

Because of you,
Helen's family got
one last smile.

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A NOTE REGARDING OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We are delighted to announce that Lorna Riddle has stepped into the role of Executive Director for the Foundation, following Cathy Murphy's departure in April this year. Many of you would know Lorna, but for those of you who don't, she has been at the Foundation for seven years and has worked closely with supporters and Hospice families during this time.

"I'm so honoured to have been chosen for this role. It's been a privilege to work for the Foundation for the last seven years – to serve you and to help patients and families get access to care when they really need it. With your help, we can continue this wonderful work. I look forward to your continued support."

Dispelling some myths around palliative care

It's never easy having an end-of-life conversation – with our families or our doctors. But when our time is limited, we need to think about "what do I really want to do?" And at those times, we are often asked, 'How do I get into the Hospice?'

We spoke with Kevin Hardy, our Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner, about palliative care myths and how patients are eventually admitted into Mary Potter Hospice:

"A lot of people diagnosed with a life-limiting illness will first hear the words 'palliative care' and instantly think: 'That's it – I'm going to die within days.'



We need to change this thinking. Palliative care does not hasten death.

If you have been diagnosed with a metastatic disease, it's a good time to speak to your oncologist, GP or treating specialist about early referral to a palliative care service. It doesn't mean you're giving up hope – or that death is imminent. It doesn't mean that you're having to give up on treatment. For example, palliative care is helpful in managing symptoms that might be associated with nausea or pain caused by chemotherapy treatment.

Evidence-based research shows that early referral to palliative care services for symptom management can prolong and improve the patient's quality of life.

What a referral to a palliative care service means is that we are going to focus on your 'goals of care' and quality of life. When you get a diagnosis of a life-limiting illness, your life changes. What you want to do every day is suddenly changed. You're on a roller-coaster of treatment, of being told what to do and when you need to do it. Palliative care services can empower you at this point by giving you choice. If you're armed with

more choices, you can concentrate on 'what do I really want to do?' and 'what's important to me?' We can explain the choices open to you – but never tell you what choices you should make. We want to make sure you always live your best possible day, every day."

"Palliative care services can empower you at this point by giving you choice."

GETTING INTO THE HOSPICE

Somewhere in the trajectory of diagnosis, to treatment, through to palliative care, there will be a tipping point. Something will change whereby the next step might be the transition to Mary Potter Hospice. That doesn't just happen straight away.

Kevin emphasises that: *'You aren't going to come into the Hospice the day you get a palliative care referral.'*

But at some point, admission to the Hospice for end-of-life care will enter the discussion. If you are already with a palliative care service, it is a seamless process to be admitted to Mary Potter Hospice. If the patient has not already been referred to a palliative care service, their oncologist, treating specialist or GP can make a direct referral for admission to Mary Potter Hospice, by calling and speaking to one of the doctors here.

We know that it's shattering when you hear that someone you love is to come to the Hospice. But everyone at the Hospice will always make sure that each patient and family receive exceptionally loving and compassionate care. We can't change the outcome, but we can change the experience.

It's time to have these conversations.

As Kevin says: *"You can empower yourself. Talk to your treating specialist about palliative care and ask about Mary Potter Hospice. You can tell your family where you want your end-of-life care to be."*

