



the  
hospice  
hub

connecting end of life care

## ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

33 Lewis Street, Perth  
Ontario K7H 2R4

[thehospicehub.ca](http://thehospicehub.ca)

## About The Hospice Hub

**Our Mission** – we have made it our mission to ensure that the community has access to hospice care in the community where we live.

**Our Vision** – we envision a compassionate community where everyone can live, age, die, and grieve well.

**Our Values** – our values are an expression of what we believe in and how we behave as an organization. They are shared beliefs, attitudes, and principles that guide how we conduct our business, how we treat our clients and partners, and how we work with each other.

- **Quality of care** – strive to be the best we can by listening, learning, and innovating.
- **Compassion and respect** – show understanding and care in everything we do, and embrace the value of our differences.
- **Collaboration and communication** – work together as one team with system partners, and engage our volunteers and the community in enhancing our programs and services.
- **Excellence and teamwork** – maintain high professional standards and value the voices of our clients, caregivers, staff, volunteers, and partners.

## Our Staff

**Executive Director:** Mary-Lou Hussak

**Day Hospice Care Coordinator:** Joanne Desormeaux

**Home Support Nurse Coordinator:** Hannah Ryan

**Bereavement Coordinator (volunteer):** Patti Koeslag

**Volunteer Coordinator (volunteer):** Lori Cunniffe

**Administration Support:** Maureen McVey



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## Message from the Board

The Hospice Hub's second year of operations, covering the period from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025, was challenging but rewarding. A lot was accomplished!

In April 2025, we received some welcome news that The Hospice Hub was approved by Canada Revenue Agency as a registered charity.

We are proud of our two fundraising events – the Hike for Hospice in June 2024 and the Polar Bear Plunge in January 2025 – which were very successful in raising over \$165,000 through the generous support of our community. We would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of the event fundraising and communications team who have done a truly amazing job.

To meet the increasing needs of hospice care in the community, the funds raised from these events enabled us to hire staff to lead our programs and services. Two registered nurses joined the organization – one a part-time employee to lead the Home Support Program, and the other, a full-time employee to lead the Day Hospice Program and provide backup support for our home support services. A part-time Administrative Assistant was hired. Mary Lou Hussak, our part-time Executive Director, was appointed by the board in May 2025.

Our first Strategic Plan for 2025-2028 was developed to ensure the organization's success in achieving its mission, vision and values. Two seven-week volunteer hospice palliative training courses were delivered – qualifying a group of volunteers to provide hospice home support and bereavement support services to our clients. We expanded our bereavement services and advance care planning sessions. Our corporate administration and board governance policies also continued to evolve. Anne Janssen, our volunteer Executive Director, was honoured at the June 2025 Annual General Meeting for her vision in getting The Hospice Hub off the ground with tremendous passion, energy, and commitment. Anne was presented with the HPCO Jane Callwood Circle of Outstanding Volunteers Award for her many accomplishments.

All of these achievements were possible because of our many talented and dedicated volunteers, staff members, and engaged and committed board members.

We would also like to thank our community members for their generosity and commitment.

Together we have made great strides towards our vision of a compassionate community where everyone can live, die, be a caregiver, and grieve well.

Warmest regards,  
Janet Cosier, Board Chair

# the hospice hub

## ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

### Introduction

**The Hospice Hub (THH)**, a registered charity, was federally incorporated as a not-for-profit in March 2023. Given the aging population and income level demographics in our rural communities, there is a deep need to provide comprehensive, compassionate, and integrated services to support individuals at end-of-life including their families and caregivers. **THH** also aspires to open a community-based residence in the Perth and Smiths Falls region to provide a welcoming, peaceful, and home-like environment in the next three years. Community awareness and fundraising play a crucial role in supporting the hospice mission.

Our programs and services include **Home Support**, **Day Hospice**, and **Bereavement Support**. Our talented and dedicated volunteers are at the heart of delivering our programs by providing, for example companionship to our clients, respite to caregivers, bereavement support groups, and fundraising and administrative support. Our services are provided free of charge. **THH** serves Perth, Smiths Falls, Portland, Westport and surrounding areas.



