

Leadership Team Report

June 2024



Mission Moment

During Nursing Week (May 6-12, 2024) SJCG's nurses shared inspiration of their own through their stories, experiences, and advice for anyone starting a career in nursing. Here is what they had to say:



Leigh M is part of the Nursing Float Team at St. Joseph's Hospital, and nursing as her second career. She notes, "I talk to clients when *they* need to talk, which is the reason I work at St. Joe's. I LOVE my career."

Sweta Z joined SJCG in 2018. An internationally educated nurse, Sweta began her career with SJCG as a PSW and, after meeting eligibility requirements, transferred to the RPN position. Her career has flourished, and she has exciting news to share: "Recently, with the support of the Care Group, I have been able to achieve my RN licence and have been offered a full time RN position."



Allison A is a Nurse Practitioner at Sister Margaret Smith Centre, and also provides medical support to clients of Crossroads Centre, but her roots at SJCG run deep. "My mom was part of the first graduating class of the Lakehead School of Nursing, and spent most of her career in Pediatrics at St. Joseph's Hospital." Allison also taught swimming lessons at St. Joseph's Heritage, and worked as an RN at Diabetes Health.

"Hold onto those amazing moments...that 'thank you' from a client. If you do, you will always bring the best of yourself to work," is great advice from Meghan F, who is part of the Comprehensive Community Support Team in Medical Outreach, St. Joseph's Health Centre. Meghan has been with SJCG since 2018 when she was a float at St. Joseph's Hospital.



Allie S is an RPN who has worked with SJCG for 10 years. She recently made the move from the unit to the role of Indigenous Health Associate, supporting Indigenous clients throughout their care journey. "We are advocates for clients," said Ally. "We are mending the gap in our health care system between Indigenous Health and Western Medicine."

It seems that Linda T was destined to become a nurse. "Starting at the tender age of 3, I saw nurses doing amazing things and knew that was what I wanted to do with my life," commented Linda, who works in Child & Adolescent Psychiatry at Sister Margaret Smith Centre. To nurses at the beginning of their career, Linda has sage advice: "Get a good foundation when starting...and then go on to everything that nursing has to offer. Always learn and grow, and you will never 'burn out'."



~ Thank you to All Nurses at St. Joseph's Care Group



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**

Tenants Thrive As Volunteers & Ambassadors!

As Audrey Hepburn once famously said, “As you grow older, you will discover you have two hands – one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.” That is just what many of the residents living in Seniors Supportive Housing are doing, helping others. Research has shown that volunteering promotes physical and mental health, reduces stress, and nurtures new relationships.

The Recreation staff at PR Cook and Sister Leila Greco Apartments (SLG) engage and support tenants by offering a variety of programs and volunteer opportunities. Some tenants have also registered as Volunteers, assisting staff with programs both within their home site and across St. Joseph’s Care Group. The tenants feel more connected the community when they can support activities, their peers, and the staff.



The Sister Lila Greco Ambassadors Program promotes independence and community. The Ambassadors are longer term SLG tenants, and their role is to create a warm welcome for new tenants. They introduce the newcomers to other tenants, give them information on recreational programs and outings, and encourage them to join in. They also help with navigating around the building and campus, and make moving to a new home that much easier.

Therapy Dog Visit in High Support Housing

Encouraging physical exercise, enhancing social interaction and working on verbal and non-verbal communication skills are some of the many benefits of pet therapy.

As soon as they heard about an upcoming visit from a therapy dog, clients of Amethyst House were buzzing with excitement. To get ready for their visitor, clients made homemade dog treats. On the afternoon of the visit, some clients engaged by taking the dog for a walk while others chose to sit quietly and pat the pup, making it a welcome part of their home.



The clients are looking forward to the pet therapy dog’s next visit.

Spinal Cord Injury Implementation, Evaluation & Quality Care Consortium

St. Joseph's Hospital's Inpatient Physical Rehabilitation Unit (3rd floor) launched the first Community Participation domain project for the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) National Consortium in January of 2024. Aimed at improving quality of life for people transitioning from hospital to a home or a community setting, staff actively assist clients living with SCI to set goals and go on outings in the community *before* discharge. Outings provide a safe way for clients to meet a goal that they have set, building the skills and confidence they need, with time to work on areas where they may need some additional supports, skills, practice, or tactics.

A total of 74 clients have participated to date. As one client reported, "I was surprised how easy the car transfer went and I had no issues walking the distances I needed to at home. I was really nervous if I would have enough energy for the outing home, but I did! I really enjoyed myself."

Outcomes related to the Community Participation domain will be submitted quarterly to the national consortium for ongoing quality improvement and the successful processes will be embedded into clinical practice. A big thanks to the project team; Dr. Hanan El Sherif, Ron Turner, Stephanie Schurr, Matt and Morgan from SCI Ontario, Andy - Client & Family Partner, Madeline Hongisto, Kiri Simpson, Jessica Popert, Angie Damianakos, Kaitlyn Ciddio, Jacqueline Veneruz, Tanis Banovsky, and Denise Taylor.



Addiction Bed Stabilization Enhancement Pilot

In May, St. Joseph's Care Group received a letter confirming three years of funding to extend an important pilot initiative. The pilot began on April 1, 2022, with the goal of implementing 10 addiction stabilization beds and 4 withdrawal management beds between 3 partner organizations including St. Joseph's Care Group, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, and NorWest Community Health Centres. This pilot successfully demonstrated the need to match clients with the right service when it is needed, and to the support services that align with individual goals for harm reduction, stabilization, day treatment, or live-in treatment.

