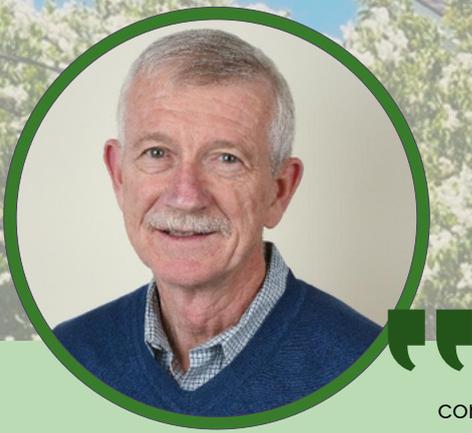


## Building a Hospice, A Legacy of Compassion: Dr. Andrew Patterson's Journey with Evergreen Hospice



Palliative care is often misunderstood. It's not a signal that death is near, but a commitment to ensuring that comfort and compassion guide every stage of care.

Our philosophy is simple: any treatment that brings a patient more comfort is a treatment worth providing.

- Dr. Andrew Patterson

Dr. Andrew Patterson, one of our esteemed Evergreen Palliative Care physicians, has dedicated his life to supporting patients and families through life's most challenging moments. The former Chief of Palliative Care and the Lead Palliative Physician at Markham Stouffville Hospital, Dr. Patterson has played a foundational role in shaping palliative care in our local community. Dr. Andrew Patterson was a founding member of Evergreen Community Hospice nearly 40 years and still remains invested as long standing board member and Evergreen Doctor.

In a recent conversation, Dr. Patterson reflected warmly on his journey, from studying medicine in Montreal to building a family practice in Stouffville, and ultimately, to his deep and enduring commitment to palliative care. His story is one of compassion, leadership, and an unwavering belief in the power of human connection.

Hospice Markham-Stouffville, as it was called back then, first started in the late 1980s, with several nurses and concerned community members around a kitchen table. They wanted to do better for their neighbours and friends who were facing the end of life with inadequate support in place.

Dr. Patterson's involvement began with a conversation. A nurse approached Dr. Patterson and told him she was planning to start a hospice. She asked him if he would join as the medical member of the board. Without hesitation, he said yes. The idea was not foreign to him, back in university, he had been introduced to palliative care by a mentor and friend, Dr. Balfour Mount, who is now recognized as the "father of palliative care" in North America. That early influence stayed with him.

Thanks to this small dedicated team of nurses, invested community members and Dr. Patterson, by 1987, Evergreen Hospice was born. This team shared a collective vision to create a space where people could receive comfort-focused care in their final days. At first, they aimed simply to open an office, raise awareness in the community, and build support through fundraising; to now with the long-term dream of a full-hospice residence coming to fruition.

For Dr. Patterson, palliative care has always been grounded in a simple truth: comfort is care. "Palliative care is a system of treatment," he explained. "It's not about 'no care' but it's about the right care. There is always something we can do." Whether it's easing pain, helping a patient sleep, adjusting their diet, or offering hydration when it brings relief; any treatment that restores comfort is worth pursuing.

Dr. Patterson remembered a patient from years ago. She had been in her 50s, nearing the end of life, and suffering greatly. Through a palliative care approach, the team was able to relieve some of that suffering. Her husband hesitated, worried that this might prolong her suffering. But Dr. Patterson gently reassured him, "she is already suffering but this is to bring her comfort." When you provide excellent care, the change is remarkable. Just days later, the woman who had been barely responsive was sitting up, chatting, and full of life. She went on to enjoy several more precious months with her family, baking Christmas cookies with her daughters and even gifting Dr. Patterson a mug that she chose from the Christmas market. Smiling, Dr. Patterson remarked that he still has the mug. Stories like this remind him why the philosophy of palliative care matters so deeply and why he continues to walk this path to this day.

When asked to choose one word to describe Evergreen, Dr. Patterson chuckled and admitted, "I was kind of dreading this question, because Evergreen is so many things." To him, it is an essential part of the community; a place that is innovative, compassionate, and always evolving. "We're constantly looking for new programs, new ways to support people in crisis, everyone's needs are so unique", he shared.

Evergreen's reach is vast. The hospice supports young children and adults of all ages facing a life-limiting illness and their families and caregivers, as well as those who are grieving. Care is adapted to meet the unique needs of each person. "We try to make sure no one is left behind", he said. Through it all, he holds deep admiration for those who make this work possible. "I'm in awe of the people at Evergreen", he smiled. "I don't think of myself as very creative, but they are. They've created a place full of hope and positivity, even while serving patients during the hardest moments of life".

For Dr. Patterson, the mission remains clear. "A functioning hospice residence is integral to any community," he said. "People need to know that when the time comes, for themselves or their caregivers, they will be cared for with dignity and compassion in a home-like space."

