



Jen Catton

Category: Caregiver Innovation

Nomination was submitted by staff member and sister, Julia from Toronto.

Our mother Jane recently passed away from Stage 4 metastatic breast cancer. Her final days were spent in the palliative care unit at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto.

Towards the end of her life, mum had trouble eating, lacked an appetite, and her projected life expectancy was based largely on the amount of nutrients she took in each day. She was only able to have liquid meals, which was fortunate because mum loved chocolate ice cream but the pudding and apple sauce, not so much. Her wonderful palliative care nurses (and oldest daughter) would indulge her every whim, because the best nutrition is the one that's in you. However, her youngest daughter Jen did not wholly agree with this sentiment.

Jen wanted to make sure mum had good nutritional value in her limited food choices, and not just eat ice cream all day. After leaving the hospital one night where mum's entire daily consumption was one-and-a-half mini-ice cream cups, Jen tearfully walked through the aisles of Canadian Tire at Bay and Dundas at 10pm because she had a plan.

She purchased large silicone ice trays designed for freezing baby food and took them home to experiment. After testing a few recipes Jen successfully created a nutritious and delicious frozen treat made from a chocolate protein shake and yogurt.

Saturday morning, Jen was thrilled to offer the best of both worlds for breakfast - a nutrient packed frozen treat for mum to enjoy. The nurses and physicians on the Palliative Care Unit were equally impressed with the results and asked if they could use Jen's recipe with other patients. Jen readily agreed and proceeded to explain the correct ratio of ingredients for the best possible results. Mum only lived for another day after the nutritious treat first made its appearance, but it was one fantastic final meal.