

Talk It Up Victoria

RVH
RENFREW VICTORIA HOSPITAL

The official newsletter of the Renfrew Victoria Hospital

A peek behind the scenes at RVH

This issue of Talk It Up Victoria is dedicated to the people who, for the most part, remain in the background at RVH. We don't have space to cover every single area, but provide a sampling of insight into the work they do. These staff members play an integral role in the smooth day-to-day operation of our organization, impacting patient safety and quality of care, contributing to cost-saving measures and environmentally friendly practices.

"Our staff in support services are the unsung heroes of our hospital," says Randy Penney, RVH President and CEO. "They quietly and so effectively go about their business of making sure the infrastructure at RVH functions efficiently and effectively. Every one of these departments, which means the staff that work in Environmental Services, Physical Plant and Grounds, Material Management, Central Sterile Supply, Dietary, Clinical Records, Switchboard, Secretaries and everyone else do an outstanding

job for us. I am very proud of them and so very pleased that we are devoting an entire issue of Talk It Up Victoria to these folks. I hope it will give our patients and community a better sense of how important these services are to our hospital.

"Given the nature of our business, in most cases it is our clinicians who often receive praise for the quality of patient care provided. I believe everyone recognizes at RVH that this can only happen if the infrastructure is there and operating properly. We run the risk of taking this for granted. We talk about the 'team' at RVH—from my perspective the staff in our support areas are as important to the team as any other member.

"So congratulations to all for a job very well done and thank you for maintaining such a wonderful environment where quality patient care can be provided."

Cafeteria focused on providing healthy, healing food



Pam Cranfield, Karen Lepine and Kathy Manwell.

Preparation and careful planning are key in feeding approximately 50 inpatients and just as many staff members at each and every meal.

And a generous portion of caring is scooped onto every plate.

"This is a really important part of the hospital," says Pam Cranfield, Dietitian and Director of Food Services at RVH, that they like to keep the cafeteria as inviting as possible.

One way they do it is by preparing the majority of our food from scratch, instead of using pre-prepared frozen meals.

A few products on the menu are from local producers including the potatoes from a local farm and milk products from Renfrew's own Tracey's Dairy.

Cranfield says it's important to do things like roast turkeys in-house in an effort to provide the patients and customers with quality food options.

Those fresh roasting scents are always helpful to get people out of their office to find out what is cooking that day.

Diana Thomas, RVH Foundation Coordinator, sits very close to the

cafeteria doors and enjoys many lunches prepared from the RVH kitchen.

"This sandwich is so good," she says in between bites of her roast beef sandwich that was prepared to order from the popular sandwich bar. "They always have great lunch options."

With a weekly budget of approximately \$4,500 for food services, she and the team work around a two-week menu for patients. They also need to be on top of any special dietary restrictions and offer appetizing replacements.

The same patient meal is also delivered to a dozen residents through the Meals on Wheels program.

Customers in Café Victoria are treated to a few different options than the patient special of the day, plus a large, fresh salad buffet.

There are 20 different people in the kitchen throughout the week, with Karen Lepine in at 5 a.m. on weekday mornings to start the ovens and start chopping fruits and vegetables for the day.

"Staff members always take pride in what they produce and put a lot of effort into the presentation," says Cranfield.

RVH Recycling Task Force: making going green a priority

A member of the RVH Dietary Department team, Dan Strachan knows that there is a staggering amount of recyclables generated from the kitchen alone. He recognizes the need to implement a more robust recycling program at the hospital.

"All plastics, glass, anything metal and batteries can be recycled," notes Strachan, adding that they already recycle a large amount of cardboard.

So a little more than a year ago, he approached RVH President and CEO Randy Penney to see what can be done to better manage these types of recyclable waste. Penney encouraged him to proceed with a new program.

The Task Force has already designated floor and department Recycling Champions to help in the effort. They have been consulting with everyone for solutions to determine the most appropriate size and amount of recycling bins and the best areas to place them.

Strachan says they still have a lot of work to do—finding a company that is willing to remove the large volume of recycling is a hurdle at this point, but he is optimistic they will have these details all worked out very soon.



"Renfrew Victoria Hospital, how may I help you?"

Helpful, friendly members of our admitting and switchboard department are typically the first people you will meet or speak to when you call our hospital.

From behind our newly renovated Information/Admitting area, the receptionist is always ready to greet you, handle registrations to the Emergency Department, answer any questions or give directions. He or she will also make a blue RVH hospital card if the patient doesn't have one or needs one replaced.

