



SPRING 2013

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Between Us

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



Brant Scott photo

Jon Wadleigh signs on for assisted living apartments

By Brant Scott

Jon Wadleigh is planning to move "uptown" from the home he built in Nepean to the brand-new independent and assisted living apartments at the Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre.

Jon is a spirited 90-year-old who has been driving his own car 20 kilometres to the Health Centre for the past six years to help out as a volunteer. As a child, he enjoyed

hunting and fishing near his home town in Stanstead, Quebec. In his late teen years, Jon exploited the stealth he used to track woodland creatures when he served as a World War II artillery gunner. His dangerous war time assignment was to get within a hair's breadth of the enemy to report their position and movement.

"I spent all those years at the front of the action and never got a scratch,"

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APARTMENT BOUND: Jon Wadleigh (foreground) is preparing to move into the new independent and assisted living apartments at the Perley Rideau. Jon's son, Ian, will help his father relocate from their family home.

Recreation and Creative Arts Service – Part II

Perley Rideau residents enjoy creative activities for better health prospects

By Brant Scott

Perhaps the best way to assess the role of a health and social service is to try imagining life without it.

Would we recognize the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre if there was no Recreation and Creative Arts Service? There is no doubt that the Health Centre would be a much different and diminished place without the day-to-day dedication of the more than 30 people who work within that service. There would be no

recreation, music, dance, horticulture or art studios here to stimulate residents' minds and bodies. There would be no leisure assessment for each resident to indicate how their psychological and physical needs could be enhanced through recreation and creative arts.

The creative activities help to foster a vibrant, upbeat Health Centre where residents find excitement, stimulation and fulfilment. For these reasons, the Perley and

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Perley Rideau
Foundation

Night at the Races all set for 12th season

The runaway success of Night at the Races continues as the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation prepares for its 12th consecutive annual event.

The popular fundraiser is held at the Rideau Carleton Raceway at 4837 Albion Road, which is Ottawa's featured venue for standard-bred harness horse racing. The event has raised more than \$275,000 for the Foundation since 2002. This year's Night at the Races will be on Thursday, May 9 and organizers anticipate another sell-out crowd of 450 people. Tickets sales are customarily brisk and this year is no exception. The assigned seating allows groups of friends to enjoy celebrating a fun night out together.

"We've changed the event to a Thursday because the raceway no longer has Friday night racing," says head organizer Wally Parsons. "It's still a great way to wind down

the week and bid on some really special silent auction items. We've got Senators tickets, gift baskets, artwork, and a host of prizes that will look great at home."

The Night at the Races concept evolved from Wally's charity network in the Ottawa area. Wally even managed to turn his own 75th birthday celebration in February into a fundraiser. The large crowd of friends who honoured him at a local restaurant raised \$13,000 for the Ottawa Food Bank at Wally's request.

His Night at the Races planning committee includes Lori Greer, Catherine Mullen, Henry Schroder, Foundation Managing Director Daniel Clapin and his Foundation assistant, Sherri Coates. The extensive supper buffet starts at 6 p.m. The Night at the Races sponsors include Sysco Central Ontario Inc., Nestlé Professional Beverages, Family Physiotherapy

and Coughlin and Associates Ltd.

The \$60 ticket price hasn't increased since 2002 and includes the raceway's all-you-can-eat buffet, a racing program, reserved seating, a \$2 race ticket and \$10 coupon for the slot machines. Guests must be 19 or over and are reminded to bring government-issued photo identification for wagering. Guests aged 19-25 should have two photo IDs. Ticket holders will also receive a \$25 tax receipt.

"It's no coincidence that we have a large percentage of people who attend year after year," says Wally. "We must be doing something right. There are no speeches, draws are made early in the evening, and there are many items for silent auction. The best part is helping to make Perley Rideau residents more comfortable and happy with the funds we raise. Could there be a better way to spend an evening?" **BU**

12th Annual Perley Rideau Night at the Races

Purchase your ticket early! • It was SOLD OUT the last 11 years
We invite you to support this event by getting together with family, friends and colleagues and purchase a table for 4 or 6 people
May 9, 2013

Dinner — 6:00 p.m. • Post time — 6:30 p.m.
Rideau Carleton Raceway and Slots, 4837 Albion Rd.
Have fun and support a great cause! There will be a silent auction and lots of great raffle prizes to win.
Tickets are \$60 (includes a \$25 income tax receipt)

Please see us at the Foundation office to purchase tickets or phone 613-526-7173.

