



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

## Vision

We enrich the quality of lives, no matter how short.

## Mission

We meet the unique palliative care needs of newborns, children, youth and their families. We lead by advocating, by advancing clinical care and family support, and by learning through research and sharing knowledge.

## Values

Roger Neilson was well known for his generosity, humanity, sense of humour, compassion and love of children. These values, as well as the following, will govern our daily work with families, community and each other:

Respect  
Family-focused care  
Collaboration  
Innovation  
Excellence  
Learning  
Celebration



Reflections from our  
Executive Director  
and our Chair, Board of  
Directors

Everything we do at Roger Neilson House is guided by a single purpose: to enrich the quality of lives - no matter how short - for children and their families. And as we look back on the past year, it's clear that we have so much to celebrate.

This annual report details only some of our proudest achievements. All of them were made possible only thanks to our outstanding team of nurses and physicians, social workers and support staff, personal support workers and volunteers, leaders and donors. It was their unwavering dedication and creativity that saw us through the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing us to innovate and adapt so that families could continue to receive the very best possible care.





That same team is following in the footsteps of those who blazed a trail when it comes to pediatric hospice palliative care in Canada. Earlier this year, Roger Neilson House marked the retirement of Dr. Bill Splinter, our cherished physician and former medical director. As one of the founding team members who helped Roger Neilson House open its doors in 2006, Dr. Splinter's contributions have been instrumental to our success. He initiated the establishment of our pediatric palliative care program: one that is respected across Canada. He also supported the creation of the first Canadian Pediatric Palliative Medicine training program accredited by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Dr. Splinter and his tireless commitment to Roger Neilson House will be missed, but we are so grateful for the solid foundation that he has given us to build upon.



We also wish to extend a special thank you to our donors and partners. Your generous support has been invaluable, allowing us to expand our impact and to better advance holistic care for children and their families - both in-house and across our community.

As a partner of the Kids Come First Health Team, Roger Neilson House works in collaboration with other child-serving organizations across Eastern Ontario to improve access to home-care programs that integrate hospice palliative care. Through this partnership, we've supported the creation of a Centre of Excellence for Pediatric Home and Community Care and advocated for families with children who have complex or life-limiting illnesses. By training more home-care workers on caring for children with complex medical needs and expanding French-language services, we can help parents spend more quality time with their child.

We are also thrilled to be renewing our partnership with the Ottawa Senators and the Senators Community Foundation. From visits with Sens players who light up our kids' faces to generous donations that help us to support local families, we are so very grateful for this special relationship - one that has shaped Roger Neilson House in becoming what it is today.

In the year ahead, we plan to strengthen our programs, aiming to reach and support even more families. What won't change is our commitment to putting families and children at the centre of everything we do.





As Roger Neilson House resumes its normal activities, our team will continue to draw on its boundless creativity, so that children in our care can enjoy even more memorable moments, both big and small. Summer camp is a hallmark of childhood for so many kids, and we are thrilled that our own summer camp program - paused during the pandemic - is returning this year.

We wish to extend our sincerest thanks to all of you who help make Roger Neilson House a place of comfort, celebration and joy for the amazing children and families we serve. To the families who have entrusted us to care for their children and to support them, we cannot thank you enough for allowing us to walk alongside you, to learn from you and to share in your lives. It is an honour and a privilege to have your story be part of ours.

Megan Wright, Executive Director  
Ian Hendry, Chair, Board of Directors



## Volunteer Services

It was another great year for the volunteer program at Roger Neilson House. As always, our volunteer colleagues have been by our side, doing what they do best, helping make RNH a warm, caring and supportive environment for our children, youth and families. We have also had the pleasure of welcoming many new volunteers, each bringing their unique skills, talents and knowledge, adding to our collective volunteer spirit of kindness and compassion.

Our work with the Volunteer Advisory Committee has continued to provide meaningful insight and tangible ideas to improve the volunteer experience. Earlier this year, Carole Brulé stepped down from her role as chair of the VAC. As the inaugural chair, Carole very skillfully helped shape our purpose, mandate and workplans, and for that, we are incredibly grateful. We look forward to continuing the VAC's great work with our new chair, Ann Gordon, who took on this role prepared with great ideas and a commitment to the continued success of the VAC.

In the last year, we have continued our efforts to maintain a positive volunteer experience. As part of our work with the VAC, we reviewed our onboarding, orientation and training processes. We started implementing a few changes to help streamline new volunteers' experience as they prepare to join our team, while continuing to ensure that volunteers are well oriented and trained for their role. This included simplifying the way in which new volunteers receive their onboarding package, and developing a new in-person orientation, that will be launched in the Fall.





