



Summer 2015

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Between Us

The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation ♦ OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Dankjewel Canada! Canada and the Liberation of the Netherlands

By Peter McKinnon



Exuberant Dutch children greet Canadian soldiers, May 1945. Photo by Bob Hanley.

With celebrations underway around the globe marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, many people in Canada and the Netherlands pause to consider the special bond between their two nations. It is a bond forged in combat; Canadian soldiers played a leading role in freeing the Dutch from Nazi occupation. Many residents of the Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre experienced the liberation first hand; some as conquering soldiers, others as survivors of Nazi oppression.

A Soldier's Story

Today, Bob Hanley lives with his wife Terri in one of the 139 apartments that comprise the Perley Rideau Seniors' Village. Born and raised on a farm in Harris, Saskatchewan,

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Kindness Begets Kindness

Couple leaves a gift in their will to the Perley Rideau Foundation

By Peter McKinnon

Ronnie Hicks, who passed away at the Perley in May, shared much with his wife Madeleine, including a commitment to modesty. They never considered their lives—or their decision to donate a sizable portion of their estate to the Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation—to be that remarkable. Take a closer look, though, and it's clear to see just how exceptional they are and why their decision makes perfect sense.

Born and raised in Ottawa South in the late 1920s, Ronnie and Madeleine first met as children. She attended St. Margaret Mary Catholic School; Ronnie went to Hopewell Public School. When the girls walked to school, Ronnie and his gang of pranksters would sometimes bombard them with snowballs (or horse-balls—a mixture that included some of the manure often found on the streets in those days).

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Perley Rideau
Foundation

Liberation of Holland Concert

On Tuesday, May 26th, the the Royal Netherlands Air Force Band put on a special concert before a packed house in the Perley Rideau's main cafeteria. Among the audience of more than 200 were many WWII veterans who contributed to the Liberation of Holland, along with several Dutch survivors of Nazi occupation. Chief conductor Major Jos Pommer led the concert band—accompanied by a five-piece rhythm section—through a repertoire of period and contemporary music. The concert was part of the Band's Liberation of Holland tour, which included a special performance at Rideau Hall before the Governor-General and his wife, and the King and Queen of the Kingdom of the Netherlands during their state visit to Canada.

Tens of thousands of Dutch emigrated to Canada in the aftermath of WWII; today, more than a million Canadians claim Dutch roots and comprise one of the largest and best-integrated ethnic groups in the country.



Family and Charity: Shaping a Will with Purpose

Perley Foundation to Host Special Information Session

www.perleyrideau.ca

By Daniel Clapin, ACFRE, Executive Director
The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation



More and more Canadians recognize the advantages of gifting by will—including a donation to charity in their will. While most people leave the vast majority of their estate to family members, the number who donate a portion to charities that are meaningful to them continues to grow. Typically an intensely personal decision, most choose to gift by will because this final act of kindness will have a tangible impact on the lives of others. We feel good when we know we have helped others.

I often get calls from people wanting to know more about gifting by will. To help meet the need for relevant, accurate information, The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation will host a special session in partnership with six other charities: the National Arts Centre Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa, United Way of Ottawa, Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation, Montfort Hospital Foundation and the Ottawa Food Bank.

The information session will take place on the morning of Friday, September 25, and will feature guest speaker Mr. Douglas Buchmayer, Partner,

Gowlings. Mr. Buchmayer will explain the ins and outs of gifting by will and answer the questions of participants.

When updating a will, it can be relatively easy to include a gift to charity, although there are many factors to consider such as the anticipated savings in estate taxes. Donations to charity can also be structured in many different ways: a set amount, for instance, a percentage of the value of one's total estate, or even a residual amount—whatever's left over after other items are taken care of.

When people review their estate plans with a professional they are often surprised just how sizable their estate will become once all of their assets—real-estate holdings, life-insurance policies, etc.—have been liquidated. This helps explain why people who gift by will typically leave gifts from their estate to more than one charity, often as many as four charities.