Theresa Miller, an RVH Admitting/Switchboard Clerk, can always be found fielding calls through the hospital switchboard and taking care of most of the paperwork and admissions to our Operating Room and specialist clinics.

"And during the busy times of day, we'll help each other out," she adds.

Their duties also include tending to the requests from Emergency physicians—such as arranging to transfer a patient to Ottawa, or arranging a specialist for follow-up care of RVH patients.

All green chemicals now used to clean our medical devices

Any operation, medical procedure or clinical testing usually includes one or more instruments.

At the end of the procedure or appointment, those items are sent up to the third floor to our Central Sterile Supply (CSS) department for deep cleaning and a strict sterilization process before they can be used again.

It soon will be renamed to reflect more of exactly what they do—the Medical Device Reprocessing Department.

“That’s what we do up here,” explains Susan Guyea, Lead of CSS at RVH.

Guyea is quite impressed with all of the quality control improvements made during her 18 years in this department—she remembers when they used to wash everything by hand in large sinks.

As of the end of November, this department is using all environmentally friendly products in their state-of-the-art sterilization equipment.

“It’s much safer all around,” adds Jeff Calvinho, one of Guyea’s colleagues in the department.

Guyea, Calvinho and two other reprocessing specialists work diligently to ensure there is no cross-contamination among the items. Every item enters through the decontamination door, goes through their new washer disinfecter machine and then is repackaged in the packaging area before heading back out into the hospital through a second separate door.

Rachel Leclaire says she has experienced nothing but a wonderful level of service from the CSS team. The Registered Respiratory Therapist relies on a large quantity of equipment from the sleep lab and RVH Sleep Products store to be processed daily.

“All of our tubing, masks and humidifier chambers are usually back within eight hours of sending them,” she says.

“It is great for us because it drastically cuts down on the amount of stock we need to keep on hand,” says Leclaire, adding she is very grateful because it also saves funds.



Janice Belaire, Sue Guyea and Jeff Calvinho

Wash, rinse and repeat, repeat, repeat



John Lyons

Picture mountains of towels and bed-sheets waiting to be cleaned, dried, folded and sorted when you arrive at work every Monday morning.

That’s exactly what John Lyons faces at 4 a.m. when he arrives to get a head start in the Laundry and Linen Department in the basement of RVH.

“You can barely walk through here,” he states.

That’s because Lyons, the Lead Hand in the department, and his crew work steady throughout the weekdays and give themselves and the machines a break on the weekends. All members of the Environmental Support staff (laundry and the housekeeping departments) are cross-trained, so everyone is able to help out wherever the extra hands are needed.

The first goal of the day is re-stocking two large carts with enough towels, hospital gowns, bedsheets, pillow cases, blankets and face cloths required for daily in-patient care. Then they replenish all of the clean linens and supplies for the rest of the hospital.

In all, the team manages to clean an average of 3,200 kilograms of laundry each week—with approximately 18 massive loads per day.

And by clean, we should say gleaming. Lyons boasts that he has “the cleanest whites in the whole Ottawa Valley.”

He has a lot of experience to back up that statement—he’s been a valuable RVH employee for the past 34 years.

For the past decade Lyons and the crew have had two 95-pound industrial washing machines to assist with the laundering task. Minutes after one wash finishes the machine is again packed full to the brim, which helps in providing the most efficient and timely service.

The washers receive the correct dosages of cleaners during the wash time before completing three rinse cycles to wash away the chemicals. Then everything is sorted and placed in one of two massive

dryers that reach up to 195 degrees Fahrenheit that again would kill any residual bacteria.

There is also a regular-sized washer and dryer that get a lot of use to keep up with the demand.

RVH also charges a nominal fee for laundry service to long-term in-patients and generates a small revenue for the hospital by providing laundry services to The Sunshine Coach and Ambulatory Care Services.

Michelle O’Grady, a third-floor RPN says that even though Lyons’ department is in the basement, he’ll go the extra mile for patients. When they had a case of a patient reluctant to take advantage the laundry service, Lyons went up and spoke to the gentleman directly, promising to take care of all of his laundry personally and even delivering it right back to him.

“That was a really big thing—none of us could convince him to send out his laundry, but John was able to convince him to do it. He just went over and above the call of duty to help this particular patient.”

Cleaning every nook and cranny with a smile



Andy Villamere, Debbie Coulas and Kim Stafford

The key to running a hospital smoothly is to ensure that all areas are kept clean and sanitized for the safety of our patients, employees and visitors.

