

Volunteer Services

Year in Review 2016-2017

Message from the CEO

Patients and their families often share how their experience in hospital was enhanced thanks to volunteers. We hear about your welcoming smile and compassionate support as they make their way from the front doors to the units and the time you spend visiting or helping with snacks and other activities.

Your presence and your connection to patients and their families are a strong support to the care provided by our health care teams. Volunteers have long been a part of our family,

and today, with more than 350 volunteers dedicating more than 44,000 hours annually, we know you are helping make St. Boniface Hospital the best it can be for the patients we serve.

Thank you, on behalf of the staff and physicians at St. Boniface Hospital, for all you do.

Dr. Bruce Roe
President & CEO, St. Boniface Hospital

*St. Boniface Hospital
Summer student
volunteers*



Hôpital St-Boniface Hospital

Music and Memory Program

Jordan Rohatynsky was among the first volunteers recruited to be a part of the Music and Memory program. The program was started with the aim to support patients with dementia, delirium, or depression through music. As a part of this program, volunteers like Jordan help patients with dementia listen to a personalized playlist of songs.

As a volunteer, Jordan brings an iPod with music specific to the patient's preference, as well as headsets or speakers, to the patient's room. She then sits with the patients for 30-60 minutes and engages them with their favourite music/ artist/ song. Patients who are currently part of this program have responded positively to it. Some of the patients tap their feet, move their hands and even sing along.

“What’s really great about the program is that it allows me to interact with patients and learn about them. It’s really amazing to see some of their reactions. They are so grateful for the memories that these songs bring back, they often ask me when I’ll be back next” says Jordan.

Our volunteer programs are an important part of patient experience at the hospital. Because patient safety is at the heart of our operation, we ensure that all our volunteers receive adequate training on how to work with different patients with different needs. Jordan is currently receiving additional training on working with patients of dementia and hopes that it will help her do more as a volunteer.



Jordan Rohatynski listens to music with a patient

A Heart Full of Art

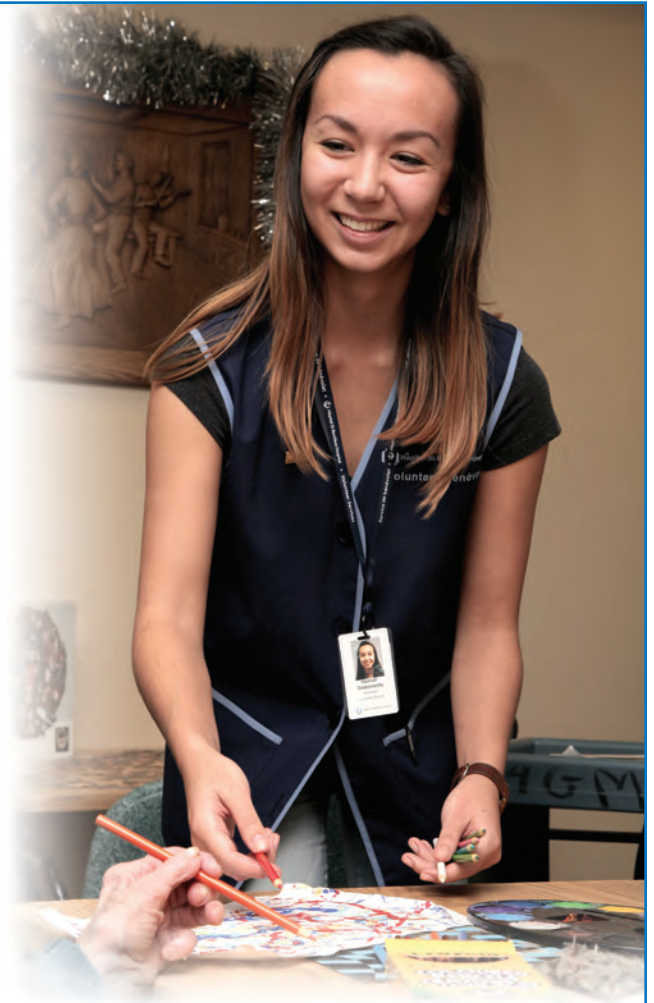
Hannah Grabowecky has been a volunteer with the Art at the Bedside program at St. Boniface Hospital for over a year. The program has proven to be effective in enhancing the life of patients with dementia while in hospital.

