

THE LINK

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GUIDING STARS LEAD THE WAY



The “Guiding Star” volunteer program was introduced in Saanich Peninsula Hospital in April 2009. Just as ancient mariners used the stars to guide them to their homeports, the Saanich Peninsula Hospital puts Guiding Star volunteers to work helping people find their destinations within the hospital.

There are many positive feelings to be gained by guiding a visitor to the correct place. Imagine going into a grocery store for the first time and seeing signs everywhere, but not for the specific item for which you are looking. When you visit the Saanich Peninsula Hospital, a Guiding Star volunteer is waiting to help you.

“It’s an amazing feeling to know you’ve helped people get to their appointments on time and helped them feel less anxious in the process,” says Laura Baddeley, Team Leader of the Guiding Stars. She sees the weight of worry being removed from the shoulders of visitors to the Hospital. She encourages other volunteers and helps them realise how very reward-

ing it is to be a Guiding Star. People may be confused and nervous when they arrive at the hospital, but a friendly face can alleviate those feelings immediately.

You could be the person providing that comfort.

Volunteers are provided with a two-hour orientation, which introduces the volunteer to the Saanich Peninsula Hospital departments and locations. This is followed by a tour of the hospital. After orientation, “rookie” Guiding Stars are accompanied by a mentor for their first three shifts of duty.

A huge advantage of this program is that you have the option of volunteering the same shift at the same time on the same day each week. The shifts are between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. in 2 hour shifts Monday to

Friday. Some are very busy, others are not so hectic, but there is always a great variety of activity.

Does the program need more volunteers? YES! There are cur-

rently 20 volunteers and the program needs 30 more. It is the hope of Chris Foster, Manager, Volunteer Resources and Laura that as many as 50 people could be involved.

“A huge advantage of this program is that you have the option of volunteering the same shift at the same time on the same day each week.”

Article by Barbara Harwood

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CONNECTING WITH COMFORT AND CARE

Palliative Care volunteers are important to patients, families – and to staff. Maggi Moreton, RN, Clinical Nurse Leader has been involved in the Palliative Care Unit at the Saanich Peninsula Hospital from the very beginning in 2002. She was an Acute Care Clinical Coordinator, then stepped into the Palliative Clinical Leader role when the position was created in May 2008.

“The people who volunteer in Palliative care are so reliable, so dedicated,” she says. “They are here on three-hour shifts from 8 in the morning until 8 in the evening, every day of the year. There have only been a few times, when for some reason, there wasn’t a volunteer in the unit. “The nurses looked around and realized there wasn’t a volunteer. They just gasped.”

That reaction underscores just how valuable the volunteers are to the Palliative Care Unit. They make cups of tea, bring extra blankets, let the nursing staff know if a patient needs help – but the most important thing they do is listen.

For family members, an incredibly important part of the palliative experience is being able to talk, sharing memories and telling the story of the life of the spouse or parent or relative they’re losing. These are stories that need to be told, and it is the volunteers who have the time to listen.

Nurses who are looking after the medical needs of patients often simply don’t have additional time to sit with patients and their families. “They’d like to have this time,” says Maggi, “maybe that may be why so many of our volunteers are retired nurses.”

Nursing staff is committed and caring, but the patients and families often make special connections with volunteers. “There is a difference with volunteers who are taking time from their own families and lives to be here. Some times the families get to know the volunteers even better than they know the medical staff.

“Serving on Palliative Care can be a deeply rewarding

experience. It is also emotionally demanding. Nursing staff rotates through the units at the hospital, spending time in acute care, as well as on the palliative care unit.

“It is the Palliative Care volunteers who have an unbroken connection with patients and their families because they are always here. They can have knowledge about patients and their families they share with nursing staff who are returning to the unit.”

Families often get to know individual volunteers well and even know what shifts they work. If there are times they just can’t travel to the hospital, they’ll phone the volunteer and ask for help. For instance, someone might call, and say “I can’t make it this afternoon – would you sit with my father?”

It is important to provide an unbroken circle of care and comfort during the day, and often family members try to maintain a vigil throughout the night as well. If they can’t arrange to be at the hospital, there is a special rota of volunteers who can be called and will come stay the night by the patient’s bedside, keeping vigil, making sure someone is in the room.

“I can say with honesty, that our volunteers as members of our Palliative team are key to providing a caring Palliative care experience,” says Maggi.



Article by Carolyn Stout

COMING FULL CIRCLE Pioneer RN Returns As Volunteer



Anna Mae Esnouf has come full circle at Saanich Peninsula Hospital, returning as an Emergency Department Volunteer to the hospital which she helped to open as one of the first two Registered Nurses on staff.