The session is free and includes complimentary on-site parking and a light lunch. We encourage you to register early, as seating is limited. RSVP by September 11. You may register by calling 613-526-7194 or by

sending an email confirmation to dclapin@prvhc.com,

Here are the relevant details:

Date: Friday, September 25, 2015

Time: 9:30 a.m. registration; presentation 10:00-noon followed by a light lunch

Location: Lupton Hall, Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre, 1750 Russell

(An equivalent French session will be held at the United Way of Ottawa on October 16.)

The Perley Rideau Seniors Village is comprised of a 450-bed long-term care centre (including 250 beds for veterans), 139 specially designed seniors apartments and community health care services.

We appreciate your support in making a bequest in your will and/or making a donation

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Mischief has always been a part of Ronnie's life; as a soldier, he insisted on wearing pyjamas to bed even though he risked being charged with a uniform violation. Madeleine was sometimes an unwitting participant in Ronnie's pranks. Among the guests at a reception the couple once attended was Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson. Ronnie walked up to the Prime Minister and boldly said: "I want you to have the pleasure of meeting my wife." Without missing a beat, the Prime Minister extended his hand to Madeleine and said: "Very delighted to meet you."

Deemed too young to serve in World War II, Ronnie enlisted in the Canadian Army and fought in the Korean War as a member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. His battalion experienced some of the conflict's fiercest fighting, including the battles for Hill 355 and Kapyong Valley. At one point, Ronnie saw his best friend Alan killed by enemy fire. He would later name a son after his fallen comrade in arms.

After the war, Ronnie and Madeleine reconnected and eventually married, which raised more than a few eyebrows, as inter-faith marriages were relatively rare at the time. They both worked outside the home—Ronnie at Canada Post for more than 30 years, while Madeleine held a variety of jobs at Bell Telephone and the National Research Council. They raised five children and served the community in many ways. Ronnie was a baseball coach and umpire for many years in Ottawa East; Madeleine washed the uniforms to ensure the team looked its best. She also got the baseball association to open up the annual end-of-season banquet to mothers—for years, it had been for fathers and sons only—and convinced Ottawa Rough Rider all-star Bob Simpson to be the guest speaker at the first mixed-gender event.

In 1991, Ronnie and Madeleine travelled to Korea on one of Veterans Affairs' annual junkets for former soldiers. It was an incredibly emotional trip for both of them: Ronnie overcome by memories of fallen friends; Madeleine by the incredible respect and gratitude expressed by every Korean—regardless of age—they encountered.

"At one point, the bus we were on drove past a school," Madeleine recalls. "Every child had lined up outside with their heads bowed to show how thankful they were to the Canadians who had fought

on their behalf."

In 2008, Ronnie's needs began to exceed Madeleine's ability to care for him, and he moved to the Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre. By the time Ronnie passed away at the age of 88, he and Madeleine had seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

"We were quite familiar with the place," says Madeleine. "We'd known a few of the residents here over the years."

Despite that familiarity, however, both were pleasantly surprised by the remarkable quality of care Ronnie has received.

"I'll never forget the time Ronnie's nurse came in on her day off to check up on him," recalls Madeleine. "You just don't get that kind of personal dedication in other residences."

Ronnie spoke to his wife on the phone every night before going to sleep. No longer able to dial the number properly in his final months, he got a nurse to place the nightly telephone call. And he always reassured his wife: "Don't worry dear, the Perley is taking great care of me."

The couple chose to repay these acts of kindness when they updated their will recently. After taking careful stock of their long marriage, loving family and full lives, Ronnie and Madeleine chose to honour what meant the most to them: family, of course, and the Perley Rideau.

"For us, it's a way of paying it forward—of helping to ensure that future residents of this place can enjoy a quality of life similar to what Ronnie has experienced in recent years," says Madeleine. "We've given to the Perley Rideau annually for many years, so including the Foundation in our will was a natural decision. We've always given back to the community, and we're certainly not going to stop now."

