

HOPE QUARTERLY

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

JULY 2025

MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR



Spring 2025 has brought incredible momentum to the Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre, with the Board charting a bold and hopeful path forward.

Our new Executive Director Dylan Lalande has embraced his role, connecting with members, donors, volunteers, & partners.

In April, your generosity helped us break another giving record—thank you for continuing to show up and speak up.

In May, we proudly opened our Collingwood location at 185 Hume Street and welcomed Emily Selby as General Manager.

In June, we celebrated the opening of our Garden of Hope and the installation of a stunning canopy by Lafontaine Iron Werks. The garden is an inspiring, healing space made possible by our incredible community.

Now, we're gearing up for the Georgian Bay Cycle of Hope – our biggest annual fundraiser and a powerful show of solidarity for those impacted by cancer.

In the midst of all this progress, we pause to say thank you. Your support fuels our mission. On behalf of the Board, thank you for helping us grow, dream, and deliver hope, close to home.

Lisa Belcourt

MEMBERSPEAK

The mission of the GBCSC is to provide support for those impacted by cancer. What has support meant to you as a member?



“The resources at the Support Centre have helped me to connect with other patients who have a shared understanding of what it is like to experience cancer and the treatments for it. I have appreciated the opportunity to give and receive emotional and mental support, and to share coping strategies.”

Jacqui Morrison



“I have found support through the Journey of Hope group. It's a place I can voice my feelings and fears. It is an encouraging, welcoming, and therapeutic environment where I know that I am not alone.”

Joyce Beattie



“In the late 1980s, there was no support after the treatments were over. You had to find your own solutions to the ongoing side effects. I sought out GBCSC after further battles with cancer and they provided emotional, psychological, physical and informational support. Just sharing stories within the GBCSC family members helped me navigate current health issues.”

Catherine Brassard

COMFORT KITS HELP MEMBERS DURING CANCER TREATMENTS

Individuals fighting cancer contend with weeks if not months of treatments. This can be physically gruelling and mentally draining. Thanks to a new initiative spearheaded by members who know how hard this part of the journey can be, complementary Comfort Kits have been created providing items helpful during treatments.

“Folks experiencing treatment for cancer, particularly intravenous chemotherapy and often radiation, tend to have side effects that are not very pleasant,” explains Bev Pitfield, one of the member volunteers leading this initiative.

“The aim of the Comfort Kits is to hopefully provide some relief of these symptoms as well as a small measure of support and empathy.”

The Comfort Kit includes a small bag with a strap that offers space for a phone and other small items handy during a treatment. Items provided include lotions, lip balm, mouthwash, warm socks, and a water bottle.

Bev notes many of the items were created by GBCSC members and volunteers. Other items were donated by local businesses. Initial funding was provided by the Huronia Community Foundation’s Heart of Georgian Bay Community Fund.

The kit also includes a Cancer Journal. The journal concept came about thanks to member Colleen Taylor who was inspired by close friend Claire Swain who recommended journaling.



Bev Pitfield



Colleen Taylor

“After I completed active treatment, I felt a bit lost, and during one of our conversations, we both agreed there had to be a better way to keep track of medications, appointments, personal reflections, and everything in between. That’s when the idea for the journal was born.”

Colleen adds she loves design and creating the journal became therapeutic for her. It helped her process the many stages during her cancer journey.

“With Claire’s gift for organization and my background in design, we created a journal that not only gives back but also helps others feel a little more grounded and supported during one of the hardest times in their lives.”

The journals have been funded in part through donations from the Victoria Harbour Lions Club and the Midland Rotary Club.

To date, 100 kits have been created and many distributed to those fighting cancer locally.

“As cancer seems to be so prevalent in our community, we expect these kits to last only for a short time,” notes Bev. “We’ll need donations from supporters to ensure this project continues to help future cancer patients.”

