



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY HOSPICE NORTHWEST

Hospice Northwest volunteer Karen Goose is seen with her client David and therapy dog Molly.

Committed volunteers alleviate loneliness

Hospice Northwest provides thorough training

BY KATHLEEN BUSO
HOSPICE NORTHWEST

HAVE you ever considered becoming a Hospice Northwest volunteer? Perhaps you've felt an inexplicable calling for the work and wondered what it's like?

Hospice Northwest executive director Cherie Kok sat down with Karen Goose, a new volunteer with the agency, to find out why she chose to become a companion to the critically ill and dying.

As Cherie learned, Karen has been no stranger to heartbreak in her life. A brother who died tragically at age 16, the loss of several other friends and family members, including her father, who deteriorated slowly from ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) — all of these experiences have contributed to Karen's longstanding interest in becoming a Hospice Northwest volunteer.

For Karen, after spending months as one of her father's caregivers, the desire to help was further strengthened when she saw how many patients in hospital had very few visitors, and how lonely their final days were.

"My dad's last chapter of his life included dealing with ALS. It was a difficult time and watching him deteriorate and struggle was heartbreaking. When he was in St. Joseph's Hospital during one of his setbacks, I noticed so many other patients who were alone or lonely. Some didn't have family nearby and others did, but family can't be there 24/7. I had so much empathy for the many situations that I witnessed. I knew that someday, I wanted to fill someone's gap in their loneliness. My dad passed away about five years ago and my life was still very busy. I

MAKING MOMENTS MATTER



needed time to heal. But I knew very strongly that becoming a hospice volunteer was on my bucket list."

Although Karen is now retired, she continues to lead a busy life, with two adult children, a lively five-year-old grandson who she regularly helps with, and an elderly mother.

Despite her full life, Karen was determined to find time to commit to the Hospice Northwest volunteer training program in September 2018. Karen recalls being impressed by the depth of information covered during the training sessions.

"I was surprised about how much detail was involved. The training alone was quite a commitment, however if one wasn't committed to the training, then it would be difficult to be committed to our clients."

When asked to recount some of her more memorable experiences with her clients over the past eight months, Karen's true passion for the work shines through.

"One gentleman who I visit is unable to do anything for himself. I try to visit during his lunch time so I can feed him and give him that special extra attention. I take him in his wheelchair for a walk and if a baseball game is playing at the nearby field, we stop and watch a few innings. Such natural things to do in such a difficult journey. He does not

have control of the movements of his arms but we have perfected a hug at the end of our visit. I know that it makes him feel like he matters and the connection of love supports him in his challenging journey. His smile from ear to ear is priceless."

Often, Karen is accompanied on her visits by her son's dog Molly.

"I visit a sweet man who is wheelchair bound. He loves dogs so we go for walks with Molly," said Karen. "I have him hold the leash and when I say 'You're doing such a great job,' he responds with 'I know!' It always makes me chuckle. I understand that this task gives him a sense of purpose and that's very important too."

When asked if there is anything else that makes her volunteering role manageable, Karen immediately mentions the support she receives from her husband.

"I could never do what I do without the love and support of my husband," she said. "He never gives me a hard time about my absence or the extras that he does around home due to my volunteer commitments. He allows me to live this dream."

If you have ever thought about becoming a Hospice Northwest volunteer, please give the Hospice Northwest office a call at 626-5570 to discuss the application process. Fall training will commence in September.

This monthly column from Hospice Northwest examines various aspects of palliative support and bereavement services. It appears on the Healthstyle page of The Chronicle-Journal on the first Tuesday of each month. Call Hospice Northwest at 626-5570 for more information.

Bad diets a recipe for blindness

BY W. GIFFORD-JONES

HOW often have we been warned, we are what we eat? Now, a book by Dr. Chris Knobbe, *Ancestral Dietary Strategy to Prevent and Treat Macular Degeneration*, is an eye-opener. Knobbe claims doctors have been taught for years that macular degeneration (MD) is due to aging and genetics but it's an absolute untruth. Rather, he claims the leading cause of blindness in North America is due to the garbage we're eating.

"Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes" was a military command given to British soldiers long ago. But if these soldiers had MD they would not have fired a single shot. MD destroys the macular, a tiny spot on the retina responsible for central vision.

Dr. Knobbe, an ophthalmologist, reports that before 1925 there were about 50 cases of macular degeneration in the world's medical literature. But by 1975, 8.8 per cent of Americans over the age of 50 had this disease.