Finding it increasingly difficult to live on her own, Madeleine expects to follow in her husband's footsteps and move to the Perley Rideau, although in one of the new, independent and assisted-living seniors apartments rather than in the long-term care centre. This will make it easier for her to honour her husband's memory and to experience the Perley Rideau's exceptional quality of care. **BU**





Dedicated Perley Rideau Staff and Volunteers a Well-oiled Healthcare Machine

By Akos Hoffer, Chief Executive Officer
The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre

What really sets the Perley Rideau apart is how we enable staff and volunteers to provide our seniors with the special attention they deserve. Most of the staff of 780 care directly for residents, tenants and local seniors, including those living with dementia. All staff and volunteers continually improve their clinical and leadership skills to deliver on our mission. Here are a just a few examples:

- All registered staff and Personal Support Workers (PSWs) receive Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA) training to help them care for residents living with dementia;
- Registered nursing staff complete PIECES training (Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Capabilities, Environment, Social) to better care for individuals with complex physical and cognitive/mental health needs and behavioural changes;
- LEAP (Learning Essential Approaches to Palliative care) training develops expertise in palliative care.

This combination of specialized training sets the Perley Rideau apart from many other seniors' healthcare residences and demonstrates our commitment to a high level of expertise. This commitment extends throughout the organization and to the volunteer professionals on the Boards of both the Foundation and Health Centre. Both Boards play an important role behind the scenes, analyzing the intricate policy details and making the operational decisions that directly affect residents and tenants. Perley Rideau administrators continually

rely on the deep corporate knowledge, experience and leadership of board members.

The interaction among residents, tenants, staff, volunteers, and members of the leadership team and Boards is part of the magic behind the Perley Rideau's success. Some of this is by design—our selection process enables us to identify, hire and train the right people, for instance. Another crucial element is the Perley Rideau Foundation's tireless fundraising efforts. Together, the Foundation, Board members and Capital Campaign Cabinet have raised \$3 million of the \$5 million for the new independent and assisted-living apartments that are central to the Seniors Village concept.

The spirit of the Perley Rideau is rooted in talent, dedication and passion. The Perley Rideau Seniors Village brings it all together for the benefit of the community at large. Thank you, Ottawa, for your continued support.



Staff recently held a Zumba party and fundraiser, led by a personal support worker who is also a certified instructor.

Hanley earned no fewer than six service medals during WWII.

After enlisting in 1940, Hanley initially worked on aircraft in Canada before being sent to England in 1942 to assist in the maintenance of warplanes such as Spitfires and Hurricanes. Once the Allies established an airfield in Normandy, Hanley was among the first engineer officers to be stationed there. Hanley also experienced the hasty retreat at Nijmegen (Operation Market Garden, also known as “a bridge too far”), the liberation of Paris and the horrors of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. He has fond memories of the First Canadian Army’s victorious sweep across the Netherlands.

“You could see as you’d move from town to town that these people had nothing,” Hanley recalls.

As the officer in charge of a team of aircraft technicians, Hanley spent most of the war servicing the aircraft used in frontline support.

“I was one of the lucky ones, because I survived,” says Hanley. “I saw people killed within ten feet of me, though. I wasn’t afraid very often; we knew that we had to do this—our job was to win the war.”

Being in charge of aircraft maintenance led to another stroke of good fortune for Bob Hanley: he had access to a camera, film and a darkroom. The Allies equipped many of their planes with cameras to gather military intelligence. Hanley has a wealth of photos from his war years; a few accompany this



Bob Hanley in uniform, 1945.

article.

“I wasn’t allowed to take pictures of anything that could be used by Nazi intelligence,” says Hanley, “so I took a lot of shots of my mates and the planes we worked on.”

One day in 1945, Hanley’s team was sent out to recover a downed plane in Holland. Since he knew the crew would be gone for some time, he convinced the mess cook to give him portions of meat. He gave the meat to a woman on a nearby farm who had offered to cook them a meal.

“I don’t think she’d had meat in a long time, so she was really happy,” recalls Hanley. “After dinner, she dug out a few bags of tea that she had saved for years, ‘for a special occasion,’ she said, ‘and this is it.’”

