



Celebrating 10 Years of Care!

Saint Joseph's Convent Becomes Bobby's Hospice



In 1924, the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception (SCIC) moved into Saint Joseph's Convent and helped to establish two West Side schools – St. Patrick's and Assumption Schools. The Sisters ministry included teaching at these schools, spiritual guidance, music lessons, working with seniors and helping the poor – all from their home at 385 Dufferin Row.

When Hospice Greater Saint John started in 1983, the Sisters graciously donated space in Saint Joseph's Hospital because they believed in the vision of helping people cope with terminal illness and grief. Hospice volunteer operations remained there until 2001 when they moved to the Saint John Regional Hospital.

Sister Rita Duncan lived at Saint Joseph's Convent and was a long-term volunteer with Hospice. She hosted the Hospice grief support groups in the basement of Saint Joseph's Convent in the late 1990's. When she became aware that Hospice was pursuing the dream of a residential hospice, she believed the Convent would be a great future home for the residential hospice.

In 2004, thanks to the advice and support of Sister Rita, the senior leadership of Hospice began meeting with the Sisters of Charity to begin the discussions of purchasing Saint Joseph's Convent for the future operations of a residential hospice.

Sister Sandra Barrett was the Congregational Leader in 2004 and she and her leadership team were interested in learning more about how this new and innovative end-of-life healthcare facility could benefit the community. Over the next three years, after many discussions, presentations and letters, Hospice was able to purchase Saint Joseph's Convent at a significantly reduced rate for the future operations of Bobby's Hospice.

A Mass of Thanksgiving and the closure of Saint Joseph's Convent occurred on Mon, June 18, 2007. More than 50 people attended the Mass in the Chapel celebrated by Msgr. Brian Sheehan of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish.

In an article by Fred Hazel in the Telegraph Journal in June 2007, he reported on the Mass and noted the following comments from Msgr. Brian Sheehan and Sister Sandra Barrett.

“While we are sad to see the Sisters leave Saint Joseph’s Convent, we are grateful that the leadership of the sisters has generously made it possible for the purchase of the convent by such a wonderful organization as Hospice. In a way, much good will continue in a building out of which so much generosity has flowed,” said Msgr. Brian Sheehan.

Sister Sandra Barrett, the Congregational Leader, summed up the Sisters mandate in a quote from the late Archbishop Oscar Romero, *“This is what we are about. We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.”*

Hospice moved into Saint Joseph’s Convent in July 2007 to begin the work of establishing Bobby’s Hospice to *“provide comfort, care and hope to patients and families on the end-of-life journey.”* After three years of fundraising and renovations, Bobby’s Hospice opened on November 1, 2010. Unfortunately, Sister Rita died in 2009, one year before Bobby’s Hospice opened in her former home of Saint Joseph’s Convent.

After losing close family members, Sister Sandra felt called to Bobby’s Hospice. For the past seven years, Sister Sandra has been coming twice a week to Bobby’s Hospice and praying in the Chapel for patients, families, staff and volunteers.

The support of the Sisters of Charity since the inception of Hospice in 1983, the dedication of Sister Rita to Hospice over many years and the leadership, support and prayers of Sister Sandra and many others have made a tremendous difference to so many in our community. They have left a valuable legacy to our community and their mission lives on in their former home of Saint Joseph’s Convent.