

Mission Moment

Ana first began volunteering with St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) in March 2023 after learning about the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP). Since joining the program, she's been a beacon of warmth and support for clients at St. Joseph's Hospital. "It's about the compassion we need to feel in our hearts for people," says Ana. "To be grateful for everything we have in our life."

Ana explains that each client has their own experiences and it's important to talk to them and listen to what they need in the moment. Some people might need physical supports, while others just want someone to keep them company and talk with them about their favourite things. "I was able to understand how people in the hospital might need help, a hand, or just someone to listen," says Ana.

We extend our gratitude to Ana and all the HELP volunteers for their commitment to our clients. Together, with volunteers like Ana and the inspiring work of programs like HELP, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our clients.

Want to hear more of Ana's story? Be sure to visit SJCG on Facebook or LinkedIn.



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

Joint Transitions in Care Committee

Established in February 2024, the Joint Transitions in Care Committee is a forum for active collaboration and problem solving around specific issues affecting transitions in care between the partnering health care organizations. Committee work will align with and support the system flow and capacity priorities, including Alternate Level Care reduction strategies for Home and Community Care Support Services North West, St. Joseph's Care Group, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, and Ontario Health North West. The Joint Transitions in Care Committee will:

- Identify and prioritize gaps in the referral pathways and work towards removing process and practice barriers;
- Set, review, and monitor transitions indicators;
- Monitor client experience;
- Develop work plans to improve performance;
- Measure and find solutions that remove barriers in transitions ;
- Review transitions pathways across the care continuum; and
- Identify and address areas for quality improvement.

The Committee will focus on strategies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of client transitions across health care sectors within Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario.

High Support Housing – Paint Night

Participating in art has been proven to provide a recovery-oriented, whole-person centred approach that offers many benefits in mental health rehabilitation. Recently, SJCG Mental Health High Support Housing clients participated in a paint night hosted at Amethyst House. Clients came together from all the other High Support homes to enjoy an evening of painting, socializing and snacks, prepared by the clients and assisted by staff.

Many of the clients have displayed their paintings in their rooms and a few clients have framed their paintings to display in their home for all to enjoy. The event was a success and the paintings created were unique and creative expressions. The clients are already planning for the next paint night.



Specialized Roles Making a Difference in Long-Term Care

In the fall of 2023, SJCG received funding through Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) to implement new roles that support best practices in delivering care to people with responsive behaviours due who are living in a long-term care home. Gerald Bolduc, a Personal Support Worker (PSW), is one of the three new Behavioural Services Leads at Hogarth Riverview Manor (HRM)

HRM currently has a large group of first-year Lakehead University Nursing students completing their clinical placements. One of the residents assigned to a student was experiencing an increase in their responsive behaviour, including agitation and combativeness, and as a result, the student was struggling to provide care. Gerald observed this challenge and he could see that the student had become apprehensive about continuing to provide care to the resident.

Gerald worked directly with the student. Together they reviewed the resident’s plan of care and their individual behavioral strategies. Gerald then personally assisted the student to provide effective and compassionate care for the resident, demonstrating the skills and strategies to best support the resident.

The Lakehead University nursing instructor contacted our Associate Administrator, noting that Gerald’s observation, instruction and kindness had an overwhelmingly positive influence on the student. They indicated that this particular encounter, support, and assistance the student received really made a difference. The instructor was so impressed and grateful for the kindness and mentorship and noted that it may have actually helped the student make the decision to continue in their nursing program.

Here for Our Partners

Building Relationships with First Nation Partners

The North West Regional Rehabilitative Care Program Manager, Denise Taylor, and the North West Regional Wound Care Program Manager, Allison Luther, were invited to meet with the Home and Community Care Programs and Chiefs and Councils of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug and Webequie First Nations in January and February 2024.

Building relationships and making connections with First Nation communities helps regional programs build capacity, improve access to care through co-design of unique roles, such as the Community Rehabilitation Worker role, and introduce prevention and best practice care. SJCG continues to take on new regional leadership roles across multiple sectors.

Nutrition Program at the Lodge on Dawson

The Lodge on Dawson is a transitional housing program that supports individuals in their goals for mental health and substance use. The program provides individual and group support to reduce barriers to living in the community using a biopsychosocial

rehabilitative approach to develop and enhance life skills, connections to community supports and fulfill meaningful life roles as they prepare to reintegrate into the community.

