



Covenant Health

Compassionate care led by Catholic values



December 2009

A newsletter for Covenant Health members

The Joy of Giving

Christmas project raises spirits and funds for Edmonton children

He has no facial hair. His mid-section is pretty trim. And he wears modern clothes, not a big red suit and clunky black boots. But when you hear Grey Nuns employee Stephen Kazowski talk about Christmas, you'd swear he's jolly old St. Nick!

And for 240 elementary school children in Edmonton this year, he will be.

A bed manager with the Grey Nuns Community Hospital since 2005, Stephen is using his personal time and salesman skills to spearhead a second annual "Spirit of Christmas" project—a gift and fundraising program for children at two Edmonton Catholic elementary schools.

He got the idea for the initiative last year, when a challenge to support St. Jerome school children was printed in his church bulletin. He had a light bulb moment.



"My wife Debra and I used to send Christmas boxes overseas. We realized that we could take this same approach locally," Stephen explained. "We gathered 120 boxes and \$190 in donations for the school lunch program."

This year, the program has grown to include St. Basil's school, and the support of over 50 "elves" — Stephen's colleagues at the Grey Nuns.

"Together we filled requests for 240 shoe boxes in 6 work-days, and collected almost \$2000 for the school lunch programs," says Stephen, bursting with joy. Each shoe box is wrapped in bright Christmas paper and contains a toque and mittens, new socks, toothpaste, a healthy snack and small age-

appropriate gifts for a girl or boy. "Every child — rich or poor — gets a gift," Stephen stresses.

As if that were not enough, Santa Stephen, his family and a few of his "elves" are organizing events at each school celebrations that will include shoe-box gift openings and meals. It will be Christmas morning-themed pancake breakfast at St. Bernadette School and a full Christmas dinner complete with turkey, stuffing and all the trimmings at St. Jerome School.

Memories from last year's gift-opening spur Stephen and his wife's enthusiasm for the project. "A child tore open his box, picked up his new toque, and screamed with such enthusiasm that many of us teared-up," he explains. "It's humbling to see the faces of these children and to realize how such a small act can go so far and mean so much."

"Health care is stressful...but we can still do something to help others," says Stephen. "Something so little as this can make a huge difference in someone's life."

For more information about the Spirit of Christmas project, email Stephen at stephen.kasowski@covenanthealth.ca

The Gifts we Bring

A message from our President and CEO, and Board Chair



As a Covenant Health team of 14,000 staff, physicians and volunteers, we have the great privilege to serve people who need hope, shelter and healing. Like the Magi in the Christmas story, we welcome and honour Jesus with the gifts we bring to each person we serve at Christmas and each day throughout the year.

This work is not for the faint-hearted. We are often challenged to give more of ourselves and do more than we plan to. And it is often heartbreaking and frustrating, as well as inspiring and fulfilling. It demands the best of who we are.

This past year has been no exception. Yet despite budget restraints and the added pressures of the H1N1 response, you have shone as individuals, as

sites, and as a unified provincial team. Innovative and courageous, thoughtful and generous—you have risen to the challenges and maintained an exceptional standard of service. We couldn't be more proud. Thank you!

And we have already made solid steps toward our vision of greater service.

Through work with provincial partners, we are making strong and confident contributions to efforts

that will advance health services for rural communities, Alberta's seniors, the homeless and mentally ill. This fall we were asked to present our vision

for Alberta's health system to the Minister's Advisory Committee on Health and our proposal for serving those with mental illness

Best of all, Christmas means a spirit of love, a time when the love of God and the love of our fellow men should prevail ... a time when our thoughts and deeds and the spirit of our lives manifest the presence of God.

- George F. McDougall

in Northern Alberta to the Alberta Edmonton Community Mental Health Implementation Committee. Each time, we provided a clear message of the values and principles that we believe must guide care for all Albertans and demonstrated Covenant Health's commitment to work with Alberta Health Services and the Government to help create both an inspiring and hopeful vision, and a sustainable approach to health care.

It's clear that there will be many more opportunities in the year ahead for us to help shape the future of health care in the province. This is something to celebrate!

As we move forward, know that you can count on your senior leaders to speak boldly on behalf of the most vulnerable of our province, and to represent the Catholic values that shape our proud tradition. In this same spirit, we know that we can count on your support and commitment to each patient and resident—efforts that are at the very heart of our mission.

We look forward to meeting and hearing from you at President's Forums across the province in the New Year. Please come prepared with your questions and suggestions.

