

Mission Moment – Hospice Holiday Memorial Services in St. Joseph's Hospital's Chapel

"I love the fact that my mom was remembered and that she meant something. To me it was almost like she was honoured. It was beautiful to do this at Christmas time, and the angel (placed on the tree) represented her being there. The fact that she was not only cared for while living, and while at the end of her life, but she was also cared for and thought of after death - that means something to me. I want to thank all the staff on the hospice floor for all the work they do day in and day out caring for people at the end of their lives. You cared for my mom with respect and grace, and it meant the world to me."

~ Emilia Honke, the family member of a client who passed in hospice



As we advance our vision of becoming a leader in client-centred care, we plan through the lens of Quality, Safety and Risk. Our Strategic Plan 2020-2024 will focus on four key Strategic Priorities:

Here for Our Clients

To address unmet needs through the provision of quality services.

Here for Our Partners

To transform the healthcare system.

Here for Our People

To support staff, physicians and volunteers to live our values.

Here for Our Future

To ensure continued organizational sustainability.

Here for Our Clients

Remembering Love: Heartwarming Hospice Holiday Memorial Services

To honour loved ones who have passed in the Hospice unit over the last year, the Hospice/Palliative Care team at St. Joseph's Hospital hosted two Hospice Holiday Memorial Services on December 6th, 2023.

The services provided comfort and support to families who have experienced the loss of a loved one, especially during the holidays which can be a particularly difficult time. The event was attended by over 50 family members as well as unit staff. Attendees were given angels to hang on a Christmas tree to honour their loved ones. Staff also said a few words in remembrance and supported those who attended in their grieving journeys.

The Hospice Holiday Memorial Services served as a compassionate reminder that, even during difficult times, the spirit of community and support can provide strength to those around us.



Holiday Cheer in Long-Term Care

This year, Bethammi Nursing Home and Hogarth Riverview Manor (HRM) joyfully welcomed the return of students over the holiday season. Student holiday visits had been temporarily paused as we collectively responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students from École Catholique Franco-Supérieur, St. Bernard Catholic Elementary School, and Woodcrest Public School visited with residents of Bethammi Nursing Home, bringing the gift of music. Residents truly loved the visits, with many asking, *“When can they visit again?”*

Residents of HRM participated in Christmas performances alongside students from St. Vincent Elementary School and Confederation College’s Recreation Therapy Program. HRM also saw the return of a well-loved Christmas Eve tradition: carolling. The therapeutic recreation team, with their very own Santa Claus (Terry, a resident at HRM), visited each unit, singing everyone’s favourite holiday classics and encouraging them to join in.

Additional Bed for High Support Housing

Supportive housing plays a crucial role in the lives of people living with serious mental illness. More than just a place to live, supportive housing is a safe, community-integrated home environment and can be a key part of reducing homelessness experienced by people living with mental illness. Right now, the demand for supportive housing far exceeds its availability. As of January 1, 2024, there are 13 people who have been accepted for admission to St. Joseph’s Care Group’s (SJCG) medium or high support housing but are waiting for space to become available.

Evergreen, a high support home owned by Northern Linkage and operated by SJCG, currently serves as a residence for five clients. Recognizing the need for additional capacity, SJCG has partnered with Northern Linkage to carry out a modest renovation to increase the home’s capacity to six.

On January 15th, 2024, a client from St. Joseph’s Hospital will be discharged to Evergreen’s newest space. It is a change that creates new space for a client who has been waiting for supportive housing for over half a year at St. Joseph’s Hospital. At Evergreen, the client can live independently, with the supports needed for a healthy, high quality of life.



Partnering with Local Biomedical Company for Innovative Wound Care

The Outpatient Wound Care Program at St. Joseph’s Hospital provides comprehensive, interprofessional wound care service for clients in Thunder Bay area and is a hub within the network supporting the Regional Wound Care Program. Many of the clients receiving care at the wound clinic have difficulty to heal diabetic foot ulcers (DFUs). This client population typically experiences slower healing rates and complications that can result in pain, infection, mobility impairment and even lower limb amputation. Difficult to heal DFUs contribute to the disproportionate amputation rate within our region, three times the provincial average, and is even more prevalent among Indigenous Peoples.

Recently, the Wound Care Program partnered with RegenMed in an Ontario Health-funded pilot project with the goal of adopting a new and innovative wound care product into practice. DermGEN is an advanced regenerative tissue matrix produced by RegenMed, a Thunder Bay-based not-for-profit tissue bank that aims to save and improve lives through the advancement of regenerative technologies.

