

Talk it up Victoria



Renfrew Victoria Hospital

Your Community Healthcare Centre

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With this Fall 2008 issue of Talk It Up Victoria, we are putting the spotlight on educational opportunities at Renfrew Victoria Hospital.

We believe in lifelong learning, a concept that is put into action each and every day by our staff, our physicians, our volunteers and, of course, our patients.

Whether they are the teachers or the learners (or a bit of both), sharing knowledge is a key part of how we help one another.

If knowledge is power, the people who grace the halls of RVH are a powerful group!

Continuing education to improve care

Jennifer Briscoe doesn't have a lot of time in her life for boredom or inactivity.

As a full-time student working on her nursing degree, she travels from her home in Cobden to the University of Ottawa three times each week. That, of course, is backed up by the hours of reading and essay writing done at home.



Add to that a part-time registered practical nurse position with at least two shifts a week at RVH. And on top of that, there are the responsibilities of mothering a five-year-old daughter.

"I like to be busy," Briscoe says with a smile.

The schedule will persist until 2012, when she expects to be a member of the nursing program's graduating class.

Briscoe credits the support of her family and co-workers for keeping her energized, even when the going gets tough.

"I know that I can learn more and grow more," she says.

"Working toward my degree gives me more potential in my career."

Already, she finds herself putting her learning to use. Information from her psychology and determinants of health courses help her understand and work with the patients in her care at RVH.

"I'm always encouraging other people to pursue educational opportunities," she says, noting that she can attest to the fact that worries about time, age or money should not hold anyone back.

Jordyn Foy is another registered practical nurse at RVH who plans to get her nursing degree.

Her professional experience at the hospital has confirmed her commitment to health care, and inspired her to go for her university degree.

In order to go ahead, though, Foy has to step back and upgrade her high school credits in biology, chemistry and math. She's currently driving to Ottawa twice each week, juggling the studies with casual nursing duties at RVH.

Like Briscoe, and the many other learners on staff, Foy's commitment to learning is a commitment to giving patients the best possible care.

Homework is a family affair for Jennifer Briscoe and her daughter, Teyah Briscoe-Ghartey.

Convenient services provide ongoing funds for hospital staff education

Want to support continuing education at Renfrew Victoria Hospital?

Have a coffee... Or do a bit of banking. It's that simple.

RVH has found some unique ways to empower its staff.

Since the mid-1990s, coffee sales in the cafeteria have been a major source of funds for employee education at the hospital. A third of the proceeds from the sale of coffee, tea and soft drinks goes into the staff's tuition assistance fund.

More recently, when an automated banking machine was installed in the emergency/ambulatory care waiting area, RVH found another means to capitalize on the opportunity. For each banking transaction at the machine, a dollar is added to the education fund.

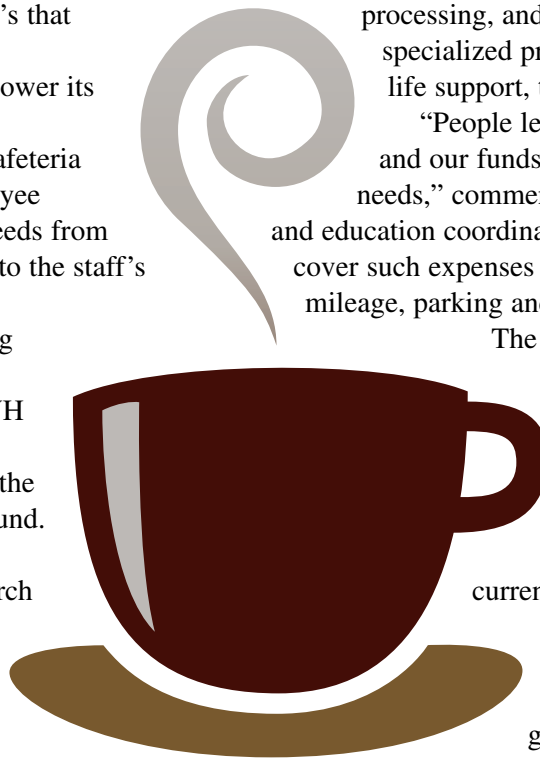
Those quarters and loonies add up.

For example, between April 2007 and March 2008, 69 staff members successfully applied for education funds. The result was a \$13,000 investment in employee education.

The fund has enabled staff to earn certificates in such diverse areas as food service, central sterilization processing, and medical terminology as well as in specialized practice areas such as advanced cardiac life support, trauma and emergency nursing. "People learn through a variety of approaches, and our funds are flexible enough to meet anyone's needs," comments Sheila Havey, RVH's patient safety and education coordinator, explaining that the money can cover such expenses as registration or tuition, texts, mileage, parking and accommodation.