In the mean time, we wish you and your loved ones the gifts of joy and peace this Christmas season, and a new year filled with many moments of inspiration and fulfillment.

Patrick Dumelie John Brennan
President and CEO Board Chair



Covenant Health Code of Conduct Launched

By Gordon Self, Vice President, Mission, Ethics and Spirituality

Our Commitment to Ethical Integrity is more than a code of conduct. It is a promise. We promise to live by our values in everything we do and say. It is this shared commitment to living our values and upholding ethical behaviour that will make our organization successful well into the future.

On November 16, 2009, Covenant Health launched its new code of conduct, called Our Commitment to Ethical Integrity. Our code of conduct applies to all Covenant Health Board members, staff, physicians and volunteers. Our Commitment to Ethical Integrity is our counterpart to Alberta Health Service's draft code of conduct, and reflects our organization's unique culture, ethical traditions and values.

The statement is built on the Health Ethics Guide, the foundational resource for ethical reflection for Catholic health care facilities in Canada, and is aligned with our six values: compassion, respect, collaboration, social justice, integrity and stewardship. In the document, you will find key statements under each of these values, to help guide you as you make decisions and set standards of behavior.

One of the key features of our code of conduct is the expectation that we will seek to resolve ethical issues or conflict at the most appropriate level. This is known as the principle of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity demonstrates respect and confidence in our own and each other's abilities to make ethical decisions and to reflect integrity in our behaviours and attitudes. Practicing subsidiarity will help us to work through differences and will ultimately allow us to continue to grow stronger as an organization.

Invaluable feedback was provided while the code of conduct was being developed and response since its launch has been very positive. Education sessions are underway to support discussion of the document with teams. If you would like to arrange an education session with your team, please contact Nasreen Bhimji at nasreen.bhimji@covenanthealth.ca or 780.735.9597.

Our Commitment to Ethical Integrity is available from your supervisor or on-line at <http://www.covenanthealth.ca/about-us/mission-vision-values/ethics.html>

First Annual Legacy Day a Success!

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. - Frederick Buechner

The first annual Legacy Day was held on November 27, 2009. A celebration of our founding congregations, the day recognized our continued service in the healing ministry of Jesus. Chapel services were held across Covenant Health sites to honour the women who worked tirelessly to bring hope, faith and health to the people of our province.

In the spirit of the Sisters and their charitable work, a food bank drive was also held the week of Legacy Day. Over 1415 kilograms of food was collected for distribution to food banks in the communities we serve.

Our founding congregations:

Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish
Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) of Montreal
Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul
Sisters of Charity Notre Dame d'Evron
Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate
Daughters of Wisdom
Sisters of St. Joseph of London
Misericordia Sisters



A heartfelt thank you to the sponsors of Christmas events at the Grey Nuns and Misericordia Community Hospitals in Edmonton.

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Lessons from St. Mary's, Trochu

29 years of studies, but no degree. And David Smyth couldn't be happier about it.

A Maintenance and Housekeeping supervisor who has served nearly three decades at St. Mary's Health Care Centre in Trochu, David considers his workplace a "university" where he learns important lessons about mission, service and leadership.

To several of his colleagues, however, he's already like one of their site's "professors" — someone who teaches others about the legacy of the Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron who founded St. Mary's and how their values and lessons can be

integrated in every day practice.

Sister Helen...Sister La Forge...

David recalls the sisters he worked with over the years as if they were on his family tree. Though the sisters left active service at the continuing care facility a few years ago, he carries a special place in his heart for the women who made such a big impression.

"They were super to work for," he says, explaining that they often showed their gratitude with a cake and ice cream or a cold drink on a hot day. "They cared for their employees as much as the residents, and treated us as partners in their work," he says.

And he explains that they were astute leaders who "laughed a lot" with their staff. "They had things in life figured



Photograph of David Smyth

out," David recalls. "They were budget-conscious and up to date on all aspects of health care, but they truly understood how people worked and what motivated them too."

Above all, David asserts, they never lost sight of their mission.

"They worked for a purpose...to help people who could not help themselves. They had great values and were selfless people. That's what I got from them."

A certified building operator with training in carpentry and a host of other skills, David leads a team of seven staff and makes a conscious effort to integrate the lessons of the sisters in his work each day. "If

a resident has an old antique lamp that he'd just love to have here, I'll make an extra effort to help make that happen," he explains.