Always prepared with their mops, cleaning cloths and a lot of elbow grease are the members of our Environmental Services team who work diligently to clean the more than 90,000 square feet of hospital space, plus the four out-buildings on the hospital campus.

“We really do help with the day-to-day operation of the hospital,” says Andy Villamere, the Lead Hand of Housekeeping at RVH. “It creates an atmosphere where the professionals can do their work more efficiently.”

“We really appreciate all that they do,” comments continuing care nurse, Collette Layman. “They are always so considerate of our needs and accommodate any request so they don’t make the patients uncomfortable.”

“We are all very patient-focused,” says Villamere, who has been an RVH employee for the past 33 years. “And it’s important for us not to interrupt the nurses’ and physicians’ workflow.”

He knows it’s also important to develop strong working relationships with each department. “We want to maintain that level of trust and we’re always striving to improve upon it.”

And it all comes back to patient safety, he notes. The RVH Environmental Services team complies with all Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC) standards, and those standards are higher with older buildings.

Every area is cleaned daily throughout the hospital, with the public rest rooms cleaned multiple times per day. The 10-member team works around the clock to keep this facility clean and disinfected.

The solutions are all perfectly metered using specialized equipment for optimum cleaning power, which saves money and time, notes Vice President of Financial Services, Tim Sonnenburg.

“This is also very important when it comes to infection control,” Sonnenburg says.

“Having everything perfectly measured helps us perform the task quicker and is a lot safer for the worker and the environment,” adds Villamere.

For the record, your health charts are in good hands

A very busy and integral part of our daily operations is the management of our patients' health records, which ensures the most accurate and up-to-date information is recorded and filed during each patient visit to RVH.

Whether it be a visit to the Emergency Department, the Ambulatory Care Clinics, Dialysis Unit or Oncology, those files are kept very well organized by the team in the Clinical Records Department, under the leadership of Marie Murray.

She explains that the four full-time and five part-time staff members are responsible for the typing up of reports for consultants, physicians and the Sleep Lab.

They're also responsible for a long list of regular duties that includes pulling files for all clinics and emergency room patients, running reports, preparing correspondence to patients and taking care of admissions.

"We keep two years' worth of patient charts on hand up here," Murray says about the office space behind the main information desk. Rows of shelving packed with file folders keep track of every detail of a patient's care. Another large area for the records, plus additional office space for transcribing notes is located in the basement level of the hospital.

"Everything is done in accordance with the Public Hospitals Act," she notes.

Murray is certified in health information management and has been a member of the RVH family for more than 37 years.

She has seen many changes throughout the hospital and many within her own department. They are looking ahead to a big switch in record management, as the Clinical Records Department is about to fully embrace the digital age and convert all records over to digitized format.

Along with saving space, going digital means they will be much more efficient at completing their daily tasks, adds Murray.



A maintenance man is only minutes away

The responsibility and stress level run high in the maintenance department of any hospital, but every patient, staff member and visitor who enters RVH property can rely on our team for assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Day-to-day they are taking care of every square foot in the hospital complex, plus four out-buildings—in total 131,000 square feet.

RVH Director of Plant Operations, Bob McParland, and his dedicated crew of three additional full-time, four part-time and two casual staff keep us warm and safe



Bob McParland and Fred Boldt

during the winter and cool and comfortable during summer months. McParland is an Operating Engineer and the rest of the crew are trained electricians, carpenters and mechanics.

"Heating and cooling the place is always a challenge with more than 300 tons of cooling capacity and 375 boiler horsepower capacity," says McParland, who has been at RVH for more than three decades. He adds that there is oxygen, the medical vacuums, electricity, hot and cold water, and sewage lines that have to be supplied to each room year round without interruption.

Outside, they always ensure sidewalks on the property are cleared of snow and ice, and maintain all of the parking meters, plus take care of cutting the grass during warmer months.

"We always try to plan our work for the day, but it doesn't usually happen that way. Whatever takes priority is what we focus on," says McParland.

"When we arrive at 6 a.m., you never know what is going to happen besides giving switchboard operators their coffee break—yes, we do that too. Then you may have to go and shovel snow for an hour or so, then build a wall, tile a floor, paint the wall and run some wire, or cable for a computer, fix a toilet or change an old sewer line. The list goes on and on."

Many of the capital projects occurring around the hospital come in on or under budget because of the talent and excellent work from the maintenance department. One recent example is the Digital Mammography suite. Those renovations were completed by their expertise rather than contracting the work to outside construction companies.

