

“DON’T LET ME DIE ALONE!”

What if you were dying and you were all alone? I mean really alone... no family... no friends... no loved ones. Completely alone!

Your constant and only companion is your terminal illness. Every waking hour of your diminishing days you live with your pain - alone. You swallow your medication - alone. You deal with every new medical crisis - alone.

This is happening right here in our community. Just in the last few days, here are some stories that have broken my heart.

- A 46-year-old woman from Trinidad was abandoned by her friends because they found it too difficult to even say goodbye. **“I am not dead yet”** she would plea, but to no avail.
- A women married for 25 years, now divorced, living with her illness by herself in a rooming house was not even able to get to a window to look out. She had no one to help.
- When a client who was dying alone in his flat, was asked by our Care Coordinator to go for a simple walk in the sunshine he responded: **“Why? Nobody cared much about me when I was well – why does it matter now that I am dying?”**
- An 84-year-old Holocaust survivor lies in her hospital bed with absolutely no one who is there for her in this city. An adult child, the love of her life (who lived with her for fifty years) has the mental capacity of a 5 year old who has been transferred to a group home and she cries all alone.

Dying alone in isolation here in Mississauga and Brampton should not be! For those clients where that should not be, **Heart House Hospice will not allow it.** It’s not caring. It’s not compassionate! And it’s not right.

So that’s where **I need your help.** I don’t need you to go into a person’s apartment with their groceries and put them away. We are working on getting enough people for that. Nor do I need you to arrange for a client’s transportation to our Day Program. We are excellent at arranging those things. Here is what you are needed for. I need your help to **give the donation that makes the difference to their end-of-life experience.** I need what these lonely clients and we at Heart House Hospice do not have enough of; your generous investment!

- *\$50 would enable us to get a trained volunteer to provide two in-home companion visits.*
- *\$100 would help those who have no one, to be able to come to our Day Hospice Program while they are still mobile and enjoy fellowship with their peers.*
- *\$250 would help us provide some of the transportation needs of our clients, volunteers*

and staff.

- *\$1,200 would allow us to personally and professionally care for a client for 42 of the remaining weeks of their lives with dignity and comfort.*

If you asked me what would be more important than those much needed and critical one time gifts? Your faithful commitment on a monthly basis (\$25, \$31, \$50, \$100) is desperately needed. The work of giving dignity and honour, especially to those dying alone is a year-round passion for Heart House Hospice. A dollar a day (\$31) or another monthly gift that you would choose will provide the stable, predictable source of funds for this critical project all year.

What would happen if you gave today? It would look something like this.

- 60-year-old Lindel had his fears relieved by our staff and volunteers about what would happen when he became too ill to manage at home alone. A residential hospice was chosen where we looked after him right to the end.
- Another client, Anya with advanced terminal cancer, had everything arranged by us to actually go back to Estonia to be with the only family she had for her final few weeks of life.
- Victor was dying of a brain tumour. His wife and 2 young children were his only caregivers here in Canada. With absolutely no one else to turn to this little family found the vital support needed from the staff and volunteers at Heart House Hospice.

Tomorrow when people will be dying alone it is in your power to help us “be there.” Have you ever thought, “*Who will show up for my funeral?*” Well, for many in our community, there is no one who shows up even for those last challenging days and months before the funeral – except Jane and Trish and Leora and Debbie and all the other staff and trained volunteers at Heart House Hospice. I for one don’t want to die alone...neither should others!

We need you to give today. These dear people will have the rest of their days touched by your gift. Make a meaningful difference today with your financial contribution to someone’s end-of life experience.

As I heard one client say to me while I sat on her hospital bed a few days ago: “*Debbie (our Care Coordinator) is the only very special person in my life. She gives her all to me where others do not have time and she is the love in my life.*”

Warmly,



David Walker,
Director of Resource Development
Heart House Hospice

P.S. Please send the enclosed envelope today. Yesterday people died alone that did not have to. Tomorrow will be too late for those now dying. It’s today that we can be what precious people dying alone need from Heart House Hospice.