"Our mission and values are what we base our meetings and our decisions on, and I believe that's how it should continue," he asserts. "That's why joining Covenant Health was very important to me—so we could carry on this legacy."

"At St. Mary's we don't carry Ph.Ds, but we have a lot of knowledge and experience. We bring a whole legacy with us that we can share with the rest of the Covenant Health team," David says with pride. "I may not have the best set of books in the province...but I think I have some of the best staff."

Team Spirit

Who inspires you?

Send your ideas for future staff, physician and volunteer profiles to team.spirit@covenanthealth.ca today!

Rural Health Strategy Project Launched

In late October, Covenant Health launched a Rural Health Strategy as an important step in achieving our strategic direction "Respond to those in need" under the executive leadership of Sheli Murphy, Vice President, Rural Health. Cindy Mulherin, Executive Director for Banff Mineral Springs Hospital is Project Manager for the initiative and Western Management Consulting will assist with the project.

The project aims to enhance our efforts to meet the health needs of people living within our communities and catchment areas by providing the most appropriate care close to home, ensuring coordination between centers and supporting effective transition between care settings. The project team will work closely with Alberta Health Services to ensure alignment with provincial health strategy work.

"Our goal is to work hand in hand with both the community and Alberta Health Services in rural Alberta to influence the health of the communities we serve—whether through our own programs and

Saying Thanks

Recognition Tips for Covenant Health Leaders

By Karen Zarsky, Organizational Development



services, working in partnership with others or contributing to provincial planning processes,” says Sheli.

Targeted for completion by April 30, 2010, the project will review existing information on programs and services at each Covenant Health rural facility; gather and analyze current community and catchment area needs as well as utilization data. Through appropriate community engagement activities in each community, we will take a look at current needs and available resources to define gaps in service.

Using this information, the project team will work with key clinical leaders to determine the work that Covenant Health can do to contribute to the health and wellness of the population and identify opportunities to pursue and implement over the next five to 10 years.

Over the past few months, teams across Covenant Health have been developing and implementing action plans to improve their work environment. The action plans drew from feedback from the Gallup employee engagement survey conducted at four sites last fall. Now, teams are taking important steps to build employee engagement, and in turn, improve quality of care.

Recognition is the number one area that our teams wanted to improve upon. Here are the excellent suggestions that came in through the action planning process.

Above all, take an individual and personal approach. The best way to find out what inspires staff is to ask them directly.

Ensure that recognition:

- matches a person’s needs,
- is timely,
- is personally delivered in ways meaningful to the recipient, and
- always links to performance

Handwritten notes of appreciation are very powerful in inspiring employees.

Be visible. Speak to your employees and co-workers every day. This makes all the difference in a positive relationship.

Celebrate. Have team lunches that celebrate a specific accomplishment or outcome.

Listen. Take the time to listen to those who report to you. This is high on employees’ lists of what is important to them.

Look for recognition opportunities.

We know our people are doing extraordinary things every day. If we listen with the intent of finding positive contributions, we will see amazing things happen all around us.

Focus on the Covenant Health Strategic Framework. Recognize employees whose work exemplifies the mission, vision, values, and strategic directions. This will help them understand how their work is important to the organization.

Don’t delay praise. Don’t wait till the team meeting—the sooner the better. People are more likely to repeat a positive behaviour if they are rewarded immediately than if they are rewarded weeks or months later.

Reward and recognize extraordinary performance:

- recognize role models,
- focus on outstanding performance
- recognize achievement that supports organizational goals

Provide opportunities for growth and development. Managers and staff view this as an important form of reward and recognition.

The Gift of Healthy Air

By Lorie Grundy R.N., MScN, Misericordia Community Hospital



As we settle into the long winter months, we seek shelter indoors and spend more time in the home. But, did you know, when our buildings are closed up and sealed against winter weather, indoor air quality may actually harm the health of your family?

Outdoor air pollution provides a baseline for indoor air quality. Add to this second hand cigarette smoke, chemical fumes, dust, animal dander, natural gas from appliances, fireplace smoke and even cooking odors and quality of indoor air declines significantly. Indoor air pollution may be many times higher than what is outside!

Lack of ventilation with fresh outdoor air, especially in air-tight buildings, is a key factor that will affect the quality of indoor air.

Want to give your family a gift that really has an impact? Give them fresh and healthy air! We have some control over indoor pollution and the health of family members, especially young infants and children who are most vulnerable to the effects.

