



Hospice
NORTHWEST SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026

PHOTO TAKEN AT THE 2025 HOSPICE
NORTHWEST GRIEF CONFERENCE

A Year of Transition & Discovery



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A message from HNW's Executive Director Janet Fairbridge, 2025/26



Janet Fairbridge,
Executive Director

As I come to the end of my first year with Hospice Northwest, the date of which coincides with the Annual General Meeting in September, I am struck first and foremost with a deep sense of gratitude.

I am incredibly grateful to be working alongside the bright and compassionate individuals who make up our Hospice Northwest Services team. From our dedicated staff, hard working Board of Directors, tireless volunteers and generous donors and community partners, we are very, very fortunate.

It has been quite a year!

You will hear in more detail from our team about their hard work and many successes on the following pages. But here's a peak at just some of the numbers:

From April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026:

- 763 individuals supported through our programs and services
- 3,363 1:1 Volunteer Client Sessions
- 237 Group Support Sessions with 978 people attending
- 10,752 volunteer hours donated across the organization
- \$54,451 raised in our Annual Campaign in November – December 2025 (15% increase over previous year)

We have had many Volunteer award winners and Volunteer recruitment is in full swing. Our Help Us Understand Grief (HUUG) program in Thunder Bay and the District continues to grow, and we held a beautiful year-end wrap up for HUUG participants at the School of Indigenous Learning (S.O.I.L).

Our Gashkendamide'e (Be Grieved from the Heart) program is in high demand across the District, and as of September 2026 into the Region, and there has been a renewed interest in our Palliative Advocacy Care Team training.

We launched a new Complex Grief program in partnership with St. Joseph's Care Group and published our first edition of The River: Navigating the Caregiver Journey, along with a first Caregiver Conference. Our ongoing Grief and Bereavement supports, and Palliative and Caregiver programs continue to see ever-increasing numbers.

A message from HNW's Executive Director Janet Fairbridge, 2025/26

We have benefited from training and learning together, including hosting students from Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute and Northern Ontario School of Medicine University, as well as hiring through support of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation. Our community partnerships have grown, and these partnerships continue to strengthen our funding and programming.

And yet there is work to be done.

In the coming days we will release our new Strategic Plan for 2026 – 2029 that will provide our road map of that work. We have programs to grow, stories to be told, education and awareness to be shared, and equity, inclusion, diversity and anti-racism work to be continued. We have donors to be engaged, workflow efficiencies to be found, volunteers and board members to be recruited. We hope to bring back the Hike for Hospice in 2027 and will have news about re-accreditation of our work through Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO). And there will be exploration of new office space and the future of a Hospice Home in Thunder Bay.

We will mark the 40th Anniversary of Hospice Northwest Services on Thursday October 15, 2026, with the Ruby Celebration at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium. On this day we will honour our past, celebrate our present and look toward the future.

We have much to celebrate!



Janet Fairbridge, CFRE
Executive Director
Hospice Northwest Services

What a difference a year makes.

As I reflect on my year as Chair of the Hospice Northwest Board of Directors, I am filled with an incredible sense of pride, gratitude and optimism for our organization and its future.

This has been a year of growth and opportunity for Hospice Northwest—and a year of transition and discovery as we welcomed Janet Fairbridge as our Executive Director. In just one year, Janet and her team have strengthened our programs, expanded our reach, built new partnerships and brought renewed energy and focus to the organization. The accomplishments outlined in Janet's report are impressive, but behind every number is a person, a family, a volunteer, a donor or a community that has been touched by the work of Hospice Northwest.

The Board has also had an important year. We have made some challenging but strategic decisions and wrestled with exciting opportunities that have caused us to pause and ask some important questions: Are we ready for what comes next? What role do we want Hospice Northwest to play in the future of hospice and palliative care? And, most importantly, how can we best serve the people and communities of Northwestern Ontario?

Those questions have not always had easy answers. But they have challenged us to think differently, to be courageous and, at times, to take a leap into the unknown. We recognize that if Hospice Northwest is to continue to grow and lead, the Board must lean into that work and provide the leadership, governance and vision required for the organization's next chapter.

And I believe we are ready.

This past year has demonstrated that Hospice Northwest is increasingly recognized as a leader in hospice, palliative care, grief and bereavement, caregiver support and education across the Northwest. Our services continue to grow, our partnerships are becoming stronger, and our vision for the future is becoming clearer. Janet's leadership, together with the dedication and expertise of our staff, has positioned us well for the exciting work ahead—including the development of our new Strategic Plan and exploration of what the future may hold for our physical presence and, ultimately, hospice and palliative care services in Thunder Bay and across the region.

None of this happens without people.



Our staff team has continued to grow—not only in numbers, but in their capacity, creativity and commitment. Our volunteers continue to give generously of their time and compassion. Our donors and community partners continue to believe in the importance of this work. And our Board members continue to bring their experience, perspective and passion to the table. To each of you, thank you. Your contributions are what make Hospice Northwest what it is.

This year we also say a very special thank you to **Joanne Kembel**, who is stepping away from the Board after an extraordinary and extended tenure of service. Joanne's contribution to Hospice Northwest has been significant, and her knowledge, commitment and steady presence will be deeply missed around the Board table. While she may be leaving the Board, we are hopeful that she will not be too far away!

As we look ahead, there is much to do. We will celebrate 40 years of Hospice Northwest, launch our new Strategic Plan, continue to grow our programs and partnerships, strengthen our organization and explore new possibilities for the future of hospice and palliative care in our region.