Although the end of the war seemed imminent during the spring of 1945, the Nazis continued to fight



Bob Hanley’s crew working on downed plane.



for every inch of land. As the contingent that comprised the left flank of the Allied advance following D-Day, the First Canadian Army liberated ports and cities along the coast of France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Some of the fiercest fighting occurred along the Scheldt estuary, the waterway that links the port of Antwerp to the sea. By April 1945, Canadian troops began to sweep through northern Holland, usually cheered on by ecstatic Dutch people. During the more than nine months of fighting to liberate the Netherlands, 7,600 Canadians died.

Although Bob Hanley survived, his brother Alexander died in the Battle of Monte Cassino, Italy. When he returned home, he barely recognized one of his sisters, who had grown into adulthood during the four years Bob had been away.

Bob recently had a reminder of how fresh the war is for many Dutch people. He showed some of his photos to a Dutch military attaché helping to arrange the 70th Anniversary Liberation concert by

The Royal Netherlands Air Force Band at the Perley Rideau. The woman almost broke down in tears when she recognized her hometown among those that Hanley helped to liberate. Although 70 years have passed, the bonds remain strong.

A Survivor's Story

Another resident of the Perley Rideau Seniors Apartments also considers herself one of the lucky ones. Cora Suurland not only survived four years of Nazi occupation, but also experienced little of the deprivation and none of the starvation that affected so many Dutch people.

Born in the Hague, Suurland was four years old when the Nazis invaded. Shortly afterwards, her family split up, and she and her brother Carl were moved to a small town in Gelderland, a rural province along the German border and one of the few areas largely unscathed by war. She recalls seeing Nazi soldiers, the sounds of air raids and bombs—particularly the whistling sound of V2

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Donations Improve Quality of Life for Residents

In recent months, several generous donations have helped to purchase a total of six mattresses designed to help prevent and support the healing of pressure ulcers. Each mattress costs approximately \$7,000.

The Royal Canadian Legion Kanata Branch 638 donated \$7,100. L to R: Peter Wilkins, Veteran Services Officer and Daniel Clapin, Foundation Executive Director



Royal Canadian Legion Bells Corner Branch 593 donated \$7,500. L to R: Joel Vansnick, Clifford Churchill, Gene Weber, Gib McElroy, Flora Riley, Daniel Clapin



The Royal Canadian Legion District "G" Veterans Care and Comfort Fund donated \$14,000. L to R: Aubrey Callan, District "G" Veterans Service Officer, Daniel Clapin, Foundation Executive Director, and Garry Pond, District "G" Commander



The Royal Canadian Legion Barrhaven Branch 641 donated \$14,000. L to R: Victor Chan, RCL Branch and Veteran Services Officer, Steve Roy, Perley Rideau staff, Delphine Haslé, Foundation Development Officer, Sharon Wilson, RCL Chairman of Poppy Trust Committee, Daniel Clapin, Foundation Executive Director.



The Director General Aerospace Equipment Program Management (DGAEPM) donated a total of \$16,000 to the Perley Rideau Foundation. During a Tree of Life ceremony in April, the donation was dedicated to the service, dedication, and sacrifice of veterans.



Foundation Board Chair Charles Lemieux and Executive Director Daniel Clapin present Colonel Chapdelaine with a birdhouse crafted by Perley Rideau resident Arthur (Art) Baird.

Donor Reception and Strawberry Social

More than 150 donors attended the Perley Rideau Foundation's annual Donor Reception and Strawberry Social on June 17th. Along with a special tour, guests heard from keynote speaker Colonel Guy Chapdelaine, Chaplain General Designate of the Canadian Armed Forces.

"No matter what you have given of your time and of your treasure," said Colonel Chapdelaine, "your contribution is important and has a huge impact on this community." He described the Perley Rideau as a veritable breath of fresh air within our city, a sanctuary of humanity where the old and feeble are loved and cared for like a big brother or sister.

Thanks again to our donors and champions for another *Remarkable Year of Giving!*

John McDermott Benefit Concerts

The support of many attendees and sponsors led to the success of *An Afternoon with John McDermott*, held in the Sacred Hall of Beechwood, The National Military Cemetery. A private concert was also organized at the residence of the Ambassador of Ireland hosted by his Excellency, Dr. Ray Bassett and Mrs. Patricia Bassett.