The pilot evaluation demonstrated the high utilization that these additional beds provided in the system. In 2023:

- The stabilization beds at the Sister Margaret Smith Centre exceeded the target for resident days by more than 25%.
- At Balmoral Centre, admission/occupancy for the two additional withdrawal management beds was 100%.

For individuals living in the District of Thunder Bay, having access to transportation services to and from the city eliminated the barrier to accessing addiction services in Thunder Bay. Arrangements were in place prior to discharge for a coordinated and safe return home.

Throughout the pilot period, recommendations to address identified areas for improvement and maintaining pathways that supported the success of this initiative were reviewed and evaluated through client surveys and feedback from partners. These key lessons learned were incorporated into the successful proposal for continued funding. St. Joseph's Care Group, as the lead organization, administers the funds to support this pilot at Balmoral Centre, Sister Margaret Smith Centre, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, and NorWest Community Health Centres.

The need for stabilization beds has been clearly demonstrated, and the results are indicative of more coordinated, efficient and supported transitions in care between acute withdrawal management services and longer-term recovery and live-in treatment programs in collaboration with providers involved in the individual's care and treatment journey. Every admission to Balmoral Centre is viewed as a diversion from the Emergency Department.

Talent Beyond Boundaries

Talent Beyond Boundaries is a non-profit organization that connects skilled refugees with countries and organizations that need their expertise. It opens opportunities for people who are displaced to migrate safely, use their training and experience, and rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose. Working with employers in Canada, the USA, the UK, and Australia, they have a talent pool of more than 100,000 people. Refugees have expertise but often lack opportunities, and many find themselves in countries where they do not have the right to work locally and are locked out of skilled migration systems.

In February 2023, St. Joseph's Care Group entered a partnership with Talent Beyond Boundaries, focusing on candidates to fill needed personal support worker positions in long-term care. Since then, we have successfully recruited 20 skilled people who are at various stages of the immigration process, with expected arrival dates throughout 2024. We welcomed our first new employee through this program earlier this month and they are now working as a Personal Support Worker at Hogarth Riverview Manor.

In April, a team from St. Joseph's Care Group travelled to a hiring event in Argentina where they had the opportunity to meet and interview amazing talent from Venezuela, Cuba, and Nigeria. They also met with officials from the United Nations Refugee Agency and representatives from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and the Association of Venezuelan Nurses in Argentina. After a successful week, job offers were made to 14 internationally trained nurses who will join our team early next year as Personal Support Workers and Registered Practical Nurses.

St. Joseph's Care Group is accessing an untapped source of talent, using ethical recruitment to source resilient, determined, loyal, and skilled employees. The program lifts people and their families out of displacement and contributes to a more diverse and rich workplace for all. Not only will this initiative positively impact our organization's health human resource challenges, but the program will enrich our teams, transform lives, and enhance our community.

Serious Illness Conversation Program

The Serious Illness Conversation Program (SIC-P) is a validated, evidence-based, systematic intervention for improving serious illness care planning. The aims of the SIC-P are that every seriously ill patient will have earlier, better and more frequent serious illness conversations with their clinicians about their goals, values, and priorities that will inform their future care. In clinical trials, the program also resulted in a reduction in anxiety and depression among clients living with a serious illness.

As part of the sustainability plan for Early Identification of Palliative Care, the North West Regional Palliative Care Program supported 23 interprofessional team members from across St. Joseph's Care Group to participate in the Serious Illness Conversation Program. The program provided resources and tools to build staff capacity in supporting these challenging conversations with our patients and families.



Dr. Greg Carfagnini Receives Ontario Medical Association's Section on Addiction Medicine Physician Achievement Award

Since 1921, the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) awards program has recognized physicians for their contributions to the medical profession and healthcare in Ontario. This May, the OMA awarded Dr. Greg Carfagnini, a physician at St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG), with the Section on Addiction Medicine Physician Achievement Award.

Addiction Medicine is a medical specialty that focuses on the care and treatment of individuals with substance use disorders. Dr. Carfagnini works in a variety of settings throughout SJCG, Thunder Bay, and Northwestern Ontario supporting individuals to access the compassionate care they deserve. Through his leadership and mentorship, Dr. Carfagnini has focused on helping to grow the addiction medicine specialty in our region to ensure even greater access to care. Congratulations Dr. Carfagnini on this outstanding achievement!



Here for Our Future

NOSM University Faculty Awards - Community Champion Award



Denise Taylor, a physical therapist and associate faculty member, was awarded the Community Champion Award by Dr. Sarita Verma, President, Vice-Chancellor, Dean and CEO of NOSM University. The Community Champion Award recognizes a Clinical Sciences faculty member who has significantly impacted their community through clinical services, teaching, research, volunteer work, or other community involvement, continually advocating accessibility for the best health care available.

In her role as the Manager of St. Joseph's Care Group's Regional Rehabilitation Care Program (RRCP), Denise collaborated with academic community partners and Indigenous communities to co-design, develop and deliver a curriculum proving the value of a new role: Community Rehabilitation Worker supporting First Nations communities. Community Rehabilitation Workers facilitate successful transitions back to the community following a stay in hospital to continue with their rehabilitation, creating more equitable access where rehabilitative care services did not previously exist. The Workers have strong ties with the RRCP, which provides subject matter expertise as needed to help sustain care in the community. It is just one example of how Denise is championing care across Northwestern Ontario. Congratulations on building stronger, healthier and more connected communities now and for the future, Denise!