



# ANNUAL REPORT

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2023

# MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

*"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." - Mother Teresa*

I want to thank everyone who has supported MAID Family Support Society (MFSS). I credit our ongoing success to our valued community of volunteers and partners who have been committed to the growth of our organization. I continue to be amazed at the dedication and caring our volunteers demonstrate to the people they support.

We officially launched our organization in January 2021, and it's hard to believe we've already come to the end of our third year. I'm thrilled with the growth we've experienced and I'm very pleased to say 2023 was quite a year! In January we had our first AGM and elected our board of directors. In March we obtained charitable status. In September we had our first volunteer retreat and published the much-anticipated book *The Many Faces of MAID*.

We're committed to getting the word out about our organization and promoting the need for support for family members and friends of those choosing MAID. We've been engaging in outreach across Canada and have connected with many MAID coordination teams and several hospice and palliative care organizations. I'm tremendously grateful for those who have supported me in my vision to create and grow this organization, including those who have helped with our fundraising efforts.

Signy Novak, Founder

# OUR VISION

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Those supporting a loved one before or after medical assistance in dying (MAID) have the support they need to thrive.

# OUR MISSION

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We strive to provide compassionate, lived-experience support and connection to people helping a loved one who is considering or planning for medical assistance in dying or those who are grieving a loss due to MAID.

# OUR VALUES

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Community

Compassion

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Integrity and trust

Respect

# PEOPLE AND PARTNERS

## VOLUNTEERS

At the end of 2023, we had 54 volunteers across Canada, almost double the number at the end of 2022.

Our volunteer team continues with:

- 2 leadership team members (director and coordinator)
- 2 debrief team members
- Social media coordinator
- Book publicity and sales

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our first board of directors was formed in January 2023.

## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- Dying with Dignity Canada
- MAiDHouse
- Bridge C-14
- Family Caregivers of British Columbia

We are proud to be affiliated with the Canadian MAID Network.

# SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES

## 2023 was a year of milestones for MFSS

### January

First AGM

First board of directors elected

Application for charitable status submitted

### March

First MFSS board meeting

Received charitable status

### September

First MFSS volunteer retreat

*The Many Faces of MAID* published

### October

Launched MFSS LinkedIn page

### November

First strategic plan finalized and approved

Reached 50 volunteers

Fulfilled 300th support request

### December

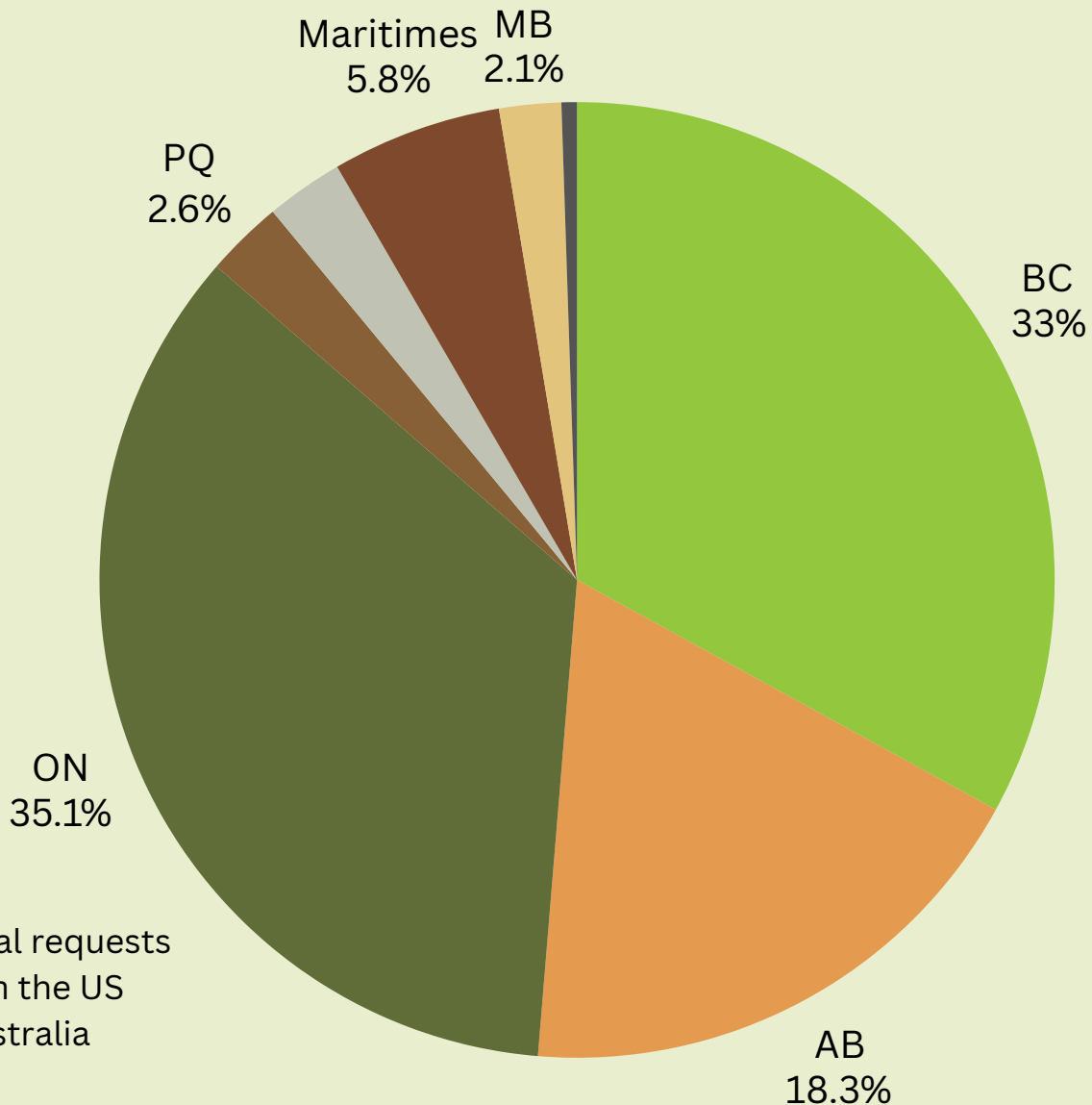
Launched MFSS newsletter

Started new volunteer drop-in meetings

# SUPPORT REQUESTS

Peer support is the heart of our organization. We received 197 support requests in 2023, a 56% increase from 2022. This brings us to a total of 335 total requests since inception.

