

Quilts in the Garden benefits hospice care

By Brock Weir

Dufferin Piecemakers quilters are coming together to honour one of their own and benefit an area hospice which gave her exceptional care next weekend with Quilts in the Garden.

When Pam Neilly, an active member of the Dufferin Piecemakers Quilt Guild, lost her battle with cancer this past January, her brother gave each of her friends a little memento to remember their dear friend.

The fabric swatches from her 'stash' sparked loving memories and a very good idea.

'At her funeral, Phil handed out a bunch of [squares] from Pam's 'stash' to each of the attendees and, in her eulogy, he said, 'Wouldn't it be great if they were all put together into quilts that could be donated to Bethell Hospice?'' recalls fellow quilter Susan Hopkins VanZant. 'I collected them back up and, with the help of some of my friends in the Dufferin Piecemakers, we had some quilting bees and put together a total of five quilts using fabric from her collection.'

While four of the five quilts form part of an online silent auction, the fifth will be subject to a live auction at Quilts in the Garden next Saturday, July 22 (rain date: July 23) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Showcasing the work of quilters from Shelburne, Orangeville, Caledon, Grand Valley and Dundalk, the event will feature draws for some great prizes, a chance to tour a great garden, and have some refreshments, including homemade donated baked goods and water donated by Ice River Springs.

'I had always wanted to do a quilt show in my garden because those are my two passions,' says Hopkins VanZant.

But the opportunity to do something to benefit Inglewood's Bethell Hospice was a game-changer.

Before Pam was in need of hospice care, Hopkins VanZant says she knew little about the services organizations such as this offered to patients and their families.

She didn't realise these services were available free of charge to people living in the area, thus taking the pressure off families of those on the end of life spectrum who have taken on the role of caregivers.

'They can concentrate on just spending time with their loved ones,' says Hopkins VanZant. 'It is such a beautiful setting, nicer than a hospital, but still with hospital-type care. I want other people to know about Hospice because, unfortunately, we might all have to take advantage of that some day.'

'Quilts in the Garden is a tribute to Pam from the perspective of her friends.'

Quilts in the Garden will take place Saturday, July 22 (rain date: July 23) at 394177 County Road 12, Amaranth. Admission is by donation. Quilts up for silent auction can be viewed and bid on by visiting www.32auctions.com/quiltsinthegarden. For more information on the event, call Susan Hopkins VanZant at 519-942-2493.