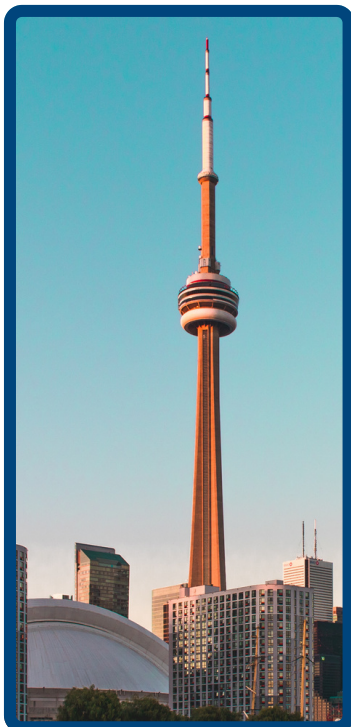




GTA CHAPTER NEWS

Together, let's meet with your MP

If you'd like to speak with your MP but aren't sure where to start, Advocacy Committee Chair Harry Ennis and his team are ready to help – and can even accompany you to a meeting. Reach out at toronto@dyingwithdignity.ca



L-R: Bruce Glawson, MP Chi Nguyen (Spadina - Harbourfront), Mary Anne Cecutti at a recent meeting to discuss proposed amendments to MAID legislation.

Education Presentations in the GTA

Growth never stops – and neither do we. It's been a busy second quarter for the Chapter's volunteers, who put on **10 presentations** from April to June.

We had **more than 350 attendees** at our sessions learning about their end-of-life choices. Educating communities on this vital topic is at the core of our mission to provide participants with the facts and peace of mind to be able to make their own choices. We had the pleasure of meeting with attentive audiences at LaSalle Towers, Upper Madison Avenue condo, Granite Place Community, Olde York Place, Christie Gardens, Oran Branch (National Council of Jewish Women of Canada - Toronto), and the Scadding Court Community Centre.

Interested in booking a presentation for your group? Please email toronto@dyingwithdignity.ca





GTA CHAPTER NEWS



Tribute to Mary Anne

by Rita Scagnetti

It is my privilege, on behalf of the GTA Chapter of DWDC, to pay tribute to our outgoing Chair, Mary Anne Cecutti.

Working with Mary Anne to build this Chapter I witnessed her incisive, analytical mind, her work ethic and discipline, her extraordinary ability to pay attention to detail. And the icing on the cake – she comes from a long line of bakers – is her innate talent to lead, her curiosity, and a determination to tackle challenges head-on.

Like many of you, I had the privilege of seeing her do what she does best—plan, lead, and elevate the Chapter and its volunteers.

I jokingly call Mary Anne, Bunni, and myself the “Founding Mothers” of this Chapter. In the dark days of COVID, we put our shoulders to the wheel and created something strong, effective, and productive.

That success is, in large part, due to Mary Anne’s vision, determination, and ability to bring people together, and to give them free rein to do what they do best. She built this team, set the standard, and created a model Chapter. I believe it is one others in Canada can look to for inspiration.

Mary Anne, we are deeply grateful for everything you have given to this Chapter. And we know that whatever organization you lend your talents to next will benefit from them as we have. Thank you doesn’t quite cover it—but it comes from all of us: Thank you, Mary Anne.





GTA CHAPTER NEWS

A Heartfelt Goodbye and Thanks by Mary Anne Cecutti



I am so fortunate not only to have Rita Scagnetti as a lifelong friend, but also to have had her by my side as an integral part of the chapter's leadership in her role as Director of Communications. She has been an essential part of the GTA Chapter's growth and spirit since its inception but has decided to pursue other volunteer activities.

With her thoughtful messaging, creative outreach, and tireless advocacy, Rita ensured that the Chapter's mission and values were communicated with clarity, compassion, and professionalism.

Whether helping draft letters to the editor, working to establish a viable advocacy committee, managing social media, or coordinating internal communications, her skills helped us connect with more people and foster a deeper understanding of the organization within our community.

Rita consistently brought energy, empathy, and a collaborative spirit to everything she did, setting an example for us all. The time and expertise she so generously shared have been crucial to the Chapter's success and are truly valued and appreciated by all.

Thank you, Rita. Your contributions have left a lasting mark, your writing skills, prodigious vocabulary, impeccable grammar, affinity for word play, and sense of humour will be missed more than words can say.

Thank you to Sharanie

Another of our long-time volunteers and Executive Committee members has temporarily stepped back from their role as Chair of the Outreach Committee. We would like to acknowledge Sharanie Patterson for her contribution and unfailing commitment in building an extremely successful Outreach program for the Chapter. Sharanie has provided invaluable support as she handed over the reins to our new Chair of Outreach, Wendy Smith. Thank you, Sharanie.