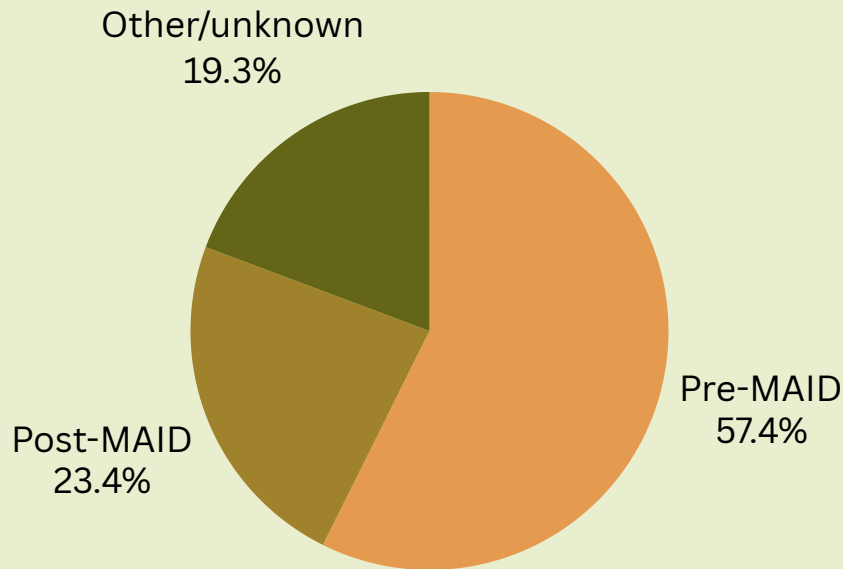
## Requests by location



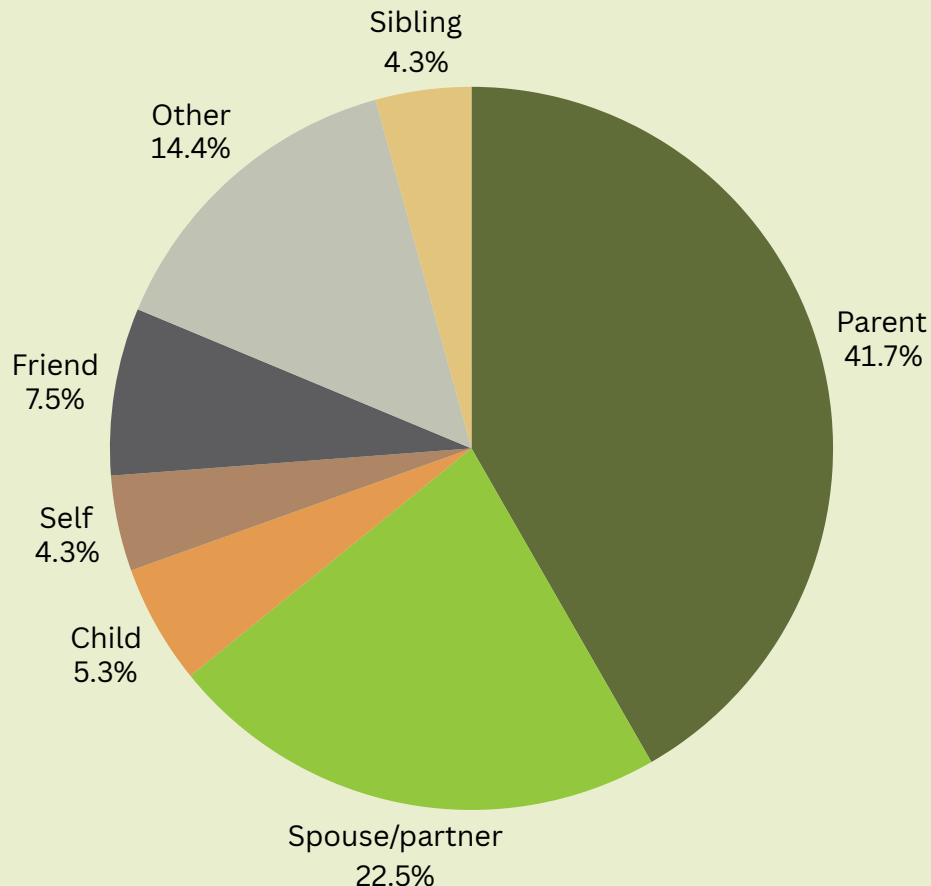
\*International requests came from the US and Australia

## Support pre- or post-MAID

We continue to receive more requests for support before the MAID provision and increasingly see clients wanting to stay in touch with the volunteer for some time after.

