

# Talk it up Victoria



Renfrew Victoria Hospital

Your Community Healthcare Centre

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## Let's "play it safe" this summer

This issue of "Talk It Up Victoria" focuses on children and youth, with tips to keep them healthy and safe as they head into those long days of freedom, fun and, for some, summer work.

You'll find information on car safety for young children, dating safety for teens, farm safety, healthy diets and more.

The material for this newsletter comes from a variety of sources – health professionals within the hospital, and information that has been collected by various organizations and made available to the public through their booklets, newsletters, websites and other means. All of it has been reviewed with local

experts in each field to ensure that it is reliable and of value.

Renfrew Victoria Hospital would like to thank our community partners who helped in this endeavour:

- Car Seat Coalition for Renfrew County
- Farm Safety Association
- Ontario Provincial Police, Renfrew detachment
- Renfrew County and District Health Unit
- Renfrew County Rape Drug Committee
- Safe Kids Week Task Group for Renfrew County
- St. John Ambulance, Renfrew County.

*It takes a community to keep our children safe and healthy. Together we care.*

### *When a doctor's visit is necessary – accentuate the positive*

Dr. Jeff Jones is an ear, nose and throat specialist who holds regular clinics at Renfrew Victoria Hospital.

His practice includes a high percentage of appointments with children having problems with tonsils, ear infections, or in need of ear tube surgery.

Here are Dr. Jones' tips to reduce children's anxiety when they're heading to a doctor's office or a hospital:

#### **Do:**

- Emphasize that the point of going is to get better or find a solution.
- Be honest. Don't say it won't hurt; instead stress that the doctors and nurses will be very kind and gentle, and will do their best not to make it hurt.
- Visit a pre-operative clinic if it's offered. It's a great way to help answer a child's questions and help them know what to expect.
- Help your child choose a favourite stuffed toy or book to take along with them.
- Talk about positive experiences you've had in the past – a nurse who was really nice when you were sick, or what interested you as a child at the doctor's office.

#### **Don't:**

- Use a doctor's appointment or a visit to the hospital as a threat (i.e. "If you don't go to bed now, you'll wind up in the hospital again.")
- Make a big deal about needles, even if you don't like them yourself.
- Blow things out of proportion. Even the effects of good messages can get lost if a doctor's

visit becomes a "big deal". Just take it all one step at a time, and answer the questions as they arise.

Above all, Dr. Jones encourages parents to be patient and kind, and tuned in to their child's concerns. Explaining what will happen can take away a lot of the worry.

"Children are often quite capable of understanding that it might hurt a little bit, but nobody's going to try to hurt them and it will be worth it to get feeling better," he concludes.



Three-year-old Paige Barr with Dr. Jeff Jones. (Photo by Pam Coulas)

## Off-road vehicles cause growing concerns

Dr. Ray Dawes of Barry's Bay has a straightforward message about all-terrain vehicles (ATVs):

"Children under the age of 16 should not operate this type of machinery."

His simple, direct conclusion is based on the number and severity of injuries he and others have seen in local emergency departments.

At St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay, the emergency care team took the time to document the ATV incidents they saw last summer. They will be conducting a similar study this year in order to track trends and take preventive action where they can.

"Just the fact we're doing these things reflects our concern," says Dr. Dawes. "It's an important issue."

Between April and November of last year, they cared for 13 patients who had suffered ATV-related injuries. While their ages ranged from 12 through 78, one-third of the patients were under the age of 16. Three of them required urgent transfer for a higher level of care, and one had to be transported out by helicopter. Seven of the 13 patients suffered fractures.

"We've been seeing more and more children involved, and some pretty serious injuries," Dr. Dawes notes, pointing to two youth fatalities in the Ottawa region last year.

"The popularity is increasing, but the ability of people to handle these machines safely is not keeping up," he comments.

"Children under the age of 16 just don't have the judgment and the physical strength to handle these machines," Dr. Dawes concludes.

## Car safety basics for your four- to eight-year-old

by Constable Janice Sawbridge,  
Ontario Provincial Police, Renfrew Detachment

*Editor's note: The law in Ontario is changing this September, making booster seats mandatory for all children who weigh between 40 and 80 pounds. The government hopes its new legislation will reduce children's injuries and fatalities by up to 75 per cent, noting that nearly 1,000 children are killed or injured this way each year on Ontario roads.*

*In light of this, Constable Sawbridge has chosen to focus on the importance of using booster seats properly.*

### What you need to know:

- Use a belt-positioning booster seat once your child has completely outgrown his forward-facing child safety seat (at about age four and at least 40 pounds).
- Your child should use a booster seat until he is at least eight years old, unless he is 4'9" or taller.
- A booster seat lifts your child so that the seatbelt fits in the right places. It will keep the shoulder belt away from your child's neck, and the lap belt over the hip bones instead of the belly.
- Never put the shoulder portion of the belt behind the back or under the arm. Serious injuries could occur with the belt in this position.

