



## OPEN DOORS OPEN HEARTS



Are you interested in starting up a compassionate community initiative to support people who are affected by a serious illness, end of life, or grieving experience?

Visit our website for resources:  
[www.bc-cpc.ca/all-resources/community-organizations/](http://www.bc-cpc.ca/all-resources/community-organizations/)

Contact us:  
[conversations@bc-cpc.ca](mailto:conversations@bc-cpc.ca)



Compassionate communities can take time to build. The payoff can be immeasurable, however, with people gaining access to much-needed services and connections when they need it the most. Meghan Derkach, the Executive Director at [Cherryville Community Food & Resources Society](#), and her team are making this happen by providing a safe space for conversations around death and dying. As living rurally has many challenges, the organization has found creative ways to provide access for its citizens to a variety of supportive resources and programs.

“It’s been a journey, but residents are starting to walk through our doors now. It’s amazing to see,” says Meghan. “We know we’re doing our job well when we see so many coming in to share their experiences about preparing for the end of life and about the death of their loved one.”

**The society is striving to normalize conversations about death and dying and is thrilled to have received its first seed grant from the BC Centre for Palliative Care.** This enabled them to start their first regular grief support group along with starting conversations at their seniors’ lunches and dinners. In addition to offering a range of senior services, the society offers a system navigation support for persons with disabilities, family and youth programs, a rich volunteer program, and summer job opportunities for youth.

Aside from funding challenges, Cherryville Community Food & Resources Society continues to search for innovative solutions to best support their rural community, particularly around disseminating information. Staff at the society take time to mail or even hand deliver their newsletter to community members to ensure residents are informed of supports available to them. They’re always working to collaborate and form new partnerships as they continue to grow.

**“We’re always offering new services, programs and support to our community and the surrounding area,”** says Meghan. **“This is what compassionate communities do. We keep our citizens’ needs at the forefront at all times.”**

*The Cherryville Community Food and Resource Society’s lasting impact is worth monitoring closely. No doubt an example of how empathetic communities can form from simple beginnings and grow into lasting legacies.*