





# PILGRIMS HOSPICE

COMPASSION FOR THE JOURNEY. SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES.

December 19, 2018

Office of the Elected Officials  
Strathcona County  
2001 Sherwood Dr  
Sherwood Park, AB T8A 3W7

To whom it may concern,

**Re: Council Priority Funds Application, Pilgrims Hospice Society**

Please accept the attached application for funding from the Council Priority Funds, Strathcona County.

I appreciate this opportunity to request \$5,355 in support of a new space for Grief Support Services offered through Pilgrims Hospice Society in the Sherwood Park and surrounding areas.

With your help, the growing number of children, teens and families in our region will receive the support they need for a healthy grief journey, free of charge, in a quiet and safe environment.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Salter-Roberts  
Manager, Grief Support Services  
Pilgrims Hospice Society  
cherylsr@pilgrimshospice.com

Enc.



**PILGRIMS  
HOSPICE**

COMPASSION FOR THE JOURNEY.  
SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES.

## **New Space for Grief Support Services**

### **Request for Funding to the Strathcona County, Council Priority Funds**

**December 2018**

Pilgrims Hospice Society, 9808 148 St., Edmonton, AB, T5N 3E8  
Satellite location #100A - 50 Brentwood Blvd, Sherwood Park,  
[info@pilgrimshospice.com](mailto:info@pilgrimshospice.com) [www.pilgrimshospice.com](http://www.pilgrimshospice.com)

**CRA Registration# 897041455 RR0001**

## Background

Pilgrims Hospice Society offers compassionate care for individuals living with a terminal illness, enhancing dignity and quality of life, until the end of life. Our programs and services support families and their loved ones through the challenges and grief the dying process and death of a loved one can bring.

The *Expressive Arts Program* provides a safe place for children, teens and families who are anticipating a death, or have been affected by the death of a loved one, enabling them to explore grief in a supportive, educational and interactive setting. The death may have been sudden or expected, due to accident, murder, suicide, illness or natural causes.

Many children and teens do not have the adult capabilities to verbally articulate their emotions, perceptions or beliefs. They may have experiences and feelings they find too difficult, painful or impossible to express in words. Art expressions offer a way through which young people can tell their stories of loss, grief and mourning, as a means to both manage and explore powerful and confusing emotions.

A supportive group for children and teens provides an opportunity to learn, have fun, be nurtured, and access their own healing and wisdom. Participants find comfort and relief in knowing that others feel the way they do, and that they are not alone.

### Expressive Arts programming seeks to:

- Bring grieving children, teens and families together in a supportive and consistent environment.
- Offer appropriate age/stage-related grief support.
- Put young people's current grief into the context of life and its many losses.
- Identify high risk children and teens, and those with possible unresolved or complicated grief, and refer them for further assistance as appropriate.

While Pilgrims Hospice welcomes individuals and families of diverse faiths and beliefs, we are not affiliated with any religion.

### The Need

Helping a bereaved child or teen is the epitome of good preventive mental, physical and spiritual health care. Without adequate and age-appropriate support, grieving children are at risk of not being able to focus or cope well with school work. They may display concerning behaviors, such as aggression, and experience frustration in not being able to adequately talk about their feelings and their unique experience. Bereaved youth are at risk of seeking other avenues in which to cope, which could include drugs, alcohol and other addictive behaviours.

"When Rory's dad died, I didn't know where to find support for him. I didn't want him to feel alone, or lost, or weird because he'd gone through this huge and devastating experience. I didn't want him to shut down or feel he had to be silent....

In the Pilgrims Hospice Program, he wasn't alone. He hung out with other kids who'd lost dads, moms, siblings. He learned to talk about and share grief. This experience has helped him get through the ordinary days with resilience and positivity. He has gained the skills to remember his dad and to move forward too." – *Patty Milligan*

In recent years, Pilgrims Hospice has gained a reputation as specialists and a go-to place for grief and bereavement support. Clients access our services within Edmonton, Strathcona County and other communities across Alberta. Each week, we receive a growing number of referrals from social workers, counsellors and other professionals working in schools and hospitals in the greater Edmonton area.

**Expressive Arts Programming in both Sherwood Park and Edmonton locations includes:**

- Children's 8 week group, offered 3 times per year
- Children's 8 week group, offered 3 times per year
- Teen's 8 week group, offered 3 times per year
- Concurrent adult support group for the parents/grandparents/guardians
- Individual counselling for children, teens and families
- *Colored Tears Summer Daycamps*
- In-school grief support.
- Community outreach through workshops and presentations, for professionals and the general public.

In 2017, a total of 181 children and teens, and 186 parents or guardians attended Expressive Arts grief counselling or group sessions, or took part in the Colored Tears Summer Daycamp.

As the only program in the region that supports the whole family in their grief, and the only one to use art, music and other creative mediums as tools for education and support, the Expressive Arts Programming is unique. We place no limits on the number of sessions received, or how often a family can attend. All grief services are offered *free of charge*, to ensure accessibility for all, regardless of ability to pay.

"These were people who had lost spouses, children and other relatives. Their children downstairs were in the same position as my daughter. The idea that Emily was being supported, in combination with my own interactions with people who were in the same terrible pain as I was, began to change us for the better as we dealt with our grief.

Pilgrims Hospice supports those who are most vulnerable, at the worst time in their lives, and helps them begin to live again." – *Gregory M. Yanda*

The program is managed by Cheryl Salter-Roberts, CCFE, CBC. She has consistently increased the capacity of the program to meet emerging needs of grieving families, since joining Pilgrims Hospice in 2005.

