

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

cowichan  
hospice



# Dear Friends,

Thank you for making another year of meaningful work possible at Cowichan Hospice. Your continued support means that compassionate, whole-person hospice care is accessible to all in the Cowichan region, in the most difficult times.



Jamie Goodman  
Board President



Monika Kawka  
Executive Director

Whether you are a volunteer, a donor, or a valued partner, your contribution to the well-being of individuals and families in our community is deeply felt.

At Cowichan Hospice, our mission is twofold: to sustain our programs, available at no cost, to those navigating grief, caregiving, and life-limiting illness; and to continue to

expand our care and support with skill, openness and sensitivity.

Sometimes the need for hospice support is clear. Other times, it gently reaches the quietest spaces—between hospital and home, a visit and a long night, or a hard conversation and a moment of peace. We strive to be there in all of those in-between moments.

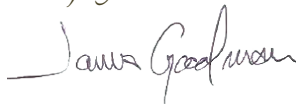
While many know us for our work with individuals navigating life-limiting illness, we also serve their caregivers. Caregivers often bear a heavy burden, and we continue to expand our services to better support those in this role, with online support groups and relaxed, in-person opportunities for connection.

Also increasingly important is support for those in our community who have lost loved ones to toxic drugs. We are expanding our capacity to support those left behind, including many parents who have experienced the unimaginable loss of their adult children.

The impact you'll read about in these pages is the direct result of your generosity, your belief in this work, and your understanding of the importance of creating a compassionate community for each other.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for walking alongside us to ensure that no one in our community has to face these profound transitions alone.

*With deep gratitude,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jamie Goodman".

Jamie Goodman, Board President

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Monika Kawka".

Monika Kawka, Executive Director

## Our Vision

Compassionate,  
person-centered,  
end-of-life and  
bereavement care  
available to anyone,  
anywhere in the  
Cowichan region.

## Our Values

Compassion  
Respect  
Integrity  
Collaboration  
Honouring Life

Cowichan Hospice is honoured to provide care in the unceded traditional and ancestral territories of the Quw'utsun, Stz'uminus, Halalt, Lyackson, Puneluxutth' (Peneluket), Ts'uubaa-asatx, Ditidaht and Meluxulh (Malahat) people.



# Your Generosity has an Impact in Your Community

Your support enables Cowichan Hospice to provide skilled, wrap-around hospice care, free of charge, to individuals living with an advancing illness, to their caregivers, and to those grieving the death of a loved one.

This care is available to everyone within the Cowichan region—at home, in hospital, in care homes, in our Community Services Office and in Cowichan Hospice House.



## *Grief Support and Community Outreach*

### Supporting Social Service Providers

In early 2024, Cedar Branches Women's Shelter reached out, seeking support for staff. In collaboration with a local counsellor, we provided training focused on grief literacy and companioning skills—equipping front-line workers with tools to support those they serve.

### Community Conversations

In the community of Arbutus Ridge, we facilitated a group grief conversation, in which a former client shared how Cowichan Hospice had helped him navigate his own loss. His story opened the door to reflections from others, including those speaking about grief for the first time. Several participants later reached out for support, some surprised to learn our services are available even years after a loss.

### Grief Circles in Workplaces

In local workplaces and care homes, we expanded grief circles, creating an opportunity for staff to acknowledge and process the loss of clients or co-workers. These sessions have been especially impactful at Clements Centre, where strong bonds between residents and staff make grief a shared experience.

### Casual Connections for Ongoing Support

Recognizing a need for continued social connection, we launched "Third Tuesday Coffee Time," a monthly drop-in at our community office. Clients, volunteers, and staff gather informally over coffee and conversation—strengthening bonds and brightening the space with laughter.

