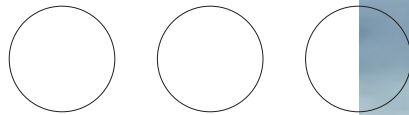
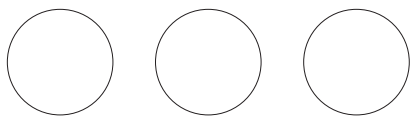

Carly Carey

From Property to Purpose:
A Local REALTOR® Creating
a Home Away From Home
for Cancer Patients and
Their Families





Carly's Lifetime of Resilience

Carly Carey believes she will survive as long as she keeps moving forward.

For the Nanaimo REALTOR®, those words are more than a hopeful outlook. They have become a way of life—one that has carried her through multiple cancer diagnoses, difficult treatments, and unimaginable uncertainty. Today, they are also the inspiration behind Carly's House, a home away from home for cancer patients and their families travelling to Nanaimo for treatment.

When we sat down with Carly for the first edition of VIREB's *Good Neighbour Report*, we expected to hear about an extraordinary community project. What we discovered was a story of resilience, compassion, and a determination to make an overwhelming journey easier for others.

Carly's own journey began when she was just 18 years old.

While attending school in Nanaimo, she was diagnosed with cancer and required frequent treatments in Victoria. The daily travel placed a tremendous emotional and financial strain on her family. Her mother used accumulated vacation time to drive Carly to appointments, while Carly eventually had to put both school and work on hold so she could focus entirely on her health.

Fortunately, the treatments were successful, and Carly spent the next 25 years in remission. During that time, she built a full and happy life, marrying her husband, Morgan, raising a family, and establishing a successful real estate career. Then, while celebrating her birthday in Japan, everything changed.

Carly became seriously ill and was admitted to hospital, where she received another life-altering diagnosis through Google Translate: lymphoma.

It was a moment few people could imagine experiencing so far from home. Yet even as she reflects on those difficult days, Carly speaks with gratitude for the exceptional medical care she received during her two-week hospital stay. Travel insurance covered the significant medical costs, allowing her and Morgan to focus on getting her well enough to return home.

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Unfortunately, the difficult news didn't end there.

Back in Nanaimo, Carly learned that the lymphoma was rare, aggressive, and Stage 4.

Doctors estimated her life expectancy at five to seven years.

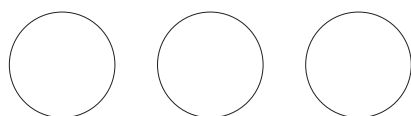
For many people, that news would have marked the end of hope.

For Carly, it became another reason to keep moving forward.

Carly Faces More Challenges and Gains More Perspective

Shortly after receiving her diagnosis, Carly was accepted into a clinical trial in Vancouver. Considering the rarity and aggressiveness of her cancer, the opportunity felt like a lifeline. Participation, however, came with its own challenges.

The intake process required Carly and Morgan to spend seven consecutive nights in Vancouver while she underwent extensive testing, met with her care team, and completed the procedures necessary to begin treatment. Like so many families facing serious illness, they absorbed the cost of travel and accommodations themselves.



Then, just moments before Carly was scheduled to begin the trial, another devastating phone call changed everything.

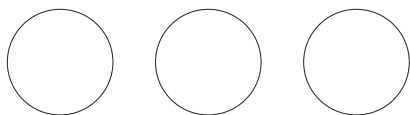
A bone marrow biopsy had revealed a second diagnosis: leukemia.

Because clinical trials have strict eligibility requirements, Carly was immediately removed from the program before receiving her first treatment.

Once again, she found herself adjusting to a new reality.

Carly returned to Vancouver Island and began chemotherapy closer to home in Nanaimo. Through it all, she gained a deeper appreciation for something many people rarely think about until illness touches their lives: proximity to care.





“I had a rushing sensation through my body, from my head to my toes,” Carly recalls of her chemotherapy treatments. “The rushing sensation inside a vehicle was nearly intolerable.”

Even the eight-minute drive home after treatment felt overwhelming.

For patients travelling from communities hours away, Carly could only imagine how much more difficult that journey would be.

The Inspiration Behind Carly's House

During treatment, Carly and Morgan met countless patients whose circumstances were even more challenging than their own.

One family's experience, in particular, stayed with them.

A patient from Port Hardy had been travelling to Nanaimo for treatment. When radiation therapy in Victoria became necessary, the family simply couldn't afford the ongoing travel and accommodation costs. Faced with an impossible decision, they declined treatment.

For Carly and Morgan, it was heartbreaking.

As they talked about how fortunate they were to live close to Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, Morgan posed a simple question: “What if we could help?”

The couple had recently purchased an investment property.

Instead of renovating it as a traditional rental, why not transform it into a place where cancer patients and their families could stay free of charge while receiving treatment?

That conversation became the beginning of Carly's House.

It wasn't simply about providing accommodation.

It was about easing one small part of an already overwhelming journey.



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A Home Designed By Experience

Every decision inside Carly's House has been shaped by lived experience.

