

CELEBRATE KINGS: *Pride in our people, places and products*

A garden of hope!

Alongside a quiet country road in Grafton, Kings County, thousands of gladiolas (glads) bloom in bright, glorious colors, with many forming a now familiar shape – the breast cancer ribbon!

The flowers celebrate the life of Margaret Salsman, a beloved wife and mother who lost her battle with cancer in January 2004. Now, in Marg's Glad Garden, the flowers planted in her memory represent hope for others fighting the disease.

Located on Brooklyn Street, the garden serves two purposes – it provides beauty to those who visit and take home a bouquet in exchange for a donation, and it provides a source of funding

for the Margaret Salsman Cancer Care Patient Navigator Memorial Fund.

"We'd always grown glads – we've grown them for the last 25 years," says Murray Salsman, Margaret's husband. "Marg loved glads. When she passed away, I had a lot in the basement, more than 3000 bulbs. In her memory, I planted them all!"

That planting turned out to be the beginning of an annual fundraiser - Glad Days. When the flowers bloomed that first summer, Murray decided to barter their beauty to help people with cancer. On the very first day, he took in over \$1000!

Murray holds Glad Days. And the same people keep coming back year after year.

"You'd be surprised how many of these people are cancer survivors, or have had a family member with cancer. They come in and want to talk about it. Did you know cancer survivors are some of the most upbeat people?"

The trademark flower of Marg's Glad Garden is the yellow glad with a red center. It was included in his wife's casket spray, and now is referred to as the Glad of Hope. It is featured on the website www.gladofhope.ca.

All the money raised through donations goes directly to help cancer patients. In the last two years, the memorial fund took in over \$24,000 and all was spent on behalf of Kings and Annapolis area cancer patients.

"When people are sick, they need to concentrate on getting well," says Murray. "Hopefully, we can help remove a little of the financial burden from their shoulders, whether it's helping

with the purchase of drugs, or even ensuring they have heat." Assistance comes through accounts already set up at local businesses, with referrals from the cancer care patient navigator at the Valley Regional Hospital.

Through his association with the hospital, Murray discovered a special helper – Dorothy Rand. A breast cancer survivor, Dorothy now works alongside Murray as his fiancée.

"I feel honored and privileged to be working with such a special man dedicated to such a wonderful cause," says Dorothy. "I am thankful for the opportunity to help Murray in his work."

So throughout August, stop by Marg's Glad Garden and remember the cause that each donation - and each bouquet - supports. And remember those whose burden is being lightened in memory of Margaret Salsman.

Story and photo by Marlene Huntley



*Murray Salsman and Dorothy Rand
check out the gladiola buds coming into bloom.*



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