

Quality of Life Matters

HEIN HOUSE, HOSPICE CARE OTTAWA'S NEW RESIDENTIAL HOSPICE, IS WELCOMED IN THE WEST END

You may not think a drive across town is taxing, but when someone in your family is nearing the end of life, it can represent time wasted when time is precious. That's why the opening of Hospice Care Ottawa's newest residential hospice, Hein House, is cause for celebration.

Located at 110 McCurdy Drive in Kanata, it's the residential wing of Ruddy-Shenkman Hospice, and starting September 26 it will be accepting patients. This means Ottawa's west-end families can now access full-service hospice care, including palliative and end-of-life residential care, right where they live.



Already the welcome has been overwhelmingly positive, says Kristina Voth-Childs, communications coordinator for Hospice Care Ottawa. "The community has stepped up and gone above and beyond." Not only are people offering to volunteer, neighbours have helped out with the grass and gardening, she adds.

The new 12,592 square-foot addition has 10 hospice rooms and two short-term respite rooms, plus an interdisciplinary team to provide 24-hour hospice care. Each of the rooms has a bathroom, as well as access to gardens. There's also space for loved ones to stay overnight. Family members and friends are encouraged to spend as much time as they like.

In this homelike setting, patients will receive physical, emotional and spiritual support with a focus on quality of life and comfort, as well as pain and symptom management. For people with life limiting illnesses who can no longer manage

at home and who don't want to be in hospital, Hein House is a life gift.

It's also a community offering that has been a long time in the works.

Back in January of 2013, Friends of Hospice Ottawa and The Hospice at May Court amalgamated to form Hospice Care Ottawa, a community-based charitable organization that provides palliative and end-of-life programs and services to people living in the city.

In June of 2013 the organization purchased the McCurdy Drive property, a 3.6-acre site in central Kanata. Thanks to a fundraising campaign led by the Bruyère Foundation, over \$6 million was raised for the purchase as well as the renovation of a former church on the property. In 2014 the doors opened to the Ruddy-Shenkman Hospice, where community hospice programs such as day hospice, caregiver support, volunteer training and grief and bereavement groups are offered. All along, though, the dream was to also provide live-in space for hospice patients in the west end.

Now it's a reality, and cause for celebration. However, ongoing costs are also a reality. "We must fundraise over \$1.8 million annually in order to continue to provide our services at no charge," Kristina points out. The next fundraising event is Homes for the Holidays, slated for November 17 to 19. The three-day tour features eight beautifully decorated homes, as well as a holiday pop-up shop at the Irish ambassador's residence and the Gingerbread Village at May Court Hospice in Old Ottawa South. Tickets go on sale September 29. See www.hospicecareottawa.ca.

