

# Grey Nuns hospital addition *spells growth for Caritas*

On the eve of the World Day of the Sick, Caritas physicians and staff, board and administrators, celebrated and gave thanks for a new addition to the Grey Nuns Community Hospital—a move that marks growth for the Catholic health care ministry in Edmonton.

The new four-storey building houses clinics and offices which have moved out of the very busy hospital in order to return three units to inpatient care. The expansion is part of the Capital Health region's capital plan to reduce wait times and ease pressures on busy emergency departments in the region.

Over 150 guests attended the February 10 opening ceremony—including dignitaries from Capital Health, the

Alberta Catholic Health Corporation, and representatives of the founding congregation, the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns). During the ceremony, His Grace, Most Reverend Thomas Collins read from Matthew (4:23-25) and blessed the 59,000 sq. ft. space for service.

"Grey Nuns foundress St. Marguerite D'Youville would speak of this opportunity as a providential gift and a call to greater responsibility—to be vibrant signs of hope in a broken world," said Dennis Brown, Vice-Chair, Caritas Board of Directors. "That spirit lives in the Caritas Mission to heal the body, enrich the mind and nurture the soul. May that spirit and mission infuse this addition and the hospital areas reclaimed for patient care."

"It was important to us to call upon


*"Grey Nuns foundress  
St. Marguerite d'Youville  
would speak of this  
opportunity as a  
providential gift..."*

— DENNIS BROWN,  
CARITAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

God's blessings on our building and on our team, to help guide us as we continue our work in caring for those in need," said Greg Hadubiak, Vice-President, Grey Nuns Community Hospital and Vice-President of Planning and Development for Caritas Health Group.

The changes will allow about an additional 100 beds to be opened at the site. "We will be increasing the number of medical beds, redeveloping our third floor for expanded Women's Health services, and adding Geriatrics and Stroke services to the complement of care at the Grey Nuns," he continues.

Programs and services that have moved into the new building include the Pre-Admission Clinic, Diabetic Education Centre, IV Therapy Clinic and Capital Health Home Care and Regional Palliative Care offices, as well as a new renal dialysis unit for south east Edmonton.

Later this year a similar addition at the Misericordia Community Hospital will be completed—with the potential for 38% expansion in Caritas-operated hospital beds in Edmonton over the next two years. 



*Archbishop Thomas Collins, assisted by Caritas Vice President of Mission, Ethics and Spirituality Gordon Self, blesses a wing of the Grey Nuns Hospital to be used for offices, allowing other space in the hospital to be returned to patient care.*

# President's Notes



**W**hat an exciting time we are in! In February we had a beautiful blessing ceremony to open the new Day Clinic Support Building addition at the Grey Nuns and the addition at the Misericordia is well under construction. At the same time, we are working with the region to make plans for the eventual redevelopment of the Edmonton General site and to create opportunities for Caritas to grow as a continuing care provider. We are definitely in for some growth!

While we are growing, we are also experiencing a higher than normal volume of activity. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed and continues to make contributions to this work as it unfolds. We are very hopeful that with the new bed capacity, pressures in our emergencies will be mitigated.

While we have had fabulous winter weather, flu did arrive late and both our emergencies and inpatient units have been under a tremendous amount of stress. I would like to thank so many of you for going above and beyond to ensure our patients and residents have kind, compassionate and individualized attention. I know this is not easy, but your professionalism and capacity to continue to care is so greatly appreciated.

Your continuous efforts to be compassionate and professional are at the heart of our mission. In his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), Pope Benedict XVI described this practical love, and called on us who work in Catholic organizations to demonstrate this difference to the world.

*"Individuals who care for those in need must first be professionally competent... Yet, while professional competence is a primary, fundamental requirement, it is not of itself sufficient. We are dealing with human beings, and human beings always need something more than technically proper care. They need humanity. They need heartfelt concern. Those who work for the Church's charitable organizations must be distinguished by the fact that they do not merely meet the needs of the moment, but they dedicate themselves to others with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity."*

For me, these are powerful words. They remind me of the awesome responsibility we have as health care providers and the powerful blessing we can be to those we serve.

Spring is finally here and many of you will be heading off to well deserved breaks with your families over spring break. Enjoy, travel safely and come back refreshed!

— Sheli Murphy, Interim President,  
Caritas Health Group

## Reflection Collection

### A Spring Prayer for the World

*Let the rain come and wash away  
the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds  
held and nurtured over generations.  
Let the rain wash away the memory  
of the hurt, the neglect.  
Then let the Sun come out and  
fill the sky with rainbows.  
Let the warmth of the Sun heal us  
wherever we are broken.  
Let it burn away the fog so that  
we can see beyond labels,  
beyond accents, gender, or skin color.  
Let the warmth and brightness  
of the Sun melt our selfishness.  
So that we can share the joys and  
feel the sorrows of our neighbors.  
And let the light of the Sun  
be so strong that we will see all  
people as our neighbors.  
Let the Earth, nourished by rain,  
bring forth flowers  
to surround us with beauty.  
And let the mountains teach our hearts  
to reach upward to heaven.*

— Source: Center of Concern, [www.coc.org](http://www.coc.org)

# Cliff Seville

## Alberta Centennial Medal honoree



Cliff Seville, Manager of Therapeutics at the Misericordia, has been recognized by the Lieutenant Governor and Premier of Alberta as an outstanding citizen of this province. This medal is conferred upon individuals who have made significant contributions to the community and society through leadership, voluntarism and community involvement. Cliff has been instrumental in starting the hyperbaric oxygen unit, wound care program, asthma care, respiratory sleep diagnostics, and several rehabilitation

programs. After a coveted career - Cliff Seville is currently responsible for respiratory care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language pathology, and audiology at the Misericordia.

