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Power of the Purse
Handbags to raise funds for end-of-life care

London, ON: For the fifth year in a row, designer handbags have drawn the London community to support end-of-life care at St. Joseph's Hospice. Presented by Lerner's LLP, Handbags for Hospice is a chic cocktail party taking place on Thursday, June 15, 2017, at the Best Western PLUS Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre. Close to 200 designer handbags, lifetime experiences and a variety of accessories from local boutiques will be up for grabs in both live and silent auctions in a shopping extravaganza to support hospice palliative care.

The collection of donated handbags has something for everyone, including an increase in hard-to-find brands and vegan leather goods, along with such must-have labels as Mansur Gavriel, Givenchy, Valentino, Rebecca Minkoff, Chloe, Louis Vuitton, Burberry, and more. The bags range in price from \$40 to almost \$3,000.

In addition to the live and silent auction, the Handbags event also includes a heartfelt "Fund-a-Need" where guests have the opportunity to directly donate towards a program or item that is not funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and must be supported by the community. Last year's event saw the Fund-a-Need raise more than \$27,000 in 10 minutes to support grief and bereavement counseling. This year St. Joseph's Hospice is asking the community to help in purchasing 'Recliner Lift' chairs which will allow the patients to have greater independence while receiving care in the 10-suite residential Hospice.

"At St. Joseph's Hospice, our focus is on patient-centred care which promotes dignity and independence", said Wendy Boyle, Director of Residential Services. "One way to support this level of care is to ensure each of our home-like suites is equipped with furniture which supports both independence and comfort; for residents and their family members."

With 52 percent of its operating budget derived from direct community support (more than \$1.2 million each year), the success of signature fundraising events, like Handbags for Hospice, is critical to ensuring the organization has the funds necessary to provide compassionate care, which includes equipment that promotes freedom and dignity.

"Some residents enjoy spending time out of bed. They want to relax in their beautiful sitting room and enjoy their last moments with loved ones. However, many residents struggle to stand up after being in a seated position which requires a great deal of physical support from our staff and their family. The physical, mental and emotional strain is hard on our clients as it illustrates another loss of independence. Thankfully, we have found a way to eliminate the struggle and increase the level of independence for our clients," said Wendy.

The Gorayeb family knows firsthand how transformative this simple piece of equipment can be. "Our family arrived at St. Joseph's Hospice and within minutes, Dad was sitting in a chair with a coffee in his hand" recalls daughter, Janic Gorayeb. "However, when he was ready to climb into bed it took three nurses and a great deal of difficulty to transfer him. This was a daily struggle and I will always remember the look in my father's eyes as I watched him realize the independence he had lost, it broke my heart. We hope the community will join our family at Handbags for Hospice and help fund this essential piece of equipment in order to uphold the independence and comfort of all clients who come into the care of St. Joseph's Hospice" stated Janic.

Bring power to the purse and help those in hospice palliative care to live well. Right to the end. Join over 400 Londoners for an evening of fashion, philanthropy and fabulous food at Handbags for Hospice on Thursday, June 15. Purchase your tickets online at: www.handbagsforhospice.com.

About Handbags for Hospice

Where: Best Western PLUS Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre

When: Thursday, June 15th / 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Admission: \$80; includes a glass of wine, gourmet hors d'oeuvres, and a live and silent auction

Online: www.handbagsforhospice.com

Social Media: Facebook: /handbagsforhospice - Twitter: @sjhospicelondon - Instagram: @handbagsforhospice

About St. Joseph's Hospice

St. Joseph's Hospice is a charitable organization that provides compassionate care and companionship to palliative and bereaved individuals and families in London and Middlesex. Since welcoming the first resident February of 2014, St. Joseph's Hospice has cared for more than 400 people in its 10-suite Hospice home, as well as providing programs and services in the community. For more information, please visit www.sjhospicelondon.com.

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