We have also continued the work we started before the pandemic, to create a recruitment and retention strategy. There is great value for RNH to recruit talented and motivated volunteers, and to retain our trained and experienced volunteers who have developed a strong understanding of the organization, a solid skill set and deeper collaborative relationships with volunteer and staff colleagues. We look forward to implementing some of those strategies over the next months.

In the Fall, we conducted a volunteer engagement survey, asking volunteers about their level of satisfaction on various themes, such as training, support, their relationship to RNH, recognition and communication. The results showed an overall satisfaction rate of 89.6%, which is an increase from the previous survey. Volunteers also expressed a high satisfaction rate in terms of their relationship to RNH, the clarity of their role and the support they receive. The volunteers also told us that they are committed to RNH and that they intend on staying. It was so lovely to read some of the comments, such as:

"I have never felt so supported or valued by any organization I've volunteered for"  
"A best-in-class organization for which to volunteer"  
"I would strongly recommend RNH to anyone who wishes to volunteer"

As positive as these results were, we are also looking forward to pursuing improvement efforts in some areas, including: finding ways to further involve volunteers in decision-making; discovering volunteers' learning needs and focusing training on those aspects, and streamlining communication.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to our amazing volunteer team. You give without ever expecting anything in return, you bring smiles to everyone's faces, and you make us shine!

Bruno Perrier, Manager  
Community Engagement and Volunteer Relations



## Volunteer Advisory Committee

2022-23 was another productive year for the Volunteer Advisory Committee. We have continued to value our partnership with staff and leadership on important aspects of the volunteer experience.

This year, we said farewell to Carole Brule who had been chairperson of the committee since its inception. She provided exceptional leadership during her five years on the committee. We wish her well in her new endeavors. It has been an honor for me to take on this role, with such big shoes to fill.

The committee has also had other changes in membership over the last year, with a few members stepping down from their role due to changing circumstances or relocation. The committee has acquired some strong new members, as we welcomed Cathy Parker, Lara Bruno-Boucher and Geoff Nimmo. Welcome to the committee! We are looking forward to recruiting a few more to round out the team.

In 2022, RNH conducted a Volunteer Engagement Survey, and the results were presented to the VAC. Overall, it demonstrated a high engagement and satisfaction rate. Using the results of the survey, the Committee focused on the Volunteer Orientation & Training Program, Communications and Volunteer participation in Decision Making.

The VAC participated in revising the Orientation & Training Program to help make it an even more focused and timely program that is well received by new volunteers. We continue to work on developing more focused training to provide volunteers with targeted support and resources based on their identified needs to best meet the children's needs.





The VAC has also discussed improvement opportunities with regards to communications and is looking forward to further discussions on this topic with RNH's new Communications Specialist. We are also continuing our efforts to raise knowledge and awareness with volunteers on the timely and effective reporting of health and safety concerns that could affect volunteers' work at RNH. The VAC also provided recommendations regarding the new TV display in the lobby, which can be utilized as a communication tool, for example, to help volunteers familiarize themselves with new staff.

The VAC also discussed volunteer participation in decision-making (where appropriate) and has noted the importance of continuing to include volunteer representatives on various committees, thereby bringing that perspective to discussions and decisions. Other ways of contributing to decision-making are under review.

Volunteer Recruitment and Retention has been a focus of attention for VAC. A comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Plan has been developed with key strategies established. These include making recruitment and retention a pillar of RNH's communication strategy, using a variety of channels to promote and advertise RNH volunteer roles and streamlining the on-boarding and training process.

In summary, it has been another busy year for the VAC, which continues to provide active volunteer input into the functioning of Roger Neilson House.

Ann Gordon, Chair



## Family Advisory Committee

This year was a busy year for the Family Advisory Committee. While still meeting virtually, we had many fruitful discussions on policies and initiatives as well as many presentations that provided the opportunity for parents, volunteers and staff to come together in a collaborative way.

We welcomed and said goodbye to a few members, volunteers and staff. After many years as the chair of the FAC, Kimberley Waara has stepped down, and I have had the pleasure of taking on this important role. At the beginning of the year the members of the FAC developed a work plan with four main goals.

### Goal 1: Enhance opportunities to engage families as partners.

In October we had a discussion on the different ways we could reach out to families. Some ideas included word of mouth, through social workers when appropriate, and on social media. This will be an on-going topic for the FAC, as the voice of family members is key in supporting RNH's important work.

