

# **Palliacco des Sommets**

December 2008

If you or someone you know is suffering from a terminal illness, you should also know about the services that are available in the community. In the MRC des Laurentides, Palliacco des Sommets foundation provides training and support for patients, their family caregivers and volunteers in order to enable people to remain in their own homes as long as possible, knowing that they are receiving first-rate care and understanding. All services are free of charge. Palliacco is an independent organization that partners with the CSSS des Sommets to provide complementary services.

A team of professionals is in place to assess the needs of the patient and to begin the process of providing palliative care. This starts when the physician informs the patient that there are no more treatments available that would lead to a cure and that the next step is to ensure that pain is at a minimum and that the psychological issues that accompany the knowledge that death is imminent are addressed. A call to Palliacco des Sommets at 819-717-9646 will set the process in motion.

Once patients or the family caregivers involved have taken the first step, they can expect a visit from a nurse who will work to ensure that their specific needs are addressed and that a compatible volunteer is assigned. This volunteer, one of a group of people who have undergone a training course in providing the support needed in these cases, will begin to visit the home of the patient for three hours at a time, once or twice a week. The services that the volunteers are trained to provide include providing information to help cope with the illness and its consequences, including documentation and connection to the many services available and to support the patient and family in dealing with the emotional, spiritual and physical changes that they are experiencing.

The presence of a caring volunteer can help to alleviate the worry, the fear of the unknown and the feelings of powerlessness that often overwhelm a patient and family when facing the inevitability of death. The volunteer can also provide very practical support, such as helping to take care of children and keeping them occupied, providing some respite to the family caregivers so that they can have a bit of time to themselves or to run some errands or just to get some rest. The volunteer can also engage the patient in a variety of activities such as conversation, playing cards, listening to music or going out for a walk.

Due to the generosity of the community, Palliacco des Sommets is even able to provide space for brief occasional respite care as well as a meeting room and other facilities to ease the burden on patients and their caregivers.

The volunteers and professionals of Palliacco des Sommets are all fully trained for the specialized needs of patients and their families and all adhere to the highest standards of confidentiality. All services are available in both English and French and more volunteers are always welcome. Training sessions in both languages are scheduled regularly. If you either need the support services offered or are interested in becoming a volunteer or making a donation, please contact Palliacco des Sommets at 819-717-9646.

Sheila Eskenazi, President, English Communities Committee of the CSSS des Sommets