LOCAL BUSINESSES SUPPORT GBCSC BECAUSE OF THE CAUSE

The GBCSC is so grateful for the generosity of our local community. Over the past year, dozens of local businesses have gone above and beyond to support those impacted by cancer through creative fundraisers, sponsorships, and in-kind donations. Here are just a few whose incredible contributions have helped make a lasting difference:

The Penetanguishene-based accessory brand raised over \$8,200 during our Paint the Town Pink campaign by donating proceeds from pink and blush product sales.



Poppy & Peonies

"We love this community, and to this day they remain our biggest supporters, they helped us get Poppy & Peonies off the ground and it's a privilege to give back! Cancer affects so many of us and we're so grateful to have the Georgian Bay Cancer Centre in our community to help those affected and their families when they need it most." - Natalie Dusome, Founder and Owner

Owned and operated by Joannie Petroff, De Ferrari Home is a beloved lifestyle boutique located in Wyebridge. Joannie has contributed thousands of dollars to the Centre through the sale of handmade pink soy candles during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



De Ferrari Home

"The Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre is such a big part of our community whether it's assisting family members or assisting people through their personal battle. They are phenomenal." - Joannie Petroff



IRIS Optical

IRIS Optical Midland has been a committed Paint the Town Pink partner, raising funds through customer donations and purchasing pink pumpkins. Store Manager Lisa Beaudoin (pictured front, second from the left), a breast cancer survivor and past member, knows firsthand the impact of accessible support.

"It's important to give back to the Centre to help as this disease can cause so much financial and emotional stress to the families affected." - Lisa Beaudoin, Store Manager.



Test Batches Brewery

This family-run Midland brewpub joined Paint the Town Pink as a community partner, raising funds through special promotions and events. They also sponsored courts during the Butter Tart Classic. As cancer survivors, their support is both personal and powerful.

"Having had our own cancer journey, we understand the importance of having cancer support close to home. A local cancer support centre is a true blessing for our community." - Jamie and Lesley Tripp, Founders

Did You Know...

Many local organizations and individuals hold fundraisers and donate all (or a portion of proceeds) in support of the GBCSC. Over the past year and half, **close to \$20,000 in financial support** has been donated to help those impacted by cancer.

Thank You!

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL *with Karen*



How did you find out about the GBCSC?

We learned about the Centre through our new family doctor. I mentioned to my husband as we were out and he was feeling pretty good, maybe we should pop in. He said yes and we did a quick u-turn. When we walked in, immediately you just feel at home when you come in.

What was it like when you first visited the Centre?

The Centre is beautiful. The staff were happy to greet us. We had an awesome tour and learned so much just in that first visit about what kind of facility it is. We felt really welcome to pop by again.

As a caregiver, how has the Centre supported you?

The Centre offers a lot of hope to as a caregiver as there are lots of ups and downs. You can feel despair and worry and concern. There are so many ways that you can join in at the Centre with others hearing and sharing stories. It gives you hope. And as a caregiver, sometimes you feel like you don't have a voice in the whole journey. You get a hopeful feeling when you can share with the other people that you meet here. Everybody has an open heart and that gives you a good feeling.

What services or programs have made a difference to you?

I have joined in several programs. Most helpful to me is probably the Caregiver Support Group. I have even made some friends through that group and it has been great. There's an Indigenous, healing group that I find terrific. I've also partaken of the counseling services to get me through a crisis that can occur to anybody. I've even gone online for the Yoga Nidra classes in the evening. It's a great way to settle down.

What does it mean to you to access support for no fees?

It means a lot to us knowing you don't have to be reaching in your wallet to go out and socialize or get the support that you feel you need. You are meeting a lot of people and building new relationships. The finances don't have to be discussed or brought into it.

Does it make a difference having this support close to home?

The Centre is just a short 15-minute drive from our home. It has worked out well for us. We can combine a stop at the Centre with other errands that we need to do. But most importantly, it means if we had a need for support or care at the spur of the moment, we could get here easily and do that. Prior to finding Centre, we would have been lucky to find help online through groups in Toronto and to get there is a two-to-three-hour drive.

**KAREN
HODGSON**



Community: *Tiny Township*

Member Since: *2023*



Georgian Bay
Cancer Support Centre

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