

## Victoria Hospice Volunteers Receive Sovereign's Medal

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** (VICTORIA, January 9, 2017) – On Thursday, January 5, Victoria Hospice Society Board Vice President, Deedrie Ballard, former Victoria Hospice and Palliative Care Foundation Board President, Peter Malcolm, and successful community builder, Graham Robertson, received the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers, presented by The Honourable Judith Guichon, BC's Lieutenant Governor General. The medal recognizes exceptional volunteers from across the country for their "significant, sustained and unpaid contributions to their community."

Robertson was honoured for his work with the [Cycle of Life Tour](#), a 2-day, nearly 200km group cycling event in support of hospice care all over Vancouver Island, an event he founded in 2011, and organized with his partner Beth until last year. Since its inception, the Cycle of Life Tour has raised more than \$365,000 for hospice care on Vancouver Island, \$236,000 of which has funded quality end-of-life care at Victoria Hospice.

"I got hooked on fundraising when I shaved my head for pledges in support of a colleague who passed away from cancer in 2010," says Robertson, a Registered Massage Therapist at Acacia Health and father of two. "It was incredible how readily people offered their time and energy. At that point, I knew I wanted to do more and I knew how I was going to do it – as a cycling fanatic, I always want to ride my bike." Robertson just needed a cause.

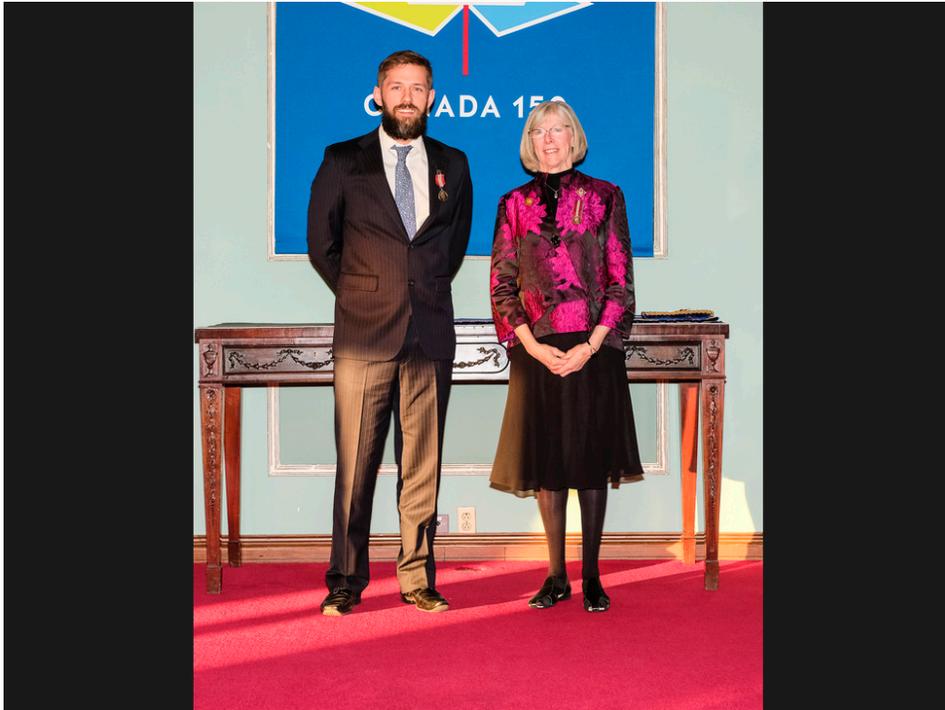
With no direct link to hospice care, he turned to close friends and family for their advice on where he should give back. "I wanted to support a local charity where I could see the impact of the charity's work in peoples' lives," says Robertson. After hearing heartfelt stories from friends and family about the impact of hospice palliative care, Robertson knew he had found his motivation. "For such a vital role that Victoria Hospice plays in the community, I was shocked by how little the community knew about its services. This drove me into action and those around me immediately stepped up to help, including Acacia Health, who continues to sponsor the event today."

In 2016, Victoria Hospice adopted the Cycle of Life Tour, to free up more time for Graham and his growing young family. Along with a crew of dedicated volunteers, sponsors and suppliers, Robertson and family are still very much involved – indeed last year he rode the tour on a tandem bike for the first time. "The riders, sponsors, and all the volunteers keep inspiring me to make a difference," says Robertson. Victoria Hospice congratulates Robertson and others for receiving the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers and thanks them for their leadership, compassion and dedication.

This year, 80 cyclists will ride in the fifth annual Cycle of Life Tour set for July 22-23, 2017. Registration opens February 1<sup>st</sup> and is sure to sell out. Visit [www.cycleoflifetour.ca](http://www.cycleoflifetour.ca) for more information.

**Donations fund almost half of Victoria Hospice's annual operating costs.** Critical funds enable us to provide the best care, support and pain and symptom management for patients nearing end-of-life, whether at home, in the community or at our Inpatient unit; extend our care to patients' families and loved ones through our bereavement support and grief counselling programs; engage in education, training and research to develop evidence-based clinical practices and advance the field of palliative care across Canada and around the world. Please visit [www.victoriahospice.org](http://www.victoriahospice.org) for more information.

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**Graham at medal ceremony with The Honourable Judith Guichon**



**Graham, Beth and family**



**Graham with riding partner Adrian Lister**