### Goal 2: FAC members and/or other family partners will help advance patient and family-centred care by providing advice on RNH and Kids Come First Working Group initiatives.

In December, as part of the Integrated Home and Community Care (IHCC) working-group's initial work, it was identified that there seems to be inconsistencies in the definition/understanding of 'pediatric palliative care' between families and service providers. The IHCC consulted with RNH's FAC as a first step in the process and the FAC families gave meaningful feedback based on their lived experiences.





Goal 3: Help RNH develop ways to garner meaningful feedback from families about their care and experience at RNH.

There have been discussions throughout the year about creative and efficient ways to seek family input about their care and experience. This included looking at different ways to seek family feedback, such as a digital suggestion box, inviting parents to join topic-specific and short-term working groups with less time commitment, and finding new ways to communicate with people who have language, time and cultural barriers that may inhibit them from becoming involved in engagement opportunities.

Goal 4: Offer advice on how to best support bereaved families upon receiving their child's Star

In March Cait Neil joined the FAC meeting and she shared what is currently being done for Legacy Building at RNH. The FAC had the opportunity at that time to provide their feedback and suggestions.

Moving forward we will continue to work together to share our views regarding RNH services and contribute to discussions on policies and initiatives.

We will miss our departing parent members, Yara Saikaly, David Bell and Emma Gofton, as well as Beatriz Alvarez (volunteer) and Sarah Allan-Wiseman (staff). We thank them for their invaluable contributions, compassion and the commitment. We are happy to welcome aboard our new members, Linda Tabet (parent), Aileen Blakeney (clinical coordinator), Stephanie Poirier (manager) and Christine Wing (volunteer).

It has been an honour and a pleasure to fill the role of Chair this year. I appreciate being able to keep a connection to a place that has been so important to my family and I as we welcomed and said goodbye to our son, and William and Élèna's brother, Félix. I look forward to continuing in the roll and being part of the FAC.

Chloe Benoit, Chair

# RNH BY THE NUMBERS

2022-23

102 CHILDREN SERVED

2,224 DAYS OF CARE PROVIDED

3,738 COUNSELLING VISITS

2,785 VOLUNTEER HOURS CONTRIBUTED

## EXPENSES

Household Operating Costs  
\$843,963



Staffing and Benefits  
\$2,770,782

## REVENUE

CHEO Foundation & Other  
Funding Sources  
\$1,275,348

Ministry of Children,  
Community and Social Services  
\$162,500

Ministry of Health  
2,136,334



SINCE OPENING IN 2006

608 CHILDREN CARED FOR

37,736 DAYS OF CARE PROVIDED

231,803 VOLUNTEER HOURS CONTRIBUTED

## FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (2022-

23)

Chloe Benoit, Chair

Kimberley Waara, Past Chair

Aileen Blakeney, Clinical Coordinator

Bruno Perrier, Manager,

Community Engagement & Volunteer Relations

Caroline Signorini, Parent

Christine Wing, Child & Family Support

Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer

Doojie Dick, Secretary

Lillian Kitcher, Parent

Megan Wright, Executive Director

Nahal Yazdani, Manager

Richard Ouimet, Parent

Sarah Allan-Wiseman, Social Worker

Stephanie Poirier, Manager, Quality & Patient Safety



## VOLUNTEER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (2022-23)

Ann Gordon, Chair, Kitchen Volunteer

Bruno Perrier, Manager, Community Engagement & Volunteer Relations

Clare Pearson, Child & Family Support / Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer

Doojie Dick, Child & Family Support / Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer

Geoff Nimmo, Reception Volunteer

Jeanine Otto, Reception Volunteer

Jennie Wilson, Administrative Assistant, Community Engagement & Volunteer Relations

Joann Zimmerling, Personal Support Worker

Lara Bruno-Boucher, Child and Family Support Volunteer

Leah Bradley, Recreation Therapist

Liz Kelly, Reception Volunteer

Villana Murray, Reception / Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2022-23)

Ian Hendry, Chair

Mike Lupiano, Past Chair

Michelle Bouchard, Vice Chair and Treasurer

Robert E. Houston, Secretary

Caitlin Neil, Community Liaison

Alexa Brewer, Director

Brian Morris, Director

Celine Fu, Director

Dr. David Creery, Director

Janet Wilson, Director

Monique Lugli, Director

Paul Lalonde, Director

Megan Wright, Ex-officio Director



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### SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: Roger Neilson House

Twitter: @RNeilsonHouse

Instagram: @rogerneilsonhouse

### MEMBERSHIPS

Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association

Canadian National Hospice Network

Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO)

Volunteer Ottawa | Ontario Hospital Association