



Latoya



Vikki



Haley

We recently celebrated Hospice Awareness Week. The week provides us an opportunity to recognise the service Hospice provides, as well as increasing awareness of what we do, and who we support. This year Hospice New Zealand has shared stories from Latoya, Eileen, Vikki and Haley. From their perspectives as patient, whānau and friend, they talk about how it's okay to enjoy life, talk about death, ask for help, and be supported by hospice.

"Understanding the care, the value, the comfort that Hospice provides – is why Hospice Awareness Week is so important", Wayne Naylor, CEO Hospice New Zealand.

So what does Hospice do?

Hospice provides specialist palliative care for people with a life-limiting illness – supporting them, their whānau and carers through illness, death and bereavement. Palliative care services are aimed at improving the quality of life for the person and their family and whānau, so they can live every moment.

Hospice patient Latoya said, ***"When Hospice was brought up for the first time by my pain specialist I really thought I'd have to pack up and move to Hospice and that was it. But that wasn't it...they managed my pain...when I left [Hospice] I felt a renewed sense of myself, of hope for the things we could do. I could have come a lot sooner, things could have been sorted a lot sooner. I'm not going to be scared of the future now"***.

Rotorua Community Hospice doesn't have an inpatient unit, like some other hospices. We care for people where they feel most comfortable. Most patients choose to be cared for in their home. Where this isn't possible, we can help fund temporary respite care at a rest home facility.

Why is Hospice important?

Death is a natural part of life, and sometimes we need help to go through it well. If you are diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, like terminal cancer, motor neuron disease, or organ failure our clinical team will ensure you have what you need to manage pain and discomfort. We have specialist equipment that can help make life a little easier, and our team helps support loved ones who are providing care.

"If you're looking at a good death it's being surrounded by people that you love, it's your pain being controlled as much as possible, it's being loved and looked after."

"And that's definitely what you get when you're with Hospice", Haley says.

Our Hospice clinical team will be there for the whole palliative care journey, providing the care necessary to ensure quality of life and dignity to the end of life.

Vikki talked about her son Ryan's Hospice journey, ***"Ryan very quickly accepted Hospice would be a great service for him. Hospice was there for the whole journey, which really helped us focus on supporting Ryan. We took care of his quality of life because we didn't have to take care of his health side of things. Hospice was there to do that"***.

Talking about death is depressing, why should I talk about it now?

"The topic is so depressing and so sad and so taboo but yet it's one of the most natural things that happens in life...you live and you die... why I'm so comfortable now is because it is something we can talk about," Latoya says.

Thinking about you or someone you love dying can be painful. Avoiding the topic is easier. Though it doesn't stop it's inevitability. Talking about death now, can make sure your wishes are known and upheld when you die. Having a plan for death means our loved ones won't need to make difficult decisions while they are grieving.

"Just normalise it, make it okay...it does make it easier... when you ignore it, it makes it incredibly difficult," says Haley.

You can strike up a casual conversation with a hypothetical situation, and let your loved ones know what you would like if that situation was to occur. Alternatively there are some great resources that can help start the conversation, and make a written record of it which they can access when needed. The New Zealand Government have a free plan – the Advanced Care Plan that you can download - <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/my-advance-care-plan-and-guide/> or get from Rotorua Community Hospice.

Some of these plans can be made legal through a will, which you can talk to a solicitor about. Also, thinking about having an enduring power of attorney you trust will ensure decisions about your medical and financial care are managed well if you lose capacity to make decisions.



Turn over to WIN a Suzuki Swift Vibe



MATTOCK WHĀNAU STORY

"A dying person's spiritual beliefs are a guiding compass and Hospice nurses recognise, listen, and support the concepts of each individual's journey"

Spiritual care embraces the complete picture of the dying person and their family. This is what the special nurses of Rotorua Community Hospice recognise. They can help support long before someone dies – their care is about the journey. They respect all spiritual traditions and cultures, observing first-hand a spiritual essence that lies within us all.

My beloved husband Ian was a practising Buddhist. He accepted that impermanence is the very nature of life - a core teaching in Buddhism. Hospice nurses imbue that same deep compassion, empathy and understanding.

They dedicate their time and energy, to skillfully guide and support 24/7. Their days evolve around recognizing the changing needs, wishes and subtle levels of suffering, both of patients and whānau alike – easing the path for the best possible care and comfort.

We thought Ian had the flu in September 2019 but within two weeks he was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia. The next three months he spent in Waikato Hospital undergoing intensive chemotherapy. Seriously ill, confined to a Hepa Unit for protection – so far away from nature – life as we knew it had shifted focus. With complications time was required in critical care. Despite having found a sibling with a perfect match for bone marrow transplant, unable to gain cytogenetic remission, Ian was no longer a candidate. We returned home to Rotorua to undergo further palliative chemotherapy. As Ian had no immunity - we were in lockdown before the nation joined us with the challenges of COVID-19. His life was in the balance, but we were so blessed with the

support of skilled chemo nurses, a compassionate haematologist, generous blood donors, a wise GP, wonderful Hospice nurses and amazing work colleagues. Ian held a confident, wise stability with humour, dignity, and faith. He was aware that with dying you are in a powerful transition. He wrote specific requests in mind preparation for time of passing and for how to approach his care before, during and after death. He gently tasked Hospice / his GP / the funeral home and I, to help create the auspicious conditions he wished for dying with peace. (Advanced Care Planning at its best!). It was a time for him to prepare spiritually for the journey ahead. He wished to remain undistracted with the least disturbance possible to meditate. His deep concentrated meditation was to focus on the subtle mind. His physical cares were addressed without conversation but with loving touch.

During his last days, he rested in the practice to meditate remaining undistracted within the luminosity and all-pervading space of the true nature of his mind. To die in the unbroken awareness of this state was important to him. His wishes were upheld with respect, consideration, and support from Rotorua Hospice staff and Mountain View funeral services - a treasured gift achieved with professionalism.

With loving memory of Ian Keith Mattock 1957-2020. A beautiful soul who showed his family and friends how to love, live, accept, let go and die gracefully.

Written By Andrea Mattock OM MANI PADME HUM



SCAN ME



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Tickets are \$50, and can be bought at <https://app.galabid.com/hospice23> or by scanning the QR code. Raffle will be drawn at Harcourts Dancing for Hospice on Saturday, 19 August 2023. All winners will be notified by phone and in writing. Terms and Conditions apply.



TICKETS
\$50 ea