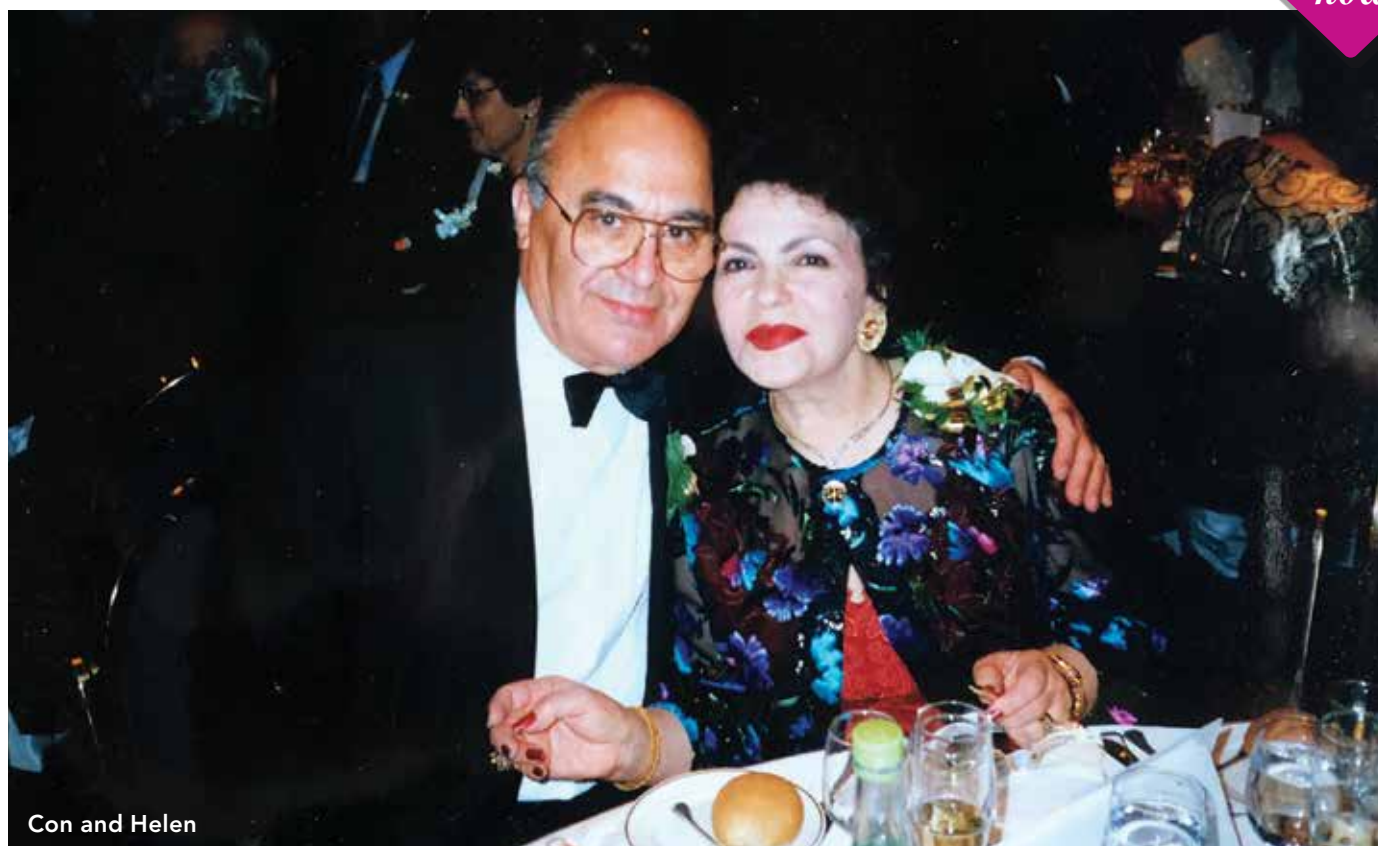
If you know your time is finite, you can concentrate on 'what's truly important now?' And then get on with living.

For more information about the Palliative Care Home Service or admittance to Mary Potter Hospice, please call the Hospice on 8239 9144.



If you are grieving or this newsletter has arrived at a difficult time for you, please know that we have you in our thoughts and prayers.

We acknowledge loved ones who have died in recent times in the Mary Potter Hospice or Calvary and remember their family and friends who miss them every day.



Con and Helen

3 days & 60 years

Helen was only in the Hospice for three days but that was long enough to create memories that will last a lifetime.

When Helen's oncologist said the words 'palliative care', her son Alex felt as if the blood drained from him.

"It sounded like 'giving up'. It sounded like 'there's no hope'. And we couldn't accept that. Mum kept going with the treatment, but it just wasn't helping. One day she looked at me and said 'Helen's not going to get better' – it was like she knew.

When I tell the story of how Mum came to be in Mary Potter, the stock reaction is the same from people – 'oh what a terrible place to be'. It's normal: no-one wants to hear they're going to a hospice, because you don't know what to expect. But now I tell them: 'Actually, I couldn't think of anywhere better to have taken Mum'."

Helen was married to Con for nearly 60 years. An amateur Greek actress, she had her own radio program. She had dined with prime ministers,

premiers, a US presidential candidate, and had even met the

Queen. A stylish, kind and vibrant personality, Helen was always immaculately dressed, and wouldn't go out unless her nails were done.

On the day Helen arrived at the Hospice, the volunteers immediately brought in fresh sandwiches and drinks to the family. Alex told us: *"The nurses and volunteers couldn't do enough for us. They kept asking: 'Are you comfortable, are you hungry, are you ok, is there anything we can do for you, do you want anything at all?' The care was constant. Everyone was so kind."* While Helen was sleeping, there was a knock on the door and in came the Hospice's beauty therapist, Rose. She explained to Alex that she did manicures, pedicures, facials and massages – not only for the patients but also for anyone in the family.