We should be proud of how far we have come.

But perhaps more importantly, we should be excited about where we are going.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to extend my deepest thanks to Janet, our remarkable staff team, our volunteers, donors, community partners and fellow Board members. Your commitment to the people and families we serve is extraordinary.

What a difference a year makes—and what an exciting difference the next few years can make.

I am honoured to have served as Chair during this important year for Hospice Northwest, and I look forward to seeing our organization continue to grow, lead and make a difference across Northwestern Ontario.

With gratitude,



Alison Denton
Chair, Board of Directors
Hospice Northwest Services
2025–2026



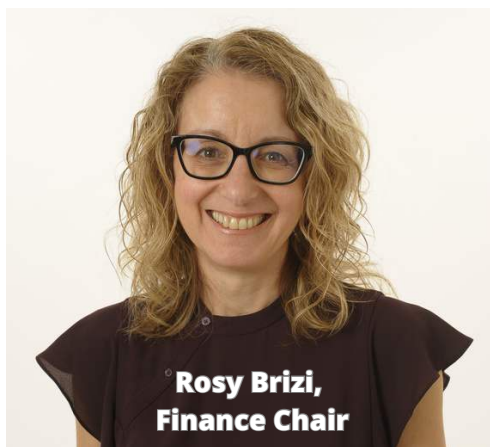
**Alison Denton,
Chair**



**Dr. Kevin Miller,
Vice Chair**



**Amy Bottos,
Past Chair**



**Rosy Brizi,
Finance Chair**



**Susan Raynak
Volunteer Representative**



**Michelle Cyrette
Board Member**



**Susan Bailey,
Board Member**



**Kathryn MacIsaac
Board Member**



**Hilary Mettam
Board Member**



**Joanne Kembel
Board Member**



**Scott Magill
Board Member**



**Doug Moynihan
Board Member**

2025/26 Hospice Northwest Board of Directors

HOSPICE NORTHWEST

WHO WE ARE



VALUES

- **Courageous**
- **Community Focused**
- **Compassionate Caring**
- **Conscientious**

WE ARE:

Courageous:

Hospice Northwest provides culturally safe care at the end of life in areas that are challenging, diverse, underserved, under-resourced and sometimes forgotten.

Community Focused:

Hospice Northwest responds to the needs of the community. Our grassroots organization strives to promote normalization of dying and death in our community and region.

Compassionate Caring:

Hospice Northwest provides a high quality service utilizing specially trained and well supported volunteers from a variety of backgrounds.

Conscientious:

Hospice Northwest is governed by a volunteer board of directors, responsible for the sustainability of the organization, now and into the future.

MISSION

Hospice Northwest is a community volunteer organization that complements, enhances and delivers end of life care, including grief and bereavement services. The mission of Hospice Northwest is to foster a compassionate community response to the needs of anyone living with, dying from, or affected by illness and disease.

VISION

Hospice Northwest will be a leader in providing compassionate companionship, education and support to individuals and their families as they travel through the final stages of life and death.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Hospice Northwest Services wishes to respectfully acknowledge this sacred land on which we deliver care. We work and live in the territory of the Anishinaabek Nation, as well as the lands of what is now known as Fort William First Nation, a signatory to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850. We also wish to recognize the historical contributions of Métis People, and that today the Thunder Bay District is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We are privileged to call this land home.

HOSPICE NORTHWEST

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 - 2025

COMMUNITY

CLIENTS

VOLUNTEERS

NEW HOME



Hospice
NORTHWEST SERVICES

MAKING MOMENTS
MATTER

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2022-2025



- Our new home will become the heart of our work in a compassionate community: we will explore opportunities for a new home for Hospice Northwest.



- Our people will be compassionate, skilled ambassadors of our mission: we will continue to invest in our staff and volunteers.



- Our clients will be supported through their end of life journey. We will provide programs and services that reflect the diversity and needs of our clients and their families throughout the palliative care continuum.



- Our future will be focused on our mission. We will strengthen community awareness of our work and our brand.

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Mission: The mission of Hospice Northwest is to foster a compassionate community response to the needs of anyone living with, dying from, or affected by illness and disease.

Vision: Hospice Northwest will be a leader in providing compassionate companionship, education and support to individuals and their families as they travel through the final stages of life and death.

Values: Courageous, Community Focused, Compassionate Caring, Conscientious
We are:

Courageous: Hospice Northwest provides culturally safe care at the end of life in areas that are challenging, diverse, underserved, under-resourced and sometimes forgotten.

Community Focused: Hospice Northwest responds to the needs of the community. Our grassroots organization strives to promote normalization of dying and death in our community and region.

Compassionate Caring: Hospice Northwest provides a high quality service utilizing specially trained and well supported volunteers from a variety of backgrounds.

Conscientious: Hospice Northwest is governed by a volunteer board of directors, responsible for the sustainability of the organization, now and into the future.