The Alberta Centennial medal recognizes and honors the outstanding achievements of Albertans who have gone to great lengths to make their province a better place to live, work and do business. Cliff has accomplished this with a strong presence in the health care community. He is frequently invited to speak at meetings

of health professionals from various disciplines. Cliff was presented the Alberta Centennial Medal at a reception on December, 21, 2005.

"This is a great honour. I would like to congratulate Cliff on receiving the Alberta Centennial Medal," says Jan Westby, Acting VP, of the Misericordia Community Hospital. 

CARITAS  HEALTH GROUP

## Rosalie Jetté Day

Wednesday, April 5, 2006



Rosalie Jetté is a woman for today.

Remembered for her "audacious" but compassionate spirit, she dared to stand up against unjust social norms and attitudes which ignored the needs of the vulnerable. Rather, she broke the silence, providing a safe haven for single mothers who had been left to their means with nowhere to turn.

Today, in 2006, with all the challenges and opportunities in health care, what does Rosalie's audacious spirit call we who are Caritas to stand up for?

*Promotion for the 2006 Rosalie Jetté Day Celebrations, which are held each year at Caritas sites—traditionally on or around the date of her death of April 5.*

*St Marguerite d'Youville, Foundress of Grey Nuns is celebrated each October.*

Do we have the audacity to believe we too can make a difference?

# Innovative VAX system

## offers greater efficiency

By Cecilia Bloxom, Public Affairs, MCH

Imagine if your household was so organized that every time you took something from the fridge it would automatically be re-ordered. Or every time you used a plate or cup it was sent for sterilization and then returned to the cupboard ready to be used again. If your dishwasher broke all you would have to do is log onto your computer and it would tell you where you purchased it from, and how much it cost.

Not many households are that organized – but the Misericordia is. That is what the new VAX system offers the

item lives within the warehouse and allows tracking from surgery, to cleaning, to re-shelving, to being delivered to the Operating Room theatre.


This process is done as items are assigned a permanent location with reference to a row, cart, shelf, partition and expected quantities. “Not only does this ensure more secure practices it also allows for automatic re-ordering of supplies,” says Pooke. “The computer compares the on hand quantity to a pre-determined minimum quantity and re-orders the difference.”

“Each theatre has an automatic copy of the preference card for each procedure for each surgeon for the following day as well. This allows nurses to prepare the surgery theatre and know which supplies are required by reviewing the Preference Cards at anytime,” says Pooke.

In the operating room, nurses chart the nursing care they provide to patients and track all the supplies they use for the surgery on the computer. Each item has a price attached to it that then tells us how much each case costs in relation to supplies used. This makes everyone in the Operating Room aware of what items cost. This includes the cost of every plate and screw for a fractured bone or the cost of the replacement parts for a total hip replacement.

The entire process is tracked via a Procedure catalogue that is linked to Preference Cards for each individual surgeon and is maintained in the VAX mainframe and accessible from any computer on site.

The VAX system has been in the planning process since June, 2004 with approval to proceed in March, 2005. It is unique to the Royal Alex Hospital and went live at the Misericordia on January 15, 2006.

“Congratulations to all team members involved in bringing this innovative process to the Misericordia,” says Jan Westby, Acting VP of the Misericordia Community Hospital. “There was a great deal of hard work in the development of this program. This is an excellent system that allows for a significant level of sterilization and organization.” 



Joan Pooke is showing the VAX labeling with a location address and an inventory number for a product whereby anyone could find the item if they have the product number and the address where it lives. This constituted creating a warehouse for approx 18,000 items in SPD in the same manner.

hospital. This innovative system tracks all supplies used. This ranges from surgical instruments to dressing gauze. It allows staff to track how many items are available on site, documents sterilization practices and when supplies run out, it automatically produces a deficiency report, telling staff they need to sterilize more.

“Items are treated more securely, you need to use the computer to take product off the shelf or put product back so that the VAX system can keep track of what quantity is on hand,” says Joan Pooke, Patient Care Manager for OR, RR, SPD.

Every item has a bar code and label that tells staff what the item is, where the

The process starts with the surgeon sending a booking card for a patient to the Operating Room telling us what their needs are. We book the patient in VAX, choosing the correct procedure from a catalogue. This in turn, chooses a preference card which is like a recipe with a list of ingredients and additional information.

