



## Sisters' legacy lives on through excellent care

Answering a call for help in October 1910, four Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron journeyed to Vegreville to care for the sick. Following their founder, Perrine Thulard's spiritual testament, "conserve among us charity, simplicity, union, humility," they began their mission by improvising a small hospital in a house owned by the Parish Priests. They admitted their first patient just a month after arriving.

A year later, a new 25-bed hospital was opened, St. Joseph's General Hospital.

Throughout the years, the Sisters faced many challenges with strength and resilience, including a lack-of and an abundance of water. The Vermillion Creek proved both a flooding risk as well as a blessing when water was needed to run the hospital. In 1918, the flu epidemic caused many to fall ill, including some of the Sisters. When children were orphaned due to this illness, the Sisters cared for them until they were able to find a new home.

This resilience, compassion and all-encompassing care for those in need continues today at St. Joseph's General Hospital.

Education at the hospital is about to take a leap into the technological future, with the arrival of a Sim Man ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) in January 2016. The Sim Man ACLS is a computerized mannequin that simulates different types of health care situations, such as heart attacks, someone in need of a tracheotomy (opening the wind pipe to assist with breathing), or in anaphylaxis or septic shock.

The Sim Man ACLS looks like a realistic human, and has the capacity to be interactive and responsive with staff as they are providing care, while recording the entire simulation. The mannequin, whom they've named Carey, can be either male or female. An operator is able to control body functions, such as heart and respiratory rate and cardiac rhythms, and respond to staff as Carey, through a microphone.

"This simulator gives staff the opportunity to practice skills in a safe environment. It is one thing to read about what to do, and another entirely to be in a situation, have it recorded, and be able to look back and decide what you would do differently next time, and then try again," says Mary Hanson, Clinical Educator, St. Joseph's General Hospital.

Mary explains this will make a big difference in a rural setting, where staff don't always get hands-on experience, and must be prepared to give excellent, confident care to every patient. With Carey, staff will get to practice specific skills in a realistic way, while working as a team.

"This project really speaks to the Sister's legacy of providing excellent care to those in need. The simulator supports staff education and skill development using realistic scenarios that prepare us to competently care for our community," says Mary.

St. Joseph's is eager to share this new tool with neighbouring healthcare facilities, and will be opening a Simulation Centre of Learning Excellence in 2017.

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*– Mary Hanson*



Sisters of Charity of  
Notre Dame d'Evron