



# KERRY GLASS

## CREATING LEGACIES OF LOVE

By Louise B. Hafesh, photography by Dan Epstein

In 2010 after learning that a local woman had passed away from cancer, leaving behind her husband and two young children ages 2 and 4, Millburn resident Kerry Glass had a nagging thought: "It struck me that her kids would never know the sound of their mom's voice, her mannerisms, or her stories," recalls the former art therapist, who holds a BA in Art focusing on photography and videography, a minor in psychology and a masters in Art Therapy. At the time, with her youngest just about school age, Glass was planning to go back to work at a local nursing home. "I thought to myself, maybe I can put my talents together to create something that would make a lasting memory for those left behind by such a tragedy."

And on that foundation, Memories Live, a registered 501c3 non-profit, was born.

"I believe that everyone has a story, but not everyone has the means as to how to share it," says Glass. It turns out she had the precise background to do just that. Influenced by Randy Pausch, the Carnegie Mellon University professor who had pancreatic cancer and video taped a "Last Lecture" that was turned into a book, she explains: "He not only wrote his story, he shared and had it filmed so his family could see, hear and read his words of wisdom whenever they wanted to. It was a lasting legacy for his loved ones that inspired me to assist those who wanted to share their stories and leave a legacy, too."

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-Kerry Glass



### From Concept to Reality...

Spurred to action, Glass hired a lawyer and never looked back. "First, I had to create a name, a logo and a brochure. It was hard to find the right wording, but somehow it all came together," she says. From there, the not-so-easy task of finding patrons took precedence. That came by way of a friend and board member whose mother-in-law was battling liver cancer and agreed to be her first client. "Once I filmed her and had a sample movie, it was a go," Glass remembers, and with prototype in hand, she turned her attention to promotion by securing a meeting with Overlook Hospital. "There I was with my iPad and a few brochures ready to share the Memories Live story," she explains. "I also went from hospital to hospital, hospice to hospice. Each place gave me more names of places and private practitioners I should talk to."

Thinking back on those days, Glass divulges, "When I started, I thought, 'I'll give this one year.' Either I'll have one year of failure and learn a lot, or I'll succeed and keep going. The first year I filmed 12 people and now Memories Live averages 20-25 clients a year. So here I am 7 years later having filmed nearly 150 individuals."



And just how does that process work? As Glass puts it, "At no cost to the families (Memories Live is supported by a fundraiser, grants and donations), we help those facing terminal illnesses to create a movie that celebrates their life, and what makes them who they are." Logistically, patrons respond to an e-mail questionnaire, after which as most are very ill, Glass follows up with a one-time filming session. "It is sometimes both mentally and physically exhausting and at the same time uplifting," she divulges. "I'm humbled that strangers let me into their lives at such a fragile stage; entrust in me to create this legacy for them. Given the opportunity to share personal & family history and memorable anecdotes, it is cathartic. Some read stories and poems, play or sing songs, others share recipes, advice, life lessons, and more."

Explaining that each movie is as different as is each individual, Glass concludes: "In the blink of an eye lives can be put in turmoil and uprooted. One day your life is normal and the next day you have a terminal illness. Knowing that I can do something for someone while they are experiencing this tragic phase of life gives me a purpose. I've learned to appreciate all I have, my health & family, much more."

**Memories Live**  
[www.memorieslive.org](http://www.memorieslive.org)

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Kerry and Neil Glass