

# Surrey Hospice Society

"Companions for the Journey ..."



Spring 2008

## When The Body Says No The Cost of Hidden Stress

Can a person literally die of loneliness? Is there a connection between the ability to express emotions and Alzheimer's disease? Is there such a thing as a "cancer personality"?

We invite you to attend the Surrey Hospice Society's Annual General Meeting as we welcome Dr. Gabor Maté, physician, author, and public speaker. Dr. Maté offers profound insights into the link between emotions and disease.

Born in Budapest, Hungary in 1944, Dr. Maté emigrated to Canada with his family in 1957. After graduating with a B.A. from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and a few years as a high school English and literature teacher, he returned to school to pursue his childhood dream of being a doctor.

Dr. Maté ran a private family practice in East Vancouver for over twenty years. He was also the Medical Co-ordinator of the Palliative Care Unit at Vancouver Hospital for seven years.

Currently he is the staff physician at the Portland Hotel, a residence and resource centre for the people of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Many of his patients suffer from mental illness, drug addiction and HIV, or all three.

Dr. Maté has had regular medical columns in The Vancouver Sun and the national Globe and Mail.

Thursday, April 10th - 7 pm  
Kwantlen University College  
Wellness Centre Faculty  
Building G - Conference Rooms A & B  
12666 72nd Avenue, Surrey

Please RSVP by calling 604-543-7006

## Walk of Remembrance and Dove Release Memorial

Enjoy the natural area trails giving you an opportunity to celebrate the memory of your loved ones. At the same time you will be raising much needed funds to help the Society continue to companion individuals and their loved ones as they face life-limiting illness, and ongoing grief support. With your continued support, we hope to raise over \$15,000 this year.

Form a team - invite your friends, family and co-workers. Choose a team captain, a team name and together have a ton of fun!

Prior to the walk beginning, doves will be released during a time of remembrance. This Memorial White Dove Release can bring peace and healing in the grieving process. The release of the dove is a way of symbolically releasing the spirit of a loved one.



Should you wish to have the name of your loved one recognized at the Memorial, please contact the Surrey Hospice Society.

For pre-registration and pledge forms please drop by the Resource Centre or call 604-543-7006. Everyone who pre-registers before event day will be entered into a draw to win a fabulous prize.

To avoid event day lineups, we would encourage you to drop off your forms and pledges at the Society office by 4 pm, Thursday, May 8th.

Saturday, May 10th  
9 am - 1 pm  
Bear Creek Park, Surrey

## Message from the Board President



*Brian Clarke*  
*President*

### Little Children

In January my daughter, Cathy, gave birth to a son – my 11<sup>th</sup> grandchild. In the Alberta town of 4,000 where Cathy and her family live, Jared, although born on January 19<sup>th</sup>, is the “New Year’s Baby”. He’s famous already, having had his picture featured in the local newspaper - front page! Jared is Cathy’s sixth child, and she says the last, although, if I’m not mistaken, she said that after the fifth.

Cathy and my son-in-law, Tyler, have a big family by today’s standards. Back in the time of my Nova Scotia forefathers, whom I wrote about in the Fall 2007 issue of the Newsletter, it would have been considered medium to small. Large families were the norm.

Jared is born in a world in which the life expectancy of the average Canadian is now 80 years. Naturally Cathy and Tyler expect Jared to outlive them. It is the expectation that parents today have for their children. But, this hasn’t always been the case. In the 1800’s, before vaccinations for many childhood diseases existed, infant mortality was much higher. People had the hope, but not the expectation, that their children would outlive them. Horrible as it sounds, children were expected to die, and regularly did. Fortunately that has changed. Of course our forefathers grieved the loss of their children, but they, like people in many undeveloped countries today, confronted more death in their lives. They grew up with death around them. It was

part of daily life. When it struck it was not as unexpected as it is today. It was not seen as unnatural; a tragic aberration. They did not have the same expectation we have that they, and their children, would enjoy a long and healthy life. That is just not the way things were. They knew that death could strike at any age. It didn’t make it easy, but it was seen as a natural occurrence.