Or send a cheque made payable to Perley Rideau Foundation at 1750 Russell Road, Ottawa ON K1G 5Z6.

Buffet dinner features over 100 fine foods
Live race program - Entertainment vouchers for slot machines and races
Complimentary parking and valet parking • Gratuities included

A sneak preview of the exciting Perley Rideau Capital Campaign

www.buildingchoices.ca

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



The evolution to bring the new Seniors Village initiative at the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre is well under way.

The Health Centre is abuzz as we draw closer to completing the 139 independent and assisted living apartments currently under construction at our Russell Road campus. Building B, located adjacent to Russell Road, is already partially occupied and will officially open this spring. Building A is attached to the east side of the Health Centre and is scheduled to open in the autumn. The new apartments are part of the visionary Seniors Village that will be the future of health care in Ottawa.

A renewed mandate for the Perley Rideau Foundation accompanies the need to accommodate more seniors as the Canadian population ages. The Foundation is the fundraising arm of the Health Centre and we are now facing the ultimate challenge. In addition to raising more than a million dollars each year in partnership with our generous donors, the Foundation must raise an additional \$5 million to help finance the independent and assisted living apartments. The Seniors Village has arrived.

In tandem with the Foundation's skilled board of directors and tireless volunteers, we are taking this task head-on. We have opened communications with countless corporations,

foundations, clubs, associations, and individual supporters to seek help in achieving our goal. The Foundation is working to attract "pacesetter" donors who wish to demonstrate their community leadership by donating a gift in the range of \$25,000 and up. This said, all donations of any amount are gratefully received.

I am pleased to note that Commissionaires Ottawa has led the way with a very generous \$500,000 donation to assist veterans and community tenants who will call the Perley Rideau home. This is precisely the kind of vision and social responsibility we encourage others to follow. We need more guardian angels to maintain the momentum. I am available to discuss this important community project any time – my contact information is in the box at the bottom of this page.

While we hope that corporations and foundations will help by funding this project on a large scale, we also appeal to small businesses and individuals. We need everyone's help to serve the many hundreds of seniors who will benefit from the independent and assisted living apartments in the future. Many seniors evolve to a point where they become too physically challenged, too ill or too lonely to live by themselves. There are many for-profit seniors' buildings that do an excellent job of providing assistance, but not

everyone can afford them.

Each of us needs to remember who our seniors are – and who they were. They were our parents, teachers, doctors, coaches, veterans, police officers, firefighters, artists, merchants, school bus drivers and everyone else who helped us prosper in our formative years. They made sure we were safe, educated and productive, and now we can return the favour.

It takes a village to raise a child, and it takes a Seniors Village to help our aging population. Canada has grown strong on the backs of those who are our heritage. Let's show our appreciation through our generosity. And remember, it won't be long before those seniors are us.

The Foundation is facing its greatest challenge ever – please make a piece of the Seniors Village all yours.