In 2024, **1142** people in the Cowichan region were served by one or more Cowichan Hospice programs:

- 320** - Support for those grieving
- 258** - Support for people living with serious illness (including 121 patients at Hospice House)
- 420** - Support for family members—caregiving and anticipatory grief (including 297 loved ones at Hospice House)
- 62** - Community Outreach (education, workshops, etc.)
- 82** - Advance Care Planning

# Families are at the Heart of Hospice House

By Maureen McKay,  
Hospice House Support Services Coordinator

**In 2024, each arrival at Hospice House reminded us of the trust families place in us to care for their loved ones.**

It was a year of quiet, meaningful moments, often centered around families and loved ones. One such moment was at the Thanksgiving dinner volunteers prepared for patients and families. Something as simple as passing a bowl of mashed potatoes brought stories, laughter, and a deep sense of connection to the group, and captured the spirit of Hospice House perfectly: a home, held and nurtured by community.

In 2024 we introduced a new way to support patients and their families: Virtual Reality experiences. VR offers moments of peace and joy as patients “armchair travel” – revisiting special places, settling into calming landscapes, or fulfilling lifelong dreams. Whether it’s “walking” a childhood beach, watching the Northern Lights, or exploring a favourite city, these guided immersive experiences can ease anxiety, reduce pain, and open the door to reflection and conversation.

A rich, personal layer was added to Hospice House’s history when photographers whose beautiful images line our walls visited and shared the stories behind their pieces. They, in turn, learned the emotional impact their work has had on patients and visitors.

Vital community relationships continued to grow: our partnership with Island Health strengthened, improving continuity of care; Elder Linda Modeste and her sister Dora led powerful First Nations cleansing ceremonies; and we shared experience and gave tours to nearby hospice societies working to build hospice houses in their own communities.

The work at Hospice House has deepened in many ways yet, as it evolves, its heart remains the same. Skilled and dedicated staff and volunteers provide care with quiet compassion and unwavering presence as they support each patient and family with comfort and dignity.



Thank you  
you were all so kind  
beautiful people. During  
our time & need ♡ ♡





# A Lifeline Back to Society

When my wife died, I thought, "I'm the big strong male and I can survive anything." But after staring at my own four walls for a while, alone with my grief, I realized I needed some support. I knew that if I didn't get into some company, I would sit at home, brood, and gradually deteriorate.

I couldn't turn back time, but I could move forward. Reaching out for support was a way to do what I could.

After a few one-to-one sessions with a grief support volunteer, I was invited to join a grief support group. My first thought about joining a group was, "Not a chance in hell." It was a scary idea for me. But the reality is this grief group has been a lifeline.

Once I was among the group and started to talk, I realized that when grief is spoken about it becomes easier to bear, even as you understand it will never ever go away. Humans are allowed to grieve. It's in our nature. Grieving in the company of other griever truly helps.

Here I have a place and time to say the things I might

not say to a friend or relative. Within the group there's an acceptance of my feelings—with no strings attached. I can be my real self, participating however and whenever I like, and as we share our experiences, I realize we're each grieving differently.

I would encourage people in our community who are grieving, especially men, to come and talk about what's really going on in their hearts and in their lives. This is a support group—that is what it's called and that is what it does—and it's marvelous.

— E. B. P., Cowichan Hospice client



**The 2024 Cycle of Life Tour raised over \$350K for end-of-life care across Vancouver Island hospices!**

Thanks to the incredible support of this community and the dedication of the Cowichan Life Cyclers team, more than \$67,000 was raised for hospice care in the Cowichan region.

**The trophy for most funds raised went to our local Cowichan Life Cyclers team!**

Front Row L to R: Sonja Elford, David Pope, Mary Hof, Rachel Anderson. Back Row L to R: Austin Reid, Joanna Sofield, Gretchen Hartley, Gay Wise, Amanda Pitre-Hayes, Marianne Palou, Karen Hoffman.

