

Mission Moment

Recently, the Indigenous Health Clinical and Traditional Healing teams at St. Joseph's Hospital connected with a client who identified as Métis following inpatient admission. Throughout their stay, the client actively participated in sharing circles, fostering a sense of community and cultural connection. As they approached the end of their life, the team facilitated traditional healing ceremonies, practices that are vital in Indigenous culture to promote spiritual healing and connection.

The client's family expressed gratitude in their obituary, stating, "On his final evening, he had a smudging ceremony with drumming, singing, and prayers from the Indigenous caregivers at St. Joe's." Although this loss is deeply felt, the team takes comfort in knowing their efforts helped him reconnect with his heritage and provided solace for his family.

- Submitted by the N'doo'owe Binesi team

Drive High-Quality People-Centred Care

Empowering Seniors to "Stay Active"



As people age, there are often fewer opportunities to socialize, which can lead to a sense of isolation and feelings of depression. *Stay Active* is a St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) community-based maintenance exercise program for people aged 65 and over. This program provides an opportunity for older adults to be physically active and connect with the community. It also creates opportunities for people to build relationships beyond the program.

For the past three years, *Stay Active* has been operating at the Oliver Road Recreation Centre. With recent support from the provincial government, *Stay Active* established a second location at West Thunder Community Centre. Similar to Oliver Road, West Thunder is a safe and welcoming gathering place that provides programs and events to meet the needs of the community. Offering this program at a second location on the other side of the city has improved access to this program by reducing transportation barriers. Currently, an average of 45 people participate every week, either at West Thunder or Oliver Road.

Bringing Smiles to Clients



On October 7, SJCG partnered with Carolyn Weiss Mobile Dental Hygiene Services to bring an essential component of holistic care to our clients at Crossroads Centre. This initiative focused on improving access to dental services for individuals facing significant barriers to care, promoting healthier lives in our community. It was made possible through the generous support of Gift from the Heart charity.

By using a refurbished ambulance as a mobile dental van, Carolyn's team provided dental services in a setting prioritizing convenience, comfort, and dignity. Registered dental hygienists delivered comprehensive oral health services, including assessments, disease management, prevention-based treatments, and education on good oral hygiene. These services are vital in helping every client maintain a healthy smile and improve overall wellbeing.



SJCG is committed to breaking down barriers to care and ensuring accessible, holistic health services are available for clients. The clients at Crossroads Centre, a unique group and integral part of the broader community, deserve the opportunity to access the care they need to thrive. This initiative reflects our dedication to supporting clients' health journeys, empowering them to live fuller lives and strengthen connections within the community.

Nurture our People

St. Joseph's Care Group Honoured with Employer Champion Award



On October 8th, 2024, the Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission held an event to celebrate the Rural Northern Immigration Pilot Program's remarkable success. We are excited to announce that SJCG was honoured with the 2024 Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Employer Champion Award at this event. Our commitment to fostering community growth and diversity remains steadfast.

The Rural Northern Immigration Pilot Program, which ended on August 31, 2024, was a community-driven immigration program that launched in 2019. Designed to spread the benefits of economic immigration to smaller communities by creating a path to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers across Canada, Thunder Bay was one of 11 communities selected for the pilot. SJCG was an early participant, hiring for a range of positions including Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses, Personal Support Workers, and Registered Pharmacy Technicians.

Over the past five years, SJCG has proudly assisted numerous people and families in finding permanent employment and establishing new lives in Thunder Bay.

In alignment with our mission, vision, and values, we are continually exploring innovative recruitment and retention strategies, like the Rural Northern Immigration Pilot Program, to enhance our organizational diversity and strengthen our community.

Lead and Enhance Regional Specialized Care

2024 North West Geriatric Care Conference



The North West Regional Seniors' Care Program, in partnership with the Centre for Education and Research on Aging & Health, hosted the first in-person North West Geriatric Care Conference since 2020 on September 23, 2024. More than 140 health service providers from across Northwestern Ontario attended to hear from a range of experts on the theme of *Adapting to Change and Complexity in Older Adult Care*.