HOSPICE NORTHWEST

A SNAPSHOT OF THE 2025/2026 YEAR



12 DEDICATED BOARD MEMBERS

Met monthly from
September until June,
along with numerous
committee meeting

12

12

12 STAFF MEMBERS

Hospice Northwest
staff grew to 7 full
time employees, 4 part
time and 1 NOHFC
intern



763 Total Client Profiles Active During The Period 2025/26

We assisted clients in the
following program areas:

- Palliative Support
- Grief Support
- Caregiver Support
- Outreach Support
- One time Support

763

237

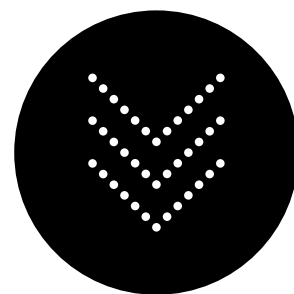
237 GROUP SUPPORT SESSIONS

were conducted in
2025/2026, with 978
people attending





VOLUNTEER DRIVEN ORGANIZATION



123 TRAINED VISITING VOLUNTEERS

visited 763 clients
in 2025/26 + 16 non-client
volunteers helped with
admin work & events

123

3363

3363 ONE-ONE CLIENT VISITS

took place in the
2025/26 year



7 SPECIALIZED VOLUNTEER TEAMS

provided support in 2025/26

- Palliative client support
- Grief client support
- Quick Response Team
- Journey Home Team
- Forget-Me-Not Team
- Caregiver Support Team
- Event/Admin Volunteers

7

10,752

10,752 VOLUNTEER HOURS

were donated to Hospice
Northwest in 2025/26





VOLUNTEER PROGRAM REPORT

Melissa Hazen,
Volunteer Coordinator

SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT THIS YEAR:

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION & RECOGNITION

Hospice Northwest was delighted to offer our volunteers several appreciation opportunities in 2025/26:

- In April for volunteer week, we gifted each volunteer with a thank you card and gift card to a local business for their enjoyment.
- In October, Hospice Northwest hosted a Fall Fun Carnival for volunteers in the Penthouse of St Joseph's Heritage Building. 21 volunteers gathered to enjoy carnival games, fun food and interacting with staff.
- In December, we celebrated the wonderful efforts of our hardworking volunteers over good food and entertainment in the Georgian Room at St. Joseph's Heritage. We enjoyed the musical talents of several members of the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, remarks from a city councillor and were graced with a visit from Santa who handed out gifts to the 56 volunteers able to attend.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Clay Mosley Award December 2025: At the Volunteer Holiday Dinner, we awarded longtime volunteer Glorie Miller with the Clay Mosley Memorial Award for her wonderful support and dedication to the volunteer program.

In 2025, five Hospice Northwest Services volunteers received the **Ontario Service Award**: Margaret Capon, Carl Hogard, Janis Nelson, Anne Querry, Nancy Vernon.

Volunteer Representative to the Board and client service volunteer, Sue Raynak was honoured twice for her dedication to the Hospice Northwest program and exceptional volunteer service. Her awards tour spanned two days and two cities, first with the **June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Volunteerism** and secondly the **June Callwood Circle of Outstanding Volunteers Award**.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Spring 2025/Fall 2025/Spring 2026 campaigns were successful in attracting a total of 69 volunteer applicants to the training program. We utilized a mixed media approach including billboard signs, *Around Town* interviews, community calendar postings as well as paid ads, social media boosts, volunteer fairs, community presentations and physical posters. We also focused on getting our message out in every community newsletter who would have us.



VOLUNTEER GLORIE MILLER
PRESENTED WITH THE CLAY MOSLEY
MEMORIAL AWARD



VOLUNTEERS WITH JANET AT THE
2025 FALL FUN CARNIVAL



VOLUNTEER SUE RAYNAK PRESENTED
WITH THE JUNE CALLWOOD AWARD

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Palliative Volunteers: Palliative volunteers are those who have dedicated upwards of 60 hours to complete the Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO) *Hospice Volunteer Training Program* including additional criteria. They support clients either in person or virtually, visiting them in supported environments or in their private dwellings. As of March 31, 2026 we had 123 active palliative volunteers across Thunder Bay and the Region. We added 18 to our ranks last fiscal year.

Grief Volunteers: Grief volunteers are HPCO graduates of the palliative volunteer program who take an extra 7 hours of HPCO education to be able to support Hospice Northwest grief clients. Support often will happen virtually over 12 weeks, with an in-person option. At the end of the fiscal year we had 38 grief trained volunteers across Thunder Bay and the Region. We offered two training cycles in the last fiscal year, graduating 6 new grief trained volunteers.

The Forget-Me-Not Volunteer Team: In 2024 after assessing increased numbers of clients living with dementia or in addition to their palliative diagnosis, Hospice Northwest partnered with the Alzheimer's Society of Thunder Bay to offer free *Gentle Persuasive Approach Therapy* training to all Hospice Northwest volunteers or any new volunteers wishing to help support clients as part of the newly developed Forget-Me-Not Volunteer Team. Hospice Northwest connected 9 volunteers to this education last fiscal year.

Quick Response Team (QRT): This team is comprised of HPCO graduated volunteers who take an extra hour of training and commit to being on a roster of volunteers who are contacted when there is a QRT client referral. At the end of the last fiscal year, we had 10 active QRT volunteers supporting this program.

Admin/Fundraising: HNW is fortunate to have volunteers who help with administrative tasks as well as fundraising initiatives. As of March 31, 2026 we had 16 volunteers to help with this work.



VOLUNTEERS AT THE 2025
HIKE FOR HOSPICE

VOLUNTEER WORKSHOPS AND SELF CARE

- Three meditation sessions were offered virtually to all volunteers.
- In August 2025, we offered volunteers a workshop on Trauma Informed Approach to Palliative Care through an Indigenous Lens.
- In September 2025, a sleep workshop was offered to all volunteers.
- Also in September, we offered volunteers the opportunity to join Kimberley Ramsbottom in a workshop geared towards front line workers who work with our structurally vulnerable palliative clients
- In Winter 2025, we contracted a naturopath to connect virtually with volunteers to answer any health questions they might have and to advise on how to decrease the impact of grief and stress on the body.
- In January 2026, we hosted an Elder in the Hospice Northwest boardroom to lead a workshop for volunteers on the 7 Grandfather Teachings.
- The volunteer program hosted volunteers for 11 drop in sessions, Coffee with the Coordinators as well as 6 Volunteer General Meetings in the last fiscal year.



