

# HOPE QUARTERLY

Sharing the stories and celebrating the work of the Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre

Winter 2023

## A message from Kathy Wolfer, Chair, Board of Directors

Welcome all to *Hope Quarterly*. This new publication is a way for the Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre (GBCSC) to keep you, as a valued supporter, informed about the impact of your support and up to date on the amazing stories and faces of local cancer support. We truly are excited to have you read along.

The GBCSC serves so many impacted by cancer in our communities of North Simcoe and parts of Southern Georgian Bay. We are Ontario's only rural cancer support centre and serve a large geographical area. It makes a tremendous difference for those impacted by cancer to receive services where they live.

In this issue, you will read incredible stories of personal impact. Impact only made possible by your generous support. We can't thank you enough for all that you do for those in our community who have been touched by cancer.

Thank you for being part of this journey and enjoy reading our inaugural issue.

Kathy



## MemberSpeak

### Why did you reach out to the GBCSC during your cancer journey?



"I became a member after my husband reached out on my behalf. I was in a dark place in my cancer journey and was looking for some support. I ended up taking advantage of the counselling services and a support group. Later I got involved with the card making program and volunteering. The Centre has become a home away from home. The connections I've made with people here I believe will become lifelong friendships."

-Deanna Sinnige

"I became a member when I was first diagnosed. When you get a cancer diagnosis, you are in a state of shock. A friend of mine recommended I come to the Cancer Support Centre and I've been here ever since. It's a place where you can be with other people going through the same thing. I find it's a very welcoming environment. People here understand what you're going through and the support is here."



-Virginia Nihill



"When I was first diagnosed, I didn't know what to do. My doctor suggested I come to the Centre. I was very nervous when I first came in but all the staff were very warm and welcoming. I found that going to programs I was able to join in with others who were on a similar journey as me. We're all included here like a big family. It's great getting together with everyone."

-Glenn Wood

## Filling a Gap

### How Brian and Anita's cancer journey was the start of an important legacy of support

Brian Millett faced a cancer diagnosis many years ago. Like so many others, he faced a gruelling series of treatments (five days a week over a month) at the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto, far from his Port Severn home. The days were long stretching from early AM to late afternoon. Plus, there were all the related travel costs.

*"We know what it's like facing these costs to get treatments... We set up this fund to help other people."*

Now 85, Brian is doing well though he continues to deal with cancer. To mark their 60th anniversary in 2019, he and Anita decided to take the funds they had saved for a special anniversary trip and dedicate them to a GAP (Gas, Accommodation, Parking) Fund at the GBCSC.

"We know what it's like facing these costs to get treatments," explains Brian. "We set up this fund to help other people."

"We're just two people who understand the need," adds Anita.

The GAP Fund has become an important support provided to GBCSC members. Throughout the year, dozens of members receive financial support for treatment travel costs including for gas costs, hospital parking fees, and accommodation expenses.

"No one realizes the added expenses when you're dealing with cancer," says Donna Huber, Brian, and Anita's daughter. She adds treatment costs can often be several thousands of dollars adding another level of stress. She and her husband Conrad have continued to support the fund with significant donations in 2020 and 2021, and hope that others continue to do the same.

## Marianne's Story

### Faced with a month of radiation and a 30-night hotel stay, Marianne turned to the GBCSC for support

Marianne Corlett faced six gruelling weeks of radiation treatment for her cancer in Toronto. The thought of driving back and forth each day while undergoing treatment was overwhelming, and to have her husband, aged over 80, make the daily trip was unthinkable. Accommodations in Toronto would be ideal, but few can afford such an unplanned expense on such short notice. The cost was simply too much. That's where the GBCSC stepped in.

After hearing Marianne's dilemma, Tammy Davenport, the GBCSC's Member Services Coordinator, reached out to Sunnybrook's Odette Cancer Centre to explore options. After learning more about her impossible situation, the treatment centre stepped up in a big way, taking on half of the cost of Marianne's stay. Paired with equal support from the GBCSC's GAP Fund, Marianne had the financial resources to cover her entire stay.

Tammy's efforts arranging accommodations nearby, and at the best price available, meant that Marianne could focus on what was most important.

"It allowed Marianne to focus on treatment and recovery. The GAP Fund is essential in minimizing financial concerns and supporting our members," says Tammy, noting it also gave Marianne more time to focus on her health and well-being.

Marianne says the Centre's support to arrange an accommodation and assistance from the GAP Fund made a huge difference. "Without the support, I was facing a huge financial burden," she adds. "I truly appreciated all of the help provided by the Cancer Support Centre."