Take a look at the simple changes you can make to keep the indoor air clean and healthy for you and your loved ones.

Tips to improve indoor air quality

Eliminate exposure to second hand smoke

- Avoid smoking in the home or garage and keep fireplaces and chimney clean and in good repair

Reduce exposure to airborne chemicals

- Have Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors installed in the basement and near all sleeping areas
- Ensure all gas appliances are inspected yearly by a professional
- Use unscented products and non chemical cleaners
- Air out the home or office after painting or renovations

Keep it clean

- Vacuum carpets, flooring and upholstery 1-2 times weekly
- Use micro-fibre dusting cloths
- Keep the clutter down where dust can gather, especially in sleeping areas
- Use exhaust fan when cooking
- Open up doors and windows and air-out your home each week

Lorie works at the Environmental Health Specialty Unit at the Misericordia Community Hospital.

If you think your child may be affected by indoor air pollution at home or at school or has any unexplained ongoing symptoms, ask your family doctor for a referral to our clinic.

My favourite Christmas Memory...

Reflections from Senior Leaders

December 1996 my family was spread out across the continent. We planned a Christmas family reunion in Bermuda, but my parents and I almost didn't make it! We arrived at the airport just in time for our flight—only to realize that we'd forgotten our passports at home. Luckily the airline agent was in the Christmas spirit and booked us for a flight the next day. Although we were a day late, having our family together for Christmas was even better than the 25 C weather.

Jennifer Haggerty,
Vice, President Planning

One of my fondest memories of Christmas is of the Nativity scene at our church. I grew up going to Santa Maria Goretti Parish and they always had an elaborate nativity scene recreating Bethlehem and the stable. It was full of details that amazed us and I especially loved sharing it with my kids.

Rosa Rudelich,
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Many fond memories include midnight mass in a small church in the small northern Alberta community where I grew up, large gatherings of our extended family opening gifts on Christmas morning, and our teenage children enjoying very basic living in a rustic cabin in the woods one year.

Michael Shea,
Vice President, Board Support

A January Tale for Christmas

By Ruth West, Registered Dietitian, Covenant Health

Holly had always enjoyed Christmas – the lights, the music, the food... especially the food. But now in January, looking back over all the wonderful times together with family and friends, she realized that she had enjoyed the food too much, with portions that were too large, and one too many desserts and boxes of chocolate.

Now she had weight to lose! But how? Holly didn't have to look far. The internet offered any number of choices. All promised quick weight loss: seven pounds in seven days, 20 pounds in a month. She found one called the "star fruit diet" – just star fruit for seven days. How hard could it be? She may never want to see a star fruit again, but it was worth it.

And so she did. She went on the star fruit diet and lost seven pounds in a week. But there was a catch. Something happened to her body that she could not see. In losing weight so quickly, she had lost muscle along with fat. And because muscle burns more calories than fat, Holly had made it harder for herself to keep her weight off in the long run. And so the next Christmas she gained even more weight and again turned to a quick weight loss diet in January. Year after year, she gained weight as fat by overeating at Christmas and



lost muscle by quick weight loss in January. Over the years, she quite literally transformed her body to one that gained weight with fewer and fewer calories.

The moral of the story: One pound of muscle burns 40-50 calories per day, one pound of fat burns two calories. Preserve your muscle, exercise regularly and don't get tempted by "quick weight loss" promises in January.

At Christmas keep your weight gain minimal by treating yourself in moderation. Choose quality over quantity. In January, you'll be glad you did.



Grey Nuns 150th Anniversary

This October, members of the Covenant Health board and senior team joined the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) of Montreal in Edmonton at St. Joseph's Basilica to celebrate the 150th anniversary of their arrival from Montreal in Alberta.

My favourite Christmas's are when my extended family come home. I love the noise and chaos that accompanies these gatherings. My favourite part is sitting down to dinner. My parents have a large living room and we put tables end to end to get 28 people at one table. After dinner we always play Cranium with everyone splitting into 4 teams. The young ones love to watch the show!

Karen Macmillan,
Senior Operating Officer, Grey Nuns
Community Hospital, Edmonton

One year, in an attempt to recreate a Norman Rockwell Christmas, my father purchased a wagon with visions of a horse-drawn family sleigh ride in the serene, snow covered farm hills. Our family bundled up and set off in the freshly fallen snow. About four miles into the ride, debacle ensued when the horse became spooked by the wind, the wheel broke off the wagon and everyone screamed. My family still laughs, recalling the adventure each year at Christmas.

