

# Evergreen Hospice

MARKHAM ~ STOUFFVILLE

## Caring for Our Community

### Hospice support on the rise in York Region

Since 1989, Evergreen Hospice has been helping people in the communities of Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville cope during the most difficult time in their lives – when they face a life-threatening illness or death.

Evergreen Hospice's professional staff and trained volunteers are dedicated to providing compassionate palliative care - helping people maintain dignity and personal choice while continuing to have a positive quality of life. Evergreen's bereavement support is designed to meet the specific emotional needs of children, teens and adults as they adjust to their loss and learn new living skills.

"The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) reports that 95% of Canadians say they want quality hospice palliative support at the end of their life, yet currently less than 15% of Canadians have access to this type of care," points out *Esther Mitchell, Evergreen Hospice Executive Director*. "Evergreen Hospice is committed to ensuring that the people who live in Markham-Stouffville have access to the quality hospice support they deserve. Being a non-profit organization, all of our hospice services are provided at no charge."

#### Evergreen Hospice offers Palliative Care support through:

- **Kathleen Mullin Day Program** - offers positive, life-affirming activities and friendship on a weekly basis.
- **In-Home Support** - trained volunteers and professional staff provide one-on-one assistance to families in their home.
- **Personalized Counselling** - trained professionals offer confidential counselling to help people cope through difficult times.
- **Caregiver Support Group** - offered bi-weekly for those who are the primary caregiver for a loved one or friend. Caregivers share their feelings, receive practical information and develop coping skills. The group is facilitated by hospice staff and trained volunteers.

#### Bereavement Programs include:

- **Shifting Sands** - drop-in support program for teens.
- **Bridges of Hope** - meets monthly, providing resources for individuals who have experienced the death of a loved one.
- **Circle of Hope** - a self-help group that shares common experiences, concerns and mutual support.
- **Bereavement Correspondence Course** - sharing information on topics including the phases, feelings and complexities of grief with practical suggestions for coping with the variety of emotions that people may feel.

#### Support for Children ~ Stormy Nights...Sunny Days

*Stormy Nights...Sunny Days* is Evergreen Hospice's ten-week bereavement support program for children ages 5-13 years. During a recent session, children were asked to sew their own personalized *Scarves of Many Colours*. Multi-coloured squares were knitted by a hospice staff member. The children selected colours that they associated with their loved one who died. The colours could reflect feelings of grief or could represent characteristics of that special person.

The scarves also became a positive reminder of the time the children spent together. As the weeks went by, the scarves grew longer and at the end of the program, the children shared the meaning of the scarves with their parent.

#### Special Events:

- **New World** - A social group for widows and widowers which enables people to re-enter social activities as a single person.
- **Not so Jolly Christmas** - annual seminar featuring Dr. Bill Webster who offers support suggestions for coping with the holidays.
- **Celebration of Life** - annual memorial service that provides an opportunity for families and friends to join Evergreen Hospice staff and volunteers and celebrate the lives of those who have been cared for.

#### Community Partnerships:

- **Dark Shadows...Bright Lights** - offered in partnership with York South Association for Community Living, this 8-week grief support group for

adults who have an intellectual disability provides an opportunity for clients to meet in a structured, positive setting to explore their feelings of loss and develop ways to cope with the changes in their lives.

- **The Bridging Project** - offered in partnership with York Region Social Services Access Centre to expand bereavement support to members of the Chinese Community. Evergreen's professional counselling staff coupled with volunteer translation assistance provides on-site support once a month.

#### Your support helps Evergreen support those in need

While all of Evergreen Hospice's programs are offered at no charge to the community, these offerings are not without cost. "Only 12% of the hospice funding comes from government assistance and Evergreen Hospice does not receive financial support from local healthcare organizations such as the Markham-Stouffville Hospital or other medical associations," explained *Ann Burkholder, Evergreen Hospice Board Member*. "Corporate financial support, personal donations, memorials and bequests as well as special event fundraising plays a crucial role in making it possible for Evergreen to meet the increasing needs of people in our community."

"Over the past three years, Evergreen Hospice's clients have increased annually by 15% and we know that the demand for hospice care will grow dramatically as York Region's population ages," notes *Jim Cuttle, Evergreen Hospice Board President*. "That creates a real financial challenge for us. We must find the necessary funds to cover the costs of training more volunteers and hiring additional counselling professionals. It just isn't acceptable to have people waiting for palliative care."

**"Thanks for all the love and wonderful care you gave to my Dad.  
We have had times of joy and sadness and you have supported my  
Mom and the rest of us through it all."**

#### Volunteers make it happen!

"We are extremely proud of our volunteers," notes *Virginia Bidwell, Evergreen Hospice Volunteer Coordinator*. "They are an amazing team of caring and committed people. It is rewarding to work with hospice families and we ensure that our volunteers are well prepared. Every new volunteer participates in a 10-week (30 hours) training program and we offer additional information sessions throughout the year."

**Last year Evergreen Hospice volunteers contributed more than 19,000  
volunteer hours helping people in the Markham-Stouffville community.**

#### Celebrating Life the Evergreen Way

"We have a fantastic group of community members who are actively involved with our fundraising initiatives," said *Karen Warner, Evergreen Hospice Fund Development Coordinator*. "Combine those talented individuals with our local business partnerships and our charity events become more successful year after year. We truly believe in celebrating life and strive to offer something for everyone. I think one of the key reasons that our fundraising events have become so popular is because of the fun we have at them!"



*Modeling their Scarves of Many Colours are children who participated in the Stormy Nights...Sunny Days program*

**A tradition of caring  
from one generation to another.**



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