message from Eva Reti

*Chair, Hospice Whitby*

Before we step fully into this exciting new phase, I want to reflect on a truly memorable milestone—the groundbreaking ceremony held on November 15, 2024, where over 200 community members gathered to mark the beginning of construction.

The event was opened with a beautiful smudging and prayer from Grandmother Kim Wheatley, honouring the land and those who will receive care there. Many of our guests were also donors, whose generosity and support brought this long-awaited moment to fruition.

It was an emotional and inspiring day—one that reminded us all why this hospice is so important to our community.

And now, I am very excited to announce that all the building permits have been issued, and we are ready to go! April 28, 2025 is the mobilization date for REA Construction to move equipment onto the site and for construction activity to begin. If all goes as planned, construction will be completed by the end of June 2026.

Then it will be time to move the furniture in, prepare the staff and volunteers, and schedule tours so that you all have a chance to come and visit our beautiful hospice residence. We anticipate welcoming our first resident in the fall of 2026.

As always, we are so thankful for all of the donors who have helped get us to this point in the project. We still have a lot of fundraising to do for construction completion and furniture and fixtures but finally getting to construction is a big accomplishment. We appreciate the support that you have shown us since our Capital Campaign started in 2018.

Watch the powerful smudging ceremony video on YouTube <https://youtu.be/E9E8S-RjItS>



Being built BY the community, FOR the community.  
Donate today

# Celebrating Our Donors

In our October 2024 newsletter, we celebrated our donors who have donated \$500 or more to the capital campaign. In this issue, we honor those who have given up to \$499, along with new donors in higher categories. Every dollar makes a difference. **THANK YOU ALL for your unwavering support.**

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# Handbags for Hospice



We are incredibly grateful to everyone who joined us for the 2024 Handbags for Hospice Whitby event. With record-breaking attendance, the evening was filled with incredible energy and community spirit.

Thanks to your generosity, we raised an amazing **\$80,125** in support of compassionate care for Durham Region. A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful sponsors, purse donors, and silent and live auction contributors. Your support truly made this event a tremendous success!

# In Memory

We are deeply grateful to family and friends who, during difficult times, choose to honor their loved ones with a donation. Below are the latest In Memory donations since the last newsletter.

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Although the number of fundraising events we hold each year is small we have an amazing group of sponsors who always step up to ensure our success. Thank you to the following:

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# Community Events

## Thank You, Mary Brown's!

A heartfelt thank you to Mary Brown's Chicken franchise owners, Shazia and Mehboob, at 80 Thickson Road South for their incredible generosity. Their December 2024 fundraiser, held over three Sundays, was a tremendous success, raising an amazing **\$1,100** in support of Hospice Whitby.

We are beyond grateful for their support and feel fortunate to have such wonderful community partners by our side.



# The Gift of Hospice

By Lynn Adams

As women, we hold a sacred place in this journey called life. Our bodies become vessels of creation, nurturing and sustaining life until it enters the world. We share stories of birth—of pain and perseverance, of joy and relief. And when we do, we are not merely recounting events; we are bearing witness to life's miraculous unfolding. We acknowledge the intensity, the vulnerability, and the transformation that takes place.

Death, too, carries this weight. It is not just an end, but a passage—one that deserves the same reverence, the same tenderness, and the same space for love and presence. The most profound moments of our lives are not only in our beginnings but also in our endings. And oh, what a gift it is to hold the memory of a loved one's final days, of their endings, wrapped in love and light, just as we cherish the joy of life's first breaths.

Hospice is that place that allows our treasured memories of birth and death to share the same space. It is not just a building—it is a gathering of hearts. It is a circle of caregivers, volunteers, and kind souls who offer not only medical care but comfort, companionship, music, warm meals, the very things that bring meaning to everyday life. Hospice is where dignity meets tenderness, where goodbyes are softened with love, and where grief is held with gentle hands.

I have had, if you can call it that, the privilege of learning firsthand, the gift of hospice by witnessing the difference between life's last days in hospital care versus hospice care.

My mother passed away recently; in a hospital room she shared with three other dying patients. While we are forever grateful for the palliative nurses and doctors who did their best during her last days, the experience was clinical and more focussed on medical procedures. There was no privacy—for her or for us. Two of the other patients passed away during her short stay. We did our best to create a sacred space within those walls, but grief felt magnified by the sterile environment, and moments of intimacy were hard to find. In all honesty, a feeling of relief permeated the room when she passed.

This is not an indictment of the medical system, just a wish that things had been different.

A far cry from my father's last days, just one year earlier, at Oakridges Hospice in Port Perry.

He was welcomed into a sunlit room with space for all of us—his family—to gather, to be fed, to be cared for. The staff, the kindest souls imaginable, tended to him with such reverence, bathing him gently, dressing him in fresh pajamas. They replaced his hospital bed with a big, comfortable bed—one with room for two. And in that bed, we experienced the most indescribably precious moments. It was there that we held him, embraced him, whispered our love, and felt the profound beauty of presence.

Hospice filled the quiet with music, with laughter, with whispered prayers and sweet goodbyes. It took the heaviness of loss and, without taking away our grief, wove in something else—peace, joy, and immense gratitude. Hospice, in those final days, did not teach us how to die; it taught us how to live.

What I know now is this: supporting hospice is not just about caring for the end of life; it is about caring for all of life. Hospice allows families to face these final moments with grace, with support, and with a blessed sense of normalcy. It ensures that no one walks that path alone, and it extends its love beyond the walls of a single room—it ripples out into communities, binding us together in the shared truth that when one of us is cared for, we are all cared for.

Every dollar given, every volunteer hour offered, helps build these sanctuaries. They need us now, so they can be there for all of us when we need them most.



# Hospice Whitby

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