

## Fill the Trees with Memories at Celebrate a Life

Annual free community event at Hillside Centre runs Dec 1 – 12

### MEDIA ALERT: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

**Victoria** – Victoria Hospice’s 32<sup>nd</sup> annual **Celebrate a Life** launches at Hillside Centre on Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. Since 1985, Celebrate a Life has provided a unique opportunity for the community to remember loved ones during the holiday season by hanging a personalized tribute ornament. (This year’s tree location is next to Sears and Paris Jewellers, from **December 1 - 12.**)

“The Celebrate a Life tree means the world to me,” says Bonnie Anderson-Stuart (pictured at right with her husband, Jim, in 2010). “Through it, I can honour Jim’s memory each year.”

After her husband died, Bonnie came to Victoria Hospice for grief counselling at the urging of her doctor. “At Hospice, it was emphasized that coming back from the death of a loved one takes a long time, that grief wasn’t linear, that there was no formula for me to fall back on.”

Celebrate a Life supports Victoria Hospice’s commitment to care through bereavement services offered to family members and friends after a death. “Having the privilege of Victoria Hospice bereavement services changed my life, says Bonnie. “And what a wonderful idea, to set up the Celebrate a Life tree and encourage the public to fill the branches with tributes.” Dedicated Hospice volunteers will be on hand at Hillside to assist with this holiday tradition. Tributes may also be made on the virtual [Celebrate A Life](#) tree.



During the holidays, memories of past celebrations with family and friends who are no longer here can magnify feelings of loss. It can be helpful to share your concerns, feelings and apprehensions with someone. Let people know what is difficult for you, and accept offers of help. The Victoria Hospice website offers useful information for grieving families including [Bereavement Tips for Special Holidays](#). Here are a few to consider:

- Think about how you will respond to others when they offer holiday good wishes. You can simply say “Thank you” or “Best wishes to you.”
- Consider cutting back on your holiday traditions by not sending cards, or by enlisting the help of other people with meals and decorating.
- Consider alternatives such as developing new traditions, going away, eating at restaurants or buying gift cards.
- Create a special decoration and give it a place of honour.

**Event info:** [www.celebratealifevictoria.ca](http://www.celebratealifevictoria.ca)

**General info:** [www.victoriahospice.org](http://www.victoriahospice.org)