# Thank You for Supporting Hospice Care with Your Gifts in 2024



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Robert Stimpson

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Due to the Canada Post strike and the government extension of tax filing dates, we have done our best to include in this list everyone who made a contribution of \$200 or more **between January 1, 2024 and February 28, 2025**. We apologize in advance for any errors or omissions.

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## A Legacy of Kindness

Robert "Bob" Stimpson's life was defined by compassion, generosity, and a deep commitment to his community.

Bob was born in Winnipeg in 1930, the youngest of 11 children. A self-educated and self-made businessman, he built a successful career in sales and management. Over several decades, his work took him from Winnipeg to Ottawa, and eventually to Toronto. In the 1990s, Bob and his late wife Carol settled in Arbutus Ridge on Vancouver Island, where they embraced retired life and their new community.

Bob's greatest passion was golf. From his humble beginnings as a caddie in 1940, he rose to become one of Canada's top amateur golfers, winning numerous championships across Manitoba, Quebec, and Ontario, and representing both Manitoba and Quebec in the prestigious Willingdon Cup.

Beyond the greens, he was known for his kindness, intelligence and dedication to others. After Carol's death in 2015, Bob continued their tradition of supporting local charities through hands-on involvement and heartfelt donations. During the holiday season, he organized food and toy drives for families in need, bringing joy and comfort to many. Inspired by the hospice support he witnessed through friends and neighbours, Bob developed a deep admiration for the work of Cowichan Hospice and determined that he would support this work and help ensure its future.

Bob stayed active well into his later years, cherishing time with friends and his community. He and his close companion Dorothy Browning traveled widely, enjoying several cruises and trips across Canada to reconnect with friends. In the fall of 2022, his health began to decline and, at 92, he played his last round of golf. He died in May of 2023, with his friends by his side.

True to his intentions, Bob left generous gifts in his will to Cowichan Hospice and two other charities that were close to his heart. His kindness and dedication to hospice care will continue to benefit this community for generations, and he will be remembered with deep gratitude.



# Advance Care Planning in the Community...

...may not be what you think it is

Advance Care Planning isn't about finances, but about thinking ahead and sharing your healthcare wishes in case you're ever unable to speak for yourself. It includes choosing the kind of care you'd want, naming someone you trust to make decisions for you, and writing your wishes down.

**In 2024, 82 people attended free Advance Care Planning workshops facilitated by Cowichan Hospice.** These workshops were two day, in-person training sessions which led participants through the process of thinking through and describing their health care instructions and appointing a representative to make health care decisions for them.

**ACP helps ensure your voice is heard, gives you peace of mind, and guides your loved ones during tough times.**



## I am a Caregiver?

In 2004, a spinal cord injury left my dad unable to walk, changing his life—and my mother's—forever. After surgery and two years of rehab, he regained mobility but, by then, caregiving for my dad had become my mom's full-time role and life's devotion, and soon another challenge arose: a diagnosis of Grave's Disease.



Lisa's dad Norm and his Shih Tzu Teddy

Fifteen years into her caregiving journey, my mom died suddenly of cardiac arrest. I had heard their story through her voice—her love, her fatigue, her frustrations—and suddenly, I was stepping into her shoes.

Grieving the loss of my mother had to wait, as my father's physical and emotional health declined quickly, with multiple hospital visits and falls. At first I focused on getting the support and equipment he needed to live on his own, and eventually he chose to move

into assisted living and a new phase began: finding a home, packing, moving and helping him settle in. During this transition also came the "gift" of adopting Dad's senior Shih Tzu.

Through all this, I had no consistent family support. It wasn't until a session with a counsellor that I finally said the word "caregiver" out loud. I remember the relief in naming it, and the shock that it had taken so long.

In my professional role, I have had the honour of sitting alongside countless caregivers, hearing their stories of love, struggle, and resilience. It's their experiences that inspired the creation of Cowichan Hospice's Caregiver Support Group.

This group has become a sanctuary where caregivers (including myself) can show up exactly as they are—raw, real, and without filters—and be met with warmth, compassion, understanding, and shared laughter. Feeling alone and overwhelmed can be replaced with connection, strength, and love.

