

David Marello

Making connections

When David Marello, 75, first heard the word hospice, it struck fear. After an unexpected hospitalisation on Boxing Day 2023 David learned that he had prostate cancer and that it had spread significantly.

That morning, David had woken up unable to move his legs - an alarming symptom that marked the beginning of a new chapter for him and his wife, Carol.

After his diagnosis, a Macmillan nurse referred the couple to Highland Hospice's Rehabilitation and Wellbeing team and Sharon, one of the team members, visited David at home.

Carol recalls: "Because David's illness had been a shock, the word hospice terrified him. So Sharon said, 'Come along to Tai Chi and see how you feel about it' - and he fell in love with the place."

His initial care focused on restoring his mobility. After a month of being unable to walk at all David began - under the guidance of Highland Hospice physiotherapist Ravi - the painstaking process of relearning how to walk.

As David's progress with physiotherapy reached a natural plateau, the Hospice introduced other therapies to support his wellbeing. The Tai Chi group, led by complementary therapist Megan, helped improve balance and movement.

Regular massages also eased symptoms like restless legs and helped David feel more comfortable and agile for days afterward. Beyond the physical support, these weekly sessions offered something else equally vital - connection.

"He wouldn't have believed how much he relies on it for the support and understanding that he gets," Carol says. The group dynamic became a lifeline - a space where participants understood one another's challenges.

David puts it simply: "We've all had the same kind of thing - it's just support being around people in a similar situation. It's the friendliness of the place and the connections. You feel the better of it when you leave. Your body feels more free, especially after massage for me, and that lasts a few days. It makes a big difference in my week. It's the highlight of the week."

David's journey with Highland Hospice is a powerful testament to what can happen when care is holistic, compassionate, and community driven.



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