



# *With You Committed to Caring*

*Making Pete's day very special! Pete with his wife Mel, sharing time with Kevin and legendary sports commentators Keith Quinn, Grant Nisbett and John McBeth*

## Helping people feel 'normal' is the ultimate for Kevin Milne....

Known as the Fair Go guy, Kevin's connection to Mary Potter Hospice began over four years ago. A companion volunteer, Kevin's been a close friend to eight wonderful people. Every week or two he spends time with a patient, bringing light relief and giving their carer some respite.

"As a companion I get more from the experience than I give," says Kevin. "You gain an instant friend and the greatest gift, which is the inspiration that these brave individuals impart. They deal with pain without complaining, they still laugh, and they offer gems of wisdom."

Kevin's current companion, Pete, is keen to head out and explore, despite mobility constraints. "After a successful trip to Pataka Gallery in Porirua, Pete wanted to take it a step further and see the National Portrait winner in Wellington. Blimey, I thought, that's a good drive. But I sorted out a park, they had a wheelchair, and we nailed it."

A trickier one was a trip to a central Wellington pub to meet up with TV sports commentary legends Keith Quinn, Grant Nisbett and John McBeth. "I found a handy car park for a disabled passenger and we all loved the occasion."

Pete's wife once shared with Kevin that her husband

said being with him made him feel "normal". "I could wish for no more."

It's not all going out and about. Kevin and Pete planted out a veggie garden in a raised plot. They've played scrabble, watched sport on TV, and Kevin has started reading the newspaper to Pete.

Another companion, Barry, was taken for a blast up the expressway in his favourite model vintage Jaguar. "I thought he'd be staring out at the countryside. But his eyes were fixed on the dials, noting the car's performance. Once a petrol-head....always a petrol-head!"

Kevin says that some people might think that spending time with someone in the last stage of their life would be unnerving. "We aren't qualified, nor are we nurses or counsellors. We're a really good friend and always have access to excellent Mary Potter staff support!"

Kevin says he remembers with great affection, every person he's been privileged to companion, and the special times they've shared.

Mary Potter's companion service is part of the Hospice's wrap-around service. To help us support more patients, like Pete, please consider a special Hospice gift this Christmas.

Kia ora koutou,



Season's greetings from the team at Mary Potter Hospice.

All we need at Mary Potter to be able keep our promise to be there for people at the end of life, is the

collective and generous contributions of many, many good people.

Our Strawberry Festivals are an example – from the companies who donate strawberries and ice cream, the volunteers who run the stalls, the hard work of our event organisers, to the public who turn up, spend, and enjoy.

That collective effort mirrors what happens every day at the Hospice. I'd like to thank, on your behalf, our teams of clinical staff and volunteers who know that there are no second chances in palliative care. Their difficult, life affirming, sacred work ensures last months, weeks and days

are marked by the relief of physical, emotional and spiritual pain. Patients, and the people most important to them, get to live in the richest and most connected way.

No matter how you have supported our care this year, thank you! In a world where life can sometimes seem outrageously disposable, it is hugely rewarding to know we have so many people in the wider Mary Potter whānau who want to live in a world where the end of life and the grief that surrounds it is always nurtured with compassion and love.

Wishing you a 'berry' merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

**Tony Paine, Chief Executive**

## "Today's an enjoyment day"

A Titahi Bay local for all her life, Maxine loves that she can walk to her sisters and the beach.

Maxine sees her sisters regularly, but says they were somewhat annoyed that she didn't tell them about her diagnosis for nearly three years.

"It wasn't until I had a coronary spasm caused by chemo medication that my family found out," she says. "They were a bit stunned."

There was a lot happening in their lives and she didn't tell them partly to protect them.

"But I think I did it to protect myself too. There's no one way to deal with a cancer diagnosis. Whatever works for you, I think you're allowed to do it."

Maxine has had a full career as a public servant. She is 68 but retired only a few months ago. She comes from a large whānau of seven siblings, all of whom have children. Her deep iwi connections with Ngati Kahungunu Ki te Wairoa and Kai tahu Wairewa are intertwined with Irish, English and Scottish heritage.

Her connection with Mary Potter Hospice began around 2009 when her cousin was a patient.

"She was in her 40s with two young kids. She celebrated Christmas, then went to the Hospice on Boxing Day.

"Mary Potter Hospice made us all comfortable. She wanted to get her daughter christened, so a christening was held. She passed away the next day."

During the course of Maxine's cousin's stay at Mary Potter Hospice, she and her family came to understand the Hospice's values. "There are no barriers. The staff



show compassion and understanding to all."

Now Maxine is connected with the Hospice herself. "We all have ideas about what we think Mary Potter Hospice does, but I've learnt a lot more. The staff here are just fabulous. Their words resonate with you."

Maxine enjoys the day programme. "There is an inclusiveness here. The environment is so welcoming. It gives you the ability to go on."

