

## **Patient Story for Nursing Week**

Jenny Forrester understands first-hand the value of nursing care. Her late husband, Dan, was a vibrant, positive person who lived his life to the fullest, even when faced with stage IV colon cancer and the harsh side effects of treatment. For Dan, Jenny and their daughters Sarah and Olivia, Dan's health-care team at the Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering (RVAP) hospital campus offered much needed kindness, compassion and solace during this time. From diagnosis to treatment and up until Dan's passing in January this year, the nurses were a crucial part of the team who provided the support the Forresters needed throughout Dan's battle.

While the cancer took a toll on Dan's body and mind, Jenny and her family faced different struggles – seeing Dan in pain, and coming to terms with the likelihood of a future without him.

Jenny believes the health-care team made it easier for Dan and their family to cope with the changes and ultimate outcome of his condition. Led by OR Manager Lisa McVety, the nurses patiently helped Dan, Jenny and their family understand what was happening at every step. They translated medical terminology into information that made sense to Jenny and Dan, and showed patience and compassion for what the Forresters were going through.

“Lisa and the rest of Dan's team demonstrated such emotional competence,” says Jenny. “When you're in this situation, it can be hard to think. Facts, data, medical lingo... It's really hard to understand these things, especially when all we could think of was how awful, how unfair this whole situation was. They never made us feel belittled, unintelligent or insignificant, and I can't thank them enough for that.”

Jenny believes Dan's team did their best to make the family's time at RVAP as comfortable as possible. His nurses always made the entire Forrester family feel welcome, and it was evident that Dan's team didn't just see him as another patient. He was a person with a life, goals, quirks and a personality, and Jenny feels Dan's nurses remembered that.

“Nurses see so many patients and their families every day. But for us, our nursing team becomes our family, and a beacon of light and warmth during such a devastating time,” Jenny says.

Quality patient care is about more than just patients' physical well-being, and nurses, like Dan and Jenny's, understand this well.

She says, “There's such a human element, a warmth about the nurses. They just care so much, and really make us feel important, that we matter to them.”

**\*\*Some names have been changed\*\***