The funding provides up to \$350 per year to individuals, and their participation in the program becomes part of their permanent record in the hospital's human resources file.

"It's a great incentive for everyone to either upgrade their current skills or develop new areas of knowledge," Havey concludes. "It keeps everyone fresh and rejuvenated, and on top of their game."



Memorial donations create a lasting legacy of educational opportunities

The Danielle Polk Fund

Several years after she was killed in a tragic bicycle accident, Danielle Polk's memory lives on through the variety of educational endeavours of RVH emergency staff.

At the time of her death, Danielle's parents requested that memorial donations be directed to the hospital foundation. With input from RVH staff, they designated the funds for continuing education of emergency department staff.

The tremendous response to the Polk request means that interest earned each year from Danielle's memorial fund provides for the educational programs, helping to ensure that emergency care in Renfrew is current and professional.

"Education is expensive," comments Dr. Max Buxton, medical director of the emergency department. "It's also important for quality of care. These funds allow us to keep building on that."

Newbury Fund

A volunteer gently massages a patient's hands, providing just the right pressure to take her mind away from fear and pain.

Next door, a nurse assesses the status of another patient using criteria she learned at a recent conference.

At the nurses' station, an animated group is discussing a recent article on family dynamics in palliative care.

These varied activities are all part of the legacy of Marilyn Newbury, whose family established an endowment fund to express their gratitude for the care she received at RVH during the final phase of her life.

"I guess we did a good thing," says a quiet Ron Newbury of the decision to designate the funds for education.

The Newbury Fund honouring his wife's memory was established in 2002. Since then, dozens of activities have been made possible, from attending national or international conferences to hosting local education sessions.

Palliative Care Coordinator Ann Marie Urbaitis gives a few recent examples of how the fund has been used:

- A massage therapist was brought in to teach 15 volunteers the art of gentle hand massage as a comfort measure for patients
- Krista Helferty, social worker in the RVH nephrology service, recently completed certification in palliative care through Lakehead University
- staff have attended conferences in Montreal and Toronto.

The funds also support RVH staff who participate in an annual local educational day. This year, the program will focus on non-malignant palliative care with presentations by local experts as well as speakers from Ottawa and Toronto.

Teaching the teachers

Training others how to improve their own health or how to care for others is a large part of the health care provider's role.

Here are two examples of how staff at RVH are ensuring that they are effective teachers and coaches:

For those who want to quit smoking

Renfrew Victoria Hospital has taken a leadership role in helping patients and staff to become non-smokers.

As the driving force behind those efforts, Respiratory Therapist Maureen Magill has coached dozens of staff members and a number of patients through the difficult process of overcoming their addiction to tobacco.

"I want to be sure that I'm giving them the best possible support and advice," she says.

To meet that goal, Magill was among the first caregivers in Canada to achieve a certificate in intensive tobacco cessation counseling from the University of Toronto's ground-breaking TEACH project. While comparable programs exist in a few elite American hospitals, TEACH is the first of its kind in Canada. It provides clinicians with intensive professional education in effective smoking cessation care and treatment.

The education is provided through simulations, video- and web-conferencing, telepsychiatry and classroom-based

instruction. Magill spent five days on-site in Toronto, and was able to do the rest of her studies from home. It took her a year to complete the course.

"It was well worth it," she says. "It's given me a bigger suitcase of tools to use."

Support specialized parenting skills

Denise Dominy, RVH's speech and language pathologist, uses a variety of techniques to help the pre-school children she sees, as well as the parents who continue her efforts on a day-to-day basis at home.

This fall, Dominy is taking a course that will certify her to offer the "It Takes Two To Talk" Hanen program, an intensive application that teaches parents strategies and techniques to use at home to foster development of their child's communication skills.

As a Hanen teacher, Dominy will help parents learn the basic concepts about communication and language and how to set realistic goals for their children. The program focuses on active interactions between the parents and children, using everyday situations to continually set the stage for language learning.

"It's a well-respected program that will help me to empower parents," says Dominy. "My goal is that this personal investment in training will pay off for the children and families I serve."



A number of the nursing staff at RVH opt to take certification exams. By achieving certification, they are recognized at a national level for their level of expertise in their area of practice. Among the RVH staff who achieved national certification in the past year are, from left, Sue Goldsmith (gerontology), Kelly Hebert (occupational health), Terri Lynn Sukkel (emergency nursing), Lynn Campbell (gerontology) and Jessica Fitzgerald (diabetes). Unavailable for the photo were Sheila Havey, who is certified in infection control, and Sandy Basset, who most recently achieved certification in palliative care and is also certified in community nursing.