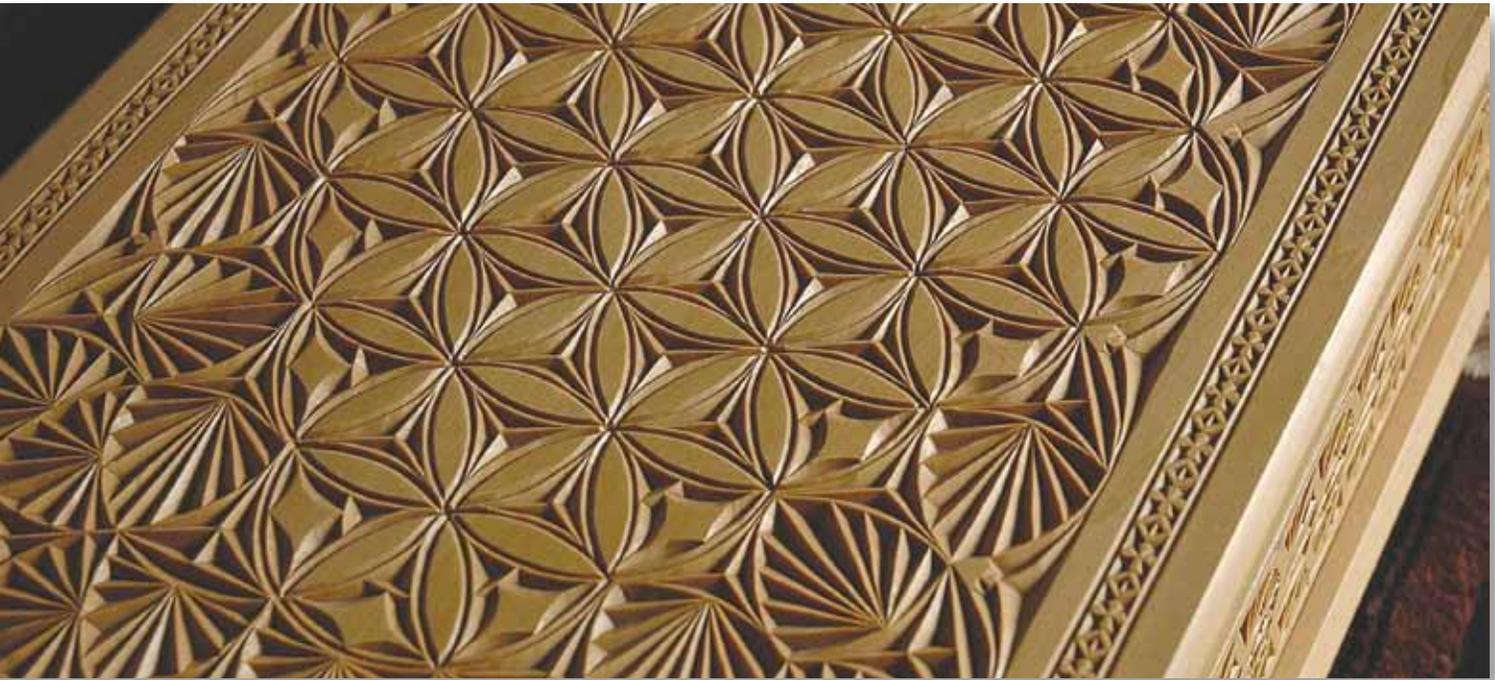
The Perley Rideau is home to 450 residents, 250 of whom are war veterans

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

Please contact Daniel Clapin

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Internet: www.perleyrideau.ca
Capital Campaign:
www.buildingchoices.ca
613-526-7194



GOOD EYE FOR DETAIL: Jon Wadleigh has taken on many different design projects over the years, including building his own house. But, chip carving could be the most difficult. He carved this box with sharp knives and infinite patience. He says it required such concentration that hours would pass in a trice. Jon is taking up residence in the new independent and assisted living apartments at the Perley Rideau and hopes to continue volunteering in the arts studio.

he says. "I was sometimes close enough to the Germans to hear their voices, but I never fired a shot. It was my job to secretly observe what they were doing. If I started firing at them, I wouldn't be here talking to you today. Their snipers were even better than ours."

After landing in England with Canada's 2nd Medium Regiment and reassigned to 11th Field Regiment, 9th Battery, Jon Wadleigh was glued to the action through Sicily and Italy. His war was an emotional roller coaster on many levels. He recalls hearing a young woman crying in a war-torn building one night, only to discover she was giving birth. Jon had helped deliver farm animals as a youngster and applied what he had learned until he was holding a fine baby boy. The teenaged mother named her

son Giovanni – Italian for Jon -- as a tribute to the young Canadian gunner who had helped her in a time of need. Jon recalls she was on the move with her tiny bundle just two hours later, heading down the road in search of sanctuary.

Jon has an irrational, deathly fear of entering an unfurnished house that he can't explain to this day. As the war raged on, he was ordered to hole up in an abandoned house and his phobia forced him to refuse. Threatened with a court martial for disobeying a direct order, he suggested his commanding officer might as well get the handcuffs, because he wasn't going into that empty house. Just hours later that night, that house was completely flattened by enemy shell fire. No court martial ensued. And Jon still

can't enter an unfurnished building.