### Launching our home support program

In October 2024, we launched the home support program.

The program is managed by a part-time Nurse Coordinator with backup from the Day Hospice Care Coordinator, and delivered by a team of specially-trained volunteers.

The goal of the program is to improve the quality of life for clients, families, and caregivers through end-of-life by providing emotional, spiritual, social, and practical support to ease suffering. The program provides clinically-supported comprehensive comfort care. Our home visits provide respite to the caregivers so they can attend to their own needs.

During the year, the Nurse Coordinator met with clients to assess their needs and discuss the services available. The coordinator then matched visiting volunteers to support clients and families. The volunteers spent time with clients being an empathic presence

by listening, engaging in conversations, reading, and providing other support activities. We also provided healthcare systems navigation services to clients and families.

To support client referrals, THH strengthened its partnerships with service providers, such as the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital; Ontario Health at Home; the community health centers; and the Lanark County and Leeds and Grenville Paramedic Services. Referrals were also made online by clients, families, and friends.

## Expanding our bereavement support program

Our bereavement program is managed by an experienced volunteer Bereavement Coordinator.

The goal of the program is to support individuals who have experienced the death of a loved one by providing emotional, social, and educational support to meet their unique needs and wishes, and to support their personal values. The program offers opportunities for adult individuals to explore their feelings of grief outside of their normal social networks; to learn about coping strategies; to share experiences with others in a similar situation; and to establish connections to decrease social isolation.

During the year, we offered a number of events which were facilitated by trained volunteers. The events included the following:

- **Closed and open bereavement support groups** – 5 support groups met for 1.5 hours each week over the course of a 6 week period. Two groups were held in Smiths Falls, and 3 groups in Perth.
- **Walking groups** – one 2-hour walking group ran for 7 weeks in Perth in the fall providing people with the opportunity to talk about their losses while walking alongside an experienced volunteer or another participant.
- **Special events** – 5 events were open to the general public to raise awareness around grief and bereavement. These included

*" I was somewhat apprehensive to join the group and after the first session I knew I was fine. The care and understanding from the facilitators was incredible and the group helped me so much in my grieving process. Their gentle support in listening to my stories and showing care was exceptional. "*

*- participant in a 6-week Bereavement Support Group*



2 events to view films that educate about grief; 1 to share stories of hope and grief; and 2 ceremonies in December to honor and express grief about our loved ones (i.e. one Evening of Remembrance in Perth and the second in Smiths Falls).

- **One-on-one companionship** – clients were provided with a safe space to share their grief and explore their thoughts and questions with a trained volunteer.

In May 2024, THH hosted a community event in Perth featuring Michelle O'Rourke, a registered nurse, who has extensive experience in the areas of caregiving, resilience, spirituality, and palliative care. Michelle's presentation was well-received by everyone.

## Offering advance care planning

Education sessions on advance care planning were offered to the community in areas, such as Perth, Portland, and Lanark. Developing an Advance Care Plan involves writing down your wishes and instructions about the kind of health and personal care you want in the future, if you become incapable of expressing your own decisions.

## Building our volunteer capacity

During the year, one of our volunteers graciously volunteered to assume the responsibilities of Volunteer Coordinator which has been beneficial in recruiting, training, and recognizing our volunteers. Our volunteer appreciation event celebrating the contributions of our volunteers was held at our June 2025 Annual General Meeting.

Two volunteer training courses were held during the year. The course was delivered as a 7 week, 3 hours per week, in-person training program based on Hospice Palliative Care Ontario's training curriculum. The course covered such topics as hospice



Volunteer training - spring 2025

palliative care, symptom management, spirituality, grief and bereavement. It was supplemented by hands-on, practical exercises and workshops with guest speakers.

Our volunteers supported our programs and services; served on the board of directors; assisted in our communications activities; participated in fundraising and community awareness events; and applied for grants.