Learning the language adds to the level of care

Most maintenance workers might not be able to tell you exactly what a myocardial infarction is, or explain the difference between the cardiovascular and hematic systems.

But RVH's Fred Boldt has taken the initiative to gain that knowledge.

Last year he decided to sign up for the medical terminology course at Algonquin College in Pembroke.

The knowledge may not be a requirement for his role as a maintenance worker, but Boldt reports that it does come in handy on a regular basis. And it keeps his options open for the future.



The 14-week course teaches students how to identify medical terms and words by their component parts, to define and understand the body structure and its systems, and understand the language related to diseases, drugs, surgical and diagnostic procedures.

Fred Boldt, maintenance worker and A+ student.

As part of his duties at the hospital, Boldt covers at the switchboard during the regular staff's breaks. He says he's much more comfortable in the role now that he can "speak the language" with the patients he greets.

It is a role he might like to pursue further in the next few years. At 55, Boldt is beginning to think about the next stage of his career. He knows he wants to work until he is 65, but he thinks he might be looking for a change.

"When I'm 62 or 63, do I want to be out shoveling snow?," he asks. Furthering his education is the best way to keep his options open.

"It built up my confidence that I could still learn. It showed me that I still have it," he comments.

Now he's inspired to continue learning. Small engines, piano or guitar lessons are just the first ideas that come to mind. The possibilities are endless.

Boldt also enjoys breaking the gender stereotype as a man working at the switchboard and reception desk.

"Women did this years ago when they went into men's jobs, and then there was the introduction of male nurses," he comments.

He urges visitors to RVH not to be intimidated if they are greeted by a man.

"We understand, and we want to be helpful," he says. "I love it there, and it feels good to have this extra level of knowledge to back me up."

Post-fracture care is a "hip" topic at RVH

Hip fractures can be a life-altering event in the life of the elderly.

RVH Physiotherapist Yolanda Prange has developed a staff education package that can make a huge difference in how a patient recovers and how much mobility and independence they regain.

Approximately 30 per cent of RVH patients are orthopedic cases, either recovering from injury or back in their community hospital post-surgery.

Prange quotes recent studies that show the earlier the patient is properly mobilized, the better chance they have of recovery and the less likely it is that they will have to move into a long-term care facility.

She developed the 45-minute educational session as a follow-up to RVH's successful falls prevention program—a similar initiative by the physiotherapy department to help staff throughout the hospital reduce the risk of patient falls.

So far, she has led 10 sessions which were attended by physiotherapists, physio assistants, x-ray staff and continuing care nurses at the hospital.

Prange covers the anatomy, types of fractures, types of surgical repairs and how the medical team can best care for patients experiencing hip ailments.

Early mobilization is presented as a key goal, along with following the appropriate weight-bearing restrictions. Participants practise the proper techniques for transferring and toileting.



Yolanda Prange, left, with some of her hip students at RVH.

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CARING *for* TOMORROW

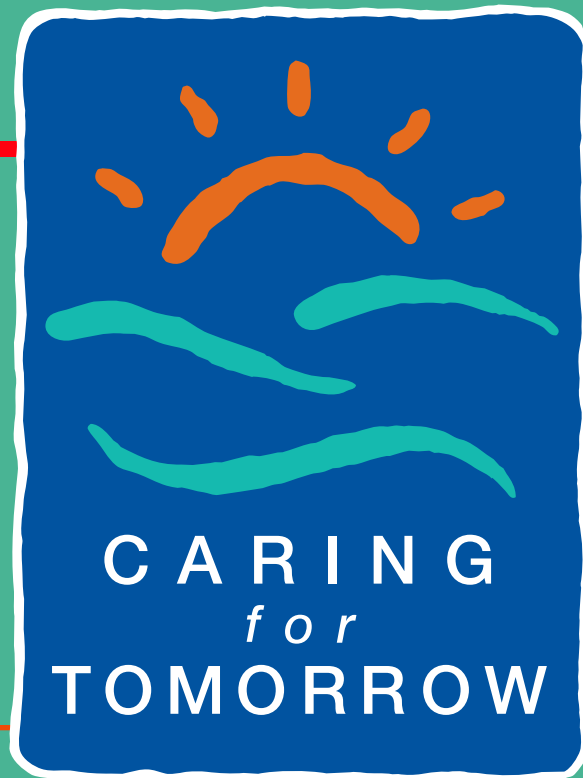
News from the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation

If you would like to learn more about the various ways you can contribute to Renfrew Victoria Hospital, please contact us:

Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation, 499 Raglan Street North,

Renfrew, Ontario K7V 1P6

Phone: (613) 432-4851, ext. 263



Auxiliary's hostess program is a fun fund raiser



The RVH Auxiliary executive, from left to right: Fran Bonner (Vice President), Ruth Steward (Gift Shop Treasurer), Mae Craig (Secretary), Doris Handford (Treasurer), Pat Blandford (President), Janet Osborne (Past President).

