



Sisters' legacy of peaceful and compassionate care lives on at St. Joseph's Home

At the request of Bishop Francis P. Carroll of Calgary, the Carmelite Sisters travelled to Medicine Hat with the goal of providing a comfortable home for seniors in the area. Fueled by their aim to provide loving and active service to the needy, they established St. Joseph's Home on April 11, 1951.

The Sisters worked tirelessly so the home was ready to receive residents who arrived at the end of May. The home filled quickly, and was soon at capacity. The Sisters made more room for the residents by moving their own beds into the attic and basement.

In 1956, a new building was constructed to accommodate the growing population of residents, and again in 1985.

For over 60 years, the Sisters provided a safe and secure assisted living program for the elderly in the Medicine Hat area. Today, the staff at St. Joseph's Home carry forward the Carmelite Sister's commitment to loving and active service in many ways, one of which is Carmel Hospice, opened in 2012 and named after the Carmelite Sisters and their legacy of compassionate care.

The hospice provides much-needed palliative care for the region, and is located on the third floor of St. Joseph's home—a space which Ryan Wiest, Site Administrator, says exudes peace and calm.

When you step off the elevator, the first thing you see is a stained glass window depicting the last four Sisters who left St. Joseph's in 2013, standing under the large Heritage Tree that grows in the Stations of the Cross park beside the facility. This window is a reminder of the service the Sisters provided, and is the first greeting to those coming to Carmel Hospice for end-of-life care.

"When patients come out of the elevator, they can consider the hospice home. It is quiet and peaceful all the time, there is no paging, no bells," says Ryan, who explains that both the atmosphere and attitude is carried over from the Sisters.

"When the Sisters worked here, they would always take time to make everyone feel welcome. It's the same now—staff give the time to make patients and families feel welcome. They will hold your hand and give you the attention you need," says Ryan, who explains that the majority of staff also worked with the Sisters. The atmosphere and humanity in the care they give is seen by new staff who adopt the same attitude, allowing the Sister's legacy to carry forward.

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Carmelite Sisters