Today we expect that we, and our children, will live long and healthy lives. The averages say we should. Medicine has made great strides permitting people to survive illnesses that would have taken their lives just a half-century ago. My grandfather died of a heart condition when my mother was 12. Had he been alive today he would have had heart bypass surgery and lived another 20 years. Mom’s 15 year old brother, evidently a bright spunky kid, died just 6 months after her father, when an abscess in his ear spread into his brain. Antibiotics and surgery would have saved him today. Medicine has come a long way, and life expectancy has increased. Baring tragic accident, we expect to live to an old age, and that, if necessary, modern medicine will get us there. But sometimes medicine can’t. Medicine has made huge inroads, even moving in the direction of replacement parts for failed organs, but nature has a way of striking back, and some viruses and diseases are mutating at a faster rate than science can keep up. When confronted by the fact that our expectation for a long life is not going to be fulfilled, our sense of what is normal, fair and right is offended, making it more difficult to accept the prognosis. In North American you often hear it said, even of people who die in their 60’s, that they died prematurely, before their time, a life cut short. Of course, people in the third world would be mystified by such

statements, because that is not their reality, and not their expectation. But it is our expectation which makes the reality of an earlier than expected death that much more difficult to cope with.

Death is never easy to deal with, and I suppose that if it ever is then something is seriously wrong. But, I believe that coping with death is even harder for us now than it was in the past. For one thing, we have less experience with it. It is not part of our daily lives. There are few large families anymore, and less sense of community. Our support networks are small. We live in a youth-oriented culture, which denies aging. Discussion of death is a taboo; sometimes still a taboo to be danced around even when death is literally staring a person and their family in the face. Death is not seen as a natural outcome, and even if we grudgingly accept that it is there is the belief that medicine should be able to do something to allow us, or someone we love, to survive to old age. Because we have difficulty coping at all with the idea of death, it can be even more difficult to come to terms with the death of a child.

As a young RCMP officer I attended a number of crib deaths. I was shocked seeing these beautiful, healthy-looking babies lying there. It didn’t seem right. Babies shouldn’t die. But I saw with my own eyes that babies did die. This was no longer something theoretical, that I heard about in recruit training or read in a magazine article. It was real. That reality offended my expectations; my sense of the natural order of things. It affected me. It may sound odd, but when my first child, Steve, was born, I realized for the first time in my life that there was something more important to me than me. I had so much love tied up in that child that if anything happened to him I thought it would kill

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me. A parent's love for a child is a very intense and powerful thing. Steve grew like a weed and was a big, healthy baby, but I had seen big healthy-looking SIDS babies lying in their cribs. I was anxious something would happen to him. I gradually developed a more balanced perspective of the risk, my anxiety waned, and I ceased being hyper-vigilant as he grew older and my other kids were born. In this age the loss of a child violates our expectations for a long life, our sense that in the natural order of things a parent should not bury their child, and our belief as to what is right and fair. Two years ago Joey, the grandson of my best friend, died at age 10. I watched as all the family's expectations and dreams for Joey were shattered. Instinctively we want to nurture and protect our children. When we, and medicine, cannot protect them, amidst the grief are

feelings of powerlessness, bewilderment, anger and failure. We live in an age where people want answers. We want to know why something happens, and what can be done about it. This quest has taken us a long way, especially in scientific, technical, and medical knowledge. But, because we are used to answers, it is harder for us to accept when sometimes there are no answers. It makes it more difficult to find peace and accept the fact that some things will always be a mystery.

And so my grandson, Jared, embarks on his life's journey, surrounded by our family's love, and with our hopes and expectation that he will have a long and healthy life. But, because of some experiences I've had in my life, and some mysteries I've pondered but will never fathom, I'm more deeply aware now just how precious his little

life is and how fragile it can be. Wishing you a safe passage, Jared.

I dedicate this article to my friend and colleague, Wendy Houle, and to the memory of her son, Tyler McManus, one of the many 'Little Children'.

