

Mother's Day tea will be 'Afternoon of Wonder' with Hope House



Hope House Hospice will host its second-annual High Tea on Sunday, May 3, just in time to get a head-start on Mother's Day.

Built around the theme of 'Step into an Afternoon of Wonder,' this year's event, which will take place at Newmarket's Old Town Hall, will feature traditional tea fare, including decadent pastries, finger sandwiches and scones prepared by Million Mouthfuls Catering, live entertainment, a silent auction and raffles, and more, with all proceeds benefiting compassionate care in Aurora and King.

Specifically, ticket sales will support the In-Home Visiting Hospice Volunteer Program coordinated by the Aurora-based community hospice, which provides specialized, compassionate support to individuals in the comforts of their own home.

'This is a magical afternoon you won't want to miss,' says Heidi Bonner, Executive Director of Hope House. 'We invite everyone to don their finest headwear, vintage hat or fascinator, and join in the fun. This event is a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together to support our programs, and it makes a great gift idea for Mother's Day.'

Tickets are \$100 per person and all proceeds will stay within the community.

Last year's event was a sell-out well in advance and Hope House's Director of Development, Rhonda Flanagan, hopes support will be just as strong in its second year.

'This year's event is aimed at bringing some awareness as well as raising funds to support our hospice programs in the community and [focusing on] our in-home visiting hospice volunteer program. We could use more volunteers for the program, but in addition to that, there's always the need for additional funding,' says Flanagan. 'Our in-home visiting volunteer provides non-medical, emotional and social support for individuals with life-limiting illness and their families. What we have available is trained volunteers that go into people's homes, they provide companionship, some caregiver respite, and some practical help with things like light chores, reading and that type of thing for two to four hours a week, always at no cost, and these volunteers are actually quite essential in helping our clients to maintain their quality of life while staying in their homes.'

People always prefer to stay in their own homes if care is needed, and as Hope House is a community hospice rather than a residential hospice, all of their programs are out in the community supporting people where they are.

'The idea is to be there for them for their whole journey and that's what these volunteers allow us to do. We're there for people from the moment of diagnosis with their life-threatening illness, as well as for people who care for them' and we're there afterwards for

people that are bereaved," says Flanagan.

"We have a lot of people asking for a match in this area, and it's difficult sometimes to get the word out and have people realize that this is an opportunity to volunteer. We're looking for people from every background too because oftentimes we have people who request that they would like someone with a specific language, for example. The more that we can get this information out, then hopefully the more that we can attract more volunteers and be able to provide the supports that people are requesting from us."

May's High Tea is an afternoon "celebrating the women in our lives as well as those we cherish in our memories," and it's also a chance to "rally around our hospice programs and to celebrate the impactful work of Hope House in the community."

"Every ticket sold, every donation made impacts our ability to provide these essential services out in the community," says Flanagan. "The event itself is just a fun-filled afternoon where people can come out, gather your girlfriends, your moms, your daughters, your aunts, your besties and join us to take this opportunity to kick back, relax, and have a little fun."

And, she adds, the fellas are welcome, too!

"Oftentimes, programs or events like this, awareness is often the first step towards support. So, many people are unaware of the resources that are actually available to them when they are dealing with a life-threatening illness or during a time of grief. In addition to our in-home visiting programs, we also offer programs for all ages. We have our Children's HUUG program, Help Us Understand Grief, which people often don't know or realize, we have caregiver support programs, we have wellness programs that are ongoing, monthly. People are unaware of the resources that are available to them in their own communities. All of our programs are always free of charge. If this helps us get that information out there, then we've achieved our goal.

"We really encourage people to come out to don their finest hats or their fascinators and join us. There's everything from door prizes to delectable treats, and it's just, it's a great gift, I think, for Mother's Day. I know a number of people are bringing their moms and we would love them to come out and join us."

For more information, including tickets, visit hopehousehospice.com/hightea.

By Brock Weir
Editor
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter