



Media Contact:

Lubna Ekramoddoullah
Senior Public Affairs Officer
Provincial Health Services Authority
604-675-7459
lekramod@phsa.ca

MEDIA RELEASE

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BC Cancer Agency announces recipient of provincial community cancer care award

Vancouver – The BC Cancer Agency is pleased to announce that Rosemary Hoare of West Sechelt is the 2011 Recipient of the Community Care Award.

The BC Cancer Agency Community Care Award, sponsored by the BC Cancer Foundation, honours an exceptional individual who goes above and beyond the call of duty in providing care and/or support to cancer patients—someone whose efforts make a real difference in the lives of people living with cancer.

One of 21 nominees across the province, Rosemary was recognized for her extraordinary vision and leadership in founding and growing the hospice movement on the Sunshine Coast.

“It’s always challenging to select the recipient because all the stories we receive are so moving and heartfelt,” explains committee chair, Dr. Ursula Lee, medical oncologist, BC Cancer Agency, an agency for the Provincial Health Services Authority. “However, this year, we had unanimous agreement due to the scope and nature of Rosemary’s contributions.”

Rosemary was nominated by her many friends, colleagues, and fellow hospice volunteers through St. Hilda’s By the Sea Anglican Church in Sechelt, B.C.

“Rosemary is one of our living saints of St. Hilda’s,” says Reverend Clarence Li. “She does not like to be publicly celebrated, but we all agreed that if anyone in our Sunshine Coast communities deserves this award, it’s Rosemary.”

When asked if any particular personal experience had motivated her to become involved in hospice work, Rosemary explained that two dear friends of hers died of cancer in the early 1980s, prompting her commitment to learn as much as she could about how best to help dying patients and their families.

From humble beginnings in 1987, when Rosemary and one other volunteer began offering hospice services, followed by the 1999 founding of the non-profit Sunshine Coast Hospice Society, and subsequently the 2005 renovation of three rooms at Shorncliffe Intermediate Care Facility—two for palliative care and an adjoining family room—Rosemary’s vision, passion, and community leadership have shone through.

Today, the organization is a member of the British Columbia Hospice Palliative Care Association. Rosemary continues to be an integral force behind the hospice movement on the Sunshine Coast, and only very recently retired as Hospice Coordinator. In the last 24 years, Society volunteers have supported approximately 2,772 dying patients and their families. The vast majority of these patients die from cancer.

Rosemary recently made a donation that has allowed the Society to lease

permanent space for an office, counseling room, lending library, reading area, kitchen, two bathrooms, and much-needed storage space. After years of meetings in church basements, community rooms, and seniors' centres, the community-based, non-profit Society finally has a home base from which to provide support and advocacy.

Rosemary's extraordinary contributions span three decades. During that time, she has journeyed with those who are nearing end of life and has significantly increased community awareness of the importance of palliative care. The BC Cancer Agency is proud to honour Rosemary's legacy with the 2011 Community Care Award.