

## COMPASSIONATE OTTAWA

### A VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE IN A FAITH COMMUNITY

Norm Tape is one of Compassionate Ottawa's original volunteers. He took part in the community inception meeting in May 2017 and has not missed a meeting since, all the while developing an interest in advance care planning (ACP).

He took an ACP training course provided by the Champlain Hospice Palliative Care Program for Compassionate Ottawa. Afterwards he approached Rev. Alcris Limongi, the Pastoral Care Minister at his church, Parkdale United, suggesting a workshop for the congregation. Alcris and Norm presented the idea to the Pastoral Care Committee who strongly supported the initiative

Announcements describing the purpose and benefits of the workshop were published in Sunday Service Bulletins for 6 weeks prior to the session to make sure everyone had clear expectations of the meeting.

The workshop took place on the evening of April 19, 2018 with 22 attendees from Parkdale and 2 guests from nearby St. Stephens Presbyterian Church. It was facilitated by Norm and Monica Patten, another volunteer with Compassionate Ottawa.

The workshop was highly interactive. Small groups discussed end of life wishes through "I Wish" playing cards and explored various aspects of the importance of having conversations with family members of wishes and desires about their future care.

The meeting evaluations were very positive with an overall score of 4.9 out of 5. Participants indicated that they would use the information to "to think about my own wishes for end of life care" and "to begin conversations with my own family about my wishes".

Rev. Limongi subsequently commented about some ideas she had coming from this first workshop. One was to invite the April 19 participants back to the church for tea in three months' time to discuss what they had been able to accomplish since the workshop. Another was to have similar sessions at different times of the day to accommodate more church members. The feedback from the April 19 session was so positive that it was clear that there was much more to be done to help people plan for their future care.

A report on the workshop was prepared for the church bulletin.

Rev. Limongi took the initiative to contact the Ottawa Presbytery and recommended that Compassionate Ottawa be invited to make a presentation to Presbytery. This recommendation was accepted and the presentation was made at the May, 2018 meeting. The response was very positive. After the meeting at Presbytery, due to the high interest, the request was made to distribute the presentation to all Ministers present and their congregations.

A second session workshop was held at Parkdale United in October, 2018

It is wonderful to witness what one volunteer can do by taking the initiative to make something positive happen in their community.

Congratulations Norm and thanks to Rev. Alcris Limongi and the members of the Pastoral Care Committee at Parkdale United.

November 2018