A pick lists for each case is then automatically printed down in Central Services at 1400 for the following day. Sterile Processing staff locate all these items on the shelves, load them onto individual carts, record that they have taken them in the computer and send the carts to the Operating Room.

### Grey Nuns VAX Update

- The computers not yet installed in the Operating Theaters
- After completion of the digital OR enhancement it is anticipated that the VAX project will go forward, first with the inventory/case cart project, then within theater charting.



## Caritas Hospitals Foundation

is pleased to introduce the 2006/2007 Volunteer Board of Trustees and Governors and the appointment of John Boucher as President and CEO



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Honorary Board Member

*We wish to thank our many generous Donors and Volunteers for their support which enabled us to raise \$4.5M for the important needs of the Caritas Health Group (Edmonton General Continuing Care Centre, and Grey Nuns and Misericordia Community Hospitals) and the Endowment Fund for the Foundation.*

## Helping Others Through Your Continued Support

# Misericordia volunteer *shares the healing power of music*

By Cecilia Bloxom, Public Affairs, MCH

Walking through the lobby of the Misericordia Community Hospital can be a musical experience thanks to the piano playing of Natalie Hohn.

Natalie believes there is good in all types of music just as there is good in all types of people. She finds it very comforting to play and it makes her feel good if other people are enjoying the music as well.

Since 1978, Natalie has been driving herself to the Misericordia to volunteer. In the 27 years that Natalie has been volunteering she has spent almost 4,000 hours in the medical library and playing piano.

Natalie knows she has a lot to share. "In your own world being with your family is a small concept," says Hohn, "but when you volunteer you have a larger impact and you affect more people – that is why I like volunteering."

Sitting down and chatting with Natalie is as pleasant as it is to watch her play piano. She knows how to hit all the right keys.

"Always do what your heart tells you to do and never give up," says Natalie Hohn. Although her heart told her she wanted to be a nurse she instead became a teacher and taught with her heart. "There is always hope for everyone," says Natalie. "Every child has a chance."

Her belief in the power of people could be attributed to the way Natalie was raised. Natalie grew up in a home where her mother demanded that women be treated equally and that every opportunity be given for education.

Natalie not only believes in the power of education but most importantly in the power of relationships. "You have to spend time together – talk to your children and make them feel important – relationships with each other are so important." says Hohn.



So next time you walk through the lobby at the Misericordia Hospital and you hear beautiful music coming from the piano, please know that it is coming from someone who believes in you.

"The Misericordia is so lucky to have someone dedicated to bringing out the good in everyone," says Toni Maloney, Manager of Volunteer Services.

Thank you Natalie! 🇺🇸

## Holy Family Columbus Club *supports Caritas palliative care*

By John Boucher, Caritas Hospitals Foundation

The Caritas Hospitals Foundation and, most importantly, the patients and families of the "Mel Miller Hospice Unit" thank the Holy Family Columbus Council for supporting this cornerstone and important cause.

Mr. John Marchak a member of Holy Family Columbus Council's Chapter 14, St. Michaels Resurrection and Assumption presented the Caritas Hospitals Foundation with a cheque for \$1,000. Mr. Marchak and his club members believe

this level of care is critical to those in need during their final stages of life. Caritas Hospitals Foundation echoes their support and raises funds to assist both the Caritas Health Group's Palliative Care Programs through special events, endowment gifts, grants and memorials. 🇺🇸



John Marchak and John Boucher

# Thank You!

## Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem's Knights Hospitaller

By Kathy Sthamann,  
Caritas Hospitals Foundation

The Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem's Knights Hospitaller presented the Caritas Hospitals Foundation with a cheque for \$530.40 on Wednesday, January 25, 2006. The historical Order of Chivalry is devoted to works of charity, health, education and to the defense of The Christian Faith.

The Commandery of Alberta's generous gift will help support Caritas Health Group's strategic funding priority, the Electric Bed Replacement initiative.

The Caritas Hospitals Foundation and most importantly the patients and residents of the Caritas Health Group, thank the Commandery of Alberta for supporting this important cause. ☩



L to R: The Reverend James W. Kruger, PH, Commander of Alberta; Linda Blumenthal, C.H., Treasurer; Kathy Sthamann, Caritas Hospitals Foundation; Leonard M. Blumenthal, LL.D., C.H., and Capital Health Board member since 1998

## Prohibited abbreviations reminder

It has now been five months since the prohibited abbreviation policy was implemented. Everyone is doing a great job with this patient safety initiative! Keep up the good work and remember medication order writing requires:

- Full drug names—no abbreviations
- No trailing zero. Example: 5.0 milligrams needs to be written as 5
- Leading zero(s) required. Example: .125 milligrams needs to be written as 0.125
- "Unit" written out instead of IU

### Remember to use:

- Prohibited abbreviation sticky notes (CH-0873)
- Prohibited abbreviation chart bookmark stickers (CH-0848)
- Consult the Regional Quality website for complete access to the Prohibited Abbreviations Toolkit ([http://www.intranet2.capitalhealth.ca/rqo/Prohibited\\_Abbreviations.asp](http://www.intranet2.capitalhealth.ca/rqo/Prohibited_Abbreviations.asp))