This marks my last President's Message. I make way as Society president for Judi Huta, who is a real dynamo, and will be an upgrade at the position. It has been an honour for me to serve as president, and to work with people whom I greatly admire. A special thank you to those with whom I've worked most closely - Marion, Donna and Barb - for your unflinching support and encouragement. You are inspirational.

*Brian Clarke*  
President

## *From a Volunteer's Heart*

In the past, my one to one volunteer assignments in the community have only required that I spend an hour visiting with my clients.

With my last palliative client this was not to be. We developed a special bond right from the beginning. My first visit lasted 2½ hours and that's how it continued. We would sit around her apartment and talk about her life and what the future might hold. She would often invite me to share reflections from my own life as well. We would laugh and laugh and laugh.

Through these conversations I got to know how she felt about her prognosis and how she was going to live her life, but, more importantly, how she

was going to die. She was very definite on what she wanted and didn't want.

About four weeks into my role as volunteer companion I received a telephone call saying that she was in the hospice residence and she wanted to make sure that I knew.

For the next several weeks I continued to visit, bringing in coffee and blueberry fritters, getting much enjoyment out of our remaining time together.

On Christmas Eve I went to visit her. I told her that I was going away after Christmas and that this would probably be the last time we would see each other. I also told her how much

I had enjoyed getting to know her, that I would always remember her, and I was glad that she had allowed me to come into her life at this time.

She died 2 weeks into the New Year.

In the short time I knew my client, she taught me many things about life. She taught me many more things about dying.

When I heard that she had died, I went out and had a blueberry fritter and a coffee and said good bye to someone who had come to mean a great deal to me in a very short time.

*Elaine May*, Volunteer

## *Honouring the Mystery*



*"We may even  
play dolls."*

I generally don't think a lot about 'mysterious' happenings. I have possessed a strong faith, even as a child, believing that when I die I will go to Heaven and there will enjoy the rest of eternity with my loved ones. This strong faith has carried me through difficult times, especially the deaths of loved ones and friends.

I have experienced the early death of my brother, Len, who drowned at age 15; my brother, Lambert, who passed away from cancer at age 38; my dad who lived to be 72, which in his family was considered to be a youngster; and last January my mom. The most painful of losses was on January 13, 1982 when my daughter, Jennifer, passed away. Jennifer was only six years old.

The Christmas before Jennifer died what she wanted most of all was a 'Sindy' doll and dollhouse. She had such a short time

to enjoy her gifts.

I saved "Sindy" and the dollhouse, never wishing to part with them. This past December I decided to take them out of the box and let my 3-year old granddaughter enjoy them. In the little suitcase, which held 'Sindy' and all her doll clothes, I found a little Christmas card my Jennifer had made for me. In it she wrote, "To mommy, love Jenny" and she taped five pennies to the inside of the card.

Shortly thereafter I began to find dimes – 2 on my family room coffee table, on different occasions; 1 under the table-runner on my dining room table; another on a shelf; one was hidden on a plate of used tea-lights in our offices. My husband was at work one day and someone pointed to the floor and asked, "Is that dime yours?"

I 'Googled' the phrase 'mysterious dimes' and was

surprised to see that many people who have lost a loved one have had a similar experience. However, their experience did not happen 27 years later.

Could it be that my Jennifer is happy that another little girl is enjoying what she had so little time to enjoy? Perhaps. I will, however, be content to let this remain a mystery.

My granddaughter looks so much like my daughter; same mannerisms – can catch me off guard at the way she looks at me; same little smile. Perhaps that is the mystery. Most of all, that is the blessing.

When I get to heaven my Jenny and I will have a lot of catching up to do. We may even 'play dolls'.

*Donna Burt*  
Office Program Coordinator  
Surrey Hospice Society

## *Welcome New Staff Member*

Rosemary Brown recently joined the Surrey Hospice Society team as a Clinical Counsellor for palliative and bereavement clients. She has a Masters degree in Counselling from UVic and is a Registered Clinical Counsellor, until recently in private practice. Her interest in, and calling to, hospice work developed when she volunteered at Victoria Hospice. Rosemary "counts it a sacred privilege to walk with hurting folk even a little bit along their journeys in the valley of the shadow of death."

