

HOPE QUARTERLY

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

2026 - ISSUE 1



QUILTING & CRAFTS GROUP PROVIDES A PLACE TO CREATE, CONNECT, & FORM NEW FRIENDSHIPS



If you drop by the Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre (GBCSC) on Tuesday mornings in Collingwood, you'll find a dedicated group of women who have turned a five-hour weekly block into something much bigger than a Quilting & Crafts group.

The group is a mix of seasoned experts and total beginners. What makes the dynamic work is the kindness and support they all have for each other; the experienced quilters have stepped up as mentors, taking the time to teach the novices the ropes. It's a welcoming, low-pressure environment where the goal is simply to create and connect. The group's impact on the Centre has been practical and immediate.

"Members have been incredibly generous, donating piles of fabric from their own personal stashes and spending hours

organizing the supplies to make the workspace functional for everyone," says Lori Chatham, Program Coordinator.

Leading up to the holiday break in December, the group stayed busy prepping for the GBCSC's Hope for the Holiday Market. They challenged themselves with new patterns, producing everything from coasters and pot holders to "port covers"—a small, thoughtful item designed specifically for other members currently undergoing treatment.

While the projects are impressive, the real draw is the friendship. Spending five hours together every week allows for plenty of conversation. Between the hum of the machines, the women catch up on everything—family updates, travel stories, and plenty of jokes. It's a space where people can talk about their life experiences in a way that feels natural and supportive, says Denise Vandelaar.

"Since joining the group at the Cancer Support Centre, I have developed wonderful friendships with the ladies that come in weekly to share their creativity, their stories, and chat just about everything and anything."

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MEMBERSPEAK

The GBCSC offers people facing cancer a place to share their stories and interact with others on the same journey. Have you developed new connections as a member? What has that meant to you?



Regina Featherstone

“Being able to interact with people who face similar illnesses comforts me and allows me to express myself. It provides a judgement-free environment, where we can forget that we are ill and enjoy laughter and banter.

The activities offered are great to come together and develop new friendships.”



Lindsay Earle

“Connecting with others who have truly walked this path has been crucial to my recovery. Through the GBCSC, our women’s group became incredibly close—we support one another both inside and outside the group. The connections I’ve built feel like family. I feel seen and heard on a different level, and I know these meaningful friendships will be lifelong, strengthened by the incredible support we continue to give each other.”



Corrina LeBlond

“I have developed several new connections since becoming a member. This has meant more than I thought it would. It’s helped me feel understood in ways that complement the love and support I receive from my family and friends.

The Georgian Bay Cancer Support Centre is truly a second home.”

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on another meaningful past year, I want to extend my sincere thanks to our community for the extraordinary generosity we have seen—from the community engagement of Paint the Town Pink through to the collective impact of Giving Tuesday and our Season of Giving campaign.

Your support has made a tangible difference, ensuring that individuals and families facing cancer in our region are not alone.

As we look ahead, I am filled with optimism for a bright 2026. Our community continues to grow,

allowing us to reach more members and offer an expanded range of programs and supports close to home.

This growth is made possible through the generosity, dedication, and care of our staff, volunteers, and our many donors and sponsors, who ensure that support is available when it is needed most.

Together, we are strengthening a community where no one has to face cancer alone, and where compassion and connection remain at the heart of everything we do.

Dylan Lalande



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“It’s so inspiring, relaxing and fun all at the same time. I look forward to it every time. You just never know what to expect and that’s what makes it so great.” The group is diving into a new collaborative project to start the new year: a community quilt. They are

working on it square by square, with the goal of raffling it off later this year to help fund GBCSC’s programs.

“We’re excited to see this group continue to grow and can’t wait to see the finished quilt once it’s off the frame,” adds Lori.



**LAURA
McCLUNG**

COMMUNITY:

Midland

MEMBER SINCE:

2024

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

How did you find out about the GBCSC?

I found out about it through my son. His father-in-law was diagnosed with cancer, a few months before I was. He told my son that it's a wonderful, wonderful place to go for support.

What was it like when you first visited the Centre?

Quite honestly, when I walked in, it felt very warm and comforting. I was really apprehensive about it because I didn't know what to expect. But it was very welcoming.

As a member, how has the Centre helped you through the ups and downs of your journey to date?

It's given me hope and a sense of normalcy to my life. I didn't know what to expect when I was diagnosed because it's devastating when you find out you have cancer. The GBCSC has helped me to accept it. And I have met so many wonderful people here.

What services or programs have made a difference to you?

I think I've taken part in almost all the programs, but I attend four to five regularly. The Journey of Hope... that's a really big one for me. We laugh, we cry... we all share our experiences with cancer. I can't wait to come into that group because I know it's a release for me, and I feel very comfortable. I can talk about whatever is on my mind. There's a lot of hugs afterwards. It's just a wonderful group.

Have you utilized the Brian & Anita Millett GAP Fund to help with some of the financial costs of cancer?

Yes! It's helped to cover my gas and parking.

If I were stuck down in Barrie during snowstorms, it helps with my accommodation costs. It takes a lot of the financial stress off you.

All programs and services are free to members. How does that make a difference?

One service I access is Seated Massage. Due to my breast surgery, I developed lymphedema. Seated Massage offers lymphatic drainage, which, if I had to go out to a private provider in the community, the cost would be astronomical.

How has the Centre given you HOPE during an often difficult journey?

This place has really helped me. Yes, you have the love and support from your family and friends, but at the Centre, you get additional support from members and staff. It's genuine... it really is genuine.

I honestly don't know what I would have done without it.

Did You Know...

The GBCSC annually receives several *In Memoriam donations*. In many cases, the Centre is the charity that families select when a loved one passes. Over the past three years, close to **\$20,000 In Memoriam were made**. In 2025, 32 individuals were remembered with a donation to the GBCSC.



“With cancer touching the lives of so many, we decided upon GBCSC as something that everyone could support. It’s certainly an important welcome new addition to our community.”

Organizing the event was a huge undertaking for the Monaco Outreach Team but they rose to the challenge along with help from other residents and the local community.

“We’re so appreciative of local businesses for rallying behind this cause,” says Michelle. “There we were, friendly faces knocking on their door so to speak, and the overwhelming response by these business owners was so kind and positive. A huge thank you to all of them!”

She adds it was a lot of legwork for the Monaco team to contact businesses, but the kind welcome they received made it worth the effort.

As this was the first “Monaco-Wide” community fundraiser, they didn’t know how much they would raise. They hoped to raise some funds but never imagined the fundraiser would bring in as much as it did. Michelle admits the Monaco team could never have achieved the fundraising total without the generosity of local businesses, the residents at Monaco, and the greater Collingwood community.



“In the end it was an event that everyone involved could be proud of, and it shows the real power of a community rallying together.”

CONDO COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO RAISE FUNDS FOR GBCSC

The GBCSC often receives support annually thanks to community-based, grassroots, third-party fundraisers. People give their time, energy and more to organize events to help those impacted by cancer. A group of residents at the Monaco Classic Condominium in Collingwood got together before the holiday season and raised \$13,500 for the GBCSC at an evening fundraiser.

“It’s so satisfying to see people come together behind an idea and make the dream come true of giving back to our community, and it’s this kind of positive support that makes all the hard work worth it,” explains Michelle FitzPatrick, a Monaco Outreach Team Member.

She says the Monaco Condominium is a very special community. They wanted to work together to do something special in the community. Their biggest challenge was to decide on a charity to support. All agreed the GBCSC was the right cause.



Georgian Bay
Cancer Support Centre

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