Principal sponsor the Medipac Group presented the events, helping raise a total of more than \$73,000 for the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation and McDermott House Canada.

Thanks to our generous sponsors who made these special events possible:

Principal Sponsor:

The Medipac Group

Musical Performance Sponsor:

Commissionaires Ottawa

Venue Sponsor:

Beechwood Funeral, Cemetery and Cremation Services

Program Sponsors:

BMO and Davidson Violette

Night at the Races 2015 a Running Success

The 14th Annual Perley Rideau Night at the Races on May 7th was a great success!

The event raised more than \$27,000 for the *Building Choices, Enriching Lives* Capital Campaign and the exciting new Seniors Village Housing Initiative. The initiative consists of two apartment buildings (Commissionaires Ottawa Place and Building B, yet to be named) with a total of 139 units designed for seniors. All apartments are now occupied, with former Canadian Armed Forces personnel accounting for 30 percent of tenants.

Perley Rideau staff have been busy setting up and delivering Assisted Living Services for those in need and taking care of the many details that make everyone feel at home.

Thanks to our generous sponsors:

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Next year's event—the fantastic 15th annual—is set for May 5, 2016.

Colourful Past, Artistic Present

Perley resident rekindles her passion for arts and crafts

By Peter McKinnon

Since moving into the Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre, Stefania Katan (née Biela) has rediscovered her passion for art, and spends considerable time painting. The Perley has an exceptional arts and crafts program, in part due to the generous support of donors. Stefania's artistic ability has played a significant role in her life; she recalls an elementary-school teacher was so impressed with Stefania's drawing of a cat that she shared it with the rest of the class as an example. Years later, she was able to contribute her art skills to the Allied war effort.

Stefania Biela was born in 1926 in France to parents who had fled the post-WWI chaos of Poland. The family settled in the town of Avion, a Polish enclave in northeast France near the Belgian border. Their attempts to evade the horrors of war soon proved to be in vain, however. Germany and the Soviet Union made a secret pact to divide Poland; in 1939, Germany invaded Poland, touching off WWII. Like many Poles during the period between the wars, Stefania's parents had long known that trouble was brewing. These concerns inspired her father and older brother to join the Polish resistance, and Stefania recalls her family hiding Belgian and Polish soldiers fleeing the Nazi *blitzkrieg*.

When France fell to the Germans a year later, Stefania was only 14 years old. In an attempt to avoid the Nazis—their home was roughly 14 kilometres from Arras, the scene of a major battle—Stefania's father packed up the car (a Hotchkiss) and the family fled. She recalls the chaotic scene on the roads: thousands of people trying to escape, their possessions packed onto carts, bicycles,



The Biela sisters

horses—any conveyance they could find. The Biela family slept where they could, eventually settling into an abandoned farm for several days. A Nazi soldier came to make a record of who lived in the home, and gave the children chocolate.

"My mother told us not to eat the chocolate," Stefania says, "because she thought it was poison."



portion of the Polish army and air force managed to flee the Nazi advance, gather in Britain and fight with the Allies.

One of these men was Karol Katan, Stefania's future husband and an officer in the Polish cavalry. He and his men took a circuitous route to Britain—via South Africa—and Karol went on to train as an air navigator in Canada. During the last years of the war, he flew Lancaster missions over Europe.

Stefania's parents finally allowed her to volunteer for the PSK in April, 1945. Her father was proud; her mother was in tears.

"She was afraid we'd never come back," recalls Stefania. "My dad told her not to worry, that the war would soon be over and the family would be together again. But my mother proved to be right. My sister and I never moved back home."

Stefania's artistic talents soon attracted the attention of senior officers and she was assigned



She knew that the Nazis were evil."

Stefania and her family did what they could to help captured soldiers. She recalls lines of prisoners of war stretching for several kilometres, and she and her sister offering them scraps of bread to eat and milk for their canteens. Stefania still grimaces at the memories of air raids: running for shelter as planes attacked.