The complete list of prohibited abbreviations can be found in the corporate administrative directive #2.3.4 Medication Orders—Appendix 1 found at [http://www.intranet2.capitalhealth.ca/policies/..](http://www.intranet2.capitalhealth.ca/policies/)

Karen Horon, & Denise Steele  
(Co-Chairs—MAPAS)  
Carmel Montgomery,  
Regional Quality

Gayle Urquhart,  
Professional Practice Leader—  
Nursing,  
University of Alberta/  
Stollery Children's Hospitals

# Peace cranes brighten *the family room on palliative unit*

By Tadra Boulton, Public Affairs, GNCH

During a six-week Summer internship with the Food Services department at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital as a quality assurance assistant, 17-year-old Holy Trinity Catholic High School student Ga Young Kim, heard about the hospital's Palliative Care unit and wanted to do something to give the patients courage to cope with their terminal illnesses, but did not know what to do.

That same day, she saw some media coverage of the 60th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings which reminded her of the 1000 cranes legend, and she immediately started planning a 1000 crane event of her own.


With the help of more than 40 of her classmates, it took about two months to fold, in the traditional Japanese origami method, the brightly colored papers of different sizes and place them in a large glass vase.

Karen MacMillan, Patient Care Manager of the Grey Nuns Palliative Care Unit was impressed by the young student's kindness and compassion. "It is inspiring to see young people with such an understanding and genuine compassion for our patients and families. I am always amazed at their level of awareness and their willingness to share that awareness and encourage others to think about or reach out to those who are suffering."

Accompanied by Boris Radyo, her high school principal, Ga Young donated the cranes to the unit just before Christmas. "I hope it will make a



Karen MacMillan, Patient Care Manager of the Grey Nuns Palliative Care Unit accepts the inspiring donation of 1000 folded paper Origami cranes from Holy Trinity Catholic High School student Ga Young Kim.

difference and show the power of the individual," says Kim. "Some people are in the hospital for such a long time. They need something to cheer them up and give them strength." 



## *The legend of the thousand cranes*

It is a Japanese legend that a thousand origami cranes will please gods and that the gods will grant the folder a wish. The most famous story of the legend is probably Sadako Sasaki and the thousand cranes. Sadako was a victim of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and she suffered from leukemia. Sadako's best friend, Chizuko, brought her some origami paper and told her the legend. Sadako decided to fold one thousand cranes and ask the gods to grant her good health. The cranes gave her strength and courage to fight cancer. Before her death, she folded about 644 cranes. Her classmates were

touched by Sadako's story of one thousand cranes and they decided to finish folding the thousand cranes for their beloved friend. Even though Sadako died before finishing the cranes, the story carried on for years and years after and it still gives courage and strength to people throughout the world. Today, in Hiroshima's Peace Park, there is a statue of Sadako standing on top of a granite pedestal holding a golden crane in her outstretched arm. At its base a plaque reads:

This is our cry.  
This is our prayer.  
Peace in the world.

# A Reason to Hope *in healthcare today?*

By Gordon Self, Vice President, Mission, Ethics and Spirituality, Caritas Health Group

**B**ed capacity pressures. Staff shortages. Rising costs. Throughput issues. Where does it all end? Don't even mention pandemic flu. We're living with crisis now!"

These are not unfamiliar words. We have heard them a lot lately. Even if we're not saying them out loud, we may very well have thought about the increasing pressure on healthcare and our ability to cope, while still providing safe, compassionate, quality care.

This year's ethics play, "A Frog in the Well" was developed to focus specifically on the ethical issues around resource allocation, and the moral options available to staff. Many challenging questions have been raised during Nursing Fair presentations—for example, how can/do we support staff who must make tough ethical choices. A series of ethics presentations have also been offered to talk about moral compromise, and equally as important, what I call "moral resiliency"—that is, being supportive of each other when our integrity and moral limits are being tested. We all are looking for a reason to hope. Is there such a sign out there?

Ten years have passed since Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago wrote his famous "A Sign of Hope" reflection on Catholic healthcare. What makes this pastoral letter so memorable is that Bernardin based his reflections on his own experience as a patient with pancreatic cancer, to which he ultimately succumbed. I remember being in Chicago not long after the Cardinal died, and my cousin told me how the city mourned him. He spoke from the heart and was very transparent about his illness, acknowledging how

illness can profoundly challenge everything one believes and values, throwing a person into chaos. He also spoke as the archbishop and pastoral shepherd of the diocese, offering a "reason to hope" to other patients faced with life-altering diagnoses and uncertain futures, including the fellow patients he met while undergoing treatment together.

But Joseph Cardinal Bernardin offered a reason to hope specifically to those who serve in healthcare – and his

*Chaos is not  
"overcome",  
but "integrated  
with creation"*


words still ring true today. He acknowledged the challenge facing Catholic hospitals in remaining compassionate, viable and efficient providers of care and carrying on the healing ministry of Jesus, even in the midst of chaos. He based his pastoral letter on the Book of Genesis, citing how chaos is not "overcome", but "integrated with creation" in much the same way that patients, as well as healthcare providers, must find ways to work through the chaos they face, without losing their resiliency, their integrity, or the reason to hope.

