

Hospice at Home The Topping story.....

Quality Time

Highly respected netball coach Ivy Topping's family will be forever grateful for the 24/7 care afforded to her by Taranaki's dedicated hospice team for her last five months.

Ivy, who died in June this year, was not aware she had cancer until it had metastasised. Extensive surgery in Wellington followed. Ivy was not one to complain and the family were in the dark for some time about how serious the situation was. "She downplayed that," daughter Jayne Rapley says. "But they took out her clavicle and a portion of her sternum, two ribs and lymph nodes. It was major, major surgery that she was lucky to survive. Such a hard bugger she was. She came through that and was still taking no medication for pain," Jayne recalls.

Eventually referred to hospice, it was far from easy to get her stubborn, independent mum with her high pain tolerance to accept any assistance. "The hospice staff came out for an initial visit and told her whatever you need we can help with. She was 'Nope'. Ivy's always done everything herself. She struggled to ask for help. But nurse Sharon earned her trust and eventually managed to gently and respectfully provide her with much needed medical care at her Waitara home, Jayne says. "Sharon was amazing." As was Dr. Nina, Nurses Heidi, Cam and Helen. "We called them The Angels. Rolls Royce care is exactly what it is. And it's not just medical care, its emotional and holistic; nothing is too hard". The family were able to ring the hospice any time day or night for assistance. "The nurses were there every day. They had a few SOS calls from us. They were there within 10 minutes. Sometimes five. The support and care for the whole family was amazing. The services wrapped around not just our mum but us all. All 21 of us at times.

Ivy had a series of falls and was provided with a hospice walker which she made good use of to get to the last couple of netball games to watch her beloved Tysons. Unfortunately, Ivy tested positive for covid in the latter stages so never did spend time as an inpatient when it would have been of benefit. Towards the end of her journey Ivy was provided with a state-of-the-art hospital bed which made her time at home more comfortable.

During Ivy's last seven days at Clifton Drive, the family of 21 were together. There were lots of tears, lots of memories, lots of hugs and love shared. She wanted to make her 80th. And she sure did. Three days after her 80th birthday Ivy passed surrounded by her family and the hospice nurses were there throughout the day. The duty of care provided was the most amazing they had ever seen. The family took advantage of the grief counselling sessions available to them while dealing with the loss of their matriarch. "I can't speak highly enough of them all. They are absolutely amazing."



Written by Lyn Humphreys
Thank you to Ivy's family for sharing their story.

Honouring your grief

6 Tips for coping this Christmas



- 1. Grief has no rules. Give yourself permission to feel whatever it is you feel.**
- 2. Keep up any traditions that your loved one started, and that you can continue. This will help you honor your lost loved one.**
- 3. Talk about your loved one with friends and family. Encourage them to share favorite stories with you.**
- 4. Set realistic expectations. Consider online shopping, gift vouchers as gifts. be okay with saying 'no' to things.**
- 5. Express your needs. Tell others how you feel. Be honest and specific. Accept and ask for help. Delegate, delegate, delegate.**
- 6. Take care of yourself when you're dealing with grief at Christmas.**