Life during wartime was difficult, but the family survived. When the Allies liberated their town, Stefania and her sister joined the hundreds of young people who cheered the arriving soldiers, climbing on their vehicles to give hugs and kisses, and to receive candy and gum. Shortly thereafter, recruitment officers for the Polish armed forces visited. Stefania's older sister volunteered immediately and moved to Great Britain as a volunteer for the Polish Women's Auxiliary Service, the PSK (*Pomocnicza Służba Kobiet*). A significant

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to headquarters in London, where she would trace maps and other documents. She attended a Polish Air Force dance at an officer's mess, where she met Karol Katan. He was 13 years older, but entirely smitten.

"He called me by my middle name, Zosia (Sophie)," says Stefania. "He had known a woman named Stefanie and really disliked her. So for the rest of his life, he called me Zosia."

With the war drawing to a close, Karol arranged for Stefania to be transferred to his office at

Dunholme Lodge, a Royal Air Force station that housed a demobilization section. They married in 1948 and soon had two sons.

"After my husband left the air force, we wanted to start a new life for ourselves," Stefania says. "So we immigrated to Canada—to Montreal. We soon found out that Canada wasn't the land of milk and honey that people described. We worked hard, though, and we made it through."

Karol worked initially as a land surveyor for the Dominion Bridge Company and later held a variety of jobs, including one as a door-to-door vacuum-cleaner salesman. He returned to Poland in 1963 to see his parents for the first time since the war and was heartbroken by the generally horrible living conditions.

When he died suddenly in 1973 at the age of 59, the family faced a financial crisis. One of their sons took a job outside of the area he had studied at university to help support the family, while Stefania, who had long worked part-time in retail, took a full-time job. The family moved into a smaller home in suburban Montreal.

Both sons later moved to Ottawa, so when Stefania's health began to fail in 2012, she moved into the Perley Rideau. At age 85, Stefania found it difficult to adjust at first.

"I was depressed for a few months," she recalls. "The arts and crafts program helped me get over it, though. I love to paint and the staff here are very nice."

The Perley Rideau Veterans Health Centre Foundation helps fund all on-site arts and crafts programs.

Stefania often takes her scooter over to Elmvale Mall, where she buys the fixings for a home-made ham sandwich, a favourite of hers since she was a child. After lunch, she heads over to the art studio to work on her latest piece. **BU**

rockets.

"I was just a child, so I wasn't aware of the drama that was unfolding around me," Suurland says. "I remember that there were no lights on at night and that we didn't have much butter, milk or meat. When someone told us that the Canadians were coming to liberate us, I remember thinking that it would be great to have the trains running again."

Suurland's reference to trains hints at a dark chapter of the war for the Netherlands, known as the *hongerwinter* (hunger winter). As a show of support for the Allied advance into Holland, Dutch railway workers went on strike against their Nazi oppressors. The Nazis responded by cutting off all food shipments to western Holland. The winter of 1944-1945 arrived early and was particularly cold; up to 20,000 Dutch people died of starvation. When Canadians arrived as liberators, their gifts of food were particularly appreciated.



Cora Suurland

"For many years after the war, there were shortages all across the Netherlands," recalls Suurland. She and her family—husband André and four children—emigrated to Canada in 1962.

"Canada was a natural choice, because nearly all Dutch people have positive feelings about Canadians," says Suurland.

Today, Suurland remains active volunteering

with the Perley Rideau's Happy Feet program. The program pairs volunteers with residents who suffer from cognitive challenges that prevent them from walking around on their own.

"It's nice to get them up and moving—we have more than a kilometre of hallways here at the Perley Rideau," says Suurland.

Residents helping other residents is further proof that the concept of creating a seniors' village, with residents of various ages and abilities, continues to be a great success. **BU**



Terri and Bob Hanley

The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation

Memorial Tributes

February 12, 2015 to June 24, 2015

Honour someone special with a donation to
The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation

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Together we improve
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The Perley Rideau Seniors Village is comprised of a 450-bed long-term care centre (including 250 beds for veterans), 139 specially-designed seniors apartments and community health care services.

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