

Mission Moment



The Women's Support Group at Sister Margaret Smith Centre (SMSC) has created a unique tribute to the strength, beauty, and resilience of women in recovery. Each feather represents a unique journey – stories of healing, struggle, and hope woven together to form a powerful wingspan.

"Being a part of this group means so much to me," said one group member. "It has been so uplifting for my mental health. Every week I can come to a safe space to learn and grow in my recovery with other women who are each as unique and spiritually beautiful as the feathers on this wall."

"Wings of Recovery" is more than just an art piece – the wings are a reminder that no one is alone in their journey. The Support Group members invite visitors to take a photo in front of the wings and reflect on their individual strength, and the healing power of community.

Submitted by the Women's Support Group at Sister Margaret Smith Centre

Drive High-Quality People-Centred Care

Building the Foundation for Culturally Safe Care

Voluntary self-identification is rooted in trust. Organizations ask people to share personal information, and in return, there must be confidence that the organization will treat that information with respect and confidentiality, only using it for the stated purpose.

To advance our journey to provide culturally safe care for Indigenous Peoples, SJCG embarked on a multifaceted collaborative project in 2022 to plan in a thoughtful way for the implementation of Voluntary Self-Identification for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples receiving care. Led by N'doo'owe Binesi, consultation was held with Ogichidaa Onaakonigewin, Indigenous health and community partners, and Indigenous clients and family members to inform processes, training, questions/language, data storage and use, and much more. It's a project that spanned all sites, involving program/service staff and Informatics to modify the back- and front-office electronic medical systems and, with education and supports, to implement Voluntary Self-Identification as a part of client intake.

In April 2025, the Voluntary Self-Identification project quietly reached completion, becoming part of daily operations. By enabling clients to self-identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, SJCG can tailor care to better align with the unique needs, values, and preferences of Indigenous Peoples. This approach fosters an environment of trust and respect, ensuring that Indigenous clients receive care that acknowledges and integrates their cultural identity.

Nurture Our People

UKG: A New Staff Scheduling System is Now Live

The launch of UKG on April 20, 2025, marks a significant advancement in how SJCG manages scheduling and time tracking. UKG is a modern workforce management system that replaces several manual and partially-online tools that were in use across the organization.

With UKG, staff can now view schedules, request time off, and respond to shift changes anytime, from any device. For managers, UKG reduces administrative burden by streamlining scheduling and approvals, while creating a clear, consistent

record that improves transparency and accountability. At an organizational level, UKG increases efficiency and accuracy by automating processes and applies the rules of multiple collective agreements consistently. It's a major step forward in aligning technology with operational needs.

And the improvements don't stop there. The next phase of the project includes software that integrates with UKG to automate the 'callout' process, identifying eligible replacements and filling vacant shifts quickly.

Together, these changes support a more responsive, transparent, and efficient workplace for everyone.

Launching the Centre for Applied Health Research's (CAHR) 2024 Annual Report

St. Joseph's Care Group's Centre for Applied Health Research (CAHR) advances high-quality research, program evaluation, and knowledge translation to support the development of new knowledge relevant to long-term care, mental health and addictions, rehabilitative care, and spiritual care.

The recently-released [2024 CAHR Annual Report](#) highlights the many ways CAHR is fulfilling its mandate to build research capacity and generate new knowledge through focused research and evaluation initiatives. By embedding research and evaluation into care delivery, CAHR generates and translates knowledge that supports informed decision-making and promotes alignment with best practices.

In 2024, CAHR members were awarded 28 new research and evaluation grants, securing more than \$14 million in funding. Alongside these externally funded projects, CAHR contributed to 16 internal initiatives at SJCG. These included the Annual Client & Resident Satisfaction Survey, which identifies ways to enhance the client experience, and the Compassionate Care in Long-Term Care Research Study, focused on improving the quality of care for residents.

The opportunity to engage in research can be a draw for healthcare professionals seeking a dynamic, forward-thinking work environment. For SJCG, supporting research helps us find better ways to care for people and make a real impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Lead and Enhance Regional Specialized Care

Planning for Coordinated Access to Mental Health

In March 2020, Ontario launched the [Roadmap to Wellness: A Plan to Build Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System](#). A central component of this strategy is Coordinated Access, which is an initiative designed to build a more connected, efficient, and client-centred mental health and addictions system across the province.

Coordinated Access brings together a range of tools and partnerships to make it easier for people to find and access the care they need, no matter where they live in Ontario. It includes the development of a province-wide, easy-to-remember toll-free number and online chat services to serve as a primary point of contact. As the regional lead for Coordinated Access, SJCG is building on strong foundational work to advance the principle that "every door is the right door" for accessing mental health and addictions care in Northwestern Ontario.

At the heart of this work is The Access Point Northwest, an online portal that acts as an entry point for a range of outpatient services, including the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program, supportive housing, case management, and chronic pain management. Since its launch in 2017, the portal has successfully introduced two key features: online self-referral and a shared consent process that allows clients to move between service providers smoothly and without interruption in care.

Next up for SJCG's Coordinated Access team will be to grow our partnerships through expansion to more services across our region. It's a multiyear project that is a direct reflection of SJCG's commitment to ensuring that everyone living with mental health or substance use challenges can find support, dignity, and hope—no matter where they are on their journey.

Strategic Enablers

Living Our Values Every Day: Our Stories Told By Our Staff and Volunteers

Spend even a few moments with a staff member or volunteer, and you'll hear powerful stories of compassion, dedication, resilience, and hope. These stories reflect who we are - not just what we do - as a community of people called to care for others in body, mind, spirit, and emotion.

On February 14, 2025, SJCG launched Living Our Values Every Day - or LOVE - an internal campaign that invites staff and volunteers to become content collaborators by sharing their voices, perspectives, and the deep commitment behind the care they provide. In partnership with the Communications team, these experiences are thoughtfully crafted into stories and shared with the wider public through social media and other channels. Participation is growing as people see what LOVE is all about, and in the three months since launch, 12 staff and volunteers have volunteered to share their story.

This collaborative approach strengthens SJCG's approach to broader communications by fostering authenticity, honesty, and openness. For staff and volunteers, seeing their stories shared is uplifting and affirming - it builds pride in the meaningful work they and their colleagues do every day, and may even inspire people seeking a fulfilling career. For the public, these diverse and personal perspectives create stronger connections with our community, foster trust, and shine a light on the quality and heart of care delivered right here in Northwestern Ontario.

What is clear is that these are stories that resonate on SJCG's social media channels. Looking at metrics that show how successful organizations are in building relationships with their audiences, we know that people spend longer on these story-based posts than on an average SJCG post, and generally have more reactions, interactions, and comments. Stories that connect on a personal level make a difference not just in how people perceive SJCG, but in how they feel about the care we can provide.