

"I was very shocked, devastated when my doctor told me the news. I knew there was something wrong with me, but I didn't think it was going to be that bad. Everything in my life was about to change."

- Lynne, former Community Palliative Care Nurse for Mercy Hospice.



Lynne Chaffey

Dear friend of Mercy Hospice,

I have experienced first-hand as a palliative nurse and now, as a patient, how your loyal support has ensured hospice care embraces those in need making sure they feel safe and protected at such a vulnerable time in their lives. I am eternally grateful to be able to express how thankful I am to you.

For 12 months now I have been living with an incurable illness.

Before my cancer diagnosis I was working full-time with the dedicated team of Community Palliative Care Nurses for Mercy Hospice.

It was on my 55th birthday when I noticed just how unwell I was becoming. I couldn't eat the beautiful roast chicken dinner my family had made me.

The doctors thought I had a stomach ulcer but after treatment I didn't feel better so I went for an ultra-scan. When I got home that evening, my father met me at the door and said you need to ring the doctor; he's been trying to get hold of you all day.

I knew immediately, it wasn't good.

I rung him and he told me I had cancer in my pancreas which had spread to my liver. I just couldn't believe it. I had ringing in my ears and numbness in my face at the shock.

All my family came over and we just hugged each other and cried.

I had to give up what I truly loved - my desire to really care for people in the community. Now, at age 56, I was the one needing the care.

Over the weeks I became nauseous all the time. I had lots of vomiting, I couldn't eat and drink, and I lost 10 kilos in three weeks. That's when I had to stop work almost immediately and we had to sell our house because if I wasn't working we couldn't afford the mortgage.

There were so many changes happening all at once, that it was very overwhelming for me and my family.

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When it was suggested at the hospital that I be referred to hospice I had a very negative reaction, which really surprised and shocked me. I thought because of my 10 years as a palliative nurse, caring for over one hundred patients and their families, I wouldn't have that reaction. But I was thinking to myself that things weren't going well...that this was the end of the road.

I came to the in-patient unit the next day and was given a syringe driver (a device for patients unable to take their medication orally), and within 24 hours I was eating and drinking again. I felt a flood of relief wash over me that the specialised treatment worked and it wasn't as bad as I thought.

When the Spiritual Support Coordinator came to see how things were going we talked about my faith.

I have a strong Christian faith, which I believe has hugely helped me to get to a place of peace. She offered communion and to see me anytime I liked, which was fantastic. She also talked about doing things I enjoy and I just mentioned to her that I had decided I'd like to take up knitting. Later that day, the Volunteer Coordinator arrived with two beautiful balls of wool and some knitting needles. So, I have learnt how to knit. She had listened to what I had said and it just turned up.

It's like this little stream of people offering lovely things. It meant so much to me because receiving such unconditional and nurturing care has helped make my journey much more bearable and I finally feel like I can get on with my life.

All the way through the doctors and nurses have really protected me. They make me feel very safe because they are so experienced in specialised palliative care. I always knew how good they were when I brought patients into the unit.

Even though, when I am at home, I don't call on them very often it does give me a great sense of security knowing I can call if I need to. It's very accessible and I don't feel like a burden or that I'm bothering someone.

It feels so scary, worrying and uncertain to be diagnosed with a life-limiting illness.

I know from personal experience what a difference unconditional care makes. To feel safe and protected when you are at your most vulnerable makes the journey more bearable. I hope that you can help with a gift today.

I miss connecting with the patients and their families through my hospice work, but it is very reassuring to know that on the other side I can trust Mercy Hospice implicitly to do what is best for me and my family, and for each and every patient. They are so lovely and gentle and caring and human. None of this could be possible without your loyal support and for that I am truly grateful.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Chaffey



P.S: You have helped Mercy Hospice be that vital first point of contact for patients like me.

When someone finds out the devastating news that they have a terminal illness they can feel utterly lost, scared and alone.

With your donation Mercy Hospice can continue to make them feel safe and protected at a very difficult time in their lives. Knowing they are being cared for by highly specialised doctors, nurses and family support helps to lift the burden.

Charities Commission # CC31621 Gifts over \$5 are tax deductible. Thank you for your donation



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