Sarah Karesa, Registered Provisional Psychologist & Canadian Certified Counsellor, and Shalini Dhunno, Registered Provisional Psychologist (part-time position), add their expertise as grief counsellors for the program.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation of the success of the Expressive Arts Program includes program completion surveys, follow up with families, and tracking all outcomes. An increase in inquiries and uptake from families in the community, as well a growing number of referrals from professionals working in the field of grief, all indicate the importance and success of the project. Referral sources, and the number of referrals received from each source, are also tracked.

**Budget**

<b>Expressive Arts Budgeted Expenses 2019</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
Staffing (2.5 qualified grief counsellors)	160,000
Food	1,000
Program supplies	4,000
Advertising/promotion	500
Rental Space, Sherwood Park	5,355
<b>Total</b>	<b>170,855</b>

Expenses for the Expressive Arts program are minimized by the additional help of several volunteers, who receive extensive training to supervise activities with the children, teens and families.

**Funding Request**

As a registered charity, Pilgrims Hospice Society is dependent on the generosity of the local community for 90% of its funding.

We are grateful for this opportunity to ask for funds and respectfully request \$5,355 in support of a new space for our Grief Support Services, now that space in the Common Ground Café is no longer available.

The proposed new space, through Property Masters, will be located at 207-48 Brentwood Blvd in Sherwood Park. The agreed rent for the space is \$425 a month plus GST, totalling \$5,355 for the year.

With your help, the growing number of children, teens and families in our region will receive the support they need for a healthy grief journey, free of charge, in a quiet and safe environment.

**Support Documents**

The 2017 Annual Report (including audited financial statements), and a brochure of our programs and services are included in this application.

**Recognition Opportunities**

The support of the Strathcona County, Council Priority Funds will be recognized with onsite signage and in our Annual Report.





December 30, 2018

**Re: Letter of Support for Priority Funding Application**

To the Council Priority Funds Committee,

Please accept this Letter of Support as part of the application submission from the Pilgrims Hospice Society. The BriarPatch Family Life Education Centre has been providing space in partnership with the Pilgrims Hospice Society to offer both grief counselling and the Expressive Arts Program for Grieving Children, Teens and Families since 2010. In this time, the program has expanded and currently is at capacity, with a wait list for the next intake of sessions beginning in mid January. At the same time, the BriarPatch Community Preschool and other BriarPatch Family Programming has also reached their capacities and the space has become extremely crowded and can no longer support the program to meet it's needs in terms of space and storage. The Common Ground Café has been the meeting space on Saturdays (the café is closed then) for the parents of our vulnerable, mourning children and teens as they participate in the program across the hall in the BriarPatch. The parents also receive guided facilitation from a team member to help them understand how children and teens grieve, but also giving them space to mourn themselves. However, the café is moving to Centre in the Park and the old location will be leased to a company offering other services. This is a loss for us as the space the café let us use for the last few years was offered at no cost. As families are not charged fees for the program and for counselling, we are facing a large dilemma.

The Expressive Arts Program and Counselling Services is an award-winning program that has helped thousands of families in the Greater Edmonton Region since it's inception in 2000 and is a preventative model for sound mental health. The Pilgrims Hospice Society and the BriarPatch Family Life Education Centre have worked hard to ensure that families have received both group and individual support from professionals and intensively trained volunteers, in a safe and inspiring environment. Participants emerge with education about grief, tools for

self-support, groups connections to others who understand and psycho-social skills for future losses. Families are engaged in helping each other with renewed hope.

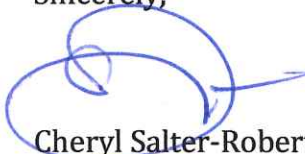
We have had conversations and meetings with both Shane Olson from Strathcona County and Bree Claude from Family and Community Services to explore options to house the Grief Support Services that our community uses daily from our space. Both have offered suggestions and support, and we are grateful for their time. We have also been actively involved in the workshops on the Community Hub discussions and are hopeful for community space in the future.

Recently space became available in the complex we have been in since 2008. Our landlord has offered this space for our grief programming at a large reduction. We are searching for funding to enter in to this agreement and this is the reason for the application from the Pilgrims Hospice Society to secure funds so we can continue to offer this vital service to our community. Without space, we are gravely concerned we will have to pull the program from Sherwood Park as no other cost effective space has been sourced out. All avenues for other spaces have been explored and at the moment, the only reasonable option is the greatly reduced rent we have been offered in the complex. As the majority of our referrals come from Family and Community Services, the Primary Care Network and both school boards, as well as our Victim Services and the Community Hospital, the loss of this intensive and unique programming would leave many residents without adequate grief support.

We offer this Letter of Support for the Pilgrims Hospice Society's application and welcome any feedback/questions that arise as the application is reviewed and considered. Our time crunch is on as the Expressive Arts Program starts again this month and our counselling calendar is filling quickly. Space is on our only concern and we hope this application will successful alleviate this worry. Our hope is that the Mayor and Council will understand the need for this specialized service that has been offered for a number of years and the immense loss if we can no longer offer this valuable service in the County.

Please feel free to contact myself for any further clarification.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Salter-Roberts  
Executive Director  
BriarPatch Family Life Education Centre  
#100a - 50 Brentwood Boulevard  
Sherwood Park, Alberta  
T8A 2H5  
Phone: 780.464.3217  
Email: [briarpatchkids@hotmail.com](mailto:briarpatchkids@hotmail.com)