STAFF WITH SANTA AT THE 2025
VOLUNTEER HOLIDAY DINNER



GRIEF PROGRAM REPORT

Hannah Albani,
Grief Program Coordinator

SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE GRIEF DEPARTMENT THIS YEAR:

During the 2025-2026 fiscal year, our grief support programs served a total of 483 clients, providing compassionate, accessible, and meaningful opportunities for individuals to connect, heal, and find hope in their grief journey.

Our staple grief support group, **Hearts and Hope**, supported 56 clients through 7 groups and 35 sessions. Recognizing the unique experiences of grief, we offered specialized groups for bereaved parents and individuals experiencing traumatic loss. Participants consistently shared how valuable it was to be in a supportive environment where they felt understood and less alone. One participant reflected, *"It was a great chance to reflect and learn about my grief and loss. The facilitators were so respectful, kind and understanding and the material was interesting and made me feel a little less alone."*

The Circle of Friends Workshop series engaged 78 participants across 17 workshops, reaching 54 unique clients. Workshops explore diverse grief experiences and coping approaches, including men's grief, anticipatory grief, grief yoga, and grief writing. Participants reported feeling validated and encouraged in their healing, with one attendee sharing that they gained reassurance that there is *"no right or wrong way to grieve"* and renewed hope for the future.

Our bi-annual **Grief Conference**, "Healing Through Grief", brought together 107 registrants and received an excellent 4.6 out of 5 rating from attendees. The event featured 11 vendors, 9 speakers, and 6 workshops, creating opportunities for learning, connection, and self-reflection. Attendees praised both the educational content and experiential sessions, highlighting the impact of expert panel discussions and wellness-focused offerings.

The **1:1 Volunteer Grief Support Program** provided personalized support to 46 clients through 348 sessions, totalling 311 volunteer hours. Clients described these relationships as transformative, citing the comfort, understanding, and encouragement they received during some of their most difficult moments.

This year marks the fourth year that Hospice Northwest has facilitated the **55+ Centre's Grief Support Group**. It is offered bi-weekly on Friday afternoons at the 55+ Centre, providing a welcoming and supportive space for grieving older adults. This program delivered 21 sessions, serving 257 participants, including 48 unique clients.



Photos from the 2025 Healing
Through Grief Conference

Evaluation results demonstrated the program's impact, with 100% of respondents reporting they felt supported in their grief journey and that the program was meeting their needs. Participants emphasized the value of being in a safe, non-judgmental space where they could share openly and realize they were not alone.

Personal Lens of Grief, now in its fourth year, invites community members to share their experience of loss through photography and reflections. This year we received 10 submissions on the theme "Growing with Grief", which are displayed in the hallway leading to our office. The exhibit continues to resonate with visitors, generating positive comments almost every week and helping create opportunities for reflection, connection, and conversation about grief.

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue building on the success of these programs and exploring new ways to respond to the evolving needs of our community. We look forward to seeing how our grief supports grow and adapt over the coming year, ensuring that people experiencing loss can access the care, connection, and resources they need. Feedback from participants, volunteers, and community members remains invaluable in shaping our services, and we will continue seeking input on how we can best support those who are grieving in our community. Together, we remain committed to fostering connection, compassion, and hope for all who walk through grief.



Photos from the 2025 Love Day
Candlelight Memorial Service



Grief Program Statistics: 483 grief clients served

PLEASE NOTE: STATISTICS BELOW COVER NON-UNIQUE # OF CLIENTS

Hearts & Hope Grief & Bereavement

of Hearts & Hope groups: 7
of Hearts & Hope sessions: 35
of unique clients attending Hearts & Hope: 56
Specific groups: Bereaved Parents, Traumatic Loss, etc.



Circle of Friends Workshop Series

of COF sessions: 17
of clients attended/supported in above sessions: 78 (not unique # of clients)

Grief Conference

107 people registered
4.6/5 rating in evaluations
11 vendors, 9 speakers, 6 workshops



Help Us Understand Grief

of HUUG sessions (for all communities): 44
of participants attending sessions: 242 includes parents & children in all communities, not uniquely identified)
3 communities receiving training, 16 Facilitators trained
4 information sessions in community
of coordinators: 2

1-1 Volunteer Grief Support

348 sessions of 1-1 volunteer grief support were provided to 46 clients in 311 hours



55+ Centre Grief Sessions

of 55+ Centre Sessions: 21
of clients supported in above sessions: 257
(not unique)



HUUG PROGRAM REPORT

Deborah Dika
Children's & Teen Grief Program
Coordinator

This year as the HUUG (Help Us Understand Grief) Program Coordinator. I am so grateful to be a part of this amazing team at Hospice Northwest. The families and children that attended HUUG this past year were incredible. Being a part of their grief journey has certainly been a gift. I, along with the facilitators, are extremely grateful to them for sharing their stories each month. The HUUG program continues to grow in Thunder and the Region. This May 2026 we will be completing our 4th year for the Thunder Bay HUUG program.

This year, we had over 25 families that benefitted from attending our monthly grief workshops along with 8 teens who continue to share their personal grief and support one another.

