



**Jessie Baker, Emo
North West**

Category: Young Caregiver

Submitted by Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner, Nikita Matichuk from our North West geography.

In March 2021, Todd lost his battle to cancer. His dying wish was to pass away at home, a remote cabin that is only accessible by boat or ice road, north of Emo.

With the hospital's visitor restrictions in effect due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Todd was even more determined to spend his remaining days with his family by his side. Todd's family and friends stepped up. Their cabin was still in the process of being finished, but the family was determined to make Todd's wish a reality – even working to get the unfinished kitchen as functional as possible.

The remote location and isolation added additional challenges. As the cabin could only be accessed by ice road, in-person services were not available. This meant that the family and friends dismantled Todd's hospital bed and equipment to transport it across the ice road and assisted in setting it up in their cabin.

As soon as they were set-up with high-speed internet and the necessary materials and medications, Todd was able to be transferred home. Wife, Carrie, provided personal care and their daughter, Jessie, took on the nursing role – all while trying to enjoy the time they had left together.



With no formal nursing experience, under the supervision of palliative care nurse practitioner, Nikita, Jessie was able to provide the needed pain and symptom management. Through remote monitoring and video conferencing, Jessie inserted a subcutaneous port. For those not familiar, this is a device that is inserted to provide ongoing medication. In addition, Jessie prepared and administered all medications – even flawlessly preparing medicines in a glass ampule. Nikita shared, this specific medication has a snap top. When breaking off to draw to the medication, even experienced professionals can cut themselves or break the glass, yet Jessie did this perfectly.

Nikita and Jessie spent countless hours together over video. Despite never meeting in-person, in speaking with them, you can feel their strong bond.

Jessie shared, “I greatly appreciate all Nikita did for my dad and our family during our difficult transition. I am truly grateful that Nikita fought for us and worked with us to find a way to bring my dad home. My parents had spent the last three years slowly building their dream home together. The fireplace you see in the photos was put together piece by piece by my mom and dad.

Everything about my dad’s diagnosis was chaotic. The initial shock of it, the denial, and the obstacles we faced getting him back home from Thunder Bay and then back home to the lake. At times it felt like everything worked against us until those last seven days we spent together as a family at home. Suddenly, everything felt simple again and my dad’s transition from this life was peaceful. In a lot of ways, it was a gift. The thing about grief is, it weighs so heavy on those who carry it. We sometimes forget to remember that the balance of loving so deeply is this grief we carry. If that’s the price I pay for having a dad so amazing and present as mine, then I carry it with pride.”

Wow, what an incredible story. Thank you, Jessie for allowing us to include your family’s story and sharing such a powerful reflection.