"People need to know it's not what you might think it is. It's about living – and taking care of people."

Alex said: "I told Rose that Mum hadn't had her nails done for about 8 weeks and they were all chipped. She loved having nice hands, so I asked Rose to do her nails. Mum was always so beautifully manicured and took such pride in her appearance – I knew she would love this treat. Rose rolled up two towels and curved them very gently under Mum's hands – and she started the manicure. She even matched the colour of the nail polish to the exact colour of Mum's nails in a photo by her bed. And then Mum opened her eyes, looked down, saw what Rose was doing and smiled. That was her last smile. And that was the last time she was conscious. That was so special."

Helen's last 24 hours were spent with her devoted daughter-in-law Sophie close by. Helen slept while Sophie read to her. After Helen died, the family spent time together in her room and in one of the family lounges. Eleni, Alex's daughter, spent hours in the Puzzle Room doing a jigsaw to help take her mind off everything.

And Con told a story about the day he'd taken Helen for a picnic before they were married. They'd driven to North Adelaide to eat their food opposite the golf course. As Con was retelling this story, he suddenly realised that their picnic had taken place directly across the road from the Hospice – exactly 60 years ago.

"That was a really special moment – the significance of that story. And here they were – 60 years later. All that time later. It was all about time. In the Hospice, it was always made clear that we could take our time – there was no hurry – 'you can do whatever you want to do'. All that unexpected care. There was nothing that was too difficult for the Hospice to do for Mum or for us – they made sure our experience

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there was the best it could be under such sad circumstances. Whatever we asked for, it was no problem.

Mum was in the Hospice for only 3 days. We say 'only 3 days' but have a look at the effect it's left on me for only 3 days.

What a magnificent place. People need to know it's not what you might think it is. It's about living – and taking care of people. I'll never be able to describe how good the care was – there was nobody at the Hospice who wasn't friendly, who wasn't wonderful. What I'll always remember is Rose being there on that first day, just walking through the door – and Mum being able to get her nails done. When she briefly woke and saw what was happening, her smile was really something special. It meant everything."

The memory of his beloved mother's last smile is something that Alex will never forget. You are behind that unexpected moment of joy because you support the complementary therapy program in the Hospice. Rose is one of three therapists whose wonderful work makes such a difference to patients and families. And that's only possible because of you. Thank you. Our sincere thanks to Alex for sharing Helen's story.



Helen & her three sons

Less distress, more De-Stress

Thanks to you, the Hospice's beauty therapist helps patients and families de-stress through her gentle relaxing touch.

You are the reason that patients and families in the Hospice can be lovingly pampered by our beauty therapist, Rose. Her therapeutic touch helps to restore emotional balance and a sense of self to so many people. We are so grateful to you for making these special moments of joy and comfort possible.

The nurses are often the first to suggest to patients and family members that they might like to have a gentle massage or a facial from Rose.

"No-one can believe there is a beauty therapist in a Hospice.

But as I explain to patients and families, it's a bit of normality at a highly stressful time. It's some time-out, a bit of relaxation, and I'm there to look after them too. A lot of female patients have never had a facial or manicure and people can't believe this is being offered."

Rose often sees patients first in St Helen's Ward, and then in the Hospice:

"Many people are scared to leave St Helen's to go to the Hospice. They think stepping into the Hospice

means that it will be over for them in a day or two.

I reassure them and say 'You don't need to be afraid - just go there. You can come up for air - you can breathe. We'll look after you there. There's a beautiful kitchen, there's music, there's lounges, there's complementary therapies - and you can just BE.'

During massages and facials, people open up about their fears - and many just break down. No-one wants to let on how scared they really are - so when they

come into the Retreat Room, they let go and often just sob. Initially I may have someone very anxious, distressed or their walls are up - but no matter who it is, when they leave that room, they're calm, they're peaceful and often ask

me for a hug. It's the power and emotion of touch."

A year ago, Rose organised a spa day for Hospice patient, Judy and her three daughters. It was a day of pedicures, manicures, and facials. Judy's husband had died some years ago, but his photo was propped up in a frame next to her. Rose remembers:

"When I finished, this sweet girl looked at herself in the mirror and started to cry. She just said: 'THERE I AM'. She recognised herself again."