GTA CHAPTER NEWS



ACP Day Event - tribute to Mary Anne

There was an excellent turnout at our in-person Chapter gathering for Advance Care Planning Day. We enjoyed a delicious lunch arranged by event co-hosts, Bina Feldman and Roz Doctorow.

Our Chapter's former Communications Director, Rita Scagnetti gave a personal tribute to outgoing Chapter Chair, Mary Anne Cecutti. This was followed by Sara Briginshaw, Manager of Volunteer Engagement from our National Office, who shared the following from CEO, Helen Long:

While she has been supported by a core group of volunteers, Mary Anne has ultimately been responsible for building a successful and committed group, who are empathic and committed educators, advocates and event organizers. Her leadership and dedication have made the GTA Chapter our largest and most active chapter, and her contributions to our volunteer structure, policy, and procedure have been invaluable.

Mary Anne we are truly grateful for all you have done for this organization, and I am personally grateful for your support, engagement, feedback and friendship.

Sara presented a certificate from National Office to Mary Anne that declared:

*"With sincere appreciation, Dying with Dignity Canada would like to recognize **Mary Anne Cecutti** for your tireless commitment to educating people across the Greater Toronto Area on patient rights and end-of-life options. Your tenacity, generosity, and energy helped build the GTA Chapter from the ground up. We couldn't have had the impact we did over the last seven years without your leadership. Thank you for being a champion of choice." - April 16, 2026 Helen Long and Sara Briginshaw*



GTA CHAPTER NEWS



ACP Day Event - special guest Eric Mathison

The GTA Chapter was pleased to welcome Eric Mathison as our guest speaker for Advance Care Planning Day. Eric is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto Scarborough, an ethics consultant and clinical ethicist, and co-founder of Tiller Labs. His research focuses on bioethics, with particular emphasis on end-of-life care, autonomy, and medical decision-making. At Tiller Labs he is developing AI-powered tools to help people navigate advance care planning.

Eric spoke about *ACP Canada's* biennial poll, which shows that the proportion of Canadians who have completed an ACP has remained stubbornly low, at around 17%. Other persistent challenges include the lack of immediate access to a completed ACP when it is needed, and the use of vague language, such as "no heroic measures" that is open to interpretation.

To help address these gaps, Eric has built an AI agent that guides users through a conversation about their health, values, and wishes, documenting both their preferences and their substitute decision maker. The agent walks users through various scenarios to capture what they would want under specific medical circumstances. Once a user confirms the accuracy of their advance directive, the tool generates a legally valid PDF for their province or territory.

This tool is not intended to replace conversations with healthcare providers or trained ACP facilitators, but rather to improve accessibility, by offering a digital, easily shareable alternative for those who might otherwise face barriers to completing their ACP.

Eric's Substack [article](#) offers a helpful overview of the tool.





GTA CHAPTER NEWS



These DWDC information sessions will stimulate thoughtful discussion in audiences at all stages of life. It's never too late to think about the issues our presentations cover, and then to translate your knowledge into action. We offer strategies that can increase your awareness and confidence, and empower you to cope better when you or someone you love faces these issues.



Each session runs 30 minutes, with an additional 30 minutes for questions and answers.



Contact us to book a presentation

toronto@dyingwithdignity.ca

The GTA Chapter of Dying with Dignity Canada can help you and the people you love tackle the prickly challenges that arise when coping with the complexity of a life-changing diagnosis or when someone is contemplating end-of-life choices. Our experience teaches us that everyone, young or old, can face these complex situations with more confidence and peace of mind armed with the right information and tools. Our presentations will raise awareness of your rights and outline the options available to you.

THE SEVEN KEYS - NEW!

Our Seven Keys presentation is based on the book *Hope For The Best Plan For The Rest* by physician Dr. Sammy Winemaker and researcher Dr. Hsien Seow. The presentation describes the seven keys for navigating a life-changing diagnosis. It can help audiences of all ages stay positive yet realistic through their illness journey; use their values and preferences to guide health care decisions; understand patient rights and how to speak up and navigate through the complex health care system.

END-OF-LIFE OPTIONS

In a society where end-of-life care is becoming increasingly complex, this session provides an overview of the end-of-life choices available in Ontario today. Learn about conventional medical care, hospice palliative care, medical assistance in dying and other options. Then see how an advance care planning process underlies all these choices.

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

This presentation empowers patients and caregivers by helping them plan for severe injury, illness and end-of-life. It covers the what, why, when and how of Advance Care Planning, explains how to select a Substitute Decision Maker and outlines the process of creating an Advance Care Plan.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

How you leave this life is your choice. This presentation speaks to what MAID is, the eligibility criteria and describes the entire process. In addition, you will learn how MAID became legal in Canada, what the current MAID legislation includes and where it falls short.

IT'S YOUR LIFE. IT'S YOUR CHOICE.

DYING WITH DIGNITY
GREATER TORONTO AREA | CANADA