I am deeply grateful to the brave caregivers who show up and share from the heart, whenever they can. They, and this group, have been part of my own healing and transformation.

*—Lisa Chileen,*

Cowichan Hospice  
Community Palliative Services Coordinator

# Reflections on the 2024 Volunteer Program

Providing compassionate, quality care to our clients is at the heart of the Cowichan Hospice Volunteer Program. Wrapped around that care is a circle of support that nurtures connection, learning and personal growth for each volunteer, while embracing the diverse experiences and identities that make our community stronger. We foster this through thoughtful, inclusive training, peer-to-peer support, caring guidance from hospice staff and meaningful opportunities to gather, reflect and celebrate together.

## Volunteer Feedback

Volunteer feedback is essential to how our program grows and evolves to meet the needs of the individuals and families we support. In 2024, we launched our first Volunteer Insights Survey, and the response was both heartening and affirming. When asked, "Would you recommend volunteering with Cowichan Hospice to your best friend?" the answer was a resounding "yes!"

## Advanced Volunteer Training

Advanced training opportunities reflected the depth and breadth of support our volunteers offer. Highlights included sessions on spirituality, the companioning model, the Way of Council, dementia care, Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), and expanded understanding of the opioid crisis. These workshops not only deepened knowledge but also encouraged compassionate, unbiased, culturally sensitive care.

## Service to the Community

Our volunteers contribute thousands of hours of service to the community each year. In addition to offering direct client support, they also mentor new volunteers, facilitate Advance Care Planning workshops, offer comforting Reiki and Therapeutic Touch® treatments, keep our gardens beautiful, lead trainings, and assist in support groups for clients—always with open minds, brave hearts, and a spirit of kindness.

Thank you for your dedicated  
service to our community,  
*Hospice Volunteers!*

## 15 years

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### David Pope

In his time with hospice David has contributed in so many ways, including offering legal support, serving on the board of directors, helping out at events, and fundraising with the Cycle of Life Tour.



### Joan Milne

With her diverse skills and warm presence, Joan is active in many roles: supporting at the front desk, in grief and palliative care, at Hospice House, and as a mentor to new volunteers

## 10 years

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### Joy Bondy

Recently retired from her volunteer role, Joy has provided one-to-one grief and palliative support to clients with care and empathy. We are grateful for the meaningful impact she has had in her time with us.

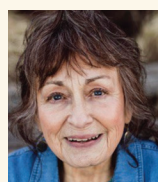


### Fran Milne

Over the past decade, Fran's work at hospice has included one-to-one grief and palliative support, as well as individualized guidance with Advance Care Planning.

## 5 years

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### Cath Hamilton

Cath is an important part of the Hospice House team, and provides one-to-one support for grief clients. She also organizes a monthly music program at Hospice House.



# 2024 FINANCIALS

## Balance Sheet

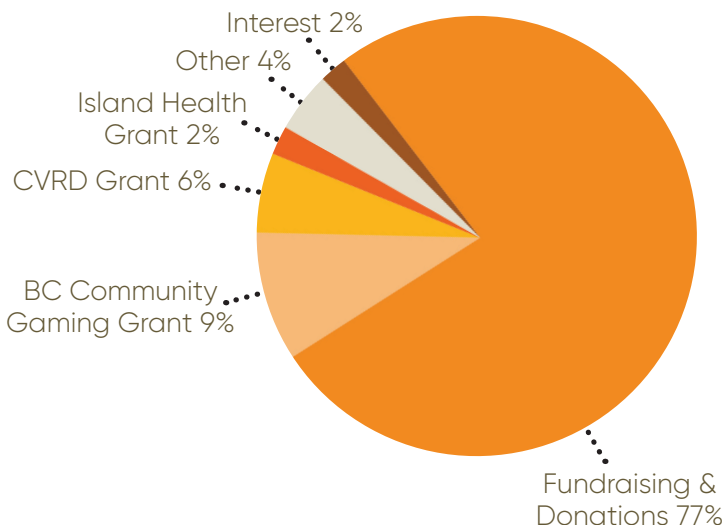
	Operating Fund 2024	Capital Fund 2024	Hospice House Fund 2024	Total 2024	Total 2023
Current Assets	\$ 1,025,468	\$ 334,409	\$ 1,623,098	<b>\$ 2,982,975</b>	\$ 2,593,950
Current Liabilities	\$ 55,752	0	\$ 1,623,098	<b>\$ 1,678,850</b>	\$ 1,656,302
Net Assets	\$ 969,716	\$ 334,409	\$ 0	<b>\$ 1,304,125</b>	\$ 937,648
Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 1,025,468	\$ 334,409	\$ 1,623,098	<b>\$ 2,982,975</b>	\$ 2,593,950