Building a local hospice residence is more than a project, it is the next chapter in Evergreen's story. "Evergreen is already part of the fabric of this community. When people think about palliative care in Markham, Stouffville and Thornhill, they think about Evergreen Hospice. Thousands have experienced our programs. For there to be a hospice residence that isn't Evergreen, that would feel out of place." He hopes the community will continue to rally behind the vision: a hospice residence with enough space to meet the needs of families right here in Markham. A place where patients and their caregivers can receive compassionate care, without the burden of distance or separation. It was a message Dr. Patterson wanted to share with every donor and supporter of Evergreen Hospice. "As Markham grows as a city, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to grow as a truly compassionate community", he said. "And we can't truly call ourselves that unless we have the ability to care for our caregivers at the end of their life, here at home".

Until that day comes, he hopes that those who walk through Evergreen's doors whether for the Living Room program, individual or couples support, or grief and bereavement care, leave feeling strengthened, supported, and surrounded by compassion. "I hope more people will share this vision", he said, "because the heart of this community deserves it" and because the organization has held the hospice space for almost four decades, even when stigma and dying with dignity wasn't at the forefront.

**Goal: \$5 million to build, furnish and start operating the hospice residence in 2026.**  
**Join us in this groundbreaking initiative!**



Contact us for more information:

+416-499-2185

[www.evgcares.org](http://www.evgcares.org)

[info@evgcares.org](mailto:info@evgcares.org)

The FIRST hospice residence of our community and the first ever to reside inside a National Park

# HOSPICE RESIDENCE PROJECT

A community's promise,  
35 years in the making



## Mission

To provide a serene and home-like environment where individuals can receive professional and compassionate end-of-life care around the clock, so that they and caregivers can focus on making meaningful memories during life's final journey.

**Did you know?** Care in a hospice residence is offered at no cost to the patient or family. Evergreen receives only 30% of our funding from government sources. For the remaining 70%, we rely on our individual supporters, sponsors, and events to continue providing vital care in our community.

## Project Overview

### Location

- 7672 Elgin Mills Road East, Markham, ON
- 1.5 acres of land within the Rouge National Urban Park

### Features

- Retrofit existing house to include 3 private rooms, shared kitchen, meditation space, library, and nursing station.
- Modern pods give caregivers a private place to stay on-site.
- Peaceful outdoor pollinator garden and gazebo.
- Sustainable features include solar power, heat pumps, and grey water recycling.

### Services

- On site palliative care nursing around the clock
- Palliative physician visits and 24/7 on-call support
- Interprofessional team supports the psychosocial, physical, practical, and spiritual needs of individuals and their caregivers.



Evergreen Hospice will be a pioneer by building the first hospice residence inside a Canadian National Park!

## Together, We're Building a Future of Comfort, Care, and Community - Here's How You Can Help.

- Make a one time gift
  - Donation of services
  - Set up a monthly gift
  - Sponsor a specific room or space
  - Invite others to support the project
- Evergreen looks forward to discussing how you can contribute to the FIRST hospice residence in our community.

## Key Steps

- Operational license acquired from Ontario Ministry of Health
- Lease signed with Parks Canada
- Architectural design in-progress
- Capital fundraising campaign
- Build and begin operations!

Evergreen offers a limited number of special naming opportunities for individuals, foundations, and corporations making a significant contribution to the hospice residence project.

Goal: \$5 million to build, furnish and start operating the hospice residence in 2026.  
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- www.evzcares.org
- info@evzcares.org

# Your Local Community Hospice

For the past four decades, Evergreen has provided community based supportive services to people of all ages and backgrounds in Markham, Stouffville and Thornhill, who are living with a life-threatening illness, caregiving or coping with the death of a family member.

**By 2036, the number of Canadians aged 65 and older will constitute 25% of the population. Furthermore the number of Canadians aged 80 and older is expected to nearly triple. (Tam-Tham, BMC Palliative Care , 2025)**

Evergreen Hospice is the only accredited hospice in the Markham, Stouffville and Thornhill, which provides one of the few accessible options for professional counselling related to death and dying, at no cost to our clients. We provide comprehensive support for both patients and their families, addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Services include counselling, support visits at home, specialized support groups, creative arts for healing, education, and more. We aim to provide individuals with dignity, compassion, personal choice and quality of life.

## Our Impact in one year alone:

How we supported our community in 2023/2024

730

Provided support to children and teenagers; support groups or seminars held.

11,970

visits to clients.

1,305

bereavement mailings sent to grieving families.

1,077

Supported clients and their families

495

caregiver support mailings sent.

## Want to have your loved ones legacy forever in the build?

Evergreen offers a limited number of special naming opportunities for individuals, foundations, and corporations making a significant contribution to the hospice residence project. We offer naming opportunities for the **hospice facility name, hospice wings, rooms, meditation room, garden** and many more. Your support will be permanent, transformational, and deeply local. We'd love to connect with you, please contact us by email at [info@evgcares.org](mailto:info@evgcares.org) or you can call us at +1 (416) 499-2185 ext. 101.