Once back in Canada, he pursued a long and distinguished career as a civil servant. Jon was in charge of building maintenance for valuable government real estate at the Experimental Farm in Ottawa. His knowledge of building and carpentry is extensive, and the well-appointed home he built on Avonlea Road is a proud testament to his penchant for quality control.

As a frequent volunteer at the Perley Rideau, Jon is preparing to move into Building A when it is completed in the fall.

"I won't even have to go outside to get to the arts and crafts studio where I like to lend a hand," he explains. "The Perley Rideau is evolving into a Seniors' Village and I'm excited to become a part of it. The new apartments are going to

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provide wonderful accommodation for seniors and veterans from the community who may need assistance with day to day activities. I've had a few falls and chipped my leg bone a while back, so it's time to settle into a place where there's help if needed."

Jon's son, Sgt. (Ret.) Ian Wadleigh, who recently completed two tours in Afghanistan, will keep the home fires burning on Avonlea Road. Jon's wife, Mary, passed away

in 2006 just two weeks before their 58th anniversary. They had a daughter, Dr. Moire Wadleigh, who passed away in 2004 after spending a rewarding career as a geochemistry professor in the Department of Earth Sciences at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Carving out a future

Jon is a master chip carver who has produced truly amazing ornate carved boxes and chess sets. He

plans to continue the hobby after he moves to the Perley Rideau. He looks forward to relocating to his new apartment and expects to enjoy the camaraderie.

"During the time I've spent volunteering at the Health Centre, I know that the staff and volunteers are the best there is," he explains. "The Seniors' Village is going to be a great thing in the evolution of the Perley Rideau and Ottawa as a whole." **BU**



JOHN SHEARDOWN TRIBUTE: Perley Rideau Foundation supporters from the "Boys Night Out" group donated this tapestry to the health centre. It is a tribute to Perley Rideau resident Captain John Sheardown, a WWII Lancaster Bomber pilot with the RCAF who passed away at age 88 on December 30, 2012. He gained international status for his pivotal role in helping to conceal six U.S. diplomats in Tehran in 1979. The tapestry was donated to the Perley Rideau by Ron Hodgeson (left) and Peter Dalton to Foundation Managing Director Daniel Clapin. Ambassador Ken Taylor during the 1979 "Canadian Caper" in Iraq later described John Sheardown: "He was a Canadian who not only was brave, heroic and an example of valour in the Canadian military during World War II, but then was a model public servant during peacetime." The Foundation is grateful to our supporters.

A father asks his adult children to “Take care of mom” after he is gone

By Brant Scott

Parents are fully expected to care for their children, but what happens when aging parents need their children’s help? There are some guidelines



TRUE TO HIS WORD: Mark Bowman helps take care of his mother, Evette, who has received excellent care in the Perley Rideau’s Alzheimer’s unit since 2005. Just before he passed away in 2004, his father, Earle, asked Mark and his sister, Cindy, to “Take care of Mom.”

out there, but most families must make up their own rules as they go. Like so many other families, Mark Bowman and his mother, Evette, are working through the process together. It all started in 2004, just as Mark was about to start his own family. Mark’s father, Earle, died three days after Mark’s wedding and his passing created a pact between father and son. “Take care of Mom,” said Earle.

Mark knew those words would help shape his future, and he continues to keep his promise with help from the Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre. Evette has been a resident in the Perley Rideau’s Alzheimer’s unit since 2005. Mark’s future has arrived.

“Back in 1999 we first saw evidence that my mother was forgetful and repeating herself,” Mark recalls. “A gerontologist diagnosed her as having Alzheimer’s and they took her driver’s license away. She was in her early seventies and it was very difficult for my dad because they had been married for over fifty years, and that camaraderie was lost. I think that generation has a very strong loyalty and they didn’t want to compromise her pride or dignity. So, they kept her home as long as possible, and after my dad died, my sister Cindy and I decided we had to give her better care. That meant we had to move Mom out of that house environment.”

Steep learning curve for caregivers

Mark and Cindy wanted the best care for their mother and came to the same conclusion so many others have made. They wanted their mother to live at the Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre. Caring for a loved one with dementia carries a heavy burden for family caregivers. And, the learning curve can be very steep. Mark is now a charter member of the “sandwich generation.” With his son Noah born in 2007, Mark is responsible for caring for his own young family and an elderly parent at the same time.

