



Sisters' legacy lives on through care of evacuated residents

When Edmonton was just a town, the doctors providing care in this frontier community, sent a letter imploring the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) to construct a general hospital to serve the pioneers, stating that the hospital should be constructed of brick with a stone foundation, to be a true credit to Edmonton.

In late 1895, the Grey Nuns admitted their first 36 patients into that brick building. They began serving the frontier community, living up to their reputation of courage during the settlement of Western Canada, selflessly providing care to those in need.

The Edmonton General Hospital was established the same year the x-ray machine was invented, and was one of the first hospitals in Canada to install one. This was one of many innovations in health care the industrious Sisters would incorporate into the Edmonton General throughout the years.

In 1908 the Sisters established a nursing school, which provided education for over 64 years. Here they were able to share their knowledge and legacy of compassionate, all encompassing care with the future nurses of Edmonton.

Responding to the needs of the Edmonton community, the acute services from the Edmonton General were transferred to a new facility in 1988, the Grey Nuns Community Hospital, and the Edmonton General became a continuing care centre.

The Sister's legacy of compassionate care and charity continues at the Edmonton General Continuing Care Centre (EGCCC) today.

When wildfires broke out in Fort McMurray in May 2016, the community had to be evacuated, displacing 23 long-term care residents to Edmonton.

It was determined that 14 of the residents would make the Edmonton General their temporary home. Jo Ann Molloy, Senior Director of Operations, EGCCC, sprang into action, ensuring there was enough staff to admit the unprecedented number of residents in just one day.

"Staff recognized these people were in need, and we had the space, so we needed to do what we could and take them in," says Jo Ann, who explains that this was quite an event, as they usually only admit one resident per day.

When the new residents arrived, they were exhausted, hungry, separated from loved ones and caregivers, and many had only the gown on their back.

"It was impressive—staff responded above and beyond what was asked and really demonstrated charity and caring for those in need," says Jo Ann. Staff left on their breaks and purchased toiletries for the residents, brought in clothes, and even acted as social supports.

"You'd never seen people so happy to get a tube of toothpaste," says Jo Ann. "We all did as much as we could to minimize that horrific impact and welcome them to their temporary home."

For three residents the EGCCC is no longer temporary, they liked the care so much they have made it their permanent home.

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– Jo Ann Molloy



Sisters of Charity
(Grey Nuns) of Montreal