STORIES OF CARE

More Time to Be Family



For Nino and his family, Dr. Kemp's House offered more than care. It gave Maria, their three children and their loved ones time to be together.

Anton, known to everyone as Nino, was happiest working with his hands.

Whether he was tending to his garden, making wine or preparing food to share with family and friends, he took pride in the things he made and the people he loved.

Originally from Croatia, Nino grew up working on his family's land before immigrating to Canada. He settled in Hamilton, worked as a steelworker and married Maria, with whom he shared 58 years of marriage.

Family was at the centre of his life.
His family remembers how much he enjoyed sitting around the table, sharing stories and joking with his grandchildren.

As Nino's health declined, Maria and the family supported him at home and wanted to ensure he received the care he needed.

As his needs changed, the family began considering how best to keep him comfortable.

When Nino came to Dr. Kemp's House, something began to change. The team took time to learn about Nino, not just his illness. The family felt that the team cared for Nino as a person, not simply as a patient.

Staff asked about his life, the music he enjoyed and the things that mattered to him. They made an effort to connect with every member of the family.

The family remembers the warmth of the welcome they received each time they visited.

The care extended beyond Nino's room.

Because he had always loved being outdoors, the team helped him spend time in the gardens whenever the weather allowed.

The family also appreciated the small gestures of kindness. Nino received a quilt donated by the Hamilton Quilters Guild, which provides quilts for residents at Dr. Kemp's House.

It was a reminder that the care surrounding him extended beyond the hospice team to the wider community.

There were small gestures of care, too, from offers of baked goods, coffee and tea to the conversations Maria had with social workers who listened and supported her during those difficult weeks. Maria also received a caregiver gift through Gregor's Gift.

The family felt that Maria was supported and cared for, too.

One particularly meaningful day came when Nino and Maria celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary.

Celebrating at Dr. Kemp's House gave Nino and Maria a meaningful moment together and created a special memory for their family.

For the entire family, moments like these made an enormous difference.

At the hospice, the family knew Nino was receiving compassionate, attentive care, allowing them to focus on spending time together.

They could spend more time loving Nino and supporting one another.

Nino spent seven weeks at Dr. Kemp's House.

When the time came to say goodbye, the family was touched by the care and dignity of the farewell. Staff gathered from across the hospice, a candle was lit, music was played and readings were shared in his honour.

The experience brought the family comfort during an incredibly painful time.

The family remembers a sense of peace during that farewell.

Before Nino's stay, the family had not experienced hospice care firsthand. They had been committed to caring for him and wanted to make the best decision for his comfort.

The family hopes others who may be hesitant about hospice understand what that care can offer.

To the family, hospice was not about giving up on a loved one. It was about comfort, dignity and quality time together.

For Nino's family, Dr. Kemp's House offered a place where they could be together, remember happier times, share laughter and care for one another while he received the support he needed.

The family will always remember the gentleness of the care Nino received.

At Kemp Care Network, care extends beyond the individual to the people who love them. Through compassionate, family-centred hospice care, we help people find comfort, dignity and connection during serious illness and end of life.