And who are those signs of hope in Caritas? By the time this article is published, we will be preparing to announce the Individual and Team recipients of the Caritas Mission Awards at the first ever Announcement Celebration on April 20th. What makes the event

special is that it will profile not only this year's recipients, but also all those who were nominated and the many individuals across Caritas who put time and a great deal of thought into nominating others. I would argue all these people should be recognized for helping to deepen the mission at Caritas. All of these people are signs of hope that, despite the unique pressures they face in their departments. They remind us of who we are at Caritas, and what we are about.

How do I know that? Just hang around any of these individuals and teams, and look carefully at what they do. But more importantly, look at how they do what they do. I'm talking about attitude—"can-do" problem-solving, teamwork, moral imagination, suspension of judgment, and respectful behaviour. Just as Joseph Cardinal Bernardin reminded us, it's how we deliver healthcare that matters. Fifteen hundred years ago, St. Benedict wrote about the same pressures in running a monastery as today's modern hospital, recognizing there wasn't always room in the monastery to offer the traveler shelter, food or basic medical assistance. Despite a lack of capacity to accommodate the stranger, Benedict reminds us we always have a moral duty to "offer a kind word".

So how do we be signs of hope for one another? It begins with a kind word. How we treat one another - as we talk on the phone, at the desk, and in the hallways, and let's not forget email. By pausing first and asking, "How would I want to be addressed?"

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin was mourned by the people because in the midst of his own personal crisis and the chaos in his life, he was able to offer a kind word to others by offering a reason to hope. How do you want to be known? 

## Play your part in *energy conservation*

By Brian Monaghan,  
Facilities Management, GNCH

National Health Care Efficiency Awareness Week was held February 1 – 7, 2006. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to participate in energy conservation measures. Simple actions such as the following go a long way to ensure that energy is not needlessly wasted:

- 1) ensure that all lights are shut off in unoccupied spaces
- 2) shut down computer monitors when leaving at the end of your shift
- 3) shut off coffee pots after use
- 4) ensure that photocopiers, printers and fax machines are programmed to the "energy saving mode"
- 5) report any energy usage concerns such as dripping taps, room temperature problems, noisy or malfunctioning light fixtures to the Facilities management department of your respective site by sending a work order to facilities management

The Caritas Energy Management team would like to thank you for your cooperation and assistance in managing our energy consumption wisely.



# Mayor Stephen Mandel

## *meets with Edmonton General Community*



*Mayor Stephen Mandel talks with members of the Edmonton General community, following his February 9 presentation*

On February 9, 2006, residents, families, and staff joined representatives of the Edmonton General Residents' Council and the Family and Community Advisory council to welcome special guest Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel.

More than 150 people gathered to hear the Mayor's thoughts on his new administration – including their efforts to be more responsive to Edmonton seniors. "We are trying to find better ways of meeting the needs of this growing population," noted the Mayor. "We are committed to allocating adequate resources

to ensure better access to such things as affordable housing and recreation facilities. We want to be designated a senior's friendly city hall," he continued.

The Mayor noted that he was pleased to hear directly from members of this community – to learn about their challenges and their priorities. "We were pleased to have hosted the mayor," said Diane Berge, Chair of the Family and Community Advisory Council. "He was so personable and down to earth and he answered all of our questions. We had a great visit and look forward to having him back." ☒

# Going Global


## *International student joins Grey Nuns dietitians for Research*

**D**ietitians, Suzanne Hare and Dianne Drummond recently welcomed international student, Enid Smid, from the Hogeschool van Amsterdam School of Food & Nutrition. Emma has been assisting Suzanne and Dianne in completing their most recent research project "Dietitians and Eating Disorders, An International Issue." Enid is working at Grey Nuns Hospital with them for the next few months.

This project is to aid in the understanding of the global issues around the increasing concern about eating disorders within the dietetics profession. To date, local professionals and nutrition students have been surveyed to establish

the need for such a project. Stage two has been the development of a questionnaire to be sent worldwide to assess existing screening practices for eating disorders within nutrition education programs, as well as existing programs, services and program policies to support students with eating disorders. The next stage, which Emma will work on, is to work with the Dietitians of Canada to distribute the questionnaire world-wide.

"During her time in Edmonton, we hope to show Emma some real Western hospitality and expose her to some authentic Canadian experiences," says Dianne. Emma's first language is Dutch, so they are looking for someone who speaks

her language to help make her transition to being a student in Canada as easy as possible. For more information, please contact Suzanne (735-7458) or Dianne (735-7613) directly. 



## The Hope Task Force *Visions of Hope*


**O**n January 11, 2006, members of the Hope Task Force held a half-day retreat at the Grey Nuns site to vision and plan for the year to come and beyond. As you may be aware, the Hope Task Force began as a committee in May 2001, following a Caritas Management Forum facilitated by Dr. R. F. Jevne from the Hope Foundation. The Hope Committee is a multi-disciplinary group with representatives from all three Caritas sites. The purpose of the Task Force is to "facilitate discussion and practice of Hope personally and professionally" within Caritas.