Patrick Dumelie, President and CEO

I have two favourite Christmas memories. The first, was hiding a ring in the tree and then at the right moment, proposing to my wife on Christmas Eve. And the second, was the Christmas morning that we told our family we were expecting a child. Both memories speak to new life, which to me is the real meaning of Christmas.

Gordon Self, Vice President, Mission, Ethics and Spirituality

One special Christmas my mom made Christmas dinner at 2 am for me and three of my nursing school buddies who worked the night shift! I remember heaps of sparkly snow in the moonlight, the smell of turkey and pumpkin pie, the laughter, the games...but most the incredible feeling of pride and love I had for my parents to have done so much work and at such an odd time of day just to make sure we had a wonderful celebration.

Sheli Murphy, Vice President and Senior Operating Officer, Rural Health Services

Getting together with family from across the western provinces to celebrate the season; reminiscing of times gone by and taking the opportunity to reconnect— further forging family ties.

Karen Galenzoski,
Vice President, Human Resources

Name our Newsletter – and Win!

What do you think the Covenant Health Newsletter for staff, physicians, volunteers and community should be called?

Suggestions for future staff profiles or stories:

Name: _____
 Title: : _____
 Site: : _____
 Phone: : _____
 Email: : _____

Email the information to celine.richter@covenanthealth.ca or clip out this form and send to Celine Richter, Editor, Covenant Health Newsletter, Corporate Office, 3033 – 66 Street, Edmonton Tel: 780-735-9581 or fax to: 780-735-7821

Every submission will be entered in a draw to win a Covenant Health jacket and 3 vests for you to share with your colleagues and friends.

Covenant Health Christmas Gifts

Good tidings! Select sizes and colours of men's and women's Covenant Health signature jackets (\$26.25) and vests (\$21) are still available for purchase at Associates of Caritas Gift shops in Edmonton. Bulk orders for sites outside of Edmonton can be processed through Volunteer Services. Contact Betty-Lynn at betty-lynn.zukewich@covenanthealth.ca



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE COVENANT HEALTH COMMUNITY

Celine Richter, Editor
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Layout and watermarked photography provided by **Audio Visual Services**, Grey Nuns and Misericordia Community Hospitals

As a family we always celebrated Christmas Eve. After dinner, before we opened our presents, my Dad always reads the Christmas Story from the Bible. This really helps us focus back to what Christmas really means.

Janet Schimpf, Senior Operating Officer, Misericordia Community Hospital, Edmonton

The first Christmas after my first wife Janice passed away, I decided that I wanted to make my daughter's first Christmas without mom a very special celebration. It certainly became an experience of a lifetime with an over-the-top experience in Disney World in Florida, including a Cirque de Soleil and Swimming with the Dolphins adventure, seeing Cinderella's Castle lit up for Christmas, and all the magic of Disney at Christmas. More importantly, it was a great time for daughter and dad bonding - a time for us to grow in love.

Greg Hadubiak, Senior Vice President and COO, Edmonton Acute Care

My favourite Christmas memories are made up of moments of deep stillness and meaning: watching the lights travelling through a darkened church on Christmas eve as the Christ candle is shared, night time baby feedings in the light of a glowing Christmas tree, the hush and sacred space at my mother's bedside in the weeks before she passed away one early January morning. In these moments, I really experienced the meaning of Christmas: hope, peace, love.

Fran Ross, Vice President Communications

A few years ago it was our turn to host Christmas with my extended family at our acreage. We cleared off our frozen pond and built a huge bonfire beside it. We played ice hockey, enjoyed hot chocolate and roasted marshmallows. Something special happened as we worked and played together and shared stories. It stirred up something magical in all of us. We ended the day with a 12 course feast—filling us with great food and memories that we still talk about every year.

Al Pierog, Vice President & Sr. Operating Officer, Rehab and Continuing Care

All of my memories of Christmases past blur together and become all of the hopeful anticipation for the next Christmas. Family, friends, laughter, tears, food and drink, snow, cold, long nights—all brought together from the past to join with what will be special about the next.

Dr. Jeff Robinson, Sr. Vice President, Medicine

Like many people, many of my fondest Christmas memories come through the reflections on childhood experiences. I can still remember when, as a young boy, three or four days leading up to December 25th would slow down to glacial pace and I would wait anxiously, almost painfully, for Christmas morning...

Jon Popowich, Vice President, Quality