



Doug Graham sits holding his grandson Carter in the newly-renovated room his wife used during her stay at CapitalCare Norwood's Palliative Hospice. The new room features a wall bed & other comforts of home.

TLC needed to ensure legacies live on after a stay at palliative hospice

CARTER MATTHEWS NEVER MET his grandma Cheryl. She passed away just after Christmas in 2010. But when the lively three-year-old came bounding into her old room at CapitalCare Norwood's Palliative Hospice this past May, it brought back a flood of memories for his mom Candice and grandpa Doug.

"We had Christmas and mom's birthday in that room," recalls Candice Matthews.

"And we celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary in the solarium," adds Doug Graham, Cheryl's husband.

Doug visited every day and slept over many times. "The staff always made us feel welcome and encouraged us to personalize the room with comforts from home," says Doug, who never complained about sleeping in a chair next to his wife.

"It was better than not being able to stay at all."

"I was happy we had some precious time together," says Doug of the four months Cheryl spent on the unit. "It made a lasting impression on all of us."

Each year, on the anniversary of Cheryl's death, Doug makes a donation to the unit to ensure some of the tender loving care they received on the unit continues on for others.

With that in mind, the CapitalCare Foundation has created TLC Legacies Living On, a new program that directs donations made to the hospice towards renovating resident rooms to better suit the needs of palliative care patients and families.

The new TLC room features a sofa bed that rolls up into the wall, as well as a dresser, microwave, fridge, chair, flat screen TV and a less institutional main bed. New flooring, softer lighting - dimmable from the main bed - and pastel coloured paint add to the warmth and comfort of the new room.

"Part of having a positive experience in hospice is being able to stay with your loved one if you choose," says Claudette Boisvert, Care Manager.

"Better sleeping surfaces increase family comfort and invites them to participate to the fullest extent possible in their loved one's experience with us."

"Families are going to love that room," says Tina Hostin, who works with the Edmonton Zone Palliative Care Program to find placements for people who require hospice care.

"It's nice for families with younger children ... it makes them feel more at home."

Doug Graham can't believe the transformation. "It was wonderful in the state it was then, now it's even better," he says, referring more to the quality of care the family received from staff on the unit than the room's decor.

"A huge part of this place is the staff," says Candice. "They get to know the patients, and they would do anything for you."

Candice Matthews and her husband Neil are delighted to hear the first patient admitted to the renovated room is a 60-year-old woman with a supportive family and six-month old granddaughter.

"As much as it is sad that you have to come here, it's nice to know there's a place like this where others can be supported too," says Candice.

The renovations to "Cheryl's Room" cost \$30,000. The unit hopes to raise enough money to eventually renovate 22 more rooms, one at a time, over the next few years.

"Many others have indicated a desire to give, but with so many rooms to renovate this will take a strong commitment from our community," says Sherry Schaefer, Director of Fundraising and Donor Relations for CapitalCare Foundation.

For more information on supporting this project, contact CapitalCare Foundation at 780-448-2413 or by e-mail at ccfoundation@capitalcare.net

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