During the Planning Retreat, Task Force members discussed a variety of potential exciting, new and viable ideas which we hope to successfully implement in the year to come. Watch for more news



*Some of the members of the 2006 Caritas Hope Task Force are pictured here, including Hope Task Force Chair Carol Vogler (on the far left) and Gordon Self, Vice President of Mission, Ethics and Spirituality (on the far right). Want to join the team? Contact Heather for details!*

on this coming soon! At the same time, we will continue to maintain our commitment to projects already underway...including: Hope Rocks; Hope Springs Eternal, and Hope Trees.

Want to know more? Contact Heather Foster at 930-5564 or hfoster@cha.ab.ca Find out how you can participate in upcoming Hope Task Force initiatives! 

# When the caregiver needs care

By Colleen Zimmer, Patient Relations Coordinator, Caritas Health Group

As a nurse of 30 years, I was easily able to care for others and to know how to communicate difficult news—such as the death of a patient to anxiously waiting loved ones. As an experienced nurse, the knowledge of how to help patients and families in their reactions to death had become second nature. However, just last year, when I was suddenly on the receiving end of this conversation...I was surprised to learn that I lacked personal coping strategies to face such tragedy.

Last year, on family day weekend, the RCMP came to my door at 1230 a.m. to announce that my 19 year old son and his friend Mike were killed in a motor vehicle accident. The boys, who were so full of life and energy, were no longer here. A mother's fears had suddenly become a reality. In the aftermath of this shock that is experienced so often by others at my workplace...I was helpless.

In the coming days, weeks and months I felt powerless to communicate my needs to family, friends and co-workers. The journey of grief for me has been an isolating experience, despite the support provided me.

The death of an adolescent is a particularly complex issue. The process of grieving and coping can be complicated by the tension that may exist in the parent/child relationship. As an adolescent, Nicholas had struggled to find out who he was, a quest that less and less

frequently was clashing with the idealism and guidance of a parent.

As a mother, I remain in emotional distress long after my son's death. Initially, I wanted to crawl inside myself and let the world go on without me. As a nurse, I knew the danger of the desire to become isolated. In the months following the accident, as supporters disappeared, I knew the need to keep busy and to mobilize networks for support.

Healthcare professionals must recognize the specific and special needs of this parent group. The death of a child has been shown to be a highly traumatic event for surviving parents and siblings (Rando, 1986, Davies, 2001, Riley, 2003). Sudden, violent death is even more traumatizing for a parent. Families, following the death of a child, can become chaotic as each person seeks meaning in the life and

death experience. The family may see God as punitive, and seek to find a reason for the death. Siblings experience difficulties as they adjust to a new life and deal with the grief process. As a parent, I easily supported my children in their grief, but not so easily could deal with my own.

Parental relationships with the surviving children changed. It took energy and coordination for the family members to fall back into the rhythm of life. I was then left to cope with my own emotional angst, leaving little energy to deal with everyday life.

When contemplating death, dying, or bereavement, few people consider their children dying. As a society, we contemplate the deaths of parents, grandparents, and ill family or friends. We accept that as part of life. The concept of the death of a child is unfamiliar, and uncomfortable. The death of a child signifies more than the loss of a person. To the family, the death is the loss of hopes, dreams, identities, and relationships. The fact that thousands of people go through this experience yearly establishes a need to understand what happens to families as they grieve the death of a child. Each family member must come to terms with the loss, and then work toward the meaning of life.

*The death of a child signifies more than the loss of a person. To the family, the death is the loss of hopes, dreams, identities, and relationships.*



# The death of a child

Many parents feel like failures as protectors and feel guilt when their child dies (Fletcher, 2002). When harm comes to your child, a mother may retreat into herself to cope with the grief. The retreat then isolates her from family support. The death of your child changes who you are and how you face the world. You will never be the same again. There is a void in your life and in your heart as you struggle to find normalcy in life. There are no rules to follow. There are no resources available to tell you how to proceed.

A child's death tends to isolate individuals and reduces the amount of unnecessary communication with others because of the pain and grief that one is coping with. There is a need to adjust your role in life, and seek meaning not only for yourself but for your family members as they try to feel whole again. With the passage of time, the disbelief, shock, incredulity and denial are wearing off for me. There has been no personal challenge more difficult. The intensity of the pain persists as the full impact of my loss is felt. The mental anguish is slowly being replaced with loving memories and positive feelings of Nicholas and Mike.

Although it has been noted that the loss of a child is the most severe loss a person can experience (Sanders, 1992, Leahy, 1992) there is no outline for the optimal way to approach parents after the sudden traumatic death of their child and to assist them in their tasks of mourning. Bereaved persons whose grief and pain are ignored may become secondary victims. As a co-worker, you can make it worse by insensitivity, and you can certainly ease the pain by kindness. The number of persons in the support system can help manage the vulnerability and the stress of such a significant loss. Your attentiveness to a person who is dealing with loss of a child can assist in their long-term bereavement.