Rosemary comes to us from Nanaimo Hospice where she counselled adults and some youth (individually and in school settings.) Her background as a school counsellor (grades 1-10) proved beneficial in the youth work.

Rosemary has also taken pastoral care training at Carey Theological College (UBC) and encourages holistic healing (physical, emotional, social, psychological and spiritual) for her clients. She is very sensitive to the variety of cultural and faith dimensions represented in this community.

After many years on the Island, a move to the mainland brought Rosemary and her husband Terry closer to family on both sides, including their little grandson, Christian.

## *Message from the Executive Director*

I am always encouraged at this time of year – with the days getting longer, and the hope of Spring. I probably said something similar last year at this time. This year I feel is a year of ‘new beginnings’. For me personally last year was a year of good-byes, and this year will be a year of new life, and the start of many new ventures, especially the opening of Laurel Place in May, and the pending construction beginning soon for our expanded Resource and Support Centre. We also look forward to welcoming new staff to our team. With the right decisions, and future planning, we expect to see the Surrey Hospice Society take on a new appearance.

That doesn't mean the valuable work done in the past wasn't important. It was the foundation to where we are today and where we are able to move in the near future. Those who put their heart and soul into the work of hospice in the past have made a huge contribution to where we are today. And now, with the help of investors of time and resources, we can move to a new level of care and support to those who need it – our palliative and bereavement clients and their families.

We have been able to purchase some much-needed equipment due to the generosity of caring service clubs in Surrey. They know that they can help us work more effectively by having new computers used for administration, data entry, mail lists,

client information, newsletters, bookkeeping, promotional materials, everything that keeps an organization going and growing.

In a short time we will start the renovation next door to our Society offices. This will enable us to more than double our space to hold our programs for children, parents, teens, families and adults.

Our counselors will actually have offices with walls and doors. There will be a learning centre/board room, and families will have a private, comfortable room to meet a counselor who can support them.

Our “Hopeful Hearts” children will have their own room to meet, play games, draw, paint, share and receive the grief support they need, in a peaceful, safe environment. Ronald McDonald House Charities and Surrey Rotary Club as well as Guildford Rotary, Royal Canadian Legion, Lions Club, individuals and businesses have made this all possible. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

Staff and volunteers have worked hard at updating our wonderful Community Thrift Store at Newton Crossing and it looks amazing. Customers thought so too and voted our Community Thrift Store the best thrift store in Surrey. THANK YOU SURREY!! Giving to and shopping at our Community Thrift Store provides revenue to support

the Surrey Hospice Society and the Surrey Firefighters Charitable Society. So much good work takes place because of you. After saving for over a year, we were able to purchase a ¾ ton van which will be used to pick up donations at drop-off bins housed at the various Surrey Fire Halls. Now the volunteer fire fighters can move those donations more readily.

To the volunteers providing palliative and grief support, we thank you for being the life of the work of hospice. To the volunteers at the store, you help keep our doors open. And to the staff who have chosen this field of work, because it's a ‘calling’, we thank you for your hearts, for your love of hospice, and your passion to meet the needs of our City.

One by one we will make a difference to the people who come through our doors and to those who receive us when we go through their doors. Whether we meet them at their bedside, or they come for grief support at the society, our purpose and desire is to companion them as they work their way through their individual journeys.

I invite each one who reads this newsletter to play a part in helping us move ahead to a new place in preparing for this greatly needed growth. Fraser Health's largest Hospice Residence, Laurel Place, opens its new 20-bed facility in Surrey on May 14th.



*Marion Brandner  
Executive Director*

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“Make a difference and embrace your community.”

The impact on our Society’s staff and volunteers will be extensive. This will mean doubling volunteer shifts in the new residence, doubling programs and program volunteers, increase space, increase program staff, administration staff, and office volunteers.

This is what we anticipate for 2008. It’s all good and quite challenging.

Make a difference and embrace your community. Give of your time, your talents, your resources, and partner with us as we build a new Surrey Hospice Society.

