



HEART HOUSE

H O S P I C E

1-855 Matheson Blvd E, Mississauga, ON L4W 4L6

Dan Wilson was described by his friends as an "original" in many ways – music, clothing, a wicked sense of humour and was an incredible cook, especially when it came to BBQing. Dan made a mean burger and ribs, but without a doubt, his greatest love of all was his family, and our two girls most of all. He repeated over and over throughout his illness that he wanted his girls to know just how hard he fought to be around for them as long as he could, and man did he fight.

Dan was diagnosed with Stage 2 colon cancer in Oct. 2019 at the age of 44, and when our youngest daughter Zoe was just six months old. What should have been an exciting time in my family's life turned into a nightmare I will never forget. Surgery, a week after his diagnosis, should have been the end of his disease, according to his surgeon and oncologist, but it turned out to be an aggressive colon cancer that came back in Dan's liver in August 2020, then lungs in May 2021, and eventually led to his death on May 25, 2022, shortly after his 47th birthday.

Dan never once stopped seeing the humour and fun life had to offer and shared this with his daughters. We have so many great memories with Dan. My girls would say their favourite memories with their dad are him making them laugh. Whether it was a living room dance party pulling a "Stone-Cold Stunner" by tossing them onto a bed, putting them through a "car wash" (Aka drying them off after bath), or sharing one of his favourite childhood shows with them (e.g., Spiderman, Hercules, Gummy Bears, Inspector Gadget, etc.). And my favourite memory with him would be taking our 2.5-year-old, and 4-month-old girls to the Raptors parade in June of 2019 – Dan was a huge sports fan, and seeing his beloved Raptors win a championship was a dream come true.

Our journey with Heart House Hospice began when we were referred by our Palliative Home Care Co-ordinator Fortuna Clipa. Both Dan and I were connected with counsellors and peers through Heart House Hospice, in addition to the HUUG program (Help Us Understand Grief) where we met Alexx, our two daughters' counsellor. I was searching for support as a caregiver, and I know Dan benefited tremendously from speaking with a peer, Dustin, whom he talked to frequently and who helped lead Dan in weekly meditations. They also connected on a deeper level, and Dustin and Dan became fast friends. Dan had a way of connecting with *everyone* easily, and Dustin was no exception. We were also so grateful for Alexx working with our two young daughters. We felt her empathy and genuine caring for the girls and their success, as well as benefited from her knowledge of how to address the girls and how much to share about his illness without traumatizing them.

Heart House is a highly organized and incredible resource for terminally ill patients and their families. They are quick to respond when someone needs help, do not judge a family, and provide as much support as they can give. Besides Dustin being a compassionate, kind, and caring ear for Dan, Karen called weekly to check on me and continues to be my grief counsellor – Karen continues to be a source of wisdom and advice.

I am not sure where I would be today if we did not have the help of Heart House Hospice. The challenge of Dan's illness and death and being a parent of two young children (aged 3 & 5 now) is more than anyone should have to deal with alone. So many of our friends and family were in awe of my strength, but the truth is, I could not have done it alone, and thank goodness I did not have to. With the help of Heart House Hospice and the kind souls that work there, like Karen, Dustin, and Alexx, I could share the workload and lean on them when I needed it the most.



This is our story....



Dan was a huge sports fan



Always seeing the humour and fun life had to offer

Story continues....

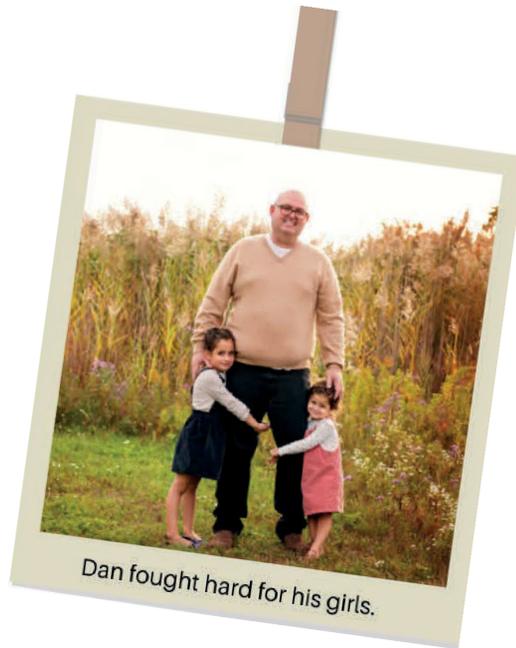
I hope you and your family will never require the services of Heart House Hospice but remember that several families in our community do. For those of us with loved ones facing a life-threatening illness, compassionate support in the hospitals is difficult to secure, so we rely on organizations like the Heart House Hospice to help us and our families cope with the illness and loss of loved ones.

Many large fundraising organizations already receive a lot of funding from the government, but many smaller groups like Heart House Hospice rely on donations from the public. Therefore, I urge you to consider your next donation to be one for a group like Heart House Hospice, where the community's needs are met directly by the organization receiving the funds.

Sincerely,



Bernadette Wilson



How Heart House made a difference

"All of us received and my daughters and I continue to receive services, and I can speak on behalf of my entire family that HHH helped make the most difficult time in our lives a little easier."

"Dan was brought to tears many times seeing Alexx, our HUUG counsellor, work with the girls because he genuinely believed they would be okay if he couldn't be around."

P.S. The program that has helped my girls - The Help Us Understand Grief (HUUG) Program responds to the needs of children and youth daily; last year, the program served 723 children and youth (a 57% increase from the prior year), through 1,983 visits.

*P.P.S. Heart House Hospice has a great new program for donors called **Hearts for Hospice**. For \$35 a month, you can join Hearts for Hospice and ensure that the HUUG Program at Heart House Hospice can continue to meet the growing demand for children and youth programming. To learn more and join now click on the button below.*

HEARTS FOR HOSPICE

The goal is 100 Hearts For Hospice. Please become a Hearts for Hospice monthly donor today so Heart House Hospice can keep serving our community's children and youth who are grieving.

If you are not able to give monthly a one-time donation is always appreciated click below to make your donation.

ONE-TIME DONATION

Thank you for your time and consideration.