

## Thankful for Hospice South Niagara

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Since there are no time limits on when you can receive palliative care, it acts to fill the gap for patients who want and need comfort at any stage of any disease such as my disease, which is COPD, abdominal aneurysm, congestive cardiac failure, lung failure and kidney failure.

In a palliative care program, whether it be terminal or chronic, there is no expectation that life-prolonging therapies will be avoided. Heart and lung failure may not be reversible and their function typically deteriorates with time as per my diagnosis.

Dr. Dooler and all team members and volunteers of Hospice South Niagara became an integral part of my journey of struggle due to the various medical problems I'm dealing with. The organization focuses on improving the quality of life for people living with life-limiting illnesses, death, dying, grief and loss. Hospice Niagara is able to assist in providing compassionate comfort and support throughout our journey to end of life.

For many of us, taking that first step forward in our individual journey of end of life can be daunting. It comes with a sucker punch of reality, mixed with overwhelming waves of emotion that can temporarily paralyze us. Being surrounded by loving, caring people can be very therapeutic and powerful, and is just one step forward in the journey.

Their team of service providers ensure that palliative care patients' pain and symptoms are well managed, in order to avoid hospitalization, which allows people to remain at home where they want to be and to end their journey in comfort and with dignity surrounded by their loving family.

The work they do, as challenging as it is, changes lives and makes a difference. Many days, it may seem like a thankless job. They are professionals on a regular basis and provide assistance and guidance as well as hands on instruction for people like me when my journey might be near the end.

My dream and goal is to have an eight-bed hospice residence, replacing the old Hockey House in Welland and overlooking the canal with multiple beautiful trees, providing optimistic possibilities where palliative care patients can live in comfort and peace of mind. I am very blessed and pleased to have the care team and volunteers of Hospice South Niagara.

*Gord Duguay, Welland*