

Butterfly Bereavement Project on display at Headwaters Health Care Centre

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Dufferin County residents are putting the grief they've felt from the loss of a loved one on display through a month-long art installation at Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC).

The local hospital, along with Bethell Hospice and the Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team (HOHC OHT) celebrated the unveiling of the 2024 Butterfly Bereavement Project, located in the hospital's Ambulatory Care Wing, on Tuesday (Nov. 5).

"I lost my father last month, which has been obviously very hard, but through events like this, it is certainly a beautiful reminder to use all that we're not alone in our grief journeys. We're never alone. We're blessed to have the support of all our partners, our friends, family, and colleagues with us always," said Kim Delahunt, CEO and president of Headwaters Hospital.

The Butterfly Bereavement Project was started by Bethell Hospice in 2022 with the aim of educating the community on locally available bereavement support, providing support to bereaved individuals and increasing awareness on National Grief and Bereavement Day and Children's Grief Awareness Day, which are both observed in the month of November.

"We hoped to find a way to engage the public in creating something, which would not only honour those who have experienced grief but also visually represent the idea that loss is a universal experience, and while there are lonely moments, one does not need to feel alone in it," said Aldona Morrison, Bethell Hospice's art therapist.

The exhibit utilizes an array of colourfully drawn butterflies, which represent hope and symbolize transformation, and are also used around the world to raise awareness about grief and bereavement.

This year's Butterfly Bereavement exhibit features over 2,000 individually decorated paper butterflies that were created to express the love and loss, stories and memories of more than 4,000 people.

The kaleidoscope of individual paper butterflies has been placed in a circular pattern as a way to showcase the unity and sense of belonging for those experiencing grief, while the words "you are not alone" are decaled on the window in spirals to signify the movement of a butterfly.

Ramon Brazukas, a client of Bethell Hospice, spoke about the sudden passing of her 29-year-old son Paul, who had suffered from bipolar affective disease for many years and how the Butterfly Bereavement Project is an aid for those facing grief.

"You are not alone is such a perfect name for this collection of beautifully coloured butterflies, in that we are not alone in probably the most universal experience at one time or another we will all encounter in our lives ? and that is grief," said Brazukas. "I realized quickly that the grief I was experiencing would be my own unique journey, exclusive to me, much like the diversity of these beautiful butterflies; no two are exactly alike. During our personal journey, we are free to embrace the peaks and valley and whatever emotions that will bring, much like butterflies soaring, landing and always moving. Butterflies can symbolize freedom, lightness and joy, and can remind us to let go of burdens and embrace liberation."

The Butterfly Bereavement Project will be on display in the Ambulatory Care Wing of Headwaters Health Care Centre throughout the month of November. Residents of Dufferin County and Caledon are invited to admire the array of personalized paper butterflies on display as well as add to the installation by colouring and creating their own butterflies, which can be found by the Welcome Center in the hospital.

More information about the Butterfly Bereavement Project can be found by visiting:
<https://hillsofheadwaterscollaborative.ca/bereavement-services/>.