## Developing our strategic plan for 2025-2028

To help us chart a course for the next three years, a facilitated strategic planning session was held in November 2024 with the Executive Director, board and committee



Strategic planning session, November 2024

members, staff, and volunteers. Follow-up discussions with different stakeholder groups were then held to refine our future plans.

Looking ahead, THH will focus on building a caring, compassionate, quality-focused organization as we continue to grow. We will ensure that our clients, families, and caregivers, and community remain our top priority.

Over the next three years, the following four strategic directions will guide us. Our mission, vision, and values are the foundation for each strategic direction.

- Build our capacity to deliver quality care services
- Cultivate a financially sustainable organization
- Foster partnerships and essential alliances
- Develop our people, leadership, and governance

To be successful in achieving each strategic direction, we have identified a number of strategic priorities to guide our course over the next three years. Both the strategic directions and priorities provide a solid framework for the development of annual operational plans, which identify the specific initiatives, projects, action steps, and performance metrics. For more information see our **Strategic Plan 2025-2028**, available for download on our website at [www.thehospicehub.ca/reports](http://www.thehospicehub.ca/reports)

Governing by our board of directors

Nine directors were appointed with diverse skills and experience, including health care, business, bereavement and spiritual support, finance, technology, and board governance as follows:

NAME	POSITION
Janet Cosier	Chair
Isobel Boyle	Vice Chair
Constance (Connie) Nuyens	Secretary
Katherine Williton	Treasurer
Janet Douglass	Board member
Patti Koeslag	Board member
Liana Gallant	Board member
Joan Stephenson-Bowes	Board member
Anne Janssen	Board member

During the year, the Board met 12 times to carry out its responsibilities. The operational plan was a central focus at each board meeting in order to track progress on the major initiatives and to discuss any risks and challenges to achieving the organizational objectives. The finance report, which was prepared by the board treasurer, was also presented at each board meeting.

Our corporate administration and board governance policies continued to evolve in areas, such as the protection of health and personal information; the appointment of a Privacy Officer; a financial policy guideline; and a statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Governance and Nomination Committee met 10 times during the year.

The board hired DS CPA Professional Corporation, a firm of professional accountants, in Smiths Falls, to perform review engagement services for The Hospice Hub’s year-end financial statements at March 31, 2024 and at March 31, 2025.

Evolving our communications and website

THH’s website which is attractive and user-friendly continues to evolve as the organization grows. Our Newsletter has been well-received. In addition, regular and



ongoing local media coverage of THH's activities has been beneficial in spreading the importance of community financial support to provide the critical end-of-life services so very much needed in our communities.

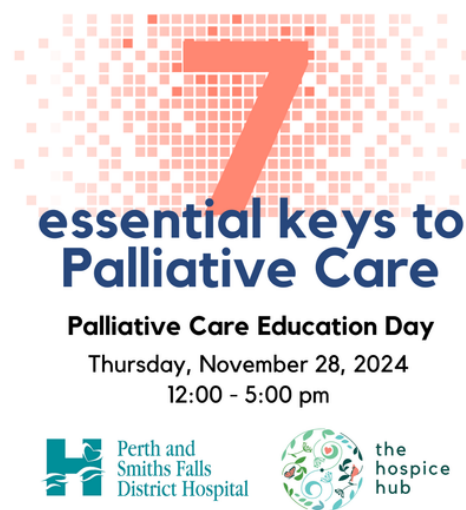
THH's information booths were set-up at several community events including the Festival of Maples and the Stewart Park Festival in Perth. Presentations were made at several community service organizations and municipal councils to raise awareness about The Hospice Hub, including its vision, mission, values, and programs and services.

## Co-sponsoring palliative care education day

The Hospice Hub co-sponsored with the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital the Palliative Care Education Day with guest speakers Dr. Sammy Winemaker and Dr. Hsien Seow for a half-day session at the Oakfield Rugby Park in Perth.