*When the caregiver needs care, don't be afraid to provide it.*

Caritas has a mission statement that is practiced by many employees: Healing the Body, Enriching the Mind, Nurturing the Soul.

It's not always clear what to say or do to help the bereaved parent. To those that simply hold my hand, and say, "I'm so sorry for your loss" I say, "Thank you for your empathy." To those that stop me and ask me how I am, I say, "Thank you for remembering my pain". To those that acknowledge the change in my vocational path, and my need for intellectual growth and stimulation to keep me motivated in life, I say "Thank you for your support." For those that say, "Do you want to talk about

it?" I say, "Thank you for the opportunity to express my feelings, my fears and my sorrow."

When the caregiver needs care, don't be afraid to provide it. Caring resources are available and have been provided for me at Caritas. The support network at work has assisted me to proceed with the necessary grief work. A handwritten note will be long remembered. There is no right thing to say or one way to say it. Holding my hand, hugging, offering kindness, concern, a gentle voice, and making an effort to communicate about my son has enabled me to move forward in my life as a survivor and will endear you to me forever. And as the next Family Day approaches—don't forget to take the time to tell your children how much you love them. You never know what tomorrow will bring! ☒

## Telecommunications Changes Successful

*By Tadra Boulton,  
Public Affairs, GNCH*

On February 7, the Grey Nuns and Misericordia Hospitals had new telephone numbers, and all Caritas sites starting using a new voice mail system.

This was no small undertaking. Caritas Telecommunications Manager Laura Stuart Shaw says, "With the help of so many Caritas and Telus staff, we were able to make the transition smoothly."

Laura credits the Telecommunication User Group members who were instrumental in communicating to staff and physicians ensuring all were aware and prepared for the changes.

Caritas's complex integration of telecommunication's

services meant this undertaking was quite unique. Laura says, "Never before have three hospitals in Edmonton undertaken a shut-down of telephone systems at the same time. Careful planning and consideration was taken to ensure minimal impact."

To give you an idea of the scope of this project:

- 1759 telephone number changes at the GNCH
- 2312 telephone number changes at the MCH
- 992 telephone number changes (increase to 5 digit dialing) at the EG
- 1132 voice mailboxes were created
- 73 voice menus were created



# Benefits information

[www.caritas.ab.ca](http://www.caritas.ab.ca)

**D**id you know that the Caritas Health Group Human Resources office now maintains current staff benefit information and forms—on the new Caritas website?

That's right! Now Caritas staff can access benefit information and download forms right from home at [www.caritas.ab.ca](http://www.caritas.ab.ca) – by clicking on the Employees section of the site. Now details on health and dental coverage, your pension plan, leaves and vacation, Canada Savings Bonds, professional development, RRSP contributions and more are available at your fingertips.

All staff will also find a wealth of answers in the section on “Commonly Asked Benefits Questions” and contact information for their pressing questions. Unionized staff will also find downloadable copies of their collective agreements.

For more information on the new Caritas website, contact Celine Brassard-Richter, at 735-2892 or [cbrassa@cha.ab.ca](mailto:cbrassa@cha.ab.ca)



# Online

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# Community News

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## **Congratulations Sheila!**

The finance department would like to offer a heartfelt congratulations to Sheila Smith, of the finance office at the Edmonton General site on achieving her CMA. Sheila was presented with her new designation at her graduation ceremony on Nov 19, 2005.

## **Support Services Education Week**

*Submitted by Darlene Blischak*

A very successful Caritas Support Services Education Week was held this fall at Caritas sites. A total of 30 presentations were held with a combined attendance of 509 staff. Sessions were held on a variety of topics, including sessions on back care at work, infection prevention and patient safety issues. Thank you to all who took time from their busy schedules to attend the sessions, to the supervisors and managers who encouraged staff to attend and to the Caritas staff who planned and presented the sessions.

Special thanks goes to the following Caritas vendors, businesses and individuals who donated the door prizes and the staff who arranged for them. Deines Microfilm, Cardinal Health, Telus, Citipage, Health Sciences Association, Baxter Corporation, ETS, Adella Hayko, Grey Nuns Rehab Outreach Services, Community Outreach, Edmonton General, Gem Catering and room booking, Audiovisual Services

## **Registered Nurses Come Under Health Professions Act**

The Honourable Iris Evans, Minister of Health and Wellness announced on November 23, 2005 that the Government of Alberta has approved the regulations for registered nurses under the Health Professions Act (1999), effective Nov. 30, 2005.

This brings the largest group of health-care professionals in the province under the act and changes the name of the regulatory body for registered nurses from the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses to the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA).

"Our new name highlights our responsibility to ensure that our members provide safe, competent and ethical nursing care," says Sheila A. McKay, CARNA president. "While the role of registered nurses doesn't change under the Health Professions Act, the number of public members on our board will increase and complaints hearings will now be held in public." For more information on this or other news impacting Alberta RNs, visit the CARNA website at <http://www.nurses.ab.ca>

## **Caritas Research Day**

The 2nd Annual Caritas Research Day was held on Thursday, January 26, 2006.

