Proudly launching our 15th anniversary year!

The West Island Palliative Care Residence is proud to mark its 15th anniversary in 2017. Since its opening in the fall of 2002, the Residence has provided care and comfort to more than 3,500 patients and 14,000 family members, helping them live their final days to the fullest extent possible in home-like surroundings. The Residence is able to do this thanks to the commitment and dedication it receives from its employees, volunteers and its generous and loyal supporters.

A simplified and modernized new logo has been launched to coincide with our 15th anniversary year. The essence of the original logo that conveyed the caring and compassion offered by the Residence has been preserved. We are extremely grateful to TANK Communications for redesigning without charge this new logo for us.

Message from Teresa Dellar, Co-Founder and Executive Director

15 years already! As the cliché says, where did the time go?

The effort to get us to this milestone took several years and the work and faith of many people. In 1999, I was working as a social worker at the Lakeshore General Hospital and was always distressed when families would be separated just when they needed most to be together, when their loved one was transferred to a downtown hospital or care centre where they would live their final days in unfamiliar surroundings.

I resolved that we, in the West Island community, could do better. It was my great good fortune that when I brought my concerns and idea for what became the West Island Palliative Care Residence to our local Member of the National Assembly, Russell Williams, I found a sympathetic ear. More than that, I found an eager partner to help make my dream a reality.

Together, we set in motion the process to acquire the land on André-Brunet Street from the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation and made our first contact with foundations and companies who were potential donors. I’ll always be grateful for the sympathetic hearings we received, and even more grateful for the generous donations that followed.

The dream became a reality and we opened our doors with our nine-bed Residence on October 16, 2002. In 2012, we expanded to meet the community’s needs by opening 14 additional beds in the separate Stillview Pavilion, making ours the largest freestanding palliative care residence in Canada.

My heartfelt thanks and gratitude to everyone who has helped make this community’s dream a reality for the past 15 years. We look to the future together with great confidence as we remain unwavering in our commitment to be at the forefront of palliative care.
All smiles on opening day!
Posing in the foyer with justifiably smiling faces at the opening of the West Island Palliative Care Residence on Oct. 16, 2002, were, from left: Russell Williams, Co-Founder of the Residence and then MNA for Nelligan; Teresa Dellar, Co-Founder and Executive Director; Jean Charest, then leader of the Liberal Party of Quebec and, several months later, Premier of Quebec; and Denis Marcoux, then Director General of the Palliative Care Network of Quebec.

“Residence” vs “hospice”
The modern movement to provide specialized, non-curative end-of-life care began in 1967 in London when Dame Cicely Saunders founded St. Christopher’s Hospice, with which the West Island Palliative Care Residence now has a strong and on-going relationship.

“Hospice” has become a well-known and respected word in English to designate a place where non-curative, end-of-life care is provided. The Canadian organization for such places is called the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA), of which the Residence is an active member.

So why is the West Island Palliative Care Residence a “Residence” and not a “Hospice”? The answer is found in French dictionaries. The word “hospice” was not well understood in French usage 15 years ago, often known more as a place where religious pilgrims would receive respite and help on their journey. While many French-speakers in Canada today understand “hospice” to mean a place of non-curative care for terminally ill patients, such was not the case years ago.

Accordingly, when the Residence was being established here in Quebec, the decision was taken that it should be called a “palliative care residence,” not a “hospice.”

Palliative care has come a long way
Knowledge and attitudes about palliative care and care for the dying in general have advanced greatly; what was once almost a taboo subject is now a major area of public discussion.

Two vital things, however, have not changed. One is the need. Our population wants and is entitled to quality palliative care close to home and our services have been embraced as a vital element of the community.

The second thing that hasn’t changed is the community’s generosity. Two-thirds of our funding is provided by the generous companies and individuals in our community and we quite literally couldn’t do it without the support of everyone, from the smallest donor to the largest.

Our society’s view about discussing end-of-life options is vastly different now than what is was when the Residence opened 15 years ago, but the need for the Residence is greater than ever.

If we as a society are going to offer more choices to patients at the end of life, as the new legislation does, then we must ensure one of those choices is ready access to high-quality palliative care in the patient’s community, as we offer at the Residence.