- Remember the rhyme: "Under the arm, seatbelts cause harm. Behind the back, safety will lack."
- If your child tries to squirm out of the seat or under the seatbelt, find a safe place to pull over. Explain to him that you will not be able to continue driving until he is safely seated in his booster.

- All children aged 12 and under should ride in the back seat of a vehicle.
- Restrain your child on every trip, every time.

*On a legal note: When the new law comes into effect, more drivers, including grandparents and babysitters, will be required to ensure that children are properly secured. Drivers who do not obey the law can be fined \$110 and lose two demerit points.*



OPP Constable Janice Sawbridge buckles in her daughter, Morgan.

## The right choice: From a teen's perspective

by Gillian Robertson, Grade 12, Renfrew Collegiate Institute

Most teenagers know the consequences of drinking and driving – horrible accidents and, often, the loss of life.

One would think that if teenagers knew the consequences of getting behind the wheel intoxicated, they would be more diligent and responsible when they drink. Sadly, this is not always the case, as youth continue to drive intoxicated.

It is common knowledge not to get into a vehicle with someone who has been drinking. If an individual is intoxicated, it is everyone's responsibility to prevent the individual from driving and potentially causing an accident.

So, what can you do if you need a ride home from a party where alcohol is being served?

Well, you could stay the night, call a taxi, call your parents, or even have a sober friend take you home.

It is better to arrive home alive than to end up in the emergency room with injuries and being scarred physically and psychologically for life... or worse, not arriving home at all.

When partying and drinking, please be mature and responsible in your actions and be your own person.

Do not let peer pressure affect your decision to accept a ride home with someone who is drunk.

Do not become just another teen statistic by making an irresponsible decision, for it may just be the last thing you ever do.

If you choose to drink, be considerate, not only of your own health and safety, but also for the safety and well-being of others around you.

Do not drink and drive; it could save a life!

# How are you going to keep them safe on the farm?

As eastern Ontario's health and safety consultant for the Farm Safety Association, Sheila James takes a rather unique approach to youth safety. She encourages parents to let their children fully experience life on the farm – helping with the animals and operating the equipment – but to develop their skills and knowledge in a cautious, methodical way.

“The most common accidents on the farm involve a 15-year-old male who is injured or killed on, with or near a tractor,” she says bluntly.

Her advice? As soon as a child shows interest, teach them how to operate something like a riding lawnmower. The key word is “teach”.

“Start with the operator's manual,” she says. “Let them know they have to read it cover to cover. Then quiz them on it. Then supervise them as they start the motor and help them drive.”

“They're learning about responsibility, and about the dangers of what they're doing,” she notes.

Her second scenario raises an extra level of caution for parents: Many accidents occur when a child is riding on a tractor with an adult. The door swings open or the child's balance is lost, he falls out and is run over by a tractor wheel or the equipment behind it.

The third most common accident, according to James, involves the power take-off at the back of the

tractor. The rotating shaft can quickly catch loose clothing and cause serious injury or death.

“On the farm, you need to think before you act,” James says. “Know when to turn off the machinery. Know where it's safe to be. Know where the dangers are and how to avoid them.”

For more information visit [www.farmsafety.ca](http://www.farmsafety.ca) and follow the links to a variety of quizzes, activities and facts.



**Andrew Walker is one of many Renfrew area teen farmers.**  
(Photo by Pam Coulas)

## Who's in charge of the children?

It's one of those “firsts” that every parent remembers: Walking out that door and leaving your child in the care of a babysitter.

“It's surprising the number of youngsters who are on their own or are babysitting a little brother or sister,” comments Steve Fowler of the local St. John Ambulance brigade.

He meets them at the babysitting courses offered by his organization. Titled “What Every Babysitter Should Know”, the courses are provided about three times a year in Renfrew. “The basic message is that you're in charge,” Fowler says of the program, which is designed for 11- to 14-year-olds. “We make it fun, but they also know this is serious – they need to be able to make decisions and be responsible.”

Some of the items covered include:

- how to be a “safe sitter” and avoid emergencies like choking or burns
- how to plan games and crafts
- how to deal with temper tantrums,
- how to care for siblings, and
- what to do in case of an emergency.

