

## Mission Moment

Crystal Pickering came to Crossroads Centre during a tough time, seeking help away from the environment that fueled her addiction. After completing treatment at Crossroads, she moved to the Lodge on Dawson, where she found community, stability, and the foundation for lasting recovery. St. Joseph's Care Group offered her not just a place to recover, but a pathway to rebuild.

Now seven years into recovery, Crystal gives back as the "Crossroads Greeter," welcoming newcomers with warmth and care. "You never feel safe - especially in early recovery. I sure didn't. So I think of what I would've wanted in my recovery that they would benefit from," she says. In helping others, Crystal continues to strengthen her own recovery and build a community where everyone has the chance to thrive.



Crystal (in orange) shares a moment with Crossroads Centre colleagues.

*Submitted in collaboration with Crystal Pickering and the Addictions & Mental Health Team*

## Drive High-Quality People-Centred Care

### Strengthening the System: Expanding Access to Addictions Services

St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) has taken a major step forward in building a coordinated system of support that meets people where they are, with dignity and compassion.

The journey began in September 2024, when Associate Minister of Mental Health & Addictions Michael Tibollo and MPP Kevin Holland announced funding for 15 new safe sobering beds. Over the past year, SJCG teams have worked steadfastly to align services in the right environments, ensuring that clients are supported in spaces that are respectful and culturally appropriate. Crossroads Centre pre- and post-treatment moved to 667 Sibley Drive, while Withdrawal Management relocated to 500 Oliver Road, co-located with Safe Sobering. Clients and staff were closely involved in planning, and the sites have already welcomed a steady stream of partners and community organizations to see the new location, meet team members, and learn more about how the programs serve the community.



In September 2025, construction quietly concluded with Withdrawal Management moving to a fully-renovated, purpose-built location within the Oliver Road location. Safe Sobering initially opened 7 beds in March 2025, with the remaining 8 beds fully operational on September 12, 2025.

Now in the home stretch, finishing touches will be made that optimize the use of space to support connection with a continuum of programs and services tailored to each person's unique journey. Innovative service delivery continues with the introduction of a newly-formed Transportation Team that meets people where they are at, intersecting with a number of community organizations as well as the emergency room to connect people with the right level of care sooner with dignity and respect.

A grand opening celebration later this year will unveil the site's new name—marking not just the completion of a project, but the beginning of a more responsive, compassionate system of addiction care for our community.

## Nurture Our People

### Leading Together: Building Capacity Through ECHO

St. Joseph's Care Group recently undertook an innovative approach to leadership development that is already showing meaningful results. Drawing on the internationally recognized ECHO (Extension for Community Health Outcomes) model, the organization piloted a "Leadership ECHO" series that brought together leaders from across all levels, from the executive team to front-line managers, into a shared, non-hierarchical learning space.

Instead of relying on traditional classroom instruction, the sessions emphasized collaborative problem-solving and peer learning. Leaders came together to discuss real challenges, exchange practical strategies, and build solutions grounded in their daily work. This approach not only strengthened leadership skills, it created stronger bonds among participants, helping to reduce the sense of isolation that can come with working in a dispersed, multisite environment.

The impact was tangible. Participants reported greater confidence in navigating the complexities of healthcare leadership, from managing operations to supporting staff through times of operational change or health system pressures. The program also fostered a deeper sense of community and mutual support across departments, while generating solutions that could be applied immediately to organizational challenges.

The Leadership ECHO initiative is gaining recognition beyond our region, having been published in the August 2025 edition of Healthcare Quarterly (Longwoods Publishing). This external validation underscores the innovation and relevance of the work. For St. Joseph's Care Group, the lessons are significant. Leadership ECHO demonstrates that high-quality development does not need to be top-down or consultant-driven; it can be built from within, using technology to connect people and foster a culture of shared learning.

### Celebrating Two Years of Partnership with Talent Beyond Boundaries

In 2022, St. Joseph's Care Group entered into partnership with Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB), a global leader in connecting displaced talent to employment, launching an initiative that has since strengthened our workforce and created a lasting impact.

This fall, TBB commemorated two years of partnership by releasing a video that highlights St. Joseph's Care Group as an organizational leader in inclusive hiring. What began with one opportunity has evolved into a program that is reshaping lives and contributing to the sustainability of our workforce.



To date, more than 40 healthcare professionals have received employment offers through this partnership, many of whom are already rebuilding their careers and lives in Canada. These are people who bring not only clinical expertise but also resilience, compassion, and a strong commitment to client care.

As noted by TBB, "St. Joseph's Care Group sets a gold standard for what inclusive hiring looks like, proving that when organizations align values like compassion and community with their robust hiring practices, everyone wins." This recognition reflects not only the success of the partnership but also the alignment of our hiring practices with our mission, vision, and values.

To watch the full video, visit [LinkedIn.com/company/stjosephscaregroup](https://www.linkedin.com/company/stjosephscaregroup).

## Lead and Enhance Regional Specialized Care

### Conference Board of Canada Report *Answering the Call – Strategies to Increase the Number of Indigenous Physicians in Canada*

In 2025, the Conference Board of Canada conducted a project on *Building Lasting Pathways: Recruiting and Retaining Indigenous Physicians in Canada*. As a case study participant, Paul Francis Jr. and the N'doo'owe Binesi team contributed to the development of the final report called *Answering the Call: Strategies to Increase the Number of Indigenous Physicians in Canada*.

Published on June 25, 2025, the Report notes that Indigenous-led solutions must be at the centre of transformation, with *Walking with Humility* cited as an initiative approach that shows what's possible when equity is built into the structure of healthcare and education, and not treated as an afterthought, to foster lasting change. As described by Paul Francis Jr., "Without Indigenous leadership, Indigenous leaders that are grounded within our culture and language, without committed resources and community engagement, we're not going to see the changes within mainstream that we need—that is necessary. I think those are probably the biggest lessons learned. For us [St. Joseph's Care Group], this is not just a typical strategic plan. It's a spiritual plan. And so, I think that's the secret sauce. I think that's what's really created the momentum for N'doo'owe Binesi is our Elders Council. And so, everything we've done is grounded within our culture and spiritual foundations."

The intention of the Report is for it to be a resource that can inform policy, improve educational and institutional practices, and support Indigenous Physicians and Students in their journey through medical education and into practice. Furthermore, it is recognized that the Report is not an endpoint, but part of a broader movement toward systemic change. The full Report is available on the Conference Board of Canada's [website](#).

## Strategic Enablers

### Commitment Statements to the Anishinaabek, and to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



In the spring of 2024, following the launch of St. Joseph's Care Group's new Strategic Plan, our Board of Directors undertook a deliberate and reflective process to develop a set of Commitment Statements. These statements acknowledge both our historical and ongoing role in contributing to barriers and disparities for marginalized communities, and chart a clear course for transformative action.

The resulting Commitment Statements — one to the Anishinaabek and one focused on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion — articulate how St. Joseph's Care Group will actively advance equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and cultural safety across all programs and services. They reflect our aspiration to ensure that every environment we operate within is safe, welcoming, and

grounded in dignity and respect for all who access care or work within our organization.

In May 2025, these Commitment Statements were formally launched to staff and subsequently shared with the public via our website and social media platforms. Replicated across our sites, these commitments are more than statements on paper: they are a visual declaration of our dedication to fostering equitable access to healthcare, building inclusive workplaces, and supporting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. They signal to our staff, clients, and community partners that SJCG is a place where everyone is valued, heard, and empowered to thrive.

By publicly affirming these commitments, the Board and leadership team are ensuring that equity, inclusion, and reconciliation remain central to both our strategic vision and everyday operations.