*Marion Brandner*  
Executive Director

## *Message from the Program Director*

It is not unusual for people who are present to those who are dying, their loved ones and the bereaved to be asked how they can possibly do this work? As the volunteers move into this avenue of service to life they discover this to be a frequent reflection they face.

Coupled with that, stories are shared with complete strangers that might not have opened up and shared their loss or the health struggle of someone dear, had the volunteer or staff member not mentioned the work they do in hospice. Somehow in a culture that denies the death experience there is a quiet safety in sharing their vulnerability with those they feel will understand - individuals who will honour the challenging transition they are engaged in with compassion and care. Indeed, a rare find these days. Such an exchange, in itself, is a sacred privilege not to be taken lightly.

What people don’t realize is that in the giving so much is

received. Is it challenging, even exhausting at times? Yes. To see another human being in deep grief or physical struggle can often impact one beyond words. But, it is also rich in life texture because when we look death in the face we are learning about life, love, and the mysteries that the many dimensions of our very existence call forth to explore.

The reality that love is powerful beyond measure solidifies in one’s core. Those who companion individuals at this stage of life are refined by all they are called to witness and engage in. To be present to a moment, an exchange of pure unconditional love can take one’s breath away in its beauty.

We learn that deep challenge can refine the very qualities in an individual if it is allowed. Not always consciously in the midst of its darkest depths but perhaps later an awareness comes that a new individual has emerged on silent wings

as we look back over the journey.

For staff and volunteers alike the gifts received in this work are immeasurable and in so many ways hard to explain. Sometimes dramatic, but more often subtle, profound and life transforming.

As I write this, I imagine the heads of our team members nodding in agreement. They know this truth intimately and they tell me time and again how they have been changed by this work. I certainly have and continue to be.

I am sincerely grateful to our volunteers and staff for the compassionate service they give to others. You are shining lights for many in a time of deep and often painful change. Your gifts of love and care are a blessing beyond words.

Keep up the wonderful work.

*Barbara Morningstar*  
Program Director



*Barbara Morningstar*  
Program Director

## Community Thrift Store Update



Welcome to 2008.



On January 5th the Community Thrift Store celebrated it's 3rd Birthday!

We have been on our feet, toddling along with the help and support of our volunteers, accomplishing quite a bit these past three years. The store has taken on a new and exciting look. Volunteers have increased and the work continues to grow.

In celebration of our 3rd Birthday, we have introduced our "Frequent Shoppers Card" - customers are loving them. If you don't have yours yet or are curious to learn more, drop by the store.

We are even more excited with all of the new events and sales being offering this year - at least once per month.

On February 9th we held the "Bedazzled Sale" which featured the sale of jewelry and jewelry boxes. It was lots of fun for staff and customers who enjoyed the variety of items on sale. Please keep us in mind when you are cleaning out your closets and drawers, we are always looking for good quality jewelry.

We extend an invitation to our next event, "Pamper Yourself", being held on May 10th. If you or someone you know enjoys relaxing in a hot tub, reading a good book or listening to some soothing music, this is the event for you. For woman of all ages - come in and "Pamper Yourself" - you deserve it.

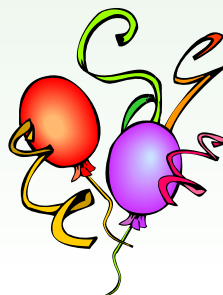
Check out our list of other Store Events, mark your Calendars, and come join in the fun.

Thank you for your continued support.

Donna and Lorraine

### Volunteers Needed

If you would like to join our team of volunteers, give Donna or Lorraine a call at 604-599-9930. Come join in the fun and meet new people. Funds raised go to support the Surrey Hospice Society and Surrey Fire Fighters Charitable Society.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### STORE EVENTS

#### MAY - "Pamper Yourself"

Items in which you feel pampered - on display from May 3rd thru 9th. Items go on sale Saturday, May 10th.

JUNE - 50% OFF Store-Wide Sale  
Saturday, June 28th.