After her time at SPH, Anna had a successful 50-year career as an RN, working at the University of Regina, with public health in

Montreal, and inside Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre in Victoria.

For the last three months Anna has been volunteering in the Emergency Department (her specialty as an RN). She finds the volunteer work very satisfying because, unlike her work as a nurse, she has lots of time to interact with the patients and their families, and she doesn't need to watch the clock. "When I was working as a nurse, we scheduled everything down

to the minute. Last week I spent 45 minutes talking with a gentleman."

The gentleman in question was a WWII veteran. He was waiting to get news about his wife and was quite agitated. Anna went over to say hello and ended up listening to the man's war stories. Soon he started to appear more relaxed. Anna feels talking with her helped to distract him from his anxiety over the long wait.

On another occasion, Anna began chatting with a young woman who had come in with a bad skin problem. The woman was very anxious about her condition, about missing work and in a great deal of discomfort. Again Anna talked with the young woman and calmed her down so that the woman was able to fall asleep later.

Anna finds that one of the keys to her success in helping people is her status as a retired RN. "People tend to feel better if they know they are talking to a retired nurse, someone who knows what she's talking about." Another key is providing information. If Anna doesn't have the answer herself, she checks with staff to get an answer.

After a nursing career, helping to raise her grandchildren and now volunteering at SPH, Anna Mae Esnouf, 78, has many plans. "There's so much more I still want to do."

Article by Martin Hayter



WELCOME TO THE LINK!

It's an exciting moment to see our first-ever newsletter 'for volunteers, by volunteers' come off the press. The goals of this newsletter are many, connecting volunteers and staff with each other by recognizing their invaluable contribution to the Saanich Peninsula Hospital, providing education about volunteerism, and potentially recruiting new volunteers.

There are now approximately 250 volunteers at the hospital. Volunteers come during weekdays and on weekends. Volunteers support many areas of the hospital including Extended Care, Acute, Palliative Care, Emergency and Outpatient Services or they may be "Guiding Stars" who welcome new arrivals to the hospital and show them to their destinations.

The newsletter has been titled 'The Link' because it's designed to provide a link between the many individuals who contribute their time and energy to the

patients and residents at the SPH. Each issue will "link" volunteers with the other dedicated people who improve the quality of care for patients and residents, who provide much valued assistance to medical staff, and who help make this hospital such a vital part of the community.

This issue features a volunteer and staff profile, highlights of the new Guiding Stars program, information about current volunteer opportunities, and what's coming up in the next issue. Future issues will showcase other staff members, volunteers and program areas and may include articles on the latest trends in volunteering

And of course we welcome your suggestions. If there's a story you'd like to hear – or an anecdote you'd like to share - please let me know. I'll be delighted to link you with one of our volunteer writers, and one of our volunteer photographers.

I want to thank every one of the 250 amazing people who take time out of your daily lives, to make a difference. Hope you enjoy reading "The Link!"

Chris Foster, Manager, Volunteer Resources.

CURRENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Guiding Star Program

Greeting people, giving directions and helping people find their way. Lots of flexibility and variety. Shifts are Monday-Friday—2 hours starting at 8am.

Meal Time Host/Greeters

Enhancing the dining experience of our residents in the Extended Care Units by portering, greeting and socializing with residents at meal times. This will include opening containers, refilling beverages, and pouring tea and coffee. Meal times are supervised by nursing staff.

Emergency Department

Providing assistance and support to patients admitted to the Emergency and their family members. Previous hospital experience helpful but not necessary. Volunteers work in 3–4 hour shifts Monday to Saturday. A departmental orientation and mentoring shifts are provided.

Recreation and Social Programs in Extended Care

Assisting staff with social and recreational activities, currently available: bingo games, carpet bowling. Weekdays – Monday to Friday—between 10am to 3pm. Garden friends and friendly visitors—flexible days and hours including weekends.

Pet Therapy

Visiting residents on the South Acute Medical Unit and Extended Care Unit. All animal volunteers must be approved by VIHA and have certification from a local therapy program such as PATS (Pacific Animal Therapy Society).

Social Butterflies

Fostering relationships with patients. May include: visiting, reading, reminiscing, playing cards or board games, music, or assisting with structured activities. Many of these patients have some level of dementia. Some may have no family or friends who visit. Flexible days and times, units include Acute, South Medical and Extended Care.

THE LINK TEAM



Top row, left to right: Carolyn Stout, Barbara Harwood
Bottom row left to right: Collin Jackson, Chris Foster, Martin Hayter

Looking for other volunteer opportunities? Then check out these web sites.

www.viha.ca - click on departments/services scroll down to Volunteer Resources

www.volunteervictoria.bc.ca - searchable database of over 1000 volunteer opportunities.

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Look for our next issue coming in April 2010.
