



# The Sunshine Room

A Ray of Light in the Hearts and Lives of Cancer Patients

Providing dignity, compassion and support. Three simple ways to ease the emotional strain of undergoing cancer treatments. A wife, mother of three, cancer advocate and volunteer, Helen Densmore Cleary learned this through experience. While battling cancer, Helen learned that a supportive environment enables cancer patients to feel hope and have the courage to face another day.

"The smallest comforts can mean so much when you have cancer," said Emmie Luther-Hiltz, Coordinator, Cancer Patient Family Network, *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, and a cancer survivor herself. "The Sunshine Room is about feeling as good as you can when you're in a place you don't want to be."

Helen had a vision and was determined to see it through. She believed that patients deserved to be surrounded by the same kind of compassion and support she was receiving from her family, friends and community. With the support of *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, the Capital Health Cancer Care Program, Capital Health Volunteer Services and the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre Foundation, Helen began working with Emmie and a committee of volunteers and health professionals. After 18 months of intensive planning and preparation, their vision became a reality.

The Sunshine Room opened in June 2003. In November of that same year, Helen lost her battle with cancer. An incredible woman and a champion for cancer patients, Helen brought a ray of sunshine into the lives of everyone she met. The Sunshine Room began because of her compassion and perseverance - it continues to thrive because of the many volunteers who believe in it as much as Helen did. It is a symbol of her dedication and commitment to improving the quality of life for people living with cancer.

"The Sunshine Room represents a huge step in realizing the tremendous need and potential for patient support," said Jill Flinn, Health Services Manager, Capital Health Cancer

Care Program. "Getting the room completed was a collaborative effort. It really became a labour of love for many people."

Thanks to interior designer Bea Doucet-Watts, the Sunshine Room was transformed into a beautiful and inviting haven for cancer patients. She created a cheerful décor, and donations of paintings and furniture brought a finishing touch to the uplifting, peaceful atmosphere.

Completely run by trained volunteers, the Sunshine Room provides cancer patients and their families with a place to unwind, enjoy an inspirational book, or listen to calming music. Complementary introductions to massage therapy, reflexology and Therapeutic Touch are offered by qualified specialists. Head wrap and wig fittings are also available.

"We have new patients visiting every day," said Kathy Dooks, a hospitality volunteer at the Sunshine Room. "This room gives patients the support they need and helps make their journey a little less bumpy. It's a wonderful feeling to know we're making a difference in the lives of others."



The Sunshine Room is confirmation that one person can really make a difference. The room is a symbol of hope, kindness and inner strength. It very much belongs to cancer patients and their families.

*The Sunshine Room is supported by a trust fund, which provides patients, their families, and others with an opportunity to support it. Ongoing opportunities are also available to anyone interested in volunteering.*

MANY HEARTS MANY MINDS ONE GOAL



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