“It covers a lot of territory,” Fowler says of the course, that usually involves 12 to 18 students.

“We're confident that the young people who earn our certificates are ready for the responsibility.”

To learn more about the St. John Ambulance Babysitting Course, contact the local office at 432-9055.



**Babysitter Lindsay Vaive with Sydney and Olivia Smart.**  
(Photo by Pam Coulas)

Looking for more safety info? Visit [www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca), the top choice of the Safe Kids Week Task Group for Renfrew County.

# Five steps to family fitness

Childhood obesity is a growing concern. Health care professionals are witnessing higher levels of childhood diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

“The good news is that it can be turned around,” says RVH Dietitian Donna Reid. “Statistics show that simple lifestyle changes can make a lasting difference and most children will maintain their new healthy weight over the long term.”

Reid emphasizes that parents should focus on health, not on weight or physical appearance.

Here are five lifestyle choices your family can adopt:

- 1. Make it a family affair:** Meals together should be a priority for every parent. Each sit-down meal makes it less likely that your children will fill up on junk food.
- 2. Choose for the health of it:** Forget Mom’s rule to always clean your plate. Teach your family to eat when they’re hungry and stop when they’re full. Learning to listen to our bodies helps all of us to “eat to live” rather than “living to eat”.
- 3. Be a leader:** Teach yourself about healthy diets. Learn to read food labels and take the time to understand which fuels you need. You can find reliable information on the internet, at the library, and at your family doctor’s office.
- 4. Supply and demand:** Controlled supply is the simplest way to manage your family’s intake. Replace your stock of potato chips and pop with fresh fruit and juice. Keep a jug of cold water in the fridge, and it will become their first choice.
- 5. Take action:** Find activities your family enjoys together. Rollerblading, bike riding and plain old walking are all good alternatives. You’ll all feel better now, and the benefits will last a lifetime.



**Fresh fruit and vegetables make a great healthy snack.**

## Protecting teens from sexual assault

“People don’t think it’s happening here, but it is.”

As the social worker in the RVH Regional Assault Care Program, Belinda Holmes knows the hard truth about drug-facilitated sexual assaults.

“It’s happening everywhere,” she says. “And young people need to be aware of it and how they can avoid it.”

Her first piece of advice is to count on the friends you know you can trust.

“Let’s all have a buddy system,” she says. “That’s the most important thing, looking after your friends and watching out for each other.”

She notes that assaults aren’t limited to the seedy bars we might envision. Barbeques, bush parties, rec rooms and anywhere people congregate can offer opportunities for trouble. And the drugs don’t have to be sophisticated pills slipped into a drink.

“Alcohol is actually the biggest drug used to facilitate sexual assault,” Holmes notes.

Other drugs can be added to non-alcoholic drinks, even water.

“You need to be watchful all the time,” Holmes says. “If your friend is acting funny and you suspect something is wrong, get her to a hospital.”

“Acting funny” can take a variety of forms – memory loss, dizziness, slurred speech, feeling disoriented or feeling very drunk when you’ve had little or no alcohol.

There are a number of things young people can do to be less vulnerable:

- Know yourself and believe in your right to set limits.
- Trust your feelings and act on them.
- Be assertive. Learn to speak up and defend yourself.
- Pay attention and be cautious.
- Drink responsibly.

## An “ouch” of prevention is worth a pound of cure

Immunization is the best protection against many serious diseases.

Also called “vaccination”, “baby shots” or “needles”, it triggers your child’s immune system to fight disease. For it to work at its best, children must have all of their vaccinations on time.

Please contact your doctor or the public health office to set your child’s vaccination schedule, and keep a written immunization record for your child.

For more information, visit [www.immunize.cpha.ca](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca), the website of the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion.

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## News from the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation



Janice Verch Whittington, dialysis nurse manager, shows the newest equipment to Jim Logan of the Loyal Orange Lodge of Renfrew County, which has now contributed \$76,000 to the unit.



The RVH auxiliary has completed its \$200,000 commitment to the Equip for Care campaign. Presenting the final installment to CEO Randy Penney are Chrissie McNaughton, Doris Handford, Jean Sills, Rosemary Cooke and Sheila Kimberley of Aikenhead's Drug Store.



Rick Hass recently visited RVH to present \$850 raised for oncology at the recent Westbound/Countrymen concert. With him are nurses Lynn McLaughlin, Deb Patterson and Marilyn Delarge.



