

THEIR VERY LAST SONG!

Last December I was sitting in my office here at Heart House Hospice. The phone was ringing non-stop... the emails incessant... and the interruptions seemed continuous.

I have tears in my eyes!

Down the hall 17 people participating in our Day Program are singing songs of the season with words like “Joy to the World, and Hark the Harold Angels Sing.” But what filled my eyes with tears were the singers who were facing the end of their life singing the traditional year end Auld Lang Syne

“For auld lang syne, my dear,
For as time goes by,
We will take a cup of kindness,
For as time goes by”

Now you and I have heard that song every New Year’s. We all have memories of the past year but we are very excited about starting a New Year! Yet approximately 90% of those people joyfully singing that song last year are no longer with us this December.

The sweet trembling voices I heard last December in the Day Hospice Program included:

- Abdul* dressed up in his best suit and tie, came to the Day Program. He believed that we honoured him with this program and he would show up looking classy because we were **giving him dignity** at the end of his life. Nabil died in hospital last month.
- Julia, also a single woman in her fifties, would come to the Day Program and would sit there with a look of **contentment on her face**. It was her only outing other than her many medical appointments. Julia no longer sings on this earth.
- Rozmeen from Trinidad was another. During her last few visits she had lost the capacity to speak, let alone sing. But Rozmeen said she still **came to hear the joy in the voices** of her new friends.
- Paul, a 40-year-old sports caster and disk jockey, **loved music** and I could hear his voice stand out above the others. Last Christmas was his final “concert.” He found it too exhausting to come after that.

Here I am in my office for another December...dreading the snowy Ontario roads, stressed over the hassles of buying too many gifts, and every so often day dreaming of a winter vacation down south.



That's when the grateful voices of these people who are dying reach my heart and bring tears to my eyes. We add much richness to their lives because of the Day Program. **Now I am going to ask you to help us add joy to the world of this year's clients.**

GUESS WHAT

We will not be able to do it next year if... plain and simple... we don't receive **another \$9,500.00**

So here is a list of what we at Heart House Hospice desperately need and how you could match that need

**Names are changed to honour confidentiality.*

with your Holiday Season gift

- **\$25 will help** us purchase a card and board games that the clients just love to play.
- **\$50 will help** us train some volunteers to provide the Therapeutic Touch feature that so many clients enjoy.
- **\$100 will help** us provide the transportation needs of taking one client to and from the Program for 3 months.
- **\$250 will help** us cover the time for those talented musicians who provide Music Therapy for up to half a year.
- **\$500 will help** provide us with sponsorship for the Art Therapy Classes the clients participate in and love.

Could it be that there is one individual or family reading this letter that could give us a **Holiday Season donation of \$1000!** All these designated gifts will help sustain and even grow the Day Program.

In a few days, accompanied by a volunteer on guitar, voices will again be heard one more time. Then their Holiday Season will be no more.

This years singers do not know you but they will all be grateful for your gift! I trust that this year you will give generously to support the Day Program. **Please start giving if you have not...** you will be rewarded. **Please give again even if you have already this year...**our clients will be grateful you did. Lastly, please consider a special Holiday Season end of year gift so we can meet our \$9,500 goal to sustain this wonderful and much needed program right here in our community all the way through 2010.





*The Toronto Media and Film College generously produced a 12-minute Documentary on the work of Heart House Hospice...it's beautiful and tells our story in an amazing way! **FOR THOSE THAT GIVE A SPECIAL HOLIDAY SEASON GIFT OF \$100 OR MORE** we will send you a copy to say a big thank you. This documentary weaves in stories with testimonials to give you a great sense of where your money is being invested and how you could explain it to others.*

Every dollar you invest is gratefully received whether it is \$25 or \$1000. We honour each gift and will apply that investment toward this wonderful Day Program that makes such a difference.

I know you receive many, many requests this time of year to give to good programs. I get that! But in the spirit of this Holiday Season, I thank you for giving to people who will not be able to receive its benefits even in a few months. Thank you and may you and your loved ones have a very special season and the best New Year of your life!

Warmly,

David Walker
Director of Resource Development
Heart House Hospice

P.S. In the next few days when you are walking in a mall and find yourself hearing Seasonal songs over and over, remember those we are helping who will never hear them again. Please mail the enclosed envelope or go to www.hearthousehospice.com and click Donate Now. Please give generously now!

