



A Message from Jo Ann Barber, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

In December 2008, our family was fortunate to experience Lisaard & Innisfree Hospice when my father-in-law needed end-of-life care. Like many of our residents, he was in the hospital, but it wasn't where he wished to spend his remaining time.

After visiting Lisaard House and learning how incredible the care was for residents and families, we really hoped he'd be able to get in — and in early January, we got the call we were waiting for. Dad was able to enjoy his final days in home-like comfort, and we celebrated his last birthday in the sunroom — with a family of wild turkeys looking in!



Because of our experience, like many families, we wanted to give back to help further their supportive work. To this day, our family continues to raise funds through the Innisfree House Capital Campaign, the annual Hike for Hospice, payroll deductions, and our family Christmas 'Funraiser'.

I also thought it would be a great place to work, and applied for an Administrative Assistant role in 2011. That December, I got the exciting news that I was the successful candidate, and my 11-year career with Lisaard & Innisfree Hospice began! It's been an incredibly rewarding experience to support this organization in the important work we do in the region.

I've seen time and time again the extraordinary impact our entire team has on the people we serve. People's lives are changed by their experience here, and they want to help this special place that supported them through a difficult time in their lives. In addition to donating funds, many have returned to volunteer, and more than a few have joined our staff.

Our services are provided at no charge to residents and families, and it's heartwarming for staff and volunteers to see how much their compassionate care is appreciated by the outpouring of love through donations and community fundraisers planned by families and friends of those who passed at one of our Houses.

We're featuring one such family in this newsletter —

Jeannie Escobar was our resident, and every member of her family made sure she knew she was surrounded by love. They filled the House with joy, tears, and laughter. We still have the beautiful collage they made of pictures they took around Lisaard House during Jeannie's stay, and they've continued to creatively support us over the years.

Thank you to everyone who helps us Make Moments Matter in our community.



"The staff and volunteers were always so wonderful, they got to know all our kids individually and would bake fresh batches of their favourite cookies and treats when they were visiting — and they did the same for their friends as well, which was so special. Lisaard & Innisfree supports the whole family as much as they do the resident, giving us the time and space we needed to be together as a family. Instead of being caregivers, we were able to spend meaningful quality time with her in a place that felt like home."

~ Jennifer Escobar

**MAKING
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Jennifer Escobar shares why giving back to Lisaard & Innisfree Hospice honours the generous spirit of her sister, Jeannie

After battling a brain tumor for years, it became evident in 2014 that further treatment was unlikely to provide meaningful relief, and that, sadly, 42-year-old Jeannie Escobar was facing her final days.

With a husband and two young boys, Jeannie was always both optimistic and pragmatic about her diagnosis, and had made it clear she didn't want to die at home. Hospitalized, in a coma, with days to live, her medical team cautioned that moving her from hospital was risky. "But the hospital is a medical facility, and we were determined to get her the next best option to home — Lisaard House," explains her sister Jennifer, "and it was the best decision we could have made." For nearly 30 collective years, Lisaard & Innisfree Hospice has helped thousands of individuals in our community facing a life-limiting illness, providing compassionate care and support for them and their families. We believe that end-of-life deserves the same attention, care, and respect that is offered at the beginning of life, and the Escobars wanted this special care for Jeannie.

Though Jeannie was in a coma for most of her month-long stay at Lisaard House, Jennifer shared that "our family was able to talk with her and do all the things we knew she would enjoy — we staged reiki drumming, held healing circles, performed religious services, we took Jeannie outside in her bed, we enjoyed the music therapy, and we could even stay overnight if we wanted."

The around the clock care the family experienced was incredible. "And we are a very big family... one day, I counted thirty of us in and around Lisaard House. The staff

always made us feel so welcome, they never suggested there were too many of us...but after that day, I ended up telling people to space out their visits," says Jennifer with a laugh.

Our hospice Houses are designed specifically to have both privacy and gathering spaces for residents and families, and beautiful grounds that can be enjoyed. Jennifer recalls their family being encouraged to 'be themselves' when they were visiting — which helped maintain a sense of normalcy during a vulnerable time. Their youngsters could play soccer, catch frogs in the marsh, watch the birds, and even arranged play dates with their friends. The Escobars became close with another family at Lisaard going through a similar experience — a young parent at end-of-life with young kids. "Their two boys developed a relationship with Jeannie's two boys, and we became a kind of support for each other, which was amazing," remarks Jennifer.

In her lifetime, Jeannie Escobar demonstrated the importance of giving back, and her generosity of spirit lives on in her family. Over the past eight years, they have continued to give back to Lisaard & Innisfree in donations of money, goods, and sweat equity. In gratitude for their experience, they created huge pantry and office supply donation drives, donated plants for our gardens, asked for donations in lieu of wedding gifts, and assembled a crew of teenagers to clean up the gardens, to name a few. Jennifer's 13-year-old daughter, Mya, launched a Facebook fundraising page, creating and selling paintings, masks, and jewellery, and donating all the proceeds to Lisaard House.

She even arranges events like Bubblegum Day at school to help support the work we do!

When asked what compels the Escobars to keep giving back over the years, Jennifer didn't hesitate "The work you do is so important. We want to keep Jeannie's memory and spirit of giving alive, and we're making sure other families can enjoy the same kind of care we did. And we'll continue to support for as many other families as possible — we are all so grateful for this treasure in our community."



"Now my heart feels like an ember and it's lighting up the dark, I'll carry these torches for you that you know I'll never drop."
~ Maroon Five, Memories