

TALK IT UP

VICTORIA

The Renfrew Victoria Hospital newsletter

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Compassionate co-workers cook up a helping hand

Often, working at RVH is equated to having a bunch of supportive, caring friends around you every day.

Ask Sandra Beimers—she knows. Her colleagues in the diagnostic imaging department rallied together to organize a highly successful fundraiser for the part-time secretary not long after hearing the news of her breast cancer diagnosis.

Understanding that the family would be going through enough emotional stress in the upcoming months, the team simply wanted to ease any future financial strains, says fellow secretary Melanie Stafford.

“You have enough to worry about when you hear something like that, and it was the least we could do,” she says.

Beimers will soon be going through radiation and chemotherapy and won't be able to continue working while in treatment. Organizers knew that any amount raised would be of great help to her, her husband and two young children.

“It was incredible. The whole hospital really came together,” says Stafford about the Spaghetti Fundraiser held on February 27. “Everyone was so generous, it was unbelievable.”



Sandra and Ray Beimers and their children at the spaghetti fundraiser.

Many staff members got busy cooking up batches of sauce to contribute to the dinner. They also hit the pavement asking local businesses for donations to the silent auction and raffle.

“There was not one business we approached that said no,” recalls Debbie Howes a diagnostic imaging technologist.

Perhaps it's because the Beimers are usually the ones on the giving side—Sandra's husband Ray is the president of the Renfrew chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society.

“They're constantly giving to other people,” says Howes.

Even the Renfrew Agricultural Society donated use of the Armouries for the event.

Beimer's co-workers weren't the only ones serving up the oodles of noodles. “We had a lot of our husbands, daughters and sons—there were so many community helpers,” says Judi Gilmore.

“We couldn't have done it without everyone's help,” says Howes, giving special mention to the wonderful cooks in Café Victoria, RVH's own cafeteria, who prepared all of the noodles.

At the end of the night, more than 850 people walked through the door, which still astonishes the organizers of the event. “We were hoping for about 500 people,” says Gilmore.

Attendees ate and enjoyed music provided by the Downtown Boys, the FBC Worship Team and Pam Reid's Highland Dancers.

The original goal of \$5,000 to \$6,000 was easily surpassed that night when more than \$13,000 was raised. In fact, funds have continued to trickle in for the Beimers and the most recent tally was \$18,200 in donations to the family stemming from the Spaghetti Fundraiser.

In a note of appreciation to her co-workers, Beimers expresses how grateful she is “to work with such a caring and compassionate group of people.”

“It has lifted such a burden off of our shoulders,” the note concludes.

That, in turn, means a lot to her co-workers who wanted nothing more for her than to focus on her health during this difficult time.

“We're just really pleased it all worked out so well,” says Stafford.

New approach to best practice modules earns national recognition

Having a standardized list of protocols, treatment options and guidelines to follow in any department is key when comes to our health care team providing top-quality care to our patients.

So when RVH's wound care program needed some attention, management took a unique approach by putting the task in the very capable hands of the people who know it best—the nursing staff on the front lines.

“We recognize that there is much better success when the front-line staff develop these standards of best practices for care,” says Chris Ferguson, RVH's Vice-President of Patient Care Services.

She and nurse manager Lynn Campbell turned to a group of nurses who they felt were the champions in this field and proposed they be the ones to work together and formulate a revised set of best practices for the wound care program.

“There have been so many advances in wound care practices, and the documentation here was in desperate need of updating. We knew these were the people who could get it done,” says Campbell, adding that there were informal guidelines, but nothing written in a comprehensive manner.

“They took it and ran with it,” says Ferguson, who is extremely impressed by the thoroughness and professionalism shown by the group, which named itself the DELCK Team.

Their program has also made an impression on the nursing community as a whole. The DELCK Team will be presenting its approach to revising the program at the Canadian Gerontological Nursing Association conference in early June.

DELCK represents the first initial in each of the nurses' names—Donna Resmer, Emily Girrard, Lorraine Huckabone, Cindy Verch and Kim Sullivan. The members work in different departments throughout the hospital and successfully presented a



The DELCK Team: Donna Resmer, Emily Smith, Lorraine Huckabone, Cindy Verch and Kim Sullivan display their wound care presentation.

multi-disciplinary framework with a consistent approach to the revamped wound care program.

“It was a real collaborative effort,” says Campbell, “I’m really proud of how well they all worked together.”