Throughout the year, children and youth continued to share their stories, their tears and to bond with one another over their common grief.

The delivery of HUUG in the region during that time was met with challenges, with a lack of referrals and also low community attendance. However, Hospice continued their relationships with North of Superior Counselling Program to identify strategic planning for the 2026 service delivery model and we are very excited for what 2026-2027 will bring to HUUG service delivery in the coming fiscal year.

This year 15 families benefitted from attending the monthly workshops.

This year in April we were able to end our HUUG Program with a workshop that included both Thunder Bay and Regional HUUG families. The family day retreat was held at the School of Indigenous Learning (S.O.I.L.) which successfully provided grieving children, youth, and families with a meaningful opportunity to connect, heal, and develop coping skills in a culturally supportive environment. This program was generously sponsored by the **Kindred Foundation**.

I would like to thank all the facilitators that support the HUUG Program, as well as the families, children and teens. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your grief journey.



Photos from the S.O.I.L. family retreat



PALLIATIVE/CAREGIVER PROGRAM REPORT

Suzanne Nuorala,
Palliative/Caregiver Program Coordinator

Hospice Northwest 1:1 Palliative Care Program

April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

It has been another busy and rewarding year for the Palliative Care Department at Hospice Northwest. We continue to receive referrals from Long-Term Care homes, the Alzheimer Society, Ontario Health at Home, self-referrals, family members, and a wide range of healthcare providers. This ongoing collaboration reflects the strong partnerships within our community and our shared commitment to improving the health, well-being, and quality of life of those we serve.

Our dedicated volunteers remain at the heart of our program, providing safe, compassionate care and meaningful companionship through both in-person visits and telephone support. Their contributions extend far beyond companionship, offering social engagement, emotional support through active listening, advocacy, assistance with medical appointments, grocery shopping, and countless other acts of kindness tailored to each client's individual needs.

The commitment, generosity, and compassion demonstrated by our volunteers do not go unnoticed. Their impact is recognized and deeply appreciated by HNW staff, as well as by the clients and families they support. The following testimonial highlights the difference our volunteers make in the lives of those they serve.

"My mother's volunteer is a God send. She visits twice a week which allows me time for some self care. Knowing that the volunteer is going to visit my mom is a huge relief and support. My mother looks forward to her visits and I see a spark in her eyes after each visit. I am so grateful for HNW and the amazing volunteers that make it all happen."

Hospice Northwest Caregiver Program and Special Events Report

April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

The Hospice Northwest Caregiver Program continued to provide education, resources, and opportunities for connection to support caregivers throughout the Thunder Bay area. The program focused on reducing caregiver isolation while increasing awareness of available community supports and services. We continue to offer the Caregiver 5 week workshops in May and November, monthly drop in programs, caregiver check ins and a safe space for peer support once a month.

A key highlight of the year was HNW's first **Caregiver Conference**, held on **October 21, 2025**, at Hilddale Lutheran Church. This half-day event brought together caregivers from across Thunder Bay for a day of learning, networking, and support.

The conference featured guest speakers, community vendors, door prizes, and a complimentary lunch. It provided a welcoming and supportive environment where caregivers could share their experiences, build connections with others facing similar challenges, and learn about the services offered by HNW and other community organizations that support individuals in their caregiving journey.

Approximately **70 caregivers** attended the conference, making it a successful inaugural event. The positive feedback received highlighted the value of creating dedicated opportunities for caregivers to access information, connect with peers, and feel supported in their important role.

"The River" Caregiver Magazine

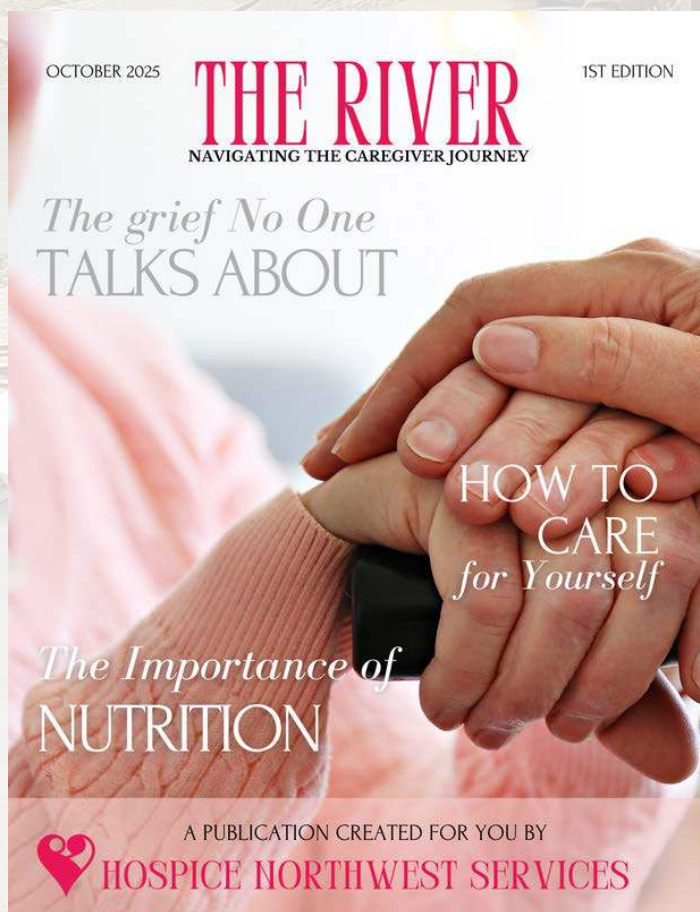
In October 2025, HNW published the first edition of *The River* Caregiver Magazine. Created to support caregivers through what can often be a difficult and challenging journey, the magazine provides practical resources, helpful information, and inspiring stories for those caring for someone.

