

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HONOURING OUR PAST ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING

(Thunder Bay, ON. June 22, 2009) As part of the closing ceremonies for the Sister Margaret Smith Centre, St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG), held a special celebration for all graduates of St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing on June 22, 2009.

This was an opportunity to meet old friends and to say farewell to the building that was once their Nurses' Residence.

St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing was first established in 1904 and students lived in a portion of hospital. In 1928, the Neelin home was purchased and converted into the first Nurses' Residence. Enrollment in the school continued to increase and in 1955 a new Nurses' Residence was officially opened and could accommodate 108 students. The new residence was built on top of the old Neelin home and provided a home-like space for living and classrooms for learning.

In 1968, through the efforts of a joint Planning Committee, comprised of representatives from St. Joseph's General Hospital, Port Arthur General Hospital, McKellar General Hospital and Lakehead University, the Lakehead Regional School of Nursing was opened, resulting in the phasing out of the individual hospital-based nursing schools. The last class from St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing graduated in 1970. Over the 66 years in operation, the nursing school graduated 845 students.

Tracy Buckler, President & CEO, SJCG said, "As we celebrate the history of St. Joseph's Care Group, we pay tribute to the people involved in the School of Nursing for their contribution to the evolution of St. Joseph's Hospital. I enjoyed meeting the former graduates as they reminisced about their former school".

Since the school's closure, the building functioned as an ancillary building that housed clinics and other associated services. In 1972, the Smith Alcohol and Drug Abuse Clinic (later renamed the Sister Margaret Smith Centre) relocated from the hospital to the former Nurses' Residence and has been providing services at that location since then. The Sister Margaret Smith Centre will relocate once more in the fall of 2009 to a modern, state-of-the-art facility on Walnut & Lillie Streets and the land of the old Neelin home will give rise to yet another health care building. In 2010, construction will begin on a new Mental Health Rehabilitation Program which will be a new wing added to St. Joseph's Hospital.

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ST. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP
Celebrating 125 Years of Care
1884 – 2009

**St. Joseph's Hospital • St. Joseph's Heritage • Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital • Hogarth Riverview Manor • Balmoral Centre
St. Joseph's Health Centre • Behavioural Sciences Centre • Diabetes Health Thunder Bay • Sister Margaret Smith Centre**

St. Joseph's Care Group is accredited with Accreditation Canada and provides services in complex care, rehabilitation, mental health and addictions, long-term care and supportive housing. Community programs are provided at Frank Murphy Community Centre.

St. Joseph's Care Group has approximately 1700 employees and over 400 volunteers. With an annual operating budget of \$125M, SJCG is the fifth largest employer in Thunder Bay. To learn more about SJCG, visit the web site at www.sjcg.net