Their managers feel the group will continue to inspire beyond the walls of RVH when they have the opportunity to present the DELCK Team poster at the national conference.

“This really does enhance their ability on the front line and accountability as nurses,” says Ferguson.

Establishing a team name was encouraged to be task number one by Campbell, who knew that if they could call themselves a collective name, they would be a more cohesive group.

It took the fivesome a few months of hard work to write the standardized list of policies, procedures and protocols when treating wound care patients, along with the most appropriate recommendations for products to use in each case. As part of the process they compiled a wound care resource binder and self-learning packages as teaching tools for their colleagues. They also ran educational sessions for nursing staff and physicians teaching the standards of best practice.

Even though the work part of the project is complete, the DELCK Team's responsibility as specialists in wound care continues in a mentorship capacity.

“Staff can now go to any of our wound care leaders on the DELCK Team, they are the experts on this after all,” Campbell notes.

“When there are questions we are now better equipped to consult with each other and come up with a plan,” comments Huckabone about the support she and the others provide to their fellow nurses, and even to the physicians.

“It's all to the patients' benefit,” says Sullivan of the extra level of trust patients can put in their care providers.

With this added level of professional investment on the job, Ferguson is seeing these team members actively more engaged and involved in their work-related activities.

“There's a real sense of ownership, and it shows,” she says.

It's also spawning other best practice modules on the front lines in other areas of care. Campbell makes mention of a new team of front-line experts beginning to re-write protocols for RVH's pain management program.

“This is really raising the bar for excellence,” concludes Ferguson.

Learning and growing together



Chris Campbell and Suzette Fletcher, Laboratory Technologists.

There is rarely any “down time” for our busy health care professionals, so it is truly an instance of “going above and beyond the call of duty” when one of our team members identifies an opportunity to provide a continuing education program to their colleagues.

Participants always respond well to the wide-range of topics, and consequent broadening of their knowledge through these sessions, says Chris Ferguson, the Vice-President of Patient Care Services.

She highlights workshops organized by two dedicated oncology department nurses and the palliative care coordinator dealing with death and dying. The Griefwalker film and discussions last fall was a valuable educational opportunity for the staff, physicians and members of the broader health care community.

“It was very well done,” she notes.

Our nephrology team plans an annual education day open to staff in all areas of the hospital where they can gain knowledge and expertise about the program, Ferguson says.

Health and safety coordinator Kelly Hebert assisted the nurse managers in organizing a safety education day to ensure all staff better understood their role in patient safety in preparation for accreditation.

Team building exercises are almost as important as the information sessions, Ferguson believes. She was pleased to see RVH Physiotherapist Kim Dyer merge the two in an educational session on working together and respect.

Chris Campbell, one of the hospital’s laboratory technologists, held a lunch-n-learn session in early November about blood transfusion reactions, prepared with the help of Dr. Ruth Padmore, a hematopathologist from the Ottawa Hospital.

The two taught the 45-minute workshop to about 30 nurses and physicians and spoke about the different types of reactions and the signs and symptoms.

Campbell, who specializes in transfusion medicine, knew that many of the front-line staff could benefit from a refresher course.

Even the physicians actively participated in the session, “which was great to see,” comments Campbell.

Participants also took away a small summary card from the Ontario Blood Suppliers that clips onto their name tags outlining the steps to take if a patient has a reaction.

She says that hosting this educational opportunity also gave her department the chance to verbalize their commitment to those on the front lines of patient care.

“The philosophy of the lab is that we’re very approachable and we just wanted to remind everyone about that. We’re always here to help out in whatever way we can,” she adds.

Campbell appreciates that RVH encourages staff members to facilitate these types of mini classes.

“We’re very lucky that it doesn’t have to be a manager who stands up and does something,” she says. “When there are gaps, it’s important to be an advocate for the patients and do something about it.”

Long-time RVH supporter will be missed



Beverly Welsh was a volunteer extraordinaire. She joined the RVH Auxiliary when she moved to Renfrew in 1998. Almost immediately, she assumed an active role as first vice-president and secretary for two years. She then filled the positions of president and past-president.

From May 2004 until June 2010, she held the position of Renfrew Victoria

Hospital board representative. Bev frequently attended the Ontario Hospital Association’s November convention as both an auxiliary representative and a board representative.