Two SJCG teams presented at the conference. Nicole Lee, Indigenous Health Associate, and Elton Beardy, Cultural Practitioner, presented the methods of Culturally Safe Care offered to clients by N'doo'owe Binesi, our Indigenous Health division. Alaine Auger, Team Coordinator, and her team also presented on behalf of the Getting Appropriate Personal & Professional Supports (GAPPS) Program.

Highlighted speakers also included the keynote presenter, Dr. Saskia Sivananthan, a neuroscientist and health data expert, who shared valuable insights on how data from large populations helps us better understand aging. With a focus on health system development, Dr. Sivananthan has collaborated with governments to shape policies for complex care needs and played a leading role in creating the report *Navigating the Path Forward for Dementia in Canada* while at the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

Dr. Lynn Martin, Professor and Chair of Health Sciences at Lakehead University, also presented on her research about the health challenges faced by vulnerable groups, including older adults and those living with intellectual disabilities, frailty, or mental health conditions. As an Associate Fellow of interRAI, Dr. Martin advocates for a community-based approach to healthcare that puts individuals at the center of decision-making about their care and services.

Participant feedback confirmed that the conference's focus on complexity in older adult care was both timely and impactful.



Neurology Outpatient Services Expands Offerings



Neurology Outpatient Services has received additional funding through the Community-Based Stroke Funding Strategy to improve support for clients transitioning from hospital-based care to community services. This has led to the development of two key stroke transitional programs aimed at helping post-stroke clients achieve their mobility and communication goals.

The Aphasia and Cognitive Communication Group helps clients with speech and language challenges following a stroke. Running for six weeks with two-hour weekly sessions, this program provides crucial support for individuals with varying levels of communication difficulties.

The Transitional Exercise Program, offered at the Canada Games Complex, supports clients preparing for discharge from the Neurology Day Program. Clients participate in group-based exercise sessions twice weekly for six weeks under the guidance of a Physiotherapist and Rehabilitation Assistant. After completing this program, they are encouraged to join the “Keep Moving with Stroke” program to continue their wellness journey.

These initiatives, in partnership with the Canada Games Complex, help clients successfully transition to the community after a stroke, empowering them to lead fuller, more active lives.

Strategic Enablers

Building Relationships: Community Forum with Police Chief



An organization's strength within the community is rooted in its connections with the people and organizations that support it.

On October 9, 2024, St. Joseph's Hospital was host to Thunder Bay Police Chief Darcy Fleury for an open community forum to talk about policing's intersection with mental health and addictions, as well as safety in the downtown north core of Thunder Bay.

Close to 50 participants joined in person, with many more contributing their thoughts and questions in advance through an online survey.

As noted by Chief Fleury in a message of appreciation to St. Joseph's Care Group, “This event provided an important platform for SJCG's staff and clients, and community members, to engage in meaningful conversations about police response to calls related to mental health and addiction...Thank you for your leadership and commitment.”



Bethammi Nursing Home Implements New Electronic Medical Record



On October 1, 2024, Bethammi Nursing Home took a major step forward in resident care by launching its new electronic medical record (EMR) system, Point Click Care (PCC). Already used in over 2,600 homes across Canada and nearly 30,000 in the U.S., PCC is designed to enhance care quality through standardized assessments and automated tasks, streamlining workflows for healthcare providers. Building on the success of Hogarth Riverview Manor's 2021 PCC implementation, the team at Bethammi was well-prepared for the project. PCC will also be introduced at PR Cook Apartments and Sister Leila Greco in November of 2024.

The implementation required significant effort from the entire team, including clinicians, support services, and IT staff, whose collaboration was essential in meeting tight timelines for implementation, training and go-live dates. As we continue with PCC, we look forward to its positive impact on residents and care quality.