## Income Statement

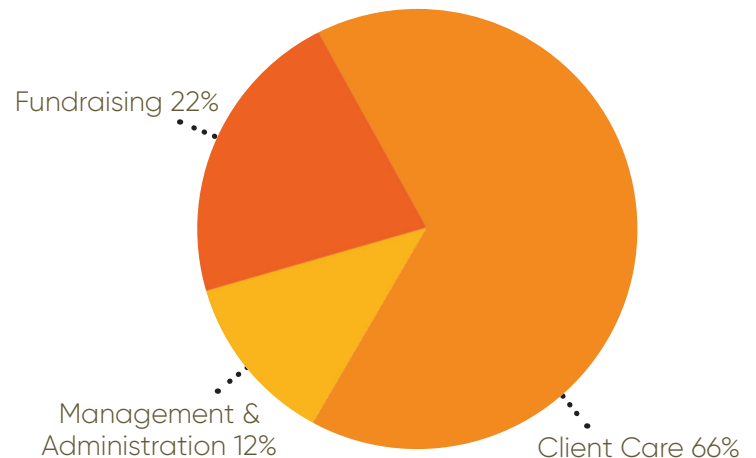
Revenues	\$ 1,073,408	0	\$ 140,947	<b>\$ 1,214,355</b>	\$ 997,011
Expenses	\$ 687,367	\$ 19,564	\$ 140,947	<b>\$ 847,878</b>	\$ 952,495
Excess Revenue Over Expenses	<b>\$ 386,041</b>	<b>\$ -19,564</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 366,477</b>	<b>\$ 44,516</b>

Volunteers contributed \$102,600 value in 2024 when calculated at \$20 an hour.

### OPERATING REVENUE



### OPERATING EXPENSES





cowichan  
hospice

COWICHAN HOSPICE  
COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Cowichan Valley Hospice Society  
Charity BN/Registration number:  
11887 8388 RR0001

Open your  
Heart  
to Hospice.



Life can look very different  
after losing a life partner  
of over 46 years.

“After all the medical appointments, the progressive illness and the caregiving, there is the loss that you can never be fully prepared for. There is the initial shock and fog of the loss of a loved one. As time moves on, there can be a lingering sense of aloneness, confusion and deep grief that is difficult to put into words but is felt inside.

Through Cowichan Hospice supports, I began to understand grief is a journey that unfolds in its own time. It is unique to each person. It can't be rushed, rationalized or have a clear set of stages to work through. It is a journey of moving towards openness and acceptance of the emotions brought by loss and grief. Part of this process is making sense and honouring the memories and emotions of a life lived and shared.

The heartfelt supports from Cowichan Hospice guided me to understand my own journey of grief and loss. It is a journey where I discover you do not have to be alone but can be accepted and supported. These are felt expressions that at times seem to defy words. And yet...through this supported process grief becomes accepted, lighter, and the clouds start to move.”

-J.C., Cowichan Hospice client

