

Thank you for being there for Kay and Larry

Larry and Kay were married in 1968, both aged 20, and were together until Kay sadly died in February this year. Your support was there when it mattered most and continues to be a lifeline to Larry. This is their story.

In 2022, Kay was diagnosed with dementia and breast cancer at Kingston Hospital and was given a prognosis of just five years to live. Despite the challenges, the couple were sometimes able to visit the Princess Alice Hospice Wellbeing Centre on Tuesday mornings, meeting other local people for valuable connection and support.

They were also referred to the Princess Alice Hospice Compassionate Neighbours scheme and Kay was matched with a volunteer called Diane, who would visit each Thursday. Larry treasures the memory he has of Diane and Kay and says: 'Kay was always happy to see her'.

One day, Kay's legs gave way and she was admitted to Kingston



Larry's story

Hospital. Larry remembers being given a 'stark choice': Kay could go into a care home or return home, bedbound. Despite the challenges, he 'leapt at the chance for Kay to come home.'

A hospital bed was delivered to their flat in Esher but the full realisation of Kay's condition hit Larry: 'She could do absolutely nothing for herself. She had carers four times a day and she hated it. It was so stressful, I would try to reassure her, but it didn't help, but they were kind and had a job to do.'

On a home visit by Hospice community nurse, Katy, Larry remembers a conversation about Kay coming into the Hospice. Soon after, Larry received a call to say a bed had become available.

During Kay's time at the Hospice, Larry and his daughter could stay overnight in her room. On the night she died, Kay was surrounded by her family and died peacefully at 10.30pm. Larry says: *'All I can say, Kay could not have been in better hands. There was so much dignity in the way she was cared for. Nurses would come into her room and talk to her, they explained what they were doing and would make her comfortable.'*

Since Kay died, Larry has continued to visit the Hospice and regularly pops in for a cooked breakfast in the dining room. A bereavement talk by Steve, the Hospice's Bereavement and Spiritual Care Lead, proved particularly poignant: *'I found it very sensible, but it also gave me a Winnie-the-Pooh quote that I used when I spoke at Kay's funeral':*

"How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."



Kay on Brighton beach

Larry is in the early stages of bereavement and misses Kay terribly:

"It was a wonderful marriage; she was a wonderful girl. I've never been an adult without Kay."

He continues to be supported by our Hospice teams, which he describes as *'absolutely wonderful, peaceful – the whole atmosphere and everybody here.'*

With your continued support we can be there for more people like Larry and Kay.