The inaugural edition featured a variety of topics, including caregiver apps, the importance of self-care, healthy recipes, personal caregiver stories, anticipatory grief, and *Navigating the River*, offering guidance and encouragement for every stage of the caregiving experience.

Looking Ahead The response to the magazine exceeded our expectations. Demand was so great that we printed a second run, which has also since been completely distributed. The overwhelming interest has reinforced the need for accessible, compassionate resources for caregivers in our community. We look forward to creating a second addition and bringing readers new stories, practical tools, expert insights, and valuable information to continue supporting caregivers on their journey.

Caregiver Testimonial

"I am extremely grateful for the Hospice Northwest caregiver program for organizing and taking care of the caregivers. The caregiver program came to me at the perfect time in my life. I am able to take what I have learned and use the new knowledge to help navigate my relationship with my brother who has dementia."



Photos from the Caregiver Conference and cover of *The River: Navigating the Caregiver Journey* magazine



OUTREACH PROGRAM REPORT

Kimberley Ramsbottom,
Outreach Coordinator

The Gashkendamide'e (Be Grieved from the Heart) Loss and Grief Support Program:

The past year was active with travel, and we are finding more communities are asking for the Gashkendamide'e (Be Grieved from the Heart) Loss and Grief Support Group Training. We tried to connect with as many individuals as possible to provide grief literacy.

Understanding the different types of grief and normalizing the process of grief is essential to an individual's grieving journey. Without this knowledge we found many individuals lacked understanding of the grief process, which often left them feeling stuck in cyclical grief that can leave the individual feeling hopeless.

We have also found an increase in supporting team debriefings for Home and Community Care teams that needed support after multiple losses within the community. This has connected many individuals with other services that can further support the grief journey.

We have heard from multiple participants that they often feel that there is no support within their communities around grief support.

Some of the feedback we have received from the Gashkendamide'e (Be Grieved from the Heart) Loss and Grief Support Group and Training:

"Explored everything and love incorporated culture."

"Looking forward to receive additional information to share in community."

"The facilitators were knowledgeable in the topic of grief. The debrief at the end of the day was good. So everyone felt lighter, Thank you so much, Meegwetch!"

"Thank you for your support. I'd love to see you again."

"Very knowledgeable, excellent resources"

"Made to feel comfortable."

"I left feeling enlightened, inspired to share, confident in moving forward."

"Did not feel pushed to express myself and felt okay to talk."

"Thought it was really well planned and organized"

"The content was super helpful and very relevant and met my training needs."

"I appreciated being able to express myself."

"It is a much needed and vital program to teach others how to carry this out, especially within the very remote communities."

"I would highly recommend this training."

"the group was amazing. It was something I really needed as I had not had therapy for this loss yet."

In 2025-2026, the Gashkendamide'e Program supported over 500 individuals with knowledge of grief and how grief can impact the individual holistically.

Outreach Program Coordinator:

The Outreach Program engages in education on a micro and macro level to empower health care consumers and providers through the palliative philosophy. The Outreach Program was busy throughout the year with many public presentations and supporting booths at a wide variety of events. The Outreach Program Coordinator provided community members, care-givers and frontline staff with literacy in advance care planning and health care consent. These educational workshops included the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, 55 Plus Centre in Kakabeka and Thunder Bay. Collaborating with the Centre for Education and Research on Aging and Health we shared advance care planning knowledge with over 120 healthcare providers during rocket round education sessions. The Outreach Program attended the Dryden Palliative Care Conference and presented the benefits of advance care planning and sat on a panel discussion for the community with experts in this field.

The Outreach Program Coordinator supported grief literacy to differing agencies across Thunder Bay and the region. Presenting at conferences such as: Hospice Palliative Care Ontario, St. Elizabeths Health, Centre for Education and Research on Aging and Health and Hospice Northwest Services. Encouraging individuals and teams to support the grief process with presentations for Reliance Home Care, Rehabilitation Workers, Northwestern and Southwestern Home and Community Care and providing debriefings for team members. The Outreach Program Coordinator provided education on the Palliative Advocacy Care Teams curriculum that offers knowledge on the palliative approach to care for frontline staff and volunteers who work with structurally vulnerable individuals. This training engaged frontline staff from Shelter House, Heart Hub, Norwest Community Clinic, Outreach Staff from across Thunder Bay and region, volunteers and management.

The Outreach Program Coordinator actively sits on many committees with a seat at the Grief and Bereavement Community of Practice. This year she was asked to present on frontline staff grief and peer led debriefings to individuals across the province.

Although the Outreach Program partnered with numerous outside agencies to encourage and share knowledge on the palliative care philosophy, as well, the Outreach Program Coordinator partnered with other programs within Hospice Northwest Services. The Outreach Program Coordinator supported two Caregiver workshops, development of the Caregiver Magazine, the Caregiver Conference, the Candlelight Memorial, Grief Conference, Personal Lens on Grief exhibit, Grief and Communications training for new volunteers.

As well as providing education for others, the Outreach Program Coordinator continued to engage in her own learning while becoming a Waiting Room Revolution Ambassador and a trainer for Essential Conversations. Forever grateful to be able to share and receive knowledge on life and death. Recognizing the importance of education and communication to improve end of life for all.