The Art at the Bedside program gives patients a creative outlet by encouraging them to get involved in an art project with the help of a volunteer who brings an art cart with various projects to the unit. Activities are tailored to the needs, interests and capabilities of the patient.

“The program allows us to have meaningful conversations with patients and sometimes, that’s all they need. We often receive thank you cards from patients because they’re simply appreciative of the company,” says Hannah.

For volunteers like Hannah, an aspiring art therapist, our volunteer programs can provide interesting and meaningful experiences. “Volunteering at St. Boniface has opened me up to the idea of working with people of all ages. I feel like I’m paying it forward in the best way possible.”

The Art at the Bedside program is funded by the St. Boniface Hospital Auxiliary



Hannah Grabowecky

Pet Visiting Program

Suzanne Ullyot and her dog, Sofie, volunteer at St. Boniface Hospital every week. Volunteers with the St. Boniface Hospital’s Pet Visiting program, like Suzanne and Sofie, visit patients in many areas of the hospital. They help reduce boredom and feelings of loneliness and can open lines of communication.

Suzanne enjoys her volunteer experience because it allows her to build real connections with the patients. Volunteers visit patients with dementia at their bedside. Most react very positively to pet visits; talking to them, feeding them treats, petting them or just observing from afar.

“I love that I get to listen to all of these wonderful people. Some patients even recognize us by our names and eagerly await our visits. Sofie enjoys her visits with older patients because she gets a lot of love and attention, and sometimes, even treats. So, Thursday is probably her favorite day of the week” adds Suzanne.



Suzanne Ullyot & Sofie

12,400 Hours and Counting

Clarence Pischke has been a volunteer with St. Boniface Hospital for 24 years. A former banker, he wanted to give back to the community after retirement. This led him to St. Boniface Hospital where, for many years, he volunteered at the gift shop helping with the daily accounting.

“I was looking for opportunity to volunteer and wanted to really use my knowledge to better help the staff and patients at St. Boniface Hospital. Volunteering at the gift shop helped me use my skills.”

Clarence has logged over 12,000 hours since he started volunteering. According to Gisele Scarpino, Supervisor, Volunteer Services, “Clarence is such a helpful and considerate volunteer. He treats everyone like a friend. Everyone on our team knows that he has so many more unregistered hours. In the end,

we know he doesn't volunteer to add up his hours – he volunteers from the heart.”

Recently, Clarence moved to volunteering at the South entrance, where he greets people and helps them find their way around the hospital. As an extrovert, Clarence thoroughly enjoys his interactions with people. He even recognizes some of the staff because of the conversations he's had with them in the past.

“I love volunteering here. The staff is terrific. When patients come in and they need help, I feel like the best way to serve them is to help them with whatever they need. In my 24 years as a volunteer, I've had many experiences and every single one of them has been an effort to make the lives of patients' easier during difficult times.”



Clarence Pischke has volunteered over 12,000 hours at the Hospital

Thank You, Trail blazers!

Kari Gunnarsson and Tara Connolly are a part of a day program for adults with different abilities called Trail Blazers. As a part of this program, they volunteer with organizations around the city, including St. Boniface Hospital. Kari and Tara, accompanied by their support worker Tracy Chamberlain, visit waiting rooms; offer magazines to patients and families and ask about their day. Tracy ensures Kari and Tara stay on task and deliver magazines to every waiting room in the hospital. Sometimes, the trio volunteers with elderly patients playing board games and engaging in conversation with them.

“What I like most about volunteering here is that I make friends, deliver magazines, talk to different people, and I get to treat myself at the cafeteria at the end of the day” says Kari.

