



Dedication to resident's quality of life carries forward Sisters' legacy in Banff

The Brett hospital sat abandoned for four years, leaving Banff with only doctor's clinics, until four Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, arrived in 1930 and purchased the hospital.

The Sisters saw a need for further medical care in Banff, and already owned and operated several other hospitals in Canada. This, combined with their mission of healing, embracing and responding to the cry for Gospel hospitality made them well suited to provide health care for the community.

With tenacity and hard work, the Sisters had the 40 by 92 ft. two-storey building, which they found populated with bats and rodents and plagued with mineral encrusted pipes, ready to accept patients within just ten days. On the twelfth day, they accepted their first patient, and soon the hospital was full.

The Sisters of St. Martha worked to keep the hospital operating with creativity—they increased revenue by providing physical therapy to patients from the Workers Compensation Board, and used the hot mineral waters nearby in healing. They were leaders in arthritis treatment, and established a school of nursing.

Throughout the years, the Sisters faced each challenge with the same strength and determination—from the depression, to wildlife appearing in hospital rooms, they stayed their course, gifting the community the Banff Mineral Hospital as it is today. The last remaining Sisters left the hospital in 1997. Today, the hospital keeps their legacy alive by providing compassionate care with the same determination and creativity.

To honour the Sister's legacy, in 2002, the continuing care unit at Banff Mineral Springs was named St. Martha's Place.

Today at St. Martha's Place, upholding quality of life for the 25 residents that call the unit home is of the utmost importance to staff.

Most of the residents have lived in the picturesque Bow Valley area for their whole lives, and staff have committed to making sure they are able to continue to enjoy the beauty of the mountains.

"We live in this beautiful place, and being active outdoors is a huge part of resident's lives," says Jody Yawney, Charge Nurse, St. Martha's Place. Jody explains that staff encourage a healthy lifestyle by incorporating not only an indoor exercise program, but also outdoor walks, picnics, lake tours, and even horse and carriage rides.

This year, they acquired a senior's adaptive bike through support from the community, which allows two residents and two staff members to ride all over town, enjoying the sunshine and fresh air while getting exercise. The bike even has electric assistance to help pedal if residents get tired.

Jody explains these programs help staff to incorporate fun throughout the day and allow them to make a difference in residents' quality of life by respecting their interests.

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Sisters of St. Martha
of Antigonish