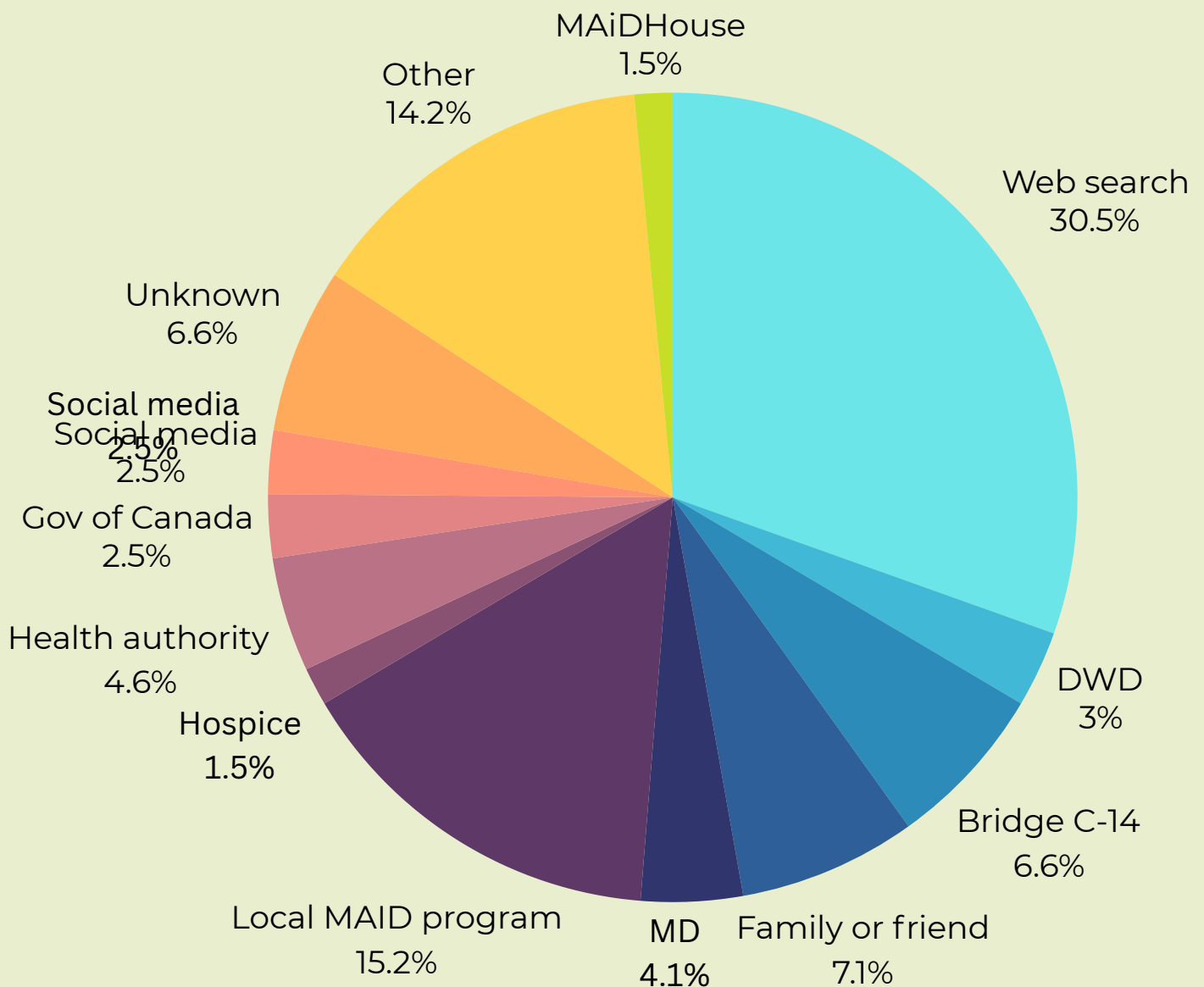


## Person supporting or grieving



# REFERRAL SOURCES

While a web search for MAID support is still our top referral source, a positive change last year is that more people heard about us from their doctor or their local MAID program, which means they are getting a referral to support at the time they need it.



# 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

<b>2022 balance carryover</b>	<b>\$967.64</b>
Donations	\$28,786.13
Book sales	\$2,132.34
In-kind donations	\$2,486
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$30,918.47</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Banking fees	\$35.80
Liability insurance	\$1,619.70
Secured credit card	\$1,000.00
Website fees and technology	\$2,609.34
Book costs, Prime membership	\$266.14
Promotion, printing, postage	\$2,761.73
Society fees	\$95.00
PO box	\$223.55
Honorariums	\$2,000.00
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$10,612.26</b>
<b>Balance at year-end</b>	<b>\$21,273.85</b>

# TESTIMONIALS

"I have been fortunate to be able to speak with an MFSS volunteer a few times a week since my mother's passing 16 days ago. I live alone and knew that I would need support so I reached out to MFSS. **The volunteer has helped me more than I can ever express: through my tears, our sharing, mutual listening and discoveries, her compassion and understanding have been the human caring that has carried me forward through the past few weeks.** I know that we will continue to talk over the phone for some time to come. Thank you! All of you!"