#### JULY - "Step Into Summer"

Shoes, sandals, flip-flops - on display June 29th thru July 4th. Items go on sale Saturday, July 5th.

AUGUST - "Celebrate the Child Within"  
Books and Games, Back-to-School  
On display August 16th thru 22nd.  
Items go on sale Saturday, August 23rd.

SEPTEMBER - 50% OFF Store-Wide Sale - Saturday, September 27th.

OCTOBER - "Scare Yourself Silly"  
Halloween Costumes and accessories  
on sale October 4th thru 31st.

NOVEMBER - "Secret Santa: A Christmas Celebration" - On display November 3rd thru 10th. Items go on sale Wednesday, November 12th.

DECEMBER - 50% OFF Store-Wide Sale - Saturday, December 20th.

Watch for in-store specials and "Wacky Wednesdays" where you never know what will be on sale.



Surrey Hospice Society extends special thanks to our Newsletter Sponsor  
Kearney Funeral Services.

Kearney - the trusted name in funeral service since 1908; Surrey's only family owned funeral service.  
We're here to help.

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- April 10th AGM at Kwantlen University College  
Guest Speaker: Gabor Maté, M.D.
- May 10th Walk of Remembrance and Dove Release held at Bear Creek Park.
- May 14th Grand Opening of Surrey Hospice Residence at Laurel Place.
- May 23-25th BCHPCA Conference
- June (TBA) Open House of our Expanded Resource and Support Centre
- October 18th "An Affair To Remember"  
Dinner/Dance Fundraiser  
Featuring Steve Elliott as 'Elvis'

### Surrey Hospice Society Resource Centre

13857 - 68th Avenue Surrey, BC V3W 2G9

Phone: 604-543-7006 Fax: 604-543-7008

### Surrey Hospice Society Surrey Fire Fighters Charitable Society Community Thrift Store

Newton Crossing - 7138 King George Hwy  
Surrey, BC V3W 5A3

Store Hours: Monday to Saturday 10 AM to 5 PM

Telephone: 604-599-9930

[www.surreyhospice.com](http://www.surreyhospice.com)

### Mission Statement

Rooted in the community and branching out to those in need, we provide social, emotional, and spiritual support for individuals and their loved ones as they face a life-limiting illness, and ongoing grief support programs for children, teens, and adults.

We believe that no one need face a life-limiting illness alone, and no one need be alone with their grief.

We offer "Companions for the Journey".

## Be In Touch

We would like to hear from you. If you would like to learn more about the Surrey Hospice Society, would like to volunteer, become a Society Member, or would like to help us in our work through a donation, please contact us.

### 2007 Board of Directors

Brian Clarke, President  
Jas Cheema, Past President  
Judi Huta, Vice President  
Marjorie Walters, Treasurer  
Janis Foster, Secretary  
Tom Crean, Director  
Amy Hennessy, Director  
Nita Hollick, Director  
Cindy Poppy, Director  
David Smiling, Director

### Society Staff

Marion Brandner, Executive Director  
[marion@surreyhospice.com](mailto:marion@surreyhospice.com)

Donna Burt, Office Program Coordinator  
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Barbara Morningstar, Program Director  
[barbara@surreyhospice.com](mailto:barbara@surreyhospice.com)

Joy Dockrey  
Client Coordinator - Community  
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Rosemary Brown, Clinical Counsellor  
[rosemary@surreyhospice.com](mailto:rosemary@surreyhospice.com)

### Thrift Store Staff

Donna Chubb, Thrift Store Manager  
[dchubb@telus.net](mailto:dchubb@telus.net)

Lorraine Marlow, Assistant to the Manager

## Consider becoming a "Friend of Hospice"

We at Surrey Hospice Society believe that each one of us has a special gift to be used to help others.

We also realize that not everyone has the gift to companion alongside of those who are facing end-of-life or who are bereaved.

So, if you would like to use your gift in some other way, why not become a "Friend of Hospice"? We have a number of "fun" ways that you could become involved.

Give us a call at 604-543-7006 to find out more.