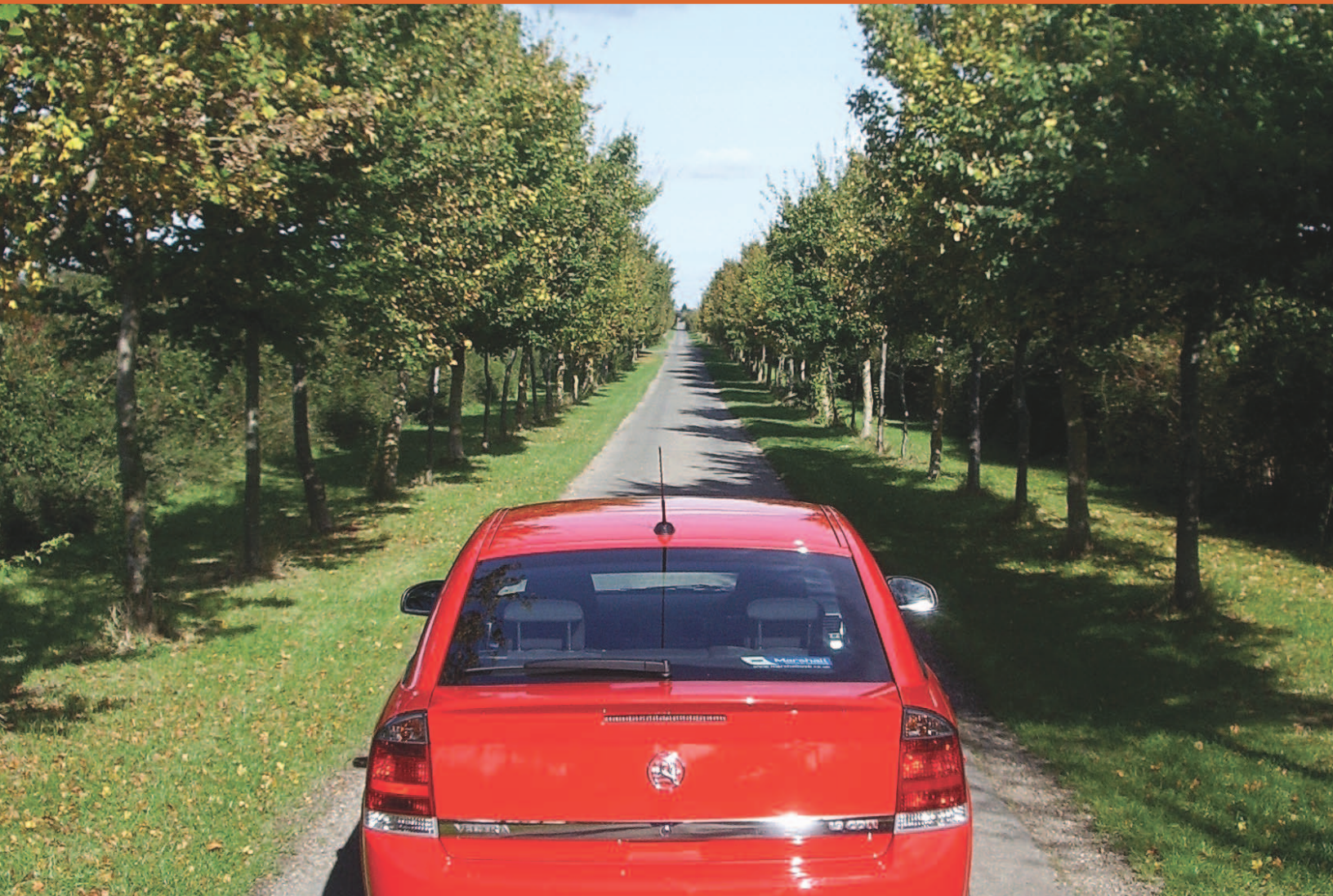


IT TAKES A TEAM



*Families talk about traveling
for care for advanced cancer*

This resource is based on families' experiences traveling for care for advanced cancer. The quotes included are from patients and family members who traveled for care from their rural communities. This resource is intended to help families who identify with the challenges around traveling for care.

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A photograph of a dirt road winding through a golden field at sunset. The road is in the foreground, leading into a vast field of tall, golden grasses. In the distance, there are rolling hills and a line of trees under a sky with soft, orange and pink hues. The overall mood is peaceful and nostalgic.