"My peer was so kind. She listened to my concerns and I was able to share feelings I could not tell my dying mom or anyone else. She made me feel a lot better. Talking to her helped prepare me. I shared my grief about the feeling that if my mom did MAID, we could be losing days, weeks or even months we could have had with her. I respected her choice to plan MAID but it hurt me so much to think I might lose out on any more time with my mom. **My peer understood. She shared her maid experience and I felt grounded to talk to someone who had been through the loss of their mom and a planned death.**"

"I think it's wonderful to have these volunteers. **They are special because it's not an easy topic to share when it's so close to home.**"

"I talked to 2 different volunteers, and was enormously grateful. **The conversations helped me face my partner's decision feeling grounded and informed.**"

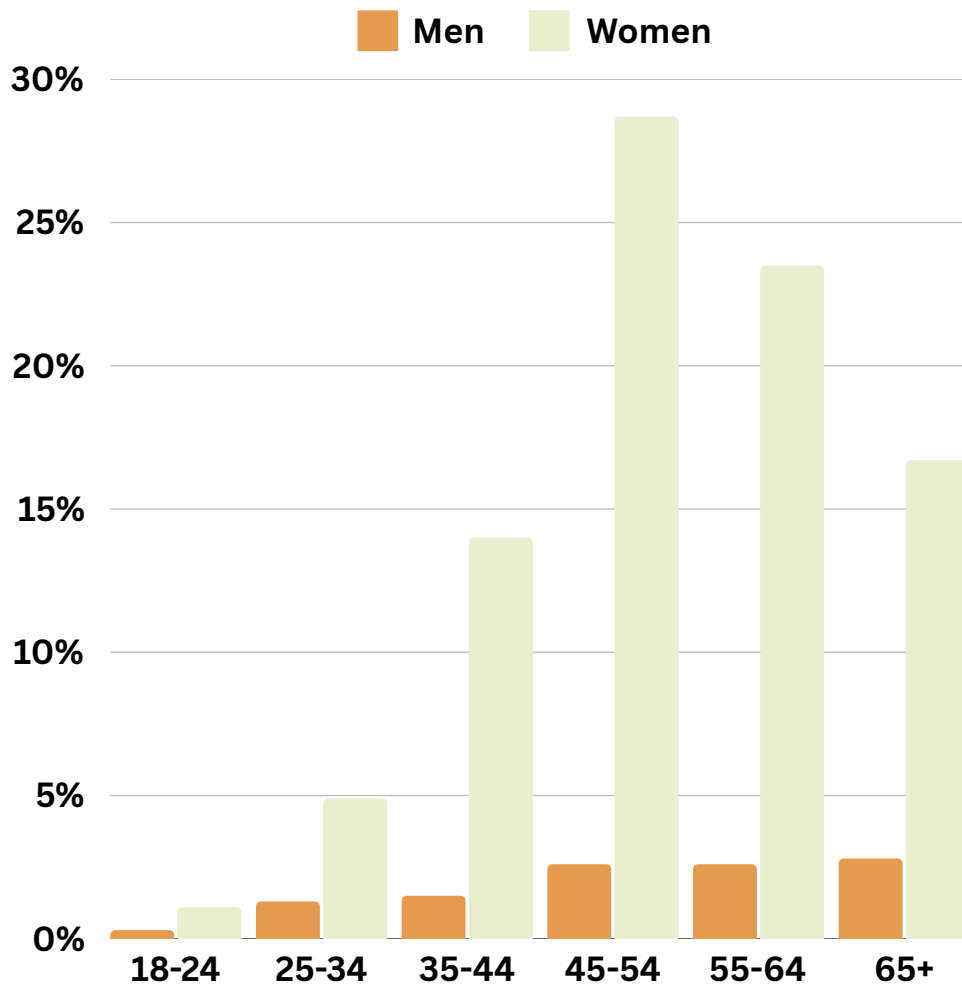


"What helped me was having someone who listened and understood what having a family member die through MAID was like. I didn't tell very many people that my mom had MAID or that she had terminal cancer because I've noticed that in general people are bad at acknowledging illness and death. **This was a safe space to talk about it all. I really liked my peer counsellor - she was so kind and generous.** She also really understood what grieving is like and at one point explained that crying is normal and that helped too."

# SOCIAL MEDIA



Our Facebook audience grew 49% in 2023 to 665 people. Overall, our audience is 89% women. We now have followers in Canada, US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Italy, South Africa, and Africa



**Audience by gender (%)**

We launched the MAID Family Support Society LinkedIn page in mid-October. As of the end of the year, we were at 27 followers and growing.