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." Mahatma Gandhi



A young individual created her own Memory Box (left). She enjoyed an afternoon of crafting with her Auntie. The finished result (right).



REGIONAL PROGRAM REPORT

Teresa Roberts,
Regional Coordinator

HNW REGIONAL STATS: WHAT OUR REGIONAL PROGRAM HAS ACCOMPLISHED

142 TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED

Our program in the region continues to be vital for those needing support in our communities.

Hearts and Hope Grief and Bereavement Group: We held two very successful virtual Hearts and Hope session in 2025. The five week program had 5 clients who found the sessions to be very helpful. The virtual aspect allows those in the region, as well as those in Thunder Bay, the opportunity to attend through Zoom. We have also opened our virtual program up to clients who live west of Thunder Bay.

Palliative Care Committees: I continue to work closely with the Palliative Care Committees in each of the regional hospitals allowing us to promote our services.

Volunteer Recruitment: We were not successful in recruiting volunteers in 2025. We have 2 volunteers who are looking at going through training but have not yet started. Our total number of volunteers in the region still stands at 22 with 11 grief-trained volunteers.

One of our volunteers in Marathon continues to run her group activities in the Manor and is able to support 8 clients with many different sessions during the month including drum fit, book club, sing-a-longs and special occasion groups. We are so grateful for her contribution to helping out with her fellow residents in her home environment.

Health Fairs: I attended 2 Health Fairs in 2025, one in Marathon and one in Pays Plat. Kimberly Ramsbottom, Outreach Coordinator, was able to attend the fair in Pays Plat with me. We were able to introduce the Gashkendamide Program to the community. We continue to work on promoting the need for volunteers in the Region and were able to hand out multiple applications. We will continue to work on this.

Client numbers: We currently have 56 clients in the region. The opening of Barrick Care LTC facility in Marathon has increased our client number. We are working closely with the facility to ensure that those who are looking for some companionship are referred as clients. We have volunteers in Marathon who are helping out and making sure that the new clients have support. We have one wonderful volunteer in Geraldton who continues to visit the Hospital and LTC unit weekly, bringing in his dog for the enjoyment of the residents.

Grief Cafes: We have Grief Cafes in Marathon, Manitouwadge and Terrace Bay. The cafes give those who are in need of support a safe place to meet and talk about how grief has affected them. We were successful in obtaining a grant to help promote our cafes. We are working with our volunteers to see how we can better advertise and to ensure that we capture those in need of support.

Death Doula Course: We have 3 volunteers and one staff member taking the Home Hospice Association Death Doula Course. We were successful in obtaining a grant to cover the cost of the course, thanks to the Thunder Bay Community Foundation. Having our trained doulas within the organization would provide an extension to the person-centred care for those in their final days, ensuring our clients have a meaningful death experience.



PAYS PLAT HEALTH FAIR



THE 2025 HIKE FOR HOSPICE REPORT

Kathleen Buso,
Communications Coordinator

TOTAL RAISED: \$67,878

On May 25th, 2025, Hospice Northwest Services celebrated the 14th anniversary of our major annual fundraiser, the Hike for Hospice Palliative Care. Our goal was set at \$60,000 and our theme was ***Because How Matters.***

Each year, the importance of Hospice Northwest's services to our community is reflected in the people who attend the event. This year, at the 2025 Hike, we were privileged to put a face to our grief clients through the introduction of our honorary spokesperson, MaryLouise Petersen. MaryLouise's journey with Hospice Northwest began just over two years previously, shortly after the sudden loss of her daughter, Jaida. *"I had not really known about HWN before this time, so I didn't realize what a huge impact they would end up having on my life moving forward after this tragedy. When I was first connected with HWN, I was greeted with warmth, compassion, and complete understanding. I was offered 1-1 volunteer grief support which lasted for quite a few months, allowing me a safe non-judgemental space to talk about my grief, and begin my healing. Over the past two years, I have been fortunate enough to join multiple Circle of Friends workshops, a few Hearts and Hope support groups, and enter submissions for the Personal Lens on Grief Exhibition. These services have been offered freely, and I have always felt welcomed and supported. For me, HWN has been a literal lifeline - I honestly don't know how I would have made it through these dark times without the constant and unwavering support that I have been given, and I am truly grateful for the services that are provided to our community. Everyone at HWN should be proud of providing those of us that are grieving a gentle space to land."*

The 2025 Hike had over 100 hikers register, along with 11 teams, and numerous volunteers and other family members. Each participant had multiple donors pledging funds, for a total of 272 donations to the 2025 Hike! Together, we raised **\$67,878** (before expenses), which included \$25,035 in corporate sponsorships, \$5520 generated through our silent auction and \$8415 from our accompanying 50/50, with \$8415 going to the lucky winner of the raffle!



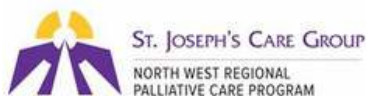
OUR 2025 HIKE SPONSORS AND FUNDERS



THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE DONORS,
EVENT SPONSORS AND OTHER FUNDERS



Indigenous Services
Canada



The Fort William
Rotary Club



2025/2026 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

TOTAL RAISED \$54,451

The 2025/26 Annual Campaign raised almost \$55,000 for hospice palliative care and grief services in our community, with donations equalling \$48,919 and the accompanying online raffle raising \$5532 (after expenses). We are proud of the fact that our Annual Fund total has progressively grown over the past nine years!