In February 2024, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) provided nutrition programming to clients. The program was led by a Registered Dietitian and consisted of three components:

1. A presentation and open discussion around budgeting
2. Preparing a nutritious meal
3. Sharing the meal together

Clients had the opportunity to ask questions; learned how to budget for nutritious food items on a limited income; and practiced skills, with each assigned a role to prepare the meal including washing, chopping and mixing ingredients. This provided each client an experiential learning opportunity to plan, make and enjoy the meal while discussing the benefits of nutritious eating and how they can sustain this once they transition to the community. The nutrition program, hosted by the TBDHU, was a success and is now integrated into regular programming at the Lodge on Dawson.

Here for Our People

Raising Awareness of Delirium



March 13 was this year's World Delirium Awareness Day. Volunteer Services and the HELP partnered to offer a workshop for volunteers on the importance of early recognition and intervention, and to raise awareness of the latest delirium research, guidelines, and best practices.

This collaborative event included presentations by Zdenka Fabiano, Community Psychogeriatric Resource Consultant, Colette Proulx, physiotherapist, and dietician students. Topics covered the impact delirium has on mobility, nutrition, and engagement. Volunteers appreciated the opportunity to learn, network and discuss their experiences.

Thriving Nursing Careers in Long-Term Care

Theresa Bonifacio had been working part-time as a Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) at Bethammi Nursing Home when she decided to return to school in 2021. Lakehead University offers a compressed Registered Nurse (RN) program that enabled Theresa to continue working casually while pursuing her RN certification. During her time in school, Theresa worked as an RPN on the units and as the wound lead for our Mandatory Quality Program.

The Bethammi team is very happy to report that Theresa is finishing her schooling in April 2024 and has accepted a permanent full-time RN position. She will also continue supporting the wound program, and the team at Bethammi is pleased to be able to support any ongoing related education. Congratulations Theresa! Assisting people in "laddering up" in their profession through finances and/or flexible scheduling, is supportive of the individual while also a key health human resource strategy.

Here for Our Future

Educating Health Care Students to Support Older Adults with Responsive Behaviours.

New graduates of health care programs entering the acute care setting have been observed to lack the foundational knowledge to support older adults with, or at risk of, responsive behaviours. Given the current trajectory of more people living with dementia, foundational knowledge will be critical to successful care. The SJCG BSO team collaborated with Confederation College to explore an opportunity to improve the foundational knowledge of RPN and PSW students to support older adults with, or at risk of, responsive behaviours.

During the 2024 winter semester, the BSO team facilitated education sessions on dementia, related impairments, strategies to support clients, delirium, depression, communication strategies, and person-centred language, to two RPN classes and one PSW class, reaching 85 students. Student Evaluation Surveys indicated that 91% of students have a better understanding of responsive behaviours and helpful strategies, and their confidence and in-depth knowledge increased in 16 areas of care.

Given the success of this education initiative, further discussions are required to continue education sessions for students. The Behavioural Support Education Lead will follow up on this initiative and explore educational opportunities with other healthcare programs.

Regional Indigenous Knowledge Gathering Event: *Walking Together with Humility*

As we continue the journey of walking together with humility, we must pause and reflect on the knowledge and stories shared at N'doo'owe Binesi's Indigenous Knowledge Gathering Event March 18th & 19th, 2024. The purpose of the gathering was to create a space and place for Indigenous Peoples and allies to continue the discussion of addressing Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination within the health care sector in a spirit-centered way.



One such story that keynote speaker, storyteller and renowned Indigenous artist Isaac Murdoch shared highlighted the importance of looking at issues and problems from other perspectives and viewpoints. Sometimes we need to look at things from a lens of beautiful to create more beautiful, as opposed to a lens of ugly to try to fix the ugly. Make Beautiful. We need to make more beautiful to see the good outshine the bad.

In their keynote address, Dr. James Makokis and his partner Anthony Johnson shared similar points of consideration throughout their presentations. The takeaway message highlighted compassion and love as a centre point of the work that we do, and “what is your message” that is left behind in the world. The message Dr. Makokis shared is that “love will heal our patients,” and it is our birthright as Indigenous Peoples to be happy. This focus on love, compassion and healing aligns well with SJCG’s newly developed Mission, Vision and Values.

Much of the feedback heard throughout the two-day event highlighted the need for additional knowledge gathering events like this to allow culture to be the medicine that helps holistically heal Indigenous Peoples, communities and nations. Read more about the Regional Indigenous Knowledge Gathering Event by visiting SJCG on Facebook and LinkedIn.