The Beta Sigma Phi Sorority Epsilon Upsilon Chapter donated a handmade quilt to the RVH oncology unit. Patient Vivian Ostroskie tries it out with, from left, Jane Forrest, Mary Norman, RNs Marie Smith and Susan Goldsmith, and Wayne Haramis.



The Bluegrass Festival committee, including Carole and Darrell Mooney and Kevin and Shelley White, with the ECG equipment they've helped purchase, and Emergency Nurse Manager Jim Legree and RPN Donna McParland.

Don't miss this year's bluegrass festival July 8, 9, 10 at Bob and Julie Johnston's farm on Castleford Road. Tickets will be sold at the gate.

## ★ *It's show time!* ★

Renfrew area performers will be hitting the stage this August for the third production organized by Really Cool Initiatives.

*Broadway: Beyond the Curtain* will provide local musicians the chance to perform their favourite show tunes, and raise money for the Renfrew Victoria Hospital oncology department.

Formed in 2001, Really Cool Initiatives specializes in musical theatre productions as fundraisers for local charities. The group is following up on two previous, popular shows: *Just A Little Off Broadway* in 2001 and *Just A Little Off Broadway Too* in 2003.

This year's show will take the stage at St. Joseph's High School in Renfrew for three consecutive evenings beginning on Wednesday, August 17th. All proceeds will be directed to the RVH oncology program.

The premise of the show will continue the Really Cool Initiatives' celebration of Broadway musicals, recreating the look and feel of the original shows' costumes and sets. Performances will be supported by live music provided by an impressive group of multi-talented local musicians. The performance will feature an innovative mix of traditional

musical theatre combined with the latest in high tech production techniques to give audiences "their money's worth and more".

Numbers in this year's show will range from Broadway classics such as *Showboat* and *Porgy & Bess*, through more contemporary shows such as *Les Miserables*, right up to popular favourites currently playing along the Great White Way such as *Wicked*. In addition to numerous solo performances, there will be several group numbers featuring a broad range of performers, from seasoned veterans to several who will be making their musical theatre debuts in *Broadway: Beyond the Curtain*.

As in previous shows, the various numbers will be stitched together with an original script. For the first time ever, original numbers created specifically for this show by the Really Cool Initiatives creativity team will be unveiled and woven into the fabric of the overall show.

Tickets, which are priced at only \$10.00, will be on sale beginning July 1st at Barry Breen Insurance and Aikenhead's Drug Store in Renfrew.

Secure your tickets early for what promises to be one of the musical highlights of this summer!

### Chrissie McNaughton – A foundation profile

Chrissie McNaughton knows how important a good hospital can be in a community. It's what brought her to Renfrew.

Following a career that took her from her childhood home in New Brunswick to Halifax, New York City, Toronto and Montreal, she was looking for a good place to retire.

"I had friends with a chalet in Calabogie and this area really appealed to me," she says, noting that the Ottawa Valley is very similar to the Saint John River Valley where she grew up.

"It was the hospital that really clinched it," she concludes. "Health care becomes more and more important

as we get a little older, and this hospital has a reputation that is second to none."

"We're on the leading edge of technology, it operates within its budget, and it's also maintained its hometown feeling," she explains.

Once she made the move to Renfrew, Chrissie happily added her energy and skills to the team that helps maintain RVH's reputation for excellence. Now president of the hospital auxiliary, she is also a member of the RVH foundation's board of directors. Her volunteer activities have included helping at the ambulatory care clinics, serving Christmas dinner for the third-floor residents, and serving on the gift shop committee.

Chrissie notes that, while she is happy to contribute to the hospital's efforts, she has also gained from her experiences there.

"It's been a great way to get to know people," she says. "I now feel that I'm part of the fabric of this community."

Chrissie came to Renfrew in 2000 with a lifetime of exciting experiences in broadcast journalism. She was a

pioneer for women in the field, enjoying a career that allowed her to mix and mingle with such celebrities as Liberace, Ella Fitzgerald and Zsa Zsa Gabor in New York, where she co-anchored NBC's supertime News Hour and worked as an assistant director in the network's public relations department.

Back in Canada, Chrissie joined the management team when Toronto's first multicultural television station was launched. That job would lead to her appointment to the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, which took her across the country as a member of the panel hearing refugee cases.

"I can honestly say that, in both of my careers, I got up every single morning looking forward to going to work," she says.

"While I no longer have the full-time commitment of a job, the same applies," she adds. "I enjoy living with a capital L."

And Renfrew has provided the perfect home base for a small-town girl who enjoyed such a high-profile career.

"It's fun," she says. "It was a good decision to come here."



**RVH Auxiliary President Chrissie McNaughton.**