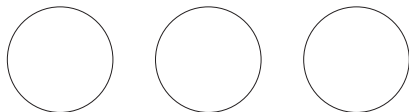
The home's current two-bedroom, one-bathroom layout is being renovated to better meet the needs of patients undergoing treatment. A second bathroom is being added because chemotherapy patients are often advised not to share bathroom facilities.

For Carly, it's about much more than practicality. "It's a dignity piece," she says. "People who are sick deserve privacy."

The renovations also address challenges that many people would never consider.

Because chemotherapy can heighten sensitivity to smells, the living room is being redesigned with doors that can separate it from the kitchen while still allowing guests to enjoy shared living spaces without overwhelming cooking odours. Accessibility has also been carefully considered, with plans to install a wheelchair-accessible ramp.

While every renovation serves a practical purpose, Carly's vision extends beyond functionality. She wants guests to feel cared for.



Patients may spend weeks away from home during treatment. Rather than providing only a place to sleep, Carly hopes to create a welcoming space where families can find comfort, privacy, and a sense of normalcy during one of the most difficult periods of their lives.

"It's not just about giving someone a roof over their head," she told us. "It's about giving them somewhere they can breathe."

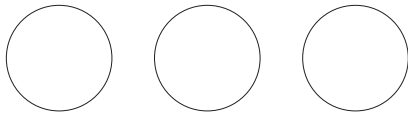
Neighbours Supporting Neighbours

If Carly has learned anything throughout her journey, it's that kindness has a way of multiplying. Since announcing the project, she and Morgan have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the Nanaimo community.

The couple has partnered with the Nanaimo Hospital Foundation, which will oversee the home's day-to-day operations and help coordinate patient stays through a dedicated social worker.

Local businesses have also stepped forward to help bring Carly's vision to life.





Donna Wall of Bob Wall Contracting has donated significant time and expertise to guide the renovation process. Other contributors—including Norm’s Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning, Islandish, an interior designer, and many others—have donated materials, labour, and professional services.

Even with that incredible support, there is still work to be done.

Carly estimates the renovations are approximately halfway complete, with about \$100,000 still needed to finish the project. Current priorities include flooring, a washer and dryer, a wheelchair-accessible ramp, and additional labour costs.

Although Carly and Morgan originally hoped to welcome their first guests in 2026, permit delays have pushed that timeline into early 2027. For the couple, however, the finish line remains firmly in sight.

What Being a Good Neighbour Means

Throughout our conversation, one thing became abundantly clear.

Carly doesn’t see herself as extraordinary.

She simply believes neighbours should help neighbours.

To her, kindness isn’t measured by the size of a donation or the scale of a project. Sometimes it’s holding a door open. Sometimes it’s bringing a bottle of water to someone working outside on a hot day. Sometimes it’s volunteering time or supporting a cause that matters.

Every act of kindness, she believes, helps build a stronger community.

“If more of us chose kindness,” she says, “we’d have a much better world.”

It’s a simple philosophy.

Yet listening to Carly speak, it’s impossible not to wonder how different our communities might look if more of us embraced it.

Looking Forward

Today, Carly continues to face cancer with the same determination that inspired the creation of Carly’s House.

She remains optimistic and deeply grateful for each day, choosing not to focus her energy on what she can’t control, but on what she can do for others.

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With Carly's House expected to welcome its first guests in 2027—and a new cancer centre planned for Nanaimo that will bring oncologists, treatment, blood work, and pharmacy services together under one roof—she is hopeful that cancer care on central Vancouver Island will become more accessible and compassionate for patients and their families.

For Carly, though, the project has never been about bricks and mortar.

It's about ensuring families don't have to choose between paying for accommodation and accessing treatment.

It's about preserving dignity.

It's about reducing one small burden during an unimaginably difficult chapter of life.

Most of all, it's about reminding people that they don't have to face cancer alone.

Perhaps that's why Carly's story resonates so deeply.

Not because it's a story about cancer.

But because it's a story about resilience.

A story about choosing hope over fear.

A story about taking one of life's greatest challenges and transforming it into something that will bring comfort to countless others for years to come.

And perhaps, above all else, it's a reminder that sometimes the best way to keep moving forward is to help someone else do the same.

How You Can Help

Donations to Carly's House can be made through the Nanaimo Hospital Foundation by selecting Carly's House under the Foundation's giving priorities. Donations are eligible for charitable tax receipts.

To learn more about the project, visit Carly's [website](#) or follow [@carlycareyrealestate](#) on Instagram for renovation updates.

Carly and Morgan also plan to host a grand opening once the home is complete. Anyone interested in attending should contact Carly through Instagram to join the guest list.

A New Series Celebrating Good Neighbours

Carly's story is the first in VIREB's *Good Neighbour Report*, a new series celebrating REALTOR® members who are making a meaningful difference in their communities.

We're grateful to Carly for sharing her journey with such honesty and generosity, and we look forward to following the progress of Carly's House as it prepares to welcome its first guests.

If you know a VIREB member whose volunteer work, charitable efforts, or community leadership deserves recognition, we'd love to hear from you. Please send your nomination to the **Communications Department** at communications@vireb.com.