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**Melissa Murray photo**

Politicians, organizers and board members of Kitchener's new residential hospice cut the ribbon during its opening last week. The hospice will start taking residents at the end of the week.

## Innisfree hospice opens

**By Melissa Murray**  
**Kitchener Post staff**

Innisfree House, the region's newest 10-bed residential hospice, will open its doors to residents at the end of this week.

The completion was celebrated last Thursday with a ribbon cutting and tours of the new facility, which cost about \$4.4 million to build. To date, about 95 per cent of that money has been raised.

"I almost don't believe this is happening tonight," Connie Dwyer, executive director of both Lisaard House and Innisfree House, said at the opening.

"I'm overwhelmed and proud."

The building features 10 rooms for residents, each with outdoor access, a reclining chair and couch, two sun rooms and family areas.

Downstairs is a practice space for Conestoga College students to learn about hospice and palliative care. The land for the hospice, located at 2375 Homer Watson Blvd., was donated by the college for the 10,000 square-foot building.

"Building a hospice is not like building a hospital — it's like building a home," said the hospice board's president Sheila Ainsworth.

She added the hospice was built and designed in a way that incorporates sunlight and fresh air to preserve personal dignity and promote care, comfort and closure.

Including Innisfree's sister site, Lisaard House, located in Cambridge, end of life care will be provided to more than 200 people each year. In 2012, the number of people admitted to Lisaard House was outpaced by the number of requests for residency.

While Lisaard House only admits residents facing a cancer diagnosis, Innisfree welcomes residents with any palliative illness with less than three months to live.

Walking into Innisfree House, there's a fireplace and club chairs to greet you and the outside wall has nearly floor to ceiling windows,

"We wanted a design that would be confident and something to be proud of," said Scott Patterson, of +VG architects.

"This is by far the most important project I've worked on for many years."