



Campus restoration upholds Sisters' legacy and gives back to community

Several men stood at the train station in Calgary in 1909, eagerly awaiting the passengers that would mean great things for the future of their town. Soon, eight Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron arrived, having journeyed from France to answer a call to administer to the sick.

The group travelled by train and horse-drawn carriage from Calgary to a small country town, later known as Trochu, where the Sisters would move in to a house and granary that formerly sheltered travellers crossing the prairies. Here, they set up both their convent and a hospital.

The Sister's motto, 'Major est Caritas' (Charity Above All), was proven immediately, as just one day after their arrival they cared for several wounded patients.

A year after their arrival, they were given ten acres of land and began constructing a new hospital. In a year, this three-storey facility with water, stream heating, and electricity was ready to receive patients.

St. Mary's Health Care Centre continues on the Sister's legacy of charity and compassionate care today, still responding to the call the Sisters received many years ago, by ministering to those in need.

It is with a profound respect for this legacy that staff and the Trochu community have decided to restore and improve the grounds surrounding the facility, including a park area, and a cemetery where Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron and other Sisters have been laid to rest.

With \$30,000 from the Sister's Legacy Fund, staff and community volunteers will complete landscaping in the cemetery, install wheelchair-accessible garden boxes, repair the cookhouse, remove overgrown shrubs, and add benches to the park area.

The benches will serve a special purpose—they will tell the story of the Sister's legacy. Each bench will be placed facing a site of historic significance, such as the granary the Sisters lived in, or the parkland donated to the Sisters by the town. There will be a storyboard beside each bench explaining the history, so as you walk the path or sit to rest, you will be able to learn about the legacy of care the Sisters have passed on to staff.

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– Tracy Sommerfeld

According to Tracy Sommerfeld, Senior Director Operations, Rural Seniors Care, Covenant Health, this project is a reflection of how much respect and gratitude both staff and the Trochu community have for the Sisters.

"The hospital is such a lasting part of Trochu, providing employment in a small town, and a nearby home for family members needing care," says Tracy. "Staff serve the community just as the Sisters did, by focusing on resident's needs, as well as the needs and concerns of their families."

The restoration will also be a way for staff to give back to Trochu, as the area will become more accessible for the community's enjoyment.



Sisters of Charity of
Notre Dame d'Evron