Bev’s generous contribution of time and tremendous efforts to fundraise knew no boundaries and she assumed many roles: chair of the Gift Shop Committee, head of the Bursary Committee, organizer of the Teddy Bear Picnic and, with husband Bill, operator of the Canadian Children’s Books Program.

Bev was awarded the distinction of becoming a Hospital Auxiliaries Association of Ontario Provincial Life Member in 2009.

Bev died peacefully on January 25, 2011. She was the lifelong partner of Bill and the wonderful mother of Chris (Cindy), Vancouver, and Doug (Deirdre), Toronto.

Oncology unit staff has that special Human Touch



Some members of the Oncology team: Rhonda Normandeau, RN, Hope Weisenberg, from Health Force Ontario, Anna Campbell, pharmacist, Kathryn Burwell, RN, Joanne Mahusky, pharmacy technician, Cheryl White, manager oncology, and Leslie de Boer, secretary.

Providing care and treatment for hundreds of area cancer patients is never considered just a job for the medical professionals at RVH.

In fact, this passionate group is recognized almost on a daily basis through kind words coming directly from patients and their families, and also expressed in the many letters that come across the desk of the Vice-President of Patient Care Services, Chris Ferguson.

“The staff that I have met and continue to be treated by are exceptionally compassionate and caring.”

—D. Gary Dillabough

“I continue to receive very positive feedback from our community about the wonderful care provided by this small unit. One recurring theme in everyone’s comments is how much they do go that extra mile,” she says.

This is exactly why she went the extra mile for them in nominating the Systemic Therapy Unit staff for the Human Touch Award.

The award is offered through Cancer Care Ontario in recognition of health care professionals, providers and volunteers in the cancer system who exhibit the highest standards of compassionate patient care. Typically only individuals are nominated, but Ferguson and many others at RVH—including patients—feel that this small group is deserving of the honour.

“They truly exemplify exactly what that award is about,” Ferguson comments. “And there’s no way we could pick one individual who stands out from the rest, they genuinely are a team.”

Patient Roy Berndt concurs. “If I had to choose one nurse for recognition, it would be impossible.

“Each person is treated with kindness and given individual care as needed,” Berndt wrote in his supporting letter. “Being a small unit allows them to get to know their patients on a more personal level, which also helps them relax and feel more comfortable in their surroundings. I think this is really beneficial to the treatment.”

“The staff in the Renfrew Victoria Hospital never make you feel like a number. They remember your name and are always genuinely concerned for your well-being,” says another patient, Chris Michener.

“I have nothing but praise for the staff in the Oncology Unit at RVH. Being able to have this care close to home is a godsend.”

—Roy Berndt

“There’s no denying that there is a high level of expertise and commitment to the patients. They go above and beyond every day,” adds Ferguson.

RVH was the first satellite chemotherapy unit in the Champlain LHIN and the program has been in place since 1993. Last year alone the hospital’s cancer care team administered 981 treatments.

Services have grown over the years to include a full spectrum of care for local cancer patients such as: early detection (Ontario Breast Screening Program, colorectal screening, urology clinic); surgery for breast and bowel cancer; insertion of PICC by nurses; chemotherapy teaching via videoconferencing; systemic therapy; and palliative care, when required.

It quickly became clear that the care that the Renfrew Victoria Hospital gives is personal and caring, with a rural quality that made me feel at home. They are a personal, caring team.

—Chris Michener

The generosity of the community when it comes to supporting this unit also speaks volumes, says Ferguson of the \$100,000 donated to the oncology unit from the last Tree of Lights campaign.

“That just shows how much this little unit means to all of us,” she concludes.

The doc is in full swing!



For a golf enthusiast it may not seem like a big deal, but working year-round to help organize a major charity golf tournament is just another item Dr. Stephen Radke schedules into his already very busy agenda.

He got involved with the committee three years ago and is gearing up for the 13th annual RVH Charity Golf Tournament.

“It’s a lot of fun to do,” says Radke, who runs a successful family medical practice and works a couple of days each week in the emergency room, all while squeezing in quality time with his two little girls and wife, Kathleen.

“There are a lot of different perspectives and everyone involved brings unique strengths to the table, but it’s really a team effort,” he says about the small group of colleagues from RVH who put this event together.

Dr. Radke is quick to mention the commitment his fellow committee members make each year—Chairperson Patrick Cayen, Peter Peyton, Doug Ewart, Faye Warren and Barb Desilets.