Kari and Tara are the perfect fit. Kari enjoys talking to patients, families, and staff while Tara ensures they remain on schedule and deliver all the magazines on time.

“They complement each other’s personality very well and have volunteered at several sites together. It is a really rewarding experience for all three of us. I thoroughly enjoy being here with Kari and Tara” adds Tracy.

Kari, Tara, and Tracy all work towards enhancing the patient’s experience at St. Boniface Hospital. We are thankful for the contributions made by all our volunteers. We are, especially, grateful for the patient-first environment they help us create.



*Kari Gunnarsson and
Tracy Chamberlain*

Honouring the Memory of a Loved One

“I see families visit their loved ones at the hospital. Most of them are unprepared to be here and I try and help them. I feel their pain and know what it’s like to be on the other side” says Gwen Higham, a special events and gift shop volunteer at St. Boniface Hospital. Gwen witnessed the critical role volunteers played when her husband was admitted to the hospital. After her husband died, she felt the best way to honor his memory was to give back to the community and help families navigate through difficult times. So, she signed up to be a volunteer at St. Boniface.

Gwen is a familiar face in the hospital. Patients and their families often recognize her from their interactions in the gift shop. She often tries to divert their attention by talking about their likes or even by making gift suggestions. “Sometimes, people just need a little distraction. I’m happy to help take their mind of things, even if it is just for a little bit.”

Gwen also volunteers at special events. Recently, she volunteered to serve coffee at St. Boniface Hospital’s Memorial and Committal of Ashes ceremony in the fall of 2016 honouring those who have died. Some family members, shaken by their loss, were unable to pour themselves coffee.

“I felt for them, so I offered to pour their coffee and take it to their seats. You know when you’ve lost a loved one, you’re all upset and shaky. People may not always be able to see this, but as volunteers our role is to be there for people. It’s these little things that matter.”



Gwen Higham

Summer Student Volunteer Program

Every summer, St. Boniface Hospital recruits student volunteers. The Summer Student Volunteer program is designed to introduce students to volunteering, and to life in the hospital.

Gisele Scarpino, Supervisor, Volunteer Services, who has been working with the program since 2004 says, “I’ve always found the students to be a welcome breath of fresh air with the enthusiasm and positive energy they bring with them.”

Not only is this a great way to learn new skills, student volunteers can use their experience at St. Boniface as a reference for future employment opportunities. The Summer Student Volunteer program also ensures we have enough volunteers to support programs during the summer months when many volunteers go on vacation.

According to Sabine Mahmud, a student volunteer with the Buhler Gallery, “The program has helped me get out of my shell. It has given me the confidence to talk to people who visit the gallery, to learn about who they are and where they have come from. It has definitely been a huge learning experience.”

We’re very thankful to all our student volunteers and look forward to welcoming more students every year.

The Day Hospital Volunteer Program

Jane Vo has been volunteer with St. Boniface Hospital since she was in high school. She started her journey with us as a summer student volunteer and has since volunteered in patient registration and the Geriatric Day Hospital. As a Day Hospital volunteer, Jane starts her shift by greeting patients as they arrive and bringing them coffee. She also assists in setting up and serving lunch as patients work with recreation therapists.

The volunteers at the Day Hospital are also known to engage patients by talking to them, getting to know them and playing board games like bingo, shuffleboard and so on.

“The Day Hospital Volunteer program really helps us get to know patients one on one. I enjoy having conversations with them about their day, what they did for the holidays and so on. Sometimes, you can brighten someone’s day with a quick conversation” says Jane.

An aspiring dietician, Jane wanted to really hone her interpersonal skills. She says her volunteer work “has helped me become more sociable. Before I started volunteering here, I was shy. This program and the friendly staff have helped me achieve that. I definitely feel good about myself and what I do.”

Former Summer Student Volunteer, Jane Vo, serves juice to patients at the Geriatric Day Hospital