The Caritas Research Steering Committee would like to extend its sincere thanks to our generous and inspiring presenters – including keynote speaker Dr. Lorne Tyrrell, Chair in Virology, Department of Medical Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Alberta. Copies of Caritas Research Day presentations are available on DVD from our Caritas libraries at the Misericordia and Grey Nuns Community Hospitals. For more information on Caritas Research Centre news and events, please contact the research office directly at (780) 735-2274 or by email to [caritasresearch@cha.ab.ca](mailto:caritasresearch@cha.ab.ca) , [caritasresearch@cha.ab.ca](mailto:caritasresearch@cha.ab.ca) , or visit the Research Centre web page at <http://www.caritas.ab.ca/Home/Research/default.htm>

## **Chinese New Year Celebration**

About 150 residents and families from Ming Ai, Units 5Y and 5C at the Edmonton General, joined Caritas leaders and staff to officially ring in the Year of the Dog on February 4, 2006.

This event was organized by the Recreation Therapy Department and featured remarks by Al Pierog, Vice President of Continuing Care, as well as entertainment that included a special 3-lion dance, a variety show with several students from the Edmonton Chinese Alliance School, and a Kung Fu demonstration.

"The Chinese new year means more than Christmas for many of the older generation," said Cherry Cheung, daughter of Ming Ai resident Chung-Kut Tong who explained that this is one of the most important events in the traditional Chinese calendar. "I could see on the many of the residents' faces that this event brought back many memories and inspired much joy. What a wonderful effort by Caritas Staff, donors and volunteers...who do so much for our residents! Thank you!!"



# Staff Education

## Nursing Rounds

### Grey Nuns Site

All sessions are held in the Auditorium  
1215 - 1300 hours

April 7, 2006

#### Role of the Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Kim Scherr & Cathy Giblin

May 5, 2006

#### Humor: The Power of Fun

Debbie Elliott, Regional Nursing Affairs

June 2, 2006

#### Wound Vac Made Easy

Deborah Mears, KCI Medical Canada Inc.

### Misericordia Site

All sessions are held in the Auditorium  
1215 - 1300 hours

Thursday, April 6, 2006

#### Role of the Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Kim Scherr & Cathy Giblin

Thursday, May 4, 2006

#### PARTY Program

Carrie Chamberlain

PARTY Program Coordinator, MCH

Thursday, June 1, 2006

#### The Bariatric Patient; Rehabilitation & Transferring Challenges

Tammy Arntson & Lisa Bendfeld

Rehabilitation Services, MCH

## Weight Management Presentations

Presented by Ruth West, Registered Dietitian at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital.

Everyone is welcome! 9am to 12 noon:

**Saturday, April 8:** Before we do the Math Want to better manage your weight and eat healthier? Come and learn ways to cut down on evening snacking and sample some healthier snacks. See what a difference small changes can make! You will leave this session with specific nutrition goals that fit in your lifestyle

**Saturday, May 6:** Let's Do the Math Come explore the surprising facts and figures about weight management. Learn from real food demonstrations just how little it takes to gain weight and which foods can make you feel full with fewer calories. The pitfalls of yoyo dieting and the value of building muscle through exercise will also be discussed. You will leave this session with specific nutrition goals that fit into your lifestyle.

**Saturday, June 3:** Beyond the Math We will discuss the many reasons that we eat when we are not hungry and share successful strategies for dealing with them. As well, we will explore how our feelings are connected to why we eat.

Call 482-8434 for information and to register. \$10 for each presentation at the door.

Held at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital, 301562 Street, Edmonton

## Upcoming ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT Sessions

- Personality Dimensions® 1/2 Day Awareness
- Personality Dimensions® & Achieving Personal Balance
- Personality Dimensions® & Leadership
- Personality Dimensions® & Conflict
- Personality Dimensions® & Communication
- Personality Dimensions® & Dealing with Difficult People
- Quality @ Work (TQI)
- Stress Management
- Conflict Management
- 7 Management & Planning Tools
- Process Quality Development

For details on dates, times and locations, visit the Caritas intranet or contact

Cathy Kirkland, Organizational Development Assistant  
e-mail [ckirklan@cha.ab.ca](mailto:ckirklan@cha.ab.ca) or call 735-2724.

Workshops & facilitation sessions are FREE to Caritas staff

There is a small fee for non-Caritas staff.

For information on how you can support the Caritas Hospitals Foundation or for details on our Planned Giving opportunities, please contact:

Caritas Hospitals Foundation

3C60, 11111 Jasper Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0L4

(780) 482-8126 (phone)

(780) 482-8195 (fax)

[Foundation@caritas.ab.ca](mailto:Foundation@caritas.ab.ca)

[www.caritashospitalsfoundation.org](http://www.caritashospitalsfoundation.org)



Caritas Hospitals Foundation

insight

A newsletter for the Caritas community

Celine Brassard-Richter, Editor

Tel: 780-735-2892

[cbrassa@cha.ab.ca](mailto:cbrassa@cha.ab.ca)