

## Mission Moment

### Beyond Boundaries: Celebrating Abeer



Opportunity, perseverance, and person-centred care have shaped Abeer Jaber's journey to nursing in Canada.

Originally from Saudi Arabia, Abeer arrived in Thunder Bay in October 2024 through Talent Beyond Boundaries, joining St. Joseph's Care Group as a Personal Support Worker. As an internationally educated nurse, she came with a focus on stability and a strong future. "I'm on my way to building a new life, not only for me, but for my family and my new generation," she said.

That dream has continued to take shape. After achieving her Registered Nurse designation, Abeer recently accepted a full-time Registered Nurse position at Hogarth Riverview Manor, where she continues her commitment to compassionate, person-centred care.

Congratulations, Abeer, on this remarkable achievement. Your dedication, resilience, and determination are inspiring, and we are proud to have you as part of the SJCG team as you begin this exciting new chapter in your nursing career.

Submitted by People & Mission

## Drive High-Quality People-Centred Care

### Embedding Indigenous Cultural Safety in Incident and Complaint Processes

In line with SJCG's commitment to safe, high-quality and culturally responsive care, an Indigenous Cultural Safety & Resolution Specialist role was established within Mikinaak Gagiigidowin (Indigenous Cultural Safety & Education) to strengthen the organization's capacity to respond to concerns involving Indigenous clients, families, and communities.

Working alongside existing quality, risk, and complaint resolution processes, the individual in this role provides expertise and guidance to leaders to help ensure Indigenous perspectives, experiences, and historical contexts are meaningfully considered when concerns are reviewed and addressed.

## Nurture Our People

### Strengthening Our Workforce Through Learner Academic Placements



As part of SJCG’s strategic priority to Nurture Our People, student placements continue to play a critical role in building a strong, sustainable workforce while supporting high-quality, inclusive care delivery.

Over the past three years, SJCG has seen steady growth in learner engagement, reflecting strengthened academic partnerships and deliberate investment in preceptorship capacity and the overall learner environment. The numbers speak for themselves:

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
<b>Total Placements</b>	1,289	1,529	1,635
<b>Total Placement Hours</b>	148,586	150,989	167,917

Growth has been particularly strong in Registered Practical Nurse (+22%) and Personal Support Worker (+34%) programs, reflecting targeted efforts to expand supervised learning capacity in priority workforce areas. Across programs, learner experience remains strong.

A notable advancement in experiential learning this year was the integration of 18 paramedic placements at Mino Ginawenjigewin. This partnership enhanced learner exposure to withdrawal management and safe sobering care in a specialized community-based setting, strengthening applied understanding of substance use, crisis response, and integrated care pathways.

Student engagement and feedback continues to improve our ability to identify and act on improvement opportunities. In 2025–2026, 91% of students surveyed would recommend their placement to peers, and 90% would recommend SJCG as a future workplace, with 88% reporting they were able to bring their “whole self” to their placement.

This work supports recruitment, retention, and long-term workforce sustainability across SJCG.

## Lead and Enhance Regional Specialized Care

### Improving Access to Psychiatric Consultation Services

The Psychiatric Consultation Clinic (PCC) at St. Joseph’s Care Group has significantly improved access to timely psychiatric assessment and consultation services for adults experiencing mental health concerns across the Thunder Bay District. Through targeted improvements to service capacity, referral processes, and clinical workflows, the PCC has transformed access to specialized mental health care, reducing wait times from months to weeks for most clients.

The PCC receives approximately 800 to 1,000 referrals each year through The Access Point Northwest from family physicians and nurse practitioners. The clinic provides psychiatric assessments, medication reviews, treatment recommendations, and short-term follow-up before clients transition back to the care of their primary care provider. In addition to supporting clients, the PCC provides important specialist support to primary care providers managing increasingly complex mental health needs.

Access to psychiatric consultation has been a significant challenge for several years, with wait times among the longest in the province. Prior to this recent project, many clients waited six to twelve months for an appointment, with some waiting more than a year. Improvements have resulted in clients being seen typically within four to six weeks.

Following a comprehensive review of referral volumes, service demand, psychiatrist workload, and overall capacity, several opportunities to strengthen access were identified. Actions included increasing psychiatric staffing, introducing more flexible physician contracting models, standardizing intake and triage processes, improving scheduling practices, and strengthening alignment between service capacity and community need.

Earlier access to psychiatric care means faster diagnosis, earlier treatment, and less stress for clients and families. It also reduces emergency department visits, pressure on primary care providers and risk of hospitalization.

## **Sharing Lessons in Indigenous Cultural Safety in Communications Practice**

In May, SJCG participated in the Ontario Hospital Association's (OHA) provincial Comms Check learning and capacity-building series through a featured session titled *Stewardship of Stories: Respecting and Sharing Indigenous Narratives*. The session brought together a broader audience of Chief Executive Officers, Communicators, and other health professionals from across Ontario to explore how communications can support Indigenous-led storytelling, with emphasis on respecting Indigenous stewardship of narratives and ensuring stories are shared by the appropriate knowledge holders and voices, grounded in lived experience, authenticity, cultural integrity, and trust.

Opening the session, Paul Francis Jr., Vice President, N'doo'owe Binesi, SJCG and Executive Director of Indigenous Health with the OHA, spoke to the importance of Indigenous-led approaches to storytelling and the responsibility of health system partners to ensure narratives are shared in ways grounded in respect, consent, and cultural safety.

Jennifer Taback, Shawanga First Nation and Co-CEO at Design de Plume shared frameworks, approaches, and practical tools to support authentic collaboration with Indigenous peoples and communities.

SJCG's Director of Communications & Government Relations, Kim Callaghan, shared SJCG's approach to Indigenous storytelling, including governance structures, review processes, policies, and practices that support the stewardship of stories. The presentation highlighted lessons learned through implementation, along with practical considerations for communicators working to identify and address gaps in narrative inclusivity and strengthen engagement with Indigenous communities.

The session, attended by more than 120 people, highlighted practical tools and frameworks that support more consistent practice, strengthening communicators' ability to support ethical, culturally grounded storytelling across the hospital sector.