

## Mission Moment

*After losing our mother to cancer in 1995, I moved my sister Yvette, who has a developmental disability and epilepsy, into supportive housing. When it didn't work out, she came to live with my husband, son, and me, where she's been ever since. Yvette worked at the airport until retiring in 2021, then began volunteering at Hogarth Riverview Manor, helping with recreational activities and transporting residents to hair appointments at Shirley's Salon. Her infectious joy and selflessness have fostered deep connections, making clients feel like family and creating a sense of belonging that enriches the lives of everyone she meets.*



*While our family bond was strong before we both began at St. Joseph's Care Group our shared experience has deepened our connection and strengthened our commitment to the work we do.*

- Karen DeGagne, St. Joseph's Hospital Staff Member

## Drive High-Quality People-Centred Care

### A Dash of Holiday Spirit



The Nutrition & Food Services team hosted St. Joseph's Care Group's (SJCG) first ever Cake Mixing Ceremony at St. Joseph's Heritage in December 2024. Cake mixing is a tradition dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century that marks the start of the holiday season and celebrates the spirit of togetherness. Residents and staff came together to participate in the ceremony. The event was filled with joy and laughter, with everyone actively involved in the cake preparation process. The spirit of teamwork and collaboration was evident as each participant added their personal touch to the mixture.

The ingredients began as a colourful display of SJCG's holiday spirit, and then "as we combined ingredients like dried fruits, nuts, and spices, we were reminded of how, in life, it is often the coming together of different elements that creates something truly wonderful."

The result? A festive cake to be enjoyed by residents of Bethammi Nursing Home and PR Cook Apartments!

### New Views for PR Cook Apartments



After years of planning and execution, the replacement of PR Cook Apartments' windows and patio doors is now complete. The significant upgrade, which began in 2018, represents the final step in updating the building, 40 years after its original opening. Over 400 windows and 150 patio doors were replaced over the course of the project.

One of the highlights of the newly renovated apartments is the stunning views of the north side of Thunder Bay that are visible through the updated windows and doors. They were designed to not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the apartments, but also to improve energy efficiency, benefitting the tenants, the environment and the building's infrastructure and sustainability. The new fixtures are designed to provide tenants with improved protection and comfort for the next 30 years.

## Nurture our People

### The Gift of Art

Earlier this season, residents and the Therapeutic Recreation (TR) team at Hogarth Riverview Manor (HRM) identified an opportunity to enhance the site's administration hallway, which notably lacked artwork. Residents undertook the initiative to infuse the space with creativity and meaning, uniting teamwork with artistic expression.

The residents worked with TR staff in secret to prepare the artwork as a surprise for HRM's administration team. In November, residents from all home areas came together for an afternoon to create vibrant pieces of art inspired by personal connections to Thunder Bay, such as local landmarks and cherished experiences, including the 2024 Solar Eclipse.



On December 6, 2024, during the annual St. Nicholas Social at HRM, the paintings were unveiled for all to see. The festive event, with cozy drinks and homemade baked goods, celebrated the residents' creativity and the caring, supportive atmosphere within SJCG.

The artwork now brightens HRM's administration hallway, offering both aesthetic value and a reminder of the positive impact of creativity in the workplace. This thoughtful gesture not only nurtured the wellbeing of residents and staff, but strengthened bonds within the SJCG community.

### Building a Future for Dementia Care

A recent presentation to high school students from two of SJCG's Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants has sparked a demand for more educational sessions focused on dementia care. Grade 12 students in Westgate High School's Human Growth and Development Class participated in an interactive seminar designed to deepen their understanding of dementia and empathetic care approaches, potentially preparing them to be future healthcare providers and volunteers.

During the session, students engaged in hands-on activities simulating a care environment, helping them understand the experience of having physical and cognitive challenges faced by individuals with dementia. Tasks like oral care, dressing, medication sorting, and food handling highlighted the impairments associated with cognitive decline.



The seminar also covered essential topics such as distinguishing dementia from normal aging, identifying and responding to unmet needs and behaviors, and learning effective communication strategies for those with cognitive impairments. Students also gained insights into the differences between dementia, delirium, and depression.

This educational session not only broadened students' understanding of dementia but also built the community's capacity to support individuals with cognitive impairments through compassionate, person-centered care. By equipping the next generation of healthcare professionals and volunteers with the tools they need, the seminar is helping to create a more informed, empathetic community that can better care for those living with dementia.

## Lead and Enhance Regional Specialized Care

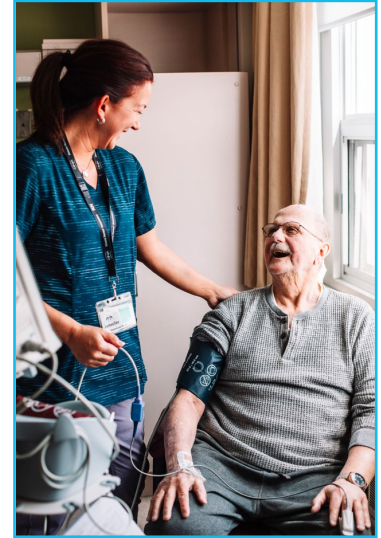
### Advancing Best Practices in Seniors' Care

This past year, SJCG's Regional Seniors' Care team implemented a new approach to emergency care for older adults with Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) to enhance care for those visiting the Emergency Department. The new "Geriatric Emergency Management" (GEM) approach builds upon the pre-existing Frailty Identification and Transition care pathway between SJCG and TBRHSC's Emergency Department to ensure early identification and assessment of complex health needs in geriatric patients.

This new approach allows more appropriate and timely access to SJCG's inpatient and outpatient specialized care, resulting in demonstrated results, including:

- 1) Improved continuity of care and effective rehabilitation;
- 2) Reduction in avoidable hospital admissions and lengths of stay; and
- 3) Increased capacity among staff to deliver senior-friendly, person-centred care.

It is anticipated that this new approach will help older adults live independently as long as possible and experience a higher quality of life. A benefit to all parties, the GEM approach has become established as an essential component of Specialized Geriatric Services in Acute Care in Thunder Bay.



## Strategic Enablers

### Growing Partnerships, Picking Nutrition



SJCG has been building community partnerships with local vendors to bring fresher, more sustainable produce to our clients. By working together, we're not only improving the quality of meals, but also supporting our local farmers and reducing our environmental footprint. Partnerships like these are central to SJCG's commitment to providing nutritious, locally sourced food to clients and residents.

One great example is our collaboration with Debruin's Greenhouses, who have been a valuable partner in providing over 1,100 pounds of tomatoes, 926 cucumbers, 300 heads of living lettuce, and 36 basil plants in just 6 months. These fresh, seasonal ingredients have added a wonderful variety and nutritional boost to the meals we serve in St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Joseph's Heritage, and Hogarth Riverview Manor. By sourcing locally, we're helping to reduce food transportation and build stronger community ties. Through these partnerships, we're making every meal a celebration of quality, sustainability, and community.