“We barely get one finished before we get right into planning the next one,” notes Desilets, RVH Foundation Director.

The group seeks out sponsors, organizes approximately 150 participants into teams and arranges one of the biggest parts of the fundraising event—the auction items for the banquet at the end of the afternoon.

“That’s always a fun challenge,” Radke comments. “We try to think of interesting prizes that will get everyone get into a bidding war.”

During his time on the organizing committee, they have been able to present more than \$40,000 each year to the RVH Foundation.

To date, more than \$300,000 has been raised and those funds have gone directly to improving patient care at our hospital. Last year new dialysis equipment was purchased, and the year before that funds were invested in the CT project.

This June 10 at the Renfrew Golf Club, Radke hopes they can hit a real hole-in-one with a record-breaking year.

“We really appreciate people like Steve, especially when you look at all of the other health care initiatives he is involved with, he still finds the time to support the community in this way,” comments Desilets.



Please mark your calendar for the 13th Annual Caring for Tomorrow Charity Golf Tournament, June 10, 2011, Renfrew Golf Club

In support of the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation

We can't do it without you!

Thank you to all sponsors, players and friends of the
RVH Caring for Tomorrow Charity Golf Tournament

To find out how you can be a part of this exciting event, call Barb Desilets, Foundation Director at 613-432-4851 ext. 263.

Healing Garden Project receives a special gift

Holly Mooney is part of a class project where everybody is helping Nobody become somebody.

Each student in Ann Lefebvre's grade two class at Queen Elizabeth School is tasked with taking Nobody, a doll with no gender, age, friends, or abilities home for a week. The goal is for Nobody to learn something positive from everybody.

Holly wanted to teach Nobody to be a kind person. To help it learn how, she made bracelets and sold them. The funds raised would then be given to the Healing Garden fund, c/o RVH Foundation, of which her Papa Daryl is chairman. The



Holly Mooney, centre, presents RVH Foundation Director Barb Desilets with the proceeds from her bracelets.

original 50 bracelets were quickly sold and Holly made an additional 20, which resulted in a \$400.00 donation.

When asked what she knew about the potential Healing Garden, Holly said it will be a place where people can go and it will make them feel better. Why did she want the money to go to the project? "Well, someone like my Nanny Marie who has cancer and lives in Jasper could go there and feel better."

After a week with Holly, Nobody was returned to school sporting one of Holly's bracelets.

Foundation Director Barb Desilets notes, "She brought tears to my eyes telling her story. The Foundation is grateful for all the gifts and support it receives, but there is always something very moving when the support comes from someone so young."

The Healing Garden project, based on the concept that patients' surroundings can be an integral part of the healing process, will provide a peaceful, restorative space for patients, caregivers and family members at RVH. Fundraising events aim to reach a goal of \$60,000, while discussions and planning between the organizing committee and the hospital are ongoing.

Organizers include local residents Charlie Kitts, Kirk Warren, Kevin White, Kent Smith, Bruce Laplaunte, Mike Quilty, Bert Virgin, Guy Jamieson, Denzil Ferguson and Chairperson Daryl Mooney.

Long-standing local Legion support



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 148 has been an outstanding supporter of RVH since the early 1970s. Contributions have been received in the form of memoriam gifts, Tree of Lights and general donations for equipment.

The Special Care Unit (known previously as Intensive Care Unit) is named for the Legion and

has been the focus of the Legion's fundraising efforts. In 1985, \$26,000.00 was donated towards a patient information centre for the unit. As part of a recent expansion of the Special Care Unit, the Legion provided funds for a Tubular Supply Cart valued at more than \$2,000.00.

Zone G7 (seven local Legion Branches) joined forces in 1984 to pledge \$150,000.00 to the dialysis unit. Over the years, the funds provided by the Legion have totalled more than \$300,000.00.

Loyal Orange Lodge of Renfrew County



The LOL held its 16th annual Bowl for Health and Fun fundraiser in March. Over the years, the Lodge has contributed more than \$100,000.00 to the Dialysis Unit at RVH and the satellite unit in Barry's Bay. The 2011 tournament funds were earmarked for the purchase of new chairs needed in the unit.



**The Renfrew
Victoria
Hospital
Foundation**

Make RVH your charity of choice. Please call the RVH Foundation office at 613-432-4851 ext. 263, or visit us online at www.rvhfoundation.com to learn more about how you can contribute to the RVH difference.