### Dignity. Comfort. Compassion. For Every Life's Final Chapter.

For over 35 years, Evergreen has supported individuals facing life-threatening illness in Markham, Stouffville, and Thornhill. Today, thanks to our community's tireless advocacy, we're proud to bring hospice residence care to life - an incredible milestone we've achieved together.

- Laura Lavallee, CEO



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# A Legacy of Care: The Evergreen Hospice journey



## 1989

It all began with 8 nurses and concerned community members sitting around a kitchen table. Formerly known as "Hospice Markham-Stouffville," the very first AGM meeting was held at Locust Hill United Church's community room. This meeting is what led to the pioneering of a partnership that established Joint Palliative Care Program with Markham-Stouffville Hospital.

## 1993

Evergreen in response to the communities needs pioneered one of the very first innovative, bereavement programs,. These programs held strong focus on wrap around services for the community.

## 1997

Evergreen launched a network of volunteer lead community programs. Volunteers were assigned to both Union Villa and Parkview Senior's Home to provide palliative care. The organization outgrew its humble space and relocated. Finally, Hospice Markham Stouffville officially became Evergreen.

## 1998

The Day Program began operations with just a \$10,000 grant from the United Way of York Region. Partnered with local school boards, Evergreen was able to launch high school support programs.

## 2014

Evergreen Hospice merged with Hospice Thornhill, becoming Evergreen Hospice of Markham, Stouffville, and Thornhill. The organization was able to establish new branding which incorporated the evergreen tree and Hospice Thornhill butterfly.

## 2017

Evergreen relocated to 201-5762 Highway 7 East, with a satellite office maintained in Thornhill. Evergreen was one of the founding Hospices to be accredited by the Hospice Palliative Care Association Ontario.

## 2020

Evergreen Hospice pivoted to adapt to the pandemic. They became responsive by meeting the communities needs. They did this by offering virtual support programs, launching virtual connection cafes, serious illness support groups and caregiver mailings.

## 2025

We are proud to announce that **Evergreen Hospice has received official licensing from the Ontario Ministry of Health** to operate a **3-bed hospice residence**; a major step forward in expanding our four decade long legacy of compassionate care. This partners with our existing HPCO Accredited In home Hospice, Day Hospice, and Grief and Bereavement support programs and provides a holistic model of palliative care for the community. No matter where you are at in your Hospice journey, Evergreen can support you. The residential beds are located within the breathtaking **Rouge National Urban Park**. With this, Evergreen will become **the first hospice residence in Canada located inside a National Park**; a truly historic achievement and a testament to our innovative approach to care.

Help us build the first-ever hospice residence located within a National Park, a serene home for care, comfort, and connection at end of life.

Goal: \$5 million to build, furnish and start operating the hospice residence in 2026.

Join us in this groundbreaking initiative!



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[info@evzcares.org](mailto:info@evzcares.org)

Please complete this form and return to [info@evgcares.org](mailto:info@evgcares.org) or Evergreen Hospice, 201 - 5762 Highway 7 East, Markham, ON L3P 1A8.



Kindly make payable cheques out to Evergreen Hospice or indicate below if you prefer to pay by credit card.

I would like to become a Friend of Hospice MONTHLY Donor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to donate (amount) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month (\$5 minimum) beginning \_\_\_\_\_ (month) \_\_\_\_\_ (year).  
I agree to allow Evergreen Hospice to withdraw my donation each month from my VISA/MasterCard card once a month:

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that I may cancel at any time by calling Evergreen Hospice.  
I will receive a single receipt after the end of the year.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please send your bi-annual newsletter to my email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I don't wish to receive the bi-annual newsletter by mail  
 Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities in:  Markham  Stouffville  Thornhill  
 Please send me information on \_\_\_\_\_ (list service or event)  
 Please remove my name from your mailing list.

We respect your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. The information you provide will be used to keep you updated and informed on the programs and activities of the Hospice.

I would like to make a one time donation to support Evergreen Hospice

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

I am enclosing a cheque payable to Evergreen Hospice for:  \$75  \$100  \$200  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

OR  Please charge my VISA/MasterCard:  \$75  \$100  \$200  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This donation is  in memory OR  in honour of OR for the  Residence Hospice Build

**\*Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20.00 or more.**

- Please send your bi-annual newsletter to my email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I don't wish to receive the bi-annual newsletter by mail  
 Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities in:  Markham  Stouffville  Thornhill  
 Please send me information on \_\_\_\_\_ (list service or event)  
 Please remove my name from your mailing list.

We respect your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. The information you provide will be used to keep you updated and informed on the programs and activities of the Hospice.

Registered Charitable Number: 12802 6143 RR 0001

## Ways to Donate



Fill out this page with your details to make a single donation or to become a monthly donor.



Scan the QR code to make a single donation or become a monthly donor online.



Call our office and make a credit card donation over the phone.  
Phone: 416-499-2185



Make a donation of securities by completing the form on our website:  
[www.evgcares.org](http://www.evgcares.org)

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