The RVH Auxiliary has discovered a powerful new way to raise funds for the hospital.

"Just by having fun... and eating," says Auxiliary President Pat Blandford with a chuckle.

She explains that those were the two main elements of a program launched by the group this summer. Members were encouraged to host a social event, and to ask their guests to make a donation to the RVH CT fund in place of giving a hostess gift.

"We've already made \$1,600," Blandford reported early in the fall. "How great is that?"

Make it a date!

The RVH Auxiliary's "Touch of Class" gala is set for February 14. Details to follow.

The social events included lunches out, dessert parties, garden parties, brunches, Scrabble and bridge parties, a luncheon for Bonnechere Manor residents and a crafters' luncheon.

The parties were open to non-auxiliary members, and Blandford says that the occasions created a buzz about the hospital, the work the auxiliary does, and the plans to bring CT to Renfrew.

Blandford quickly adds that the summer program did not end when the leaves started to fall. She encourages anyone interested to give it a try.

"It's not complicated, and it's a great excuse to treat yourself and do something fun," she reports.

The idea is actually built on an auxiliary program called the "Vanishing Luncheon" which was popular decades ago. Blandford credits Chip Troke, a senior member of the auxiliary, for bringing the good memories back to life.

Think outside the box!

As we advance toward the festive social season, we invite you to take a cue from the RVH Auxiliary and "think outside the box".

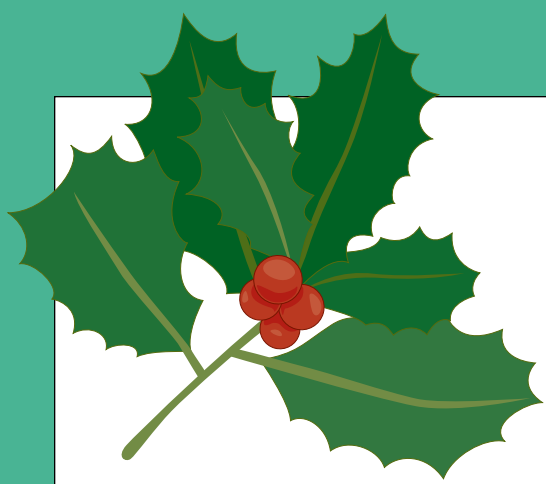
Instead of a hostess gift or a Christmas token, please consider making a donation to the RVH CT Fund to honour the recipient.

It's a gift that will benefit our entire community, and help us bring this much-needed service to Renfrew.

There are no provincial funds available to help us purchase or operate the CT equipment. RVH is depending on the ongoing support of our community to make it happen.

Thank you for making us confident enough to "think outside the box" as we continue to expand the health services we provide!

To make a donation, please call the RVH Foundation office at 613-432-4851, ext. 263.



We're beginning the countdown to Christmas

Christmas is just around the corner, and the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation would like to remind you of three special opportunities to support your community hospital:

- Auxiliary members are already preparing their popular frozen tortieres. Last year, hundreds were sold and potential customers had to be turned away. To make your order for this holiday season, please call any auxiliary member or phone the RVH gift shop at 613-432-4851 ext. 291.
- Stock will be arriving soon in the RVH gift shop. Stop by and take care of your special shopping in a quiet, relaxed atmosphere. Sale proceeds are donated to the RVH Foundation, supporting quality health care in our hospital.
- The planning has begun for the annual Tree of Lights, our biggest fund-raising campaign of the year. The beautiful original cards will be in the mail soon, and everyone is invited to gather at Low Square on December 5 to kick this campaign off in true holiday style. Please plan to participate, and to support this fund-raiser dedicated to the RVH CT Fund.



Our community continues to support the care we provide. Above, RVH's Barb Desilets accepts a donation of \$1,500 from Haley United Church's yard sale proceeds from Jim Logan, Debbie Tiernay and John Smith. Top right, Donna Reid and Jessica Fitzgerald of the RVH diabetes program accept a donation of \$3,800 raised by Gracie Stewart and Logan Wright through the third annual 9nDine golf event. Bottom right, Desilets receives an \$1,800 cheque from Chad Gillan and Judy Hunter, organizers of the Crystal Gillan Memorial Golf Tournament.



RVH now has a monthly donor program
making it easy for you to give today—Caring for Tomorrow
To learn more, call the RVH Foundation at 613-432-4851, ext. 263