Maxine is trying hard to not let her illness get in the way of life. "Sometimes I say to the family 'today's not a cancer day, today's an enjoyment day.' The cancer's there, but it's how you deal with it. I won't allow it to sit on my arse. There's other things that need to happen."

Thanks to you and our many other committed donors across Mary Potter's community, it's our privilege to be there for Wellingtonians like Maxine. **This festive season will you help our teams to continue supporting other courageous people?**



# Strawberry Festival 2024

Our Strawberry Festivals are a 'strawsome' way to share some joy with the community and to fundraise for Hospice. This year our festivals were bigger than ever and sprinkled some strawberry sweetness across the community. A 'berry' big thank you to our generous sponsors and everyone who supported festivals in Kāpiti, Porirua and Wellington. Each serves as a reminder of what the Hospice is all about – making the most of life!



Photo credit: Lance Lawson Photography



Photo credit: Jo Platek from Captured By Friday Photography



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Wellington City Council  
Me Heke Ki Pōneke



## Part of the snapshot of someone's life

Keeping people safe and independent, and working with their strengths is Christy's focus at Mary Potter Hospice.

Explaining her work Christy said "As an occupational therapist in the Hospices inpatient unit, I usually get involved if someone is going home. I make sure a person's home environment is set up so they can be safe and as independent as they want to be."

"I help with putting in equipment, making sure family members are trained on how to use the equipment or how to move a person safely."

Christy says one situation stays with her where she was able to make a big difference to a patient.

"It was just before a public holiday and a patient was desperate to go home to spend time with her family. I did a home visit to talk with the family and assess the house, particularly the bathroom and bedroom. Can she independently wash herself, dress herself, and who will help? The equipment arrived the next day and I put it in for her so she could be home for the public holiday. I'll always remember how much being able to spend time with her family meant to her."

"Occupational therapy is mainly around rehab and helping someone get better, but this is different. I have



to look at the situation differently, this is the final snapshot of a person's life. I really appreciate the privilege of being a part of their final days."

Christy also appreciates the team approach at Mary Potter Hospice. "I can only do so much on my own. The team is very important. Depending on if you are a social worker, a nurse, a spiritual carer, we all see different ways to help a patient."

**Like Christy, Mary Potter Hospice can only do so much on its own. As a supporter, you are a vital part of Mary Potter's special team. So on behalf of our brave patients, thank you for helping to make our vital work possible.**

What we have achieved...thanks to you

# 2023 - 2024

Source: Mary Potter Hospice Palcare database

Total contacts with patients (excluding inpatient unit)

26,835

% of deaths in region cared for by Mary Potter Hospice

27%

Patients supported to die at home in their preferred place of care:

Pacific patients


67%

Māori patients

59%


Non Māori non Pacific

42%



10

Average nights in inpatient unit




280

Number of inpatient unit admissions

616 contacts

Bereavement service



Hospice at Home visits (weekends and after hours)

725

## Christmas wish list

- Can you please help us this Christmas? We are in need of some important items and we'd be grateful for your help.
- **Give the gift of comfort** with an outdoor bean bag for Day Hospice patients this summer (\$129) or a footstool (\$150)
  - **Keep hard of hearing patients safe** with a wireless door alarm bell (3 at \$44 or \$132)
  - **Give relief from breathlessness** with hand held portable fan (500 needed at \$1,955)
  - **Make Christmas festive** this season for a patient with a food voucher! (\$50)
  - **Support a coffee and chat café** for bereavement support (\$90/month or \$1,080/year)
  - **Offer respite** by providing Day Hospice Patients with a trip to the Planetarium (\$200)
  - **Help with patient's care at home** - 2 audio visual monitors needed at \$200 each and 2 audio monitors at \$129 each
  - **Arts and craft supplies** for Day Hospice Patients (\$399)
  - **Keep the Hospice contactable** - help maintain our aging phone system (\$500/month)
  - **Give mobility to a loved one** - five new wheelchairs are needed (from \$575 to \$851)
  - **Bring relief at a critical time** - extra nursing supplies are needed! (\$1,000)
  - **Help patients relax with ease** - one power lazy boy style chairlift needed (\$1,750)
  - **Make walking easy!** Two bariatric walking frames/strollers needed (\$1,770 each)
  - **Ensure patients remain safe** - one set of bariatric bed rails needed (\$2,196)
  - **Keep patients personal clothing clean** – washing machine and dryer combo is required (\$2,763)
  - **Help move patients safely** - a transfer slide is needed (\$950)
  - **Bath towels for carers** - a pack of dark bath towels are needed for carers (\$95)
- If you can help, thank you! Please contact Phillip Harris, [phillip.harris@marypotter.org.nz](mailto:phillip.harris@marypotter.org.nz) or phone 021 210 7276.

## Thank you to our generous supporters

Trusts and businesses  
August 2024 to November 2024 \$10,000+

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- Bowen Trust Board  
Maysie & Henry Hill Charitable Trust  
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## Keeping in touch with you through our newsletter



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