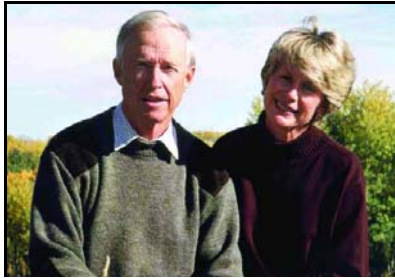


A PLACE FOR THE LIVING - FOOTHILLS COUNTRY HOSPICE



In a landscape of gently sloping hills clothed with lodgepole pine, eight acres of donated pastoral land just north of Okotoks is now home to Canada's first rural hospice. This community driven project was initiated by the **Foothills Country Hospice Society** to raise funds to build and operate a 24 hour palliative care facility run by volunteers and local medical health professionals to serve residents of Okotoks, Turner Valley, High River and Black Diamond.

While a growing number of rural communities in Alberta have palliative care rooms in their hospitals, Okotoks didn't have a hospital, therefore, area residents had to travel long distances to be with loved ones in palliative care.

Local residents and TCF Donors, Leslie and David Bissett, have been major supporters of the hospice, contributing over \$1 million, through the David and Leslie Bissett Fund at The Calgary Foundation, towards seed money and operating costs as well as providing considerable support and guidance.

Leslie became involved after reading about the project in the local paper. She relates, "When my own mother passed away in a hospital, it wasn't a pleasant experience. Hospitals just don't have the necessary facilities. I had to sleep on the floor, you almost feel like you were in the way."

To further her knowledge about palliative care, Leslie met with staff from the Rosedale Hospice in Calgary as well as members of the Foothills Country Hospice Society before making the final decision to invest. "I'm a big fan of the hospice movement and am very impressed with what they do," says Leslie.

The hospice accommodates eight patients and has two family rooms. The site features walking paths and a garden. Half of the beds are reserved for patients living out the last few months of their lives. The other beds are occupied by those living with terminal diseases who need a break from their home or increased medical care - when comfort versus cure becomes the central quality-of-life focus for them and their families.

www.countryhospice.org