*“Judy was drinking champagne and looked so peaceful and happy – and she suddenly looked up and said ‘Isn’t **this** the way to die? We’re having a spa day, I’ve got a glass of champagne, I’ve got my husband here, my three angels too – this is the way to die.”* Rose told us she would never forget it. Judy’s daughters were so grateful, they donated a new soft treatment bed to the complementary therapy room.

On another occasion, the mother of a 34 year-old patient came to Rose and asked for help, explaining how distressed her daughter was over the excessive facial hair that her treatment had caused. Rose gave this lovely patient a facial, waxed the unwanted hair away, painted her nails, & put makeup on her. *“When I finished, this sweet girl looked at herself in the mirror and started to cry. She just said: ‘**THERE I AM**’. She recognised herself again.”*

Rose believes: *“You just can’t do this work without falling in love with families. It’s such an honour to have a family trust me and allow me in to share the most emotional time of their lives. You’re touching people, you’re getting involved. People are telling you very intimate things. It’s sacred. I’m really proud to be here.”*

The Hospice’s complementary therapy program is funded purely by donations. Through your generosity, you help patients and families receive therapy that alleviates anxiety, pain and emotional distress. Thank you for the remarkable difference you make.



Nurse Amy Williams & Stephen K Amos
Photo credit: The Advertiser/Morgan Sette

FRINGE FUN(D)RAISING WITH STEPHEN K AMOS

During the Adelaide Fringe in March, we had a very special entertainer contact us out of the blue to help raise money for Mary Potter Hospice.

English comedian Stephen K Amos lost his beloved twin sister when she died in a UK hospice in 2018. Her death came soon after that of Stephen’s mother. Devastated, he decided to use his personal tragedy to give back – and raise money for local hospices wherever he performed.

While he was in Adelaide, he generously chose to fundraise for Mary Potter. Stephen explained why he wanted to bring awareness to people about the Hospice:

“Before this happened to me, I was very ignorant about what hospices do. A lot of people have a preconception that hospices are purely funded by governments, which is far from the truth. It’s only when you use the services of a hospice you realise the amazing work that they do, and how much they rely on donations to do that incredible work. After my sister’s hospice experience, I really wanted to give back.”

Every night for the two weeks that Stephen was performing in Adelaide, he opened his heart about losing his mum and sister, while encouraging his audience to donate to Mary Potter Hospice at the end of each show. He personally collected money alongside Foundation staff and volunteers every night. His humour and kindness had a huge impact and inspired real generosity from his audience.

We couldn’t be more grateful for Stephen’s commitment to Mary Potter while he was in town – and sincerely thank everyone at his shows who donated to help the Hospice.

Click to
donate
now

UPCOMING EVENTS

CALVARY PASTORAL CARE 2019 MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thursday 7 November at 5.30pm

Final service for the year. Held at Calvary North Adelaide Hospital Chapel and followed by refreshments in the Connery building – all welcome. There is no need to RSVP – just come along.

For more information, please contact **Pastoral Care** on **08 8239 9285**.

LIGHTING OF THE LOVING TREE

Wednesday 4 December at 8.45pm. For more information about the Community Carols Concert please refer to the next edition of our newsletter for the time and location.

2019 CALVARY HOSPITAL AUXILIARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

RECITAL

Sunday 13 October at 2.00pm: Calvary Chapel.

Cost: \$35pp (includes sparkling wine & treats)

Contact: **Priscilla Thomas 0419 826 281**

BRUNCH BY THE SEA

Sunday 17 November at 10.00am: The Grand, Glenelg.

Cost: \$60pp (includes sparkling wine & full breakfast)

Contact: **Jill Harrison 8431 9323** or **Priscilla Thomas 0419 826 281**

THANK YOU

Along with others mentioned in this newsletter, we want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the following businesses, schools and community groups for their support of our recent Walk for Love. We encourage you to support them where possible.

- Blackwell Funerals
- Moo Premium Foods
- Duncan Basheer Hannon
- Police Credit Union
- Cirelli Coffee
- St Peters College Boarders
- BOSFC
- Rotary Club of West Torrens
- Mateuzi
- Ceravolo Orchards
- Dr Dan Huynh

PRIVACY MATTERS

We take your privacy seriously. We never share or sell your information to other charities or organisations. We follow strict Payment Card Industry (PCI) standards which protects your credit card information.

You can read all about how we record, store and use your information by reading our privacy policy at www.marypotter.org.au.

If you have any queries or concerns please contact us on **08 8239 0119**.

The Mary Potter Foundation is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)