## Member Spotlight

### Up close and personal with Diane King

#### **What prompted you to become a member?**

My friend's mother had been a member and started telling me about this Cancer Support Centre in our area. So, I walk in their front doors and was welcomed by friendly faces. I was feeling I needed to join a support program. I asked my doctor about the Centre, and he said he had heard wonderful things about GBCSC.

*"It has provided me with emotional, physical, and financial support. It's helped to be around people dealing with similar issues. When I'm there, I can see how others cope with their cancer. It's helpful to talk to people who are having similar feelings as me"*

Diane, member since 2018, on the role the GBCSC has played during her cancer journey

#### **What program or services provided by the GBCSC have made a difference to you?**

Oh wow... where do I start! When I joined, the programs that I most remember (and are still going on) Chair Yoga and Mindfulness, Stretch and Tone, Card Making, plus Soup for the Soul, and fun crafts. All this is still going on and now you can also participate virtually for some programs. The Journey of Hope Support Group is great. There I can share anything happening or going to happen that's affecting me... even if I cry or maybe laugh. I never feel uncomfortable!

#### **In your opinion, why is the GBCSC an important place for people impacted by cancer in our community?**

Although everyone's cancer situation is different, it is important to have a beautiful building where people can gather safely to support each other and provide a feeling of HOPE... cancer can be beaten. It provides a welcome distraction from the everyday routine of dealing with cancer.

#### **If someone is just newly-diagnosed with cancer and isn't sure about becoming a member, what would you say to encourage them to become a member?**

Come and see the facility and meet the people who are in a situation similar to yours. The volunteers and staff are so welcoming and always willing to support you. The vibe at the Centre is so positive.

#### **Do you have a particular memory or moment at the Centre that stands out to you?**

There are so many special moments and friends that I have met and lost during my journey. One that I will never forget was participating in Chair Yoga and while laying on the floor mat beside me a long time, beautiful, full-of-life elderly woman grabbed my hand during savasana. My heart was so full and thankful for that moment. Namaste.

#### **Is there anything else you want to mention about the GBCSC?**

If YOU are trying to think of a non-profit organization to support - think of GBCSC! Either by donating, participating in their fundraisers, 50/50 Hope Lottery, or by volunteering your time. It helps support important programs and services plus it helps individuals like me to deal with this disease.



## Heroes Matter

### How a scheduled charitable gift can be a lifeline in our community.

GBCSC members can access free support services and programs they need thanks to our many generous donors. That's especially true of those providing a regularly, scheduled gift throughout the year. It can make an incredible impact on somebody who is fighting cancer.

#### The challenge of cancer

A cancer diagnosis is life changing. For someone living in the many rural areas across North Simcoe and Southern Georgian Bay, it comes with a range of extra challenges that no person is ever truly prepared for. That's something that Jackie McEwan-Murray knows a lot about.

Jackie, who gives a monthly gift as a Heroes of Hope Giving Team member, saw the benefits of local cancer support when she was dealing with cancer.

*"It played a big part on my recovery and that's why it's important for me to continue to give back because if it helps one person then I know I'm making a positive impact."*

*-Jackie McEwan-Murray, Survivor, Volunteer, and Heroes of Hope team member*



#### Making a difference

The GBCSC's Heroes of Hope program was born of the notion that when the community comes together for a great cause, amazing things can happen for our members:

- Marianne's hotel stay during her six weeks of radiation in Toronto was made possible thanks to a \$100 monthly gift.
- Diane and other members can access bi-weekly support groups thanks to a monthly gift of \$50.
- Kris, who is dealing with hair loss from cancer treatment, received a wig and had it styled thanks to a \$25 monthly gift.
- Deanna received counselling after her diagnosis thanks to a donor's \$10 monthly contribution.

#### Provide ongoing support

By joining Jackie and becoming a Hero of Hope, your ongoing support ensures we can provide free programs and services to people close to home in North Simcoe, Springwater Township, and parts of Southern Georgian Bay who are fighting cancer. Your recurring gift can vary in size and frequency to align with your budget and giving preferences. All gifts, no matter how big or how often, are life-changing for someone battling cancer.

To join our Heroes of Hope Giving Team and support our members every month all year long, contact us at [fundraising@gbcancersupportcentre.ca](mailto:fundraising@gbcancersupportcentre.ca) or call Paul at 705 549 6444 ext. 204.



Georgian Bay  
Cancer Support Centre

The mission of the Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre is to provide emotional, physical, social, spiritual support, education and information as a complement to the medical system for people living with cancer, their families and caregivers.