Winemaker and Seow have many years of palliative care research and experience in caring for seriously ill patients. At the workshop, they shared highlights of their new book, *Hope for the Best, Plan for the Rest*, including the 7 keys to unlock a better illness experience

Doctors Winemaker and Seow provided stories, tips, and exercises to improve a patient's journey from the time of diagnosis. In addition, they described some practical tools to take charge of one's life-changing diagnosis and navigate the health care system with confidence, knowledge, and calm. Presentations were also made by



Palliative Care Education Day - November 28, 2024

several community organizations describing the services that they provide to support the end-of-life needs of people in our community.

## Fundraising through events, grants, and donations

THH was successful in raising funds to support its operations. The funds raised for the main fundraising events were the following:

- **Hike for Hospice** in June 2024 - \$ 83,000
- **Polar Bear Plunge** in January 2025 - \$82,000

Donations were made by individual community members totaling \$32,000.

We would like to acknowledge the grants from the following organizations:

- **Ontario Health East** (\$50,000) one-time funding for grief and bereavement support in 2024-2025
- **Perth and District Community Foundation** Community Grant (\$25,000) in collaboration with PEP – Seniors Therapeutic Center for 2025-2026
- **Town of Smiths Falls** (\$10,000) Community Grant for 2025-2026

With much gratitude, in-kind donations were also received, such as rent-free office space and Wi-Fi at the Perth Family Health Centre, and bookkeeping services. Volunteers have contributed hundreds of hours of their time to: build collaborative relationships with partners; recruit and train home and bereavement support volunteers; build a technology infrastructure and website; organize fundraising events; develop communications materials; and perform various administrative, operational, and grant writing services.

The planning and implementation work for the 2025 Hike for Hospice started in early in 2025. The event was held on May 25, 2025. It was a big success! We would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of the event team who did a truly amazing job! We also very much appreciate the generous financial giving of our community, and from their friends and families from afar, as well as our local newspapers and radio station for their support in covering our events. Together we raised \$57,725 for the delivery of our programs and services in 2025-2026.



Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 2025 - Perth Polar Bear Plunge



## Financials

At March 31, 2025, net income after deducting operating costs totalled approximately \$187,000. This income will be used to help launch our new day hospice program in Smiths Falls and Perth, and expand the home support and bereavement services in 2025-2026.

## Looking forward to 2025-2026

The Hospice Hub will focus on the following priorities:

- Develop and implement the Day Hospice Program
- Expand Home Support and Bereavement Support services
- Enhance the organization's partnerships with healthcare and community partners
- Evolve our employee and volunteer education and appreciation programs
- Engage with community members in building a hospice residence.



**Clockwise starting from top-left:** THH booth at the Perth Night Market; Janet Cosier is awarded the "Warrior of the Month" award at a Board Meeting; Isobel Boyle presents to the Westport Seniors Living group; participants jump into the Tay during the 2025 Plunge for Hospice; the "Gourmet Grannies" at the 2025 Hike for Hospice; volunteers Karolyn and Sam pose with THH's decorated Christmas tree at the Crystal Palace

# the hospice hub

April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025



## Home support \*

**38** clients and families  
**60** client visits  
**20** systems navigation requests  
**1** nurse coordinator hired

*\* launched October 2024*



## Bereavement support

**55** group sessions  
**500** participants  
**75** 1-on-1 companion visits



## Advance care planning

**4** group sessions  
**55** participants

## Palliative Care Education Day

**100** participants

## THE Hub-Bub! newsletter

**9** editions

**1,375** subscribers



## in the news

**20** articles

**5** radio & tv interviews

## community awareness

**7** awareness events

**6** presentations to community groups

**4** presentations to municipal councils

**Hike for Hospice**  
+  
**Polar Bear Plunge**  
=  
**\$ 165k**

**2** volunteer training courses + **1** orientation session



**50** trained hospice and bereavement volunteers

**13,200** volunteer hours = **6.5** FTE