Our Fall 2025 annual campaign focused on the theme of 'Caring for the Caregiver'. The message that we shared with our donors:

Providing care to a loved one has been likened to traveling along the path of a river. From the calm waters at the beginning of the journey, to riding the rapids as new symptoms arise, to the feeling of drowning in deep waters - Hospice Northwest travels with you, providing support through every turn.

During the 2025 campaign, we shared the stories of three caregivers and the impact Hospice Northwest has had on their lives.

Terry and his wife Debbie have been living with the devastating effects of dementia for the past 13 years. Debbie's disease has gotten progressively worse. When she started wandering away from their home, Terry made the difficult decision to move her into a long-term care facility, so that she could receive around-the-clock care.

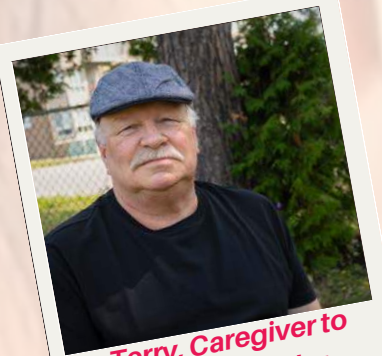
"I reached out to Hospice Northwest Services because I can't be with Debbie 24 hours a day. I really wanted someone to visit her when I can't be there. I wanted someone to walk with her and hold her hand because she likes to hold people's hands."

"I'm Penny Radford and I am a caregiver for my mom Julia, who is living with Alzheimer's disease. Having Sue as our Hospice Northwest volunteer is extremely helpful and so needed in the stage of life that mom is going through. In my family's case, with my mom having dementia and not being able to express her needs, the way Hospice Northwest advocates for us, and how they help us navigate the system are all so important."

Dale is a caregiver for his wife, Mary K, who is living with dementia.

"My wife, Mary-K, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's about 7 years ago, and until about 3 years ago, life was pretty normal. That's when she started seeing things that weren't there, and her memory steadily declined, and I wasn't able to leave her alone. Thanks to Hospice Northwest and their suggestion, I was able to get help so that I could go shopping and golf once a week."

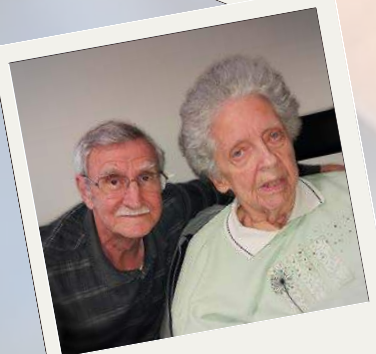
Thank you so much to our clients for sharing their stories and to our generous donors, whose support makes stories like these possible.



Terry, Caregiver to his wife Debby



Penny, caregiver to her mom Julia



HIKE AND ANNUAL CAMPAIGN GROWTH OVER THE YEARS



Financial Statement of Operations

YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

REVENUES	2026	2025
Grants	\$884,340	\$812,906
Fundraising Income	131,970	110,408
Lottery Income - Net of Cost	8,903	16,730
Other Income	32,764	39,149
	\$1,057,977	\$979,193
EXPENSES		
Bank Charges	768	200
Board Development & Meeting Costs	1,006	6,002
Building Costs	38,088	36,591
Dues and Memberships	1,386	2,371
Fundraising Expenses - Annual Fund	4,551	1,326
Insurance	6,762	8,437
Office Equipment and Maintenance	5,558	1,845
Office	17,328	23,750
Postage	121	52
Professional Fees	48,843	31,556
Program Costs	151,476	112,886
Public Awareness	6,326	4,362
Telephone	6,994	6,334
Volunteer Development & Training	23,047	12,274
Wages	538,399	521,631
Wages - Benefits Costs	71,596	69,390
	\$922,267	\$839,007
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$135,710	\$140,186

Looking Forward to 2026/2027

- New Strategic Plan to be released Fall of 2026
- Die-alogues event, 'Leaving a Legacy' in June 2026, with another Die-alogues in planning for 2027
- 50/50 Online Raffle, Draw Date October 15, 2026
- Ruby Celebration: Hospice Northwest's 40th Anniversary fundraiser: October 15, 2026
- Caregiver 5 week workshop series October and November 2026
- Ruby Celebration Silent Auction, running now until October 15, 2026
- Regional Virtual Hearts and Hope Group being held October 17 - November 14, 2026
- Christmas Volunteer Appreciation Dinner December 3, 2026
- December art exhibit at Wilkes Terrace (Terrace Bay) related to the Art Therapy Program, sponsored by Hospice Northwest and North of Superior Healthcare Group
- Candlelight Memorial Service, February 2027
- Planning for the 2nd Caregiver Conference and 2nd edition of the Caregiver Magazine
- Planning for Grief Conference in 2027
- Regional and Thunder Bay HUUG workshops ongoing throughout the year, September to April
- Hearts and Hope Grief Groups ongoing in Thunder Bay
- Ongoing Circle of Friends Workshops scheduled for the year
- Gashkendamide'e Workshops will continue
- Fall and Spring Volunteer Recruitment Drives for Thunder Bay and Region
- Specialized volunteer training sessions will be scheduled
- Grief Cafes in the Region will continue
- Monthly volunteer training and support meetings
- Monthly programming for caregivers and palliative care clients
- Volunteer Recognition events and volunteer award nominations

Any questions regarding the content of this report can be sent to info@hospicenorthwest.ca or by calling (807) 626-5570.