*“We’ve traveled this road
a hundred times before, but
this time it’s different.”*



“People who aren’t even that close to you, they’re there and they offer their support in the most amazing ways.”

- Patient

As we traveled for advanced cancer care our team helped out so that we could focus on us.

We found the support our team offered us was critical. They helped with the day to day by giving us information, helping with problem solving and by giving us emotional support.

Their friendship was so valuable to us. We found our communication improved and we worried less.

Who’s on your team?

- Family**
- Friends**
- Neighbours**
- Doctors**
- Nurses**
- Pharmacists**
- Other families undergoing treatment**
- Social workers**
- Counselors**
- Other _____**



The First Trip

“Ask people to help you drive, so you’re not always doing the driving. Do not just depend on the two of you.”

- Family Member

When we were worried we called to double check that we had done everything we needed. Packing our just-in-case bag and making a list of the little things you don’t always think of helped us get ready.

Sometimes things don’t go as planned, so we found someone to look after our property while we were away. All this planning helped us get into a routine that made it easier each time we traveled. We didn’t have to worry about forgetting things.

“There were days where we felt, here we go again! But pretty soon the truck would go by itself.”

- Family Member

I’m new at long distance driving...

Before making the commute I will:

- Practice driving with a friend**
- Arrange care for children and the animals**
- Make sure my vehicle has proper tires**
- Check fluids**
- Ask someone to share the driving**

What should be in your just-in-case bag?

We learned quickly that there is no such thing as being too prepared.

- List of medications and doctors' names
- Extra medication (for both of us)
- Extra clothing (for both of us)
- Blanket and pillows
- Road maps or GPS
- Snacks and water
- Peppermints for dry mouth
- Bucket with lid
- Wet wipes
- Activities to pass the time (e.g., talking or books)
- Cell phone and charger
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Candles
- Other: _____





On the Road

We prepared for anything that would happen while we were on the road.

It wasn't just about the driving. We had to think about whether rough roads were making things worse and staying on top of pain management.

We broke the trip up into stages, taking rest breaks when we needed to.

"I used visualization on the journey to help manage anxiety and prepare for treatment."

- Patient

"There were times when my family member was so sick we were not sure if we should still make the trip. When we were having trouble deciding whether to go, I called the nurse line."

- Family Member

Making the Most of It

“It’s time we can spend together. So we treasure that time and try to make each trip even better.”

- Family Member

Doing enjoyable things in the city was really nice. We went out for special dinners or made a picnic for the park. It helped make it more about our time together rather than about the treatments.

Staying overnight on treatment days or along the way gave us both a chance to get the rest we needed and some time to ourselves. Every so often we used the break to connect with friends, family, and other patients.

We talked during the drive and shared how we felt and what we were thinking about. It was time to talk about what mattered most.



“I think people just find it easier to talk in a small space. You have that extra time that’s just for us.”

- Family Member



When Money Gets Tight

“It can really add up. You know you go back and forth five or six times in a two week period and that’s quite common for a lot of people between the tests and treatments. Suddenly that’s an extra \$800 that you never imagined.”

- Family Member

“Our cancer center helped us find accommodation that didn’t cost too much. Other families going through the same stuff that we were also had ideas for us.”

- Patient

Our friends and family held fundraisers in our community to help us out.

Government refunds were definitely helpful. We made a special envelope for our receipts.

Making long-distance calls on our cell phones really added up. Calling cards were a great way to stay in touch with people from home.

Learning about financial support

- **Ask for the video or pamphlet Financial Information for Cancer Patients.**
- **Ask to speak with a patient and family counsellor, they are the experts and are there to help.**
- **Contact the Canadian Cancer Society’s Information Service to find out about financial support and other community resources:
1.888.939.3333**



Seeking Help Along the Way

“I had to learn how to take care of myself. I wasn’t expecting how tiring and stressful the traveling could be.”

- Family Member

When help was offered, we said “yes.” Sometimes we had to remind ourselves that we weren’t a burden to others, and it was okay to ask for help.

We learned it was normal to feel nervous, worried, sad and scared. Our team was there to help.