Dr. William Osler, professor of medicine at McGill University, once commented only a doctor who has a particular disease really understands it. In this case Knobbe, who suffered from arthritis for 15 years, heard about the Paleo Diet. Then after 10 days of following it, he noticed his pain was 80 per cent improved. Obviously, he wanted to understand why.

First, he discovered the research of Dr. Weston A. Price, a dentist. Price reported that people who consumed refined white flour, sugar, canned goods, sweets, and vegetable oils developed diseases of civilization such as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, obesity, Type 2 diabetes, cancer and all the autoimmune disorders.

Price found that native, traditional foods contain 10 times as many fat soluble vitamins A, D, and K2, four times as many water soluble vitamins such as all the B vitamins and C, and one and a half to 60 times more minerals than today's diet.

Dr. Knobbe asked himself, "Could macular degeneration also be the result of poor nutrition?" This changed the course of his life. He discovered that macular degeneration was strongly associated with heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. And that macular degeneration, and



THE DOCTOR GAME

these diseases, once rare, are now of epidemic proportions.

Knobbe claims the change is due to the introduction of processed oils and refined flour. Today, 20 per cent of the North American diet is wheat, and 85 per cent of it is refined and nutrient deficient. Add to this sugar, trans fats and the most dangerous of all, polyunsaturated vegetable oils. All this garbage supplies 63 per cent of our diet.

Dr. Knobbe now urges doctors to stop attributing macular degeneration to aging and genetics. Rather, look at the facts. In 1961, North Americans were consuming 9 grams daily of polyunsaturated vegetable oils. By 2000, it increased to 40 grams daily.

This is not just a North American problem. Knobbe's research shows that the same situation exists in New Zealand and Japan. It is obvious that something has gone terribly wrong. So what can consumers do?

Knobbe says a good start is to start saying no to processed foods, vegetable oils and sugar. This means switching to eating unprocessed whole foods including wild-caught seafood, organic grass fed beef, pasteurized pork and fowl. And fast food restaurants are off limits. He adds that bone broth is helpful and since macular degeneration patients are deficient in vitamin A, D, and K2, they need a tablespoon of extra virgin cod liver oil twice a week.

Will North Americans heed this advice about the garbage we're eating? I hope some readers listen, as preventable blindness is a tragedy. So add more fish, meat, eggs, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds to the diet. This can help to prevent macular degeneration, and a host of other chronic disabling conditions.

The Doctor Game runs each Tuesday in The Chronicle-Journal. Dr. Ken Walker (aka W. Gifford-Jones) has a private practice in Toronto. Please send comments to info@docgiff.com or visit docgiff.com.

Hot cars still a threat for Canadian children

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Accidents in which children die while stranded in hot cars may be more common than people realize, but the authors of a study probing the issue said there are numerous practical habits parents can adopt to ward off such tragedies.

The study from the Hospital for Sick Children concluded an average of one child a year dies across Canada after being trapped in an overheated vehicle, usually because a parent or caregiver forgot they were inside.

Forgetfulness played a role in four of the six deaths recorded between 2013 and 2018, according to the research published last month in *Pediatrics and Child Health*. The circumstances around a case too recent to be included in the research — the death in May of a 16-month-old in Burnaby, B.C. — are still under police investigation.

Study co-author Dr. Joeline Huber said such accidents can happen to anyone, but stressed that adopting new routines could prevent disaster.

"Never leave a child unattended in a motor vehicle, even for a minute," she said. "That should be a rule that you make for yourself: even if I forgot something in the house, I need to run back in the house with

the child."

The majority of the deaths researchers studied involved incidents where a caregiver forgot to drop a child off at daycare.

This included the 2013 death of Maximus Huyskens, a Milton, Ont., toddler who died in the back seat of his grandmother's car one month shy of his second birthday.

Court heard the woman had collected her grandson from his mother's home, but mistakenly drove home after working a night shift without dropping him off at daycare as planned. She ultimately pleaded guilty to failing to provide the necessities of life and received a suspended sentence plus two years of probation at the joint recommendation of both the Crown and defence lawyers.

To avoid similar tragedies, Huber said parents should arrange to have child-care providers call and sound the alarm if one of their charges is unexpectedly absent.

She also suggested parents implement a few habits meant to guard against forgetfulness, such as placing their cellphones in the back seat of the car whenever a child is sitting there.

"You have to get your cellphone at some point, usually, so that's a good way to remember," she said.

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Application deadline for the fall training session is September 20, 2019

AND HELP MAKE EVERY MOMENT MATTER

For more information, contact Wendi at 626-5570 ext. 5572, email info@hospicenorthwest.ca or visit our website at www.hospicenorthwest.ca