"No project is too small or too large, too simple or too complex," comments RVH Vice President of Corporate



Services, Julia Boudreau. "More importantly, they are always approachable, friendly and accommodating when we ask for assistance."

She is also quick to mention that every one of them will go out of their way to help the public, patients and their fellow co-workers: "The term 'other duties' takes on a whole new meaning for these guys." It's commonplace to see one of our helpful maintenance team putting up holiday decorations on the building, assembling army tents for the annual RVH Teddy Bear Picnic, and helping anyone whose car won't start in the winter.

Stocking the hospital with supplies

How does an organization as large as the Renfrew Victoria Hospital decide which types of gauze they're going to use with their patients? Or which brand of paper towels to use in the washrooms?

The ordering, purchasing and management of each and every item is a job all of its own and can be a challenge, according to Doug Ewart. As the head of Material Management he spends his work day researching the best products to stock for our needs.

"The products need to always meet our clinical needs ahead of everything else," he explains.

Renfrew Victoria Hospital belongs to a few different group purchasing organizations, which ensures that we are paying the lowest prices for many regularly used items, explains RVH Vice President of Financial Services, Tim Sonnenburg. "We are committed to Health Pro Canada. We buy about 80 per cent of our supplies through Health Pro."

RVH is able to purchase capital items like vital sign monitors, beds, stretchers and IV poles through the St. Joseph's Purchasing Group, and is also associated with the Champlain Health Supply Services (CHSS).

Belonging to these groups allows us to pay the same price point that larger hospitals pay for the same item.

Ewart says RVH spends an average of \$2.5 million each year on the plethora of supplies that are stock-piled in the basement of the hospital.

He has one full-time storage attendant and one casual staff member helping him to keep track of the 845 items in the current inventory. The Materials Management team is responsible for delivering these items to their appropriate locations as well.

"A lot of leg work needs to be done in making these purchases," says Ewart, who has worked in the department for the past 10 years.

He recently switched over the supplier and brand of basic white copy paper after researching a better price on one of the most used items in the hospital.

"I project we'll save \$2,700 a year with this one contract, and in the long run that makes a big difference."

Over the course of a year, Ewart figures he is able to save RVH tens of thousands of dollars by investigating better pricing for items.

"It's not necessarily the cheapest price that I look for—I look for best value."



Doug Ewart

Call to Action

LEARN  KNOW  ACT

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Getting to the heart of the matter...

Critical patient care decisions are made based on the information provided by vital signs monitors. Access to the latest technology ensures that decisions can be made very quickly, leading to improved patient care and safety.

This year's Tree of Lights campaign, running from December through to the end of March 2013, is committed to raising the funds necessary for the purchase of "vital" equipment for our patients and our staff.

These monitors are used in a number of patient care areas throughout the hospital including emergency, daycare and active care. The investment required to meet our current needs is in excess of \$200,000 for cardiac-related equipment and there is no government funding to help cover the costs.

Anyone wishing to support the Tree of Lights campaign—or another project/area of RVH—is invited to contact the RVH Foundation office at 613-432-4851 ext. 263.



Spinning for heart health illuminates the Tree of Lights

RVH President and CEO Randy Penney and RVH Chief of Staff Dr. Steven Radke had plenty of motivation to pedal, as a good crowd gathered for the annual lighting of the tree in Low Square on December 7.

Special thanks to Dr. Sharon Collins for lending her talents to create the artwork for the annual RVH holiday card.

A donation has been made on your behalf
—RVHF

Give a gift that warms the heart—make an RVH Foundation gift donation.

RVH Foundation is taking strides to enhance its online presence. If you would like to receive RVH Foundation and Renfrew Victoria Hospital news electronically, please send your email address to: info@rvhfoundation.com



Giving all year long

A special donation at this year's Tree of Lights event from the Cougars Conquering Cancer was the culmination of this year's fundraising efforts by the group.

Home Hardware Unwrapping Christmas Early



The Home Hardware team presents Sandra Beimers, CTA Community Representative, with the funds raised during its annual Unwrapping Christmas Early event. The final tally was a record-breaking \$3,776.77 with proceeds from ticket sales and the bake sale.

We would like to repeat our heartfelt *thank you* to each and every person who helped to organize, volunteered or contributed in any way to an event in support of the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation over the past year.

Together we are Caring for Tomorrow.



The Renfrew
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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.