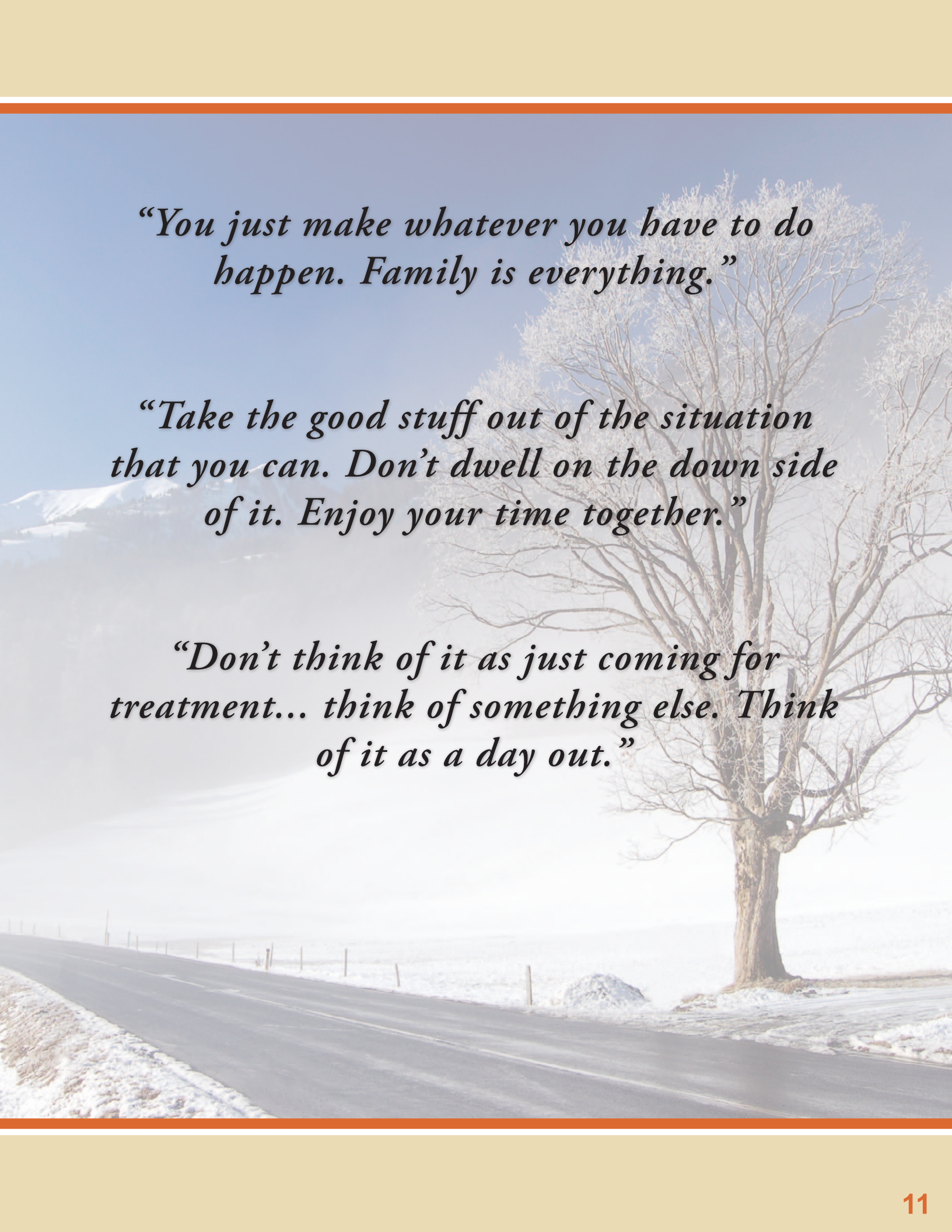
“Early on, we felt it was something the two of us could do with no help. If you’re married 43 years, you figure you can do this. But we found we needed help.”

- Family Member

We kept a list by the door to make it easier for us to get the help we needed when people came around.

Our ‘help’ list:

- Mow the lawn**
- Look after the kids on Wednesday afternoon**
- Make dinners that can be frozen and reheated**
- Take care of the animals**
- Clean the bathrooms and wash the floors**
- Help with the laundry**
- Do some of the driving**
- Plow the snow**
- _____



“You just make whatever you have to do happen. Family is everything.”

“Take the good stuff out of the situation that you can. Don’t dwell on the down side of it. Enjoy your time together.”

“Don’t think of it as just coming for treatment... think of something else. Think of it as a day out.”



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