The project will explore the best practice protocol expected to improve wound healing closure rates and quality of life, and in the longer term, reduce amputation rates in the Northwest and the related costs to the health care system. The first client was treated on December 6, 2023, and an evaluation of this pilot project will take place later this year.

Matawa Partnership Featured in Healthcare Quarterly

St. Joseph's Care Group's (SJCG) Oshkibiimaates Wiidoogakewin program (Matawa Partnership) was featured in the November issue of Healthcare Quarterly. Co-written by SJCG's Oshkibiimaates Wiidoogakewin supervisor Ashley Palmer and Matawa Education and Care Centre principal Brad Battiston, the article conveyed the unique partnership between SJCG and Matawa First Nations Management to provide holistic and culturally safe mental health and addictions services for the youth attending the Matawa Education and Care Centre located in Thunder Bay. It was a fantastic opportunity to share our unique, collaborative initiative and the client-centred care being provided to Indigenous youth with other healthcare organizations across the country.

Healthcare Quarterly, owned by Longwoods, is a respected publication featuring best practices, policy and innovations in the administration of healthcare and is edited by members of the University of Toronto's Institute of Health Policy, Management & Evaluation. The article is available online at Longwoods.com, and can be viewed using this link:

<https://www.longwoods.com/content/27219/healthcare-quarterly/oshkibiimaates-wiidoogakewin-a-partnership-between-matawa-first-nations-management-and-st.-joseph->



Staff & Volunteer Holiday Lunches

Holiday lunches are back! Celebrating together is a big part of St. Joseph's Care Group's culture and how we connect with each other, and it was deeply missed during the pandemic. Hundreds of staff and volunteers attended, with lunches taking place at four sites over the month of December. It's impossible to share all of the messages of thanks for the return of the holiday lunch, expressions of appreciation for our Nutrition & Food Services team for the exceptional meals, and the joyful new connections or reconnections with coworkers and volunteers.



International Volunteer Day Celebrations

International Volunteer Day is held each year on December 5. This year's theme was recognizing the power of collective action with the tagline *if everyone did*.

At St. Joseph's Care Group, we see the impact that our volunteers have on the lives of our clients and across our organization each day. To celebrate International Volunteer Day and recognize our volunteers, events were held at St. Joseph's Hospital and Hogarth Riverview Manor including a luncheon with games and an evening with Christmas music and cake. More than 30 volunteers joined us. Just as it is important to acknowledge our volunteers on this special day, anytime you see a volunteer please let them know how much you appreciate all they do.



Hogarth Riverview Manor Residents Give Back to Our Community

Residents of Hogarth Riverview Manor wanted an opportunity to give back to the community, especially individuals currently struggling with homelessness. They chose to support Elevate NWO, an organization that delivers health care supplies, meals, and support to individuals living in homeless encampments throughout Thunder Bay.

What began as a holiday project on the Groves (ground level) quickly extended to residents across the Home. They spent a day baking Christmas treats, creating holiday cards and making hand crafted gifts for those in need.

Everyone who participated in this activity felt joy and pride in being able to give back, with 30 people in the community receiving a gift. Meaningful activities are an important dimension of overall wellbeing, especially at a time of year when many hold long traditions of giving dear to their hearts.



Showcasing SJCG's Many Career Options to Graduating Nurses

St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) held our first New Graduate Nursing Showcase on Wednesday, December 13th, 2023, at the St. Joseph's Hospital site. The event was hosted by management together with clinical representation, including Collaborative Practice, Human Resources, Learning & Development, and N'doo'wee Binesi team members.

The purpose of the event was to engage with upcoming Bachelor of Science Nursing Graduates on the depth and range of nursing career opportunities and supportive environment that SJCG has to offer. Those in attendance had the opportunity to learn from and ask questions of the members of the management team and frontline staff of various programs. Additionally, we highlighted the support offered to newly graduating nurses by our Collaborative Practice team. Our Clinical Educators shared information about their roles, including providing orientation to staff and preparing them with the knowledge and skills to begin orientation at the unit level and providing ongoing clinical skill support at the unit level and in the simulation lab. Our Clinical Scholars highlighted the ongoing mentorship and guidance they provide new graduate nurses at the bedside during their first year of practice.

The event resulted in confirmed interviews, and created important in-person connections with graduates who are considering St. Joseph's Care Group for future employment.