# OUTREACH

We supported the theme of growth with many outreach activities during 2023. **We connected with partner organizations and MAID programs across Canada** and **dispatched postcards** to organizations across the country to promote MFSS and help people access support when they need it.

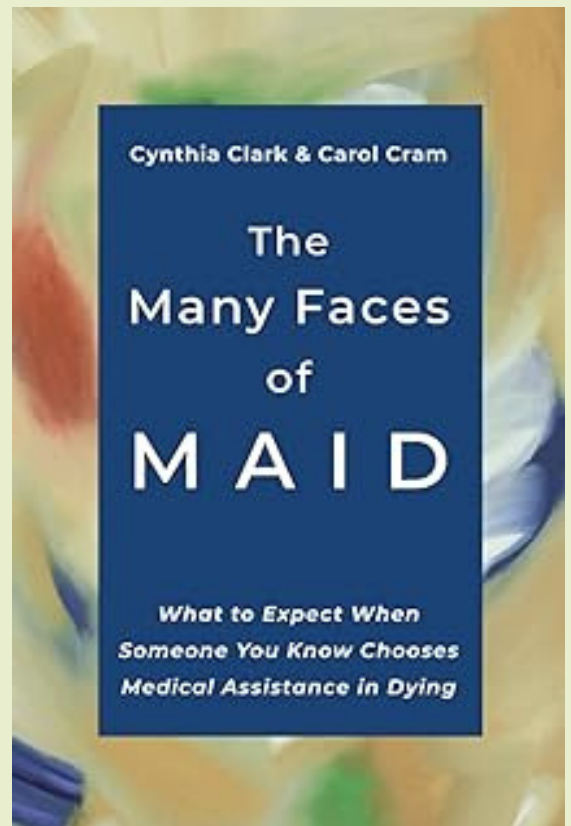
This outreach was reflected in significantly increased interest in what MFSS is doing. Over the course of the year **we received many requests for meetings and presentations** to share our insight on what support is needed for family members and loved ones when someone chooses MAID.

## Highlights

- Met with MAID assessors, providers, and support staff from different health authorities, including Island Health and Alberta Health Services
- Connected with many hospices in BC
- Established an Atlantic MAID group with representatives from MFSS, Dying With Dignity, and MAID teams from the Maritime provinces

***The Many Faces of MAID***  
was published in  
**September 2023** with all  
proceeds going to MFSS

**480 books sold**  
**\$2,490 in proceeds**



**Excerpts from reviews:**

*“This was just the book I wanted to read. It didn't exist when I first looked for it, and now that it does, I know that many, many people will benefit deeply from it.”*

*“Now that I’ve found this book, it has validated and helped me put words to all those stages from diagnosis to managing grief. I’m very grateful to to be creating my ‘new normal’ as a result.”*

*“These are real stories. This is not a ‘how to’ book about medical assistance in dying, it’s about life and death, and how we meet both. Bravo.”*

We offer our sincere gratitude to authors Cynthia Clark and Carol Cram for gifting us with this support and to all the storytellers for sharing their experiences.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amanda Dexter, ***Chair***  
Wakefield, PQ

Pauline Abrahams  
Toronto, ON

Cynthia Clark, ***Vice Chair***  
Calgary, AB

Caroline Brunt  
Vancouver, BC

Jasmin Alexander, ***Treasurer***  
Victoria, BC

Oceanna Hall  
North Saanich, BC

Robin Farr, ***Secretary***  
Calgary, AB

Susan Zwick  
NanOOSE Bay, BC

Signy Novak, ***Founder***  
Burnaby, BC

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

MAID Family Support Society received charitable status in March 2023, recognizing the value our organization provides in the community. Charitable status has allowed us to step up our fundraising efforts and to date we have received many generous donations and legacy gifts totaling over \$25,000. Ongoing donations support the work we do and will allow us to expand our efforts in 2024. Donations go towards reaching more people across the country to provide support when they need it, doing outreach to MAID-related organizations, increasing collaborations and partnerships, and enhancing our circle of care support system for volunteers.

We thank everyone who supported us with a financial contribution in 2023.