“My mom comes from St. John’s, Newfoundland,” says Mark. “She was a very bright woman engaged in the arts and languages. She was valedictorian for her school, she excelled at learning and settled in Halifax, where she was very involved in the Jewish community. My mom was a very warm, loving, insightful and strong person. Losing your faculties, mobility and bodily functions is basically everything you have.

“She came to the Perley Rideau directly from Halifax,” he adds. “I was already in Ottawa and my sister lives in Toronto. When Mom came here, the first two or three months were a very difficult adjustment for all of us. I think there was an acceleration of the disease in the first couple of years. But, this past year has been amazing because she’s been very

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Perley Rideau Foundation and RONA offer discount cards to our supporters

The Perley Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation recently sealed a deal with RONA Home & Garden stores to help raise funds for our residents.

The Foundation will assist Perley Rideau donors to receive a membership RONA Discount Card for unlimited use. This card entitles each member to receive an immediate 5% discount on most of the 45,000 items sold at RONA's two stores located at 585 West Hunt Club and 1880 Innes Road in Ottawa.

The RONA stores will also send an additional 5% rebate on total membership purchases annually to the Foundation.

"Our agreement with RONA can provide new funding to directly help Perley Rideau residents," explains Daniel Clapin, Foundation Managing Director. "RONA is a major home and garden supplier and we hope our supporters will take a few minutes to apply. The RONA Discount Card loyalty program provides an instant five percent off each purchase and sends another five percent to the Foundation. It's a virtually effortless way to give.

"The onus is on our supporters to obtain a card through the Perley Rideau Foundation and use it for all their home and garden projects," he adds. "We

especially hope that Foundation supporters who are planning major renovations or landscaping will take this offer to heart. Every purchase on this card helps both the buyer and the Foundation."

The discount card may not be combined with any other offer or promotion such as sale items, RONA Gift Cards, Run to RONA event, financing and/or Air Miles promotions. It applies to in-stock merchandise only and not for special order or installed merchandise. For information on how easy it is to sign up for a Perley Rideau—RONA membership card, please call the Foundation at 613-526-7173. Thank you! **BU**

A father asks his adult children to "Take care of mom" after he is gone ... *continued from page 6*

stable mentally and physically. The constant care that she's been given over these seven years at the Perley Rideau has been excellent."

Mark and Cindy visit their mother regularly and find the Health Centre staff is more than willing to be their eyes and ears when they aren't on-site. Mark says the nursing and personal care staff are warm, friendly and very adept at record-keeping. He believes the activities provided by the Recreation and Creative Arts Service helps Evette stay content and relaxed.

"She loves music and going to concerts and that kind of thing," explains Mark. "There are activities that are planned and although she's not able to physically manipulate things, she enjoys

music and the arts. The programs they have here are excellent. The arts program really needs to be supported."

Leaving a legacy for Mom and Dad

Mark is such a fan of the Recreation and Creative Arts Service that he and Cindy hope to bequeath some of their mother's estate to the Perley Rideau Foundation when she no longer needs it. He says it would be a fitting legacy for his father as well, as the estate originated with him. The Foundation allocates \$135,000 per year to the Recreation and Creative Arts Service that provides residents with access to therapy through music, dance, gardening, pet visits, walking, and special events. *(See the story on Page 1)*

"There is a high level of consistency and depth of care at the Perley Rideau," he says. "I know that when I call they'll know how Mom is doing and her records will contain amazing detail. There's a personal care plan that I saw in December that is very comprehensive. I am called when anything is out of the ordinary. If Mom gets a rash, the nurse calls me up. I always feel connected.

"I don't have any problem leaving my mom at the end of the day or when I have to go away," adds Mark. "We give everybody the particulars of where we are, and I feel very confident in the care that she's been getting. We are honouring my dad's wish, which was to take care of Mom, and that is a good feeling." **BU**

Perley Rideau residents offered creative activity therapies ... continued from page 1

Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation provides \$135,000 annually from its generous donors to sustain this vital service.

In the last issue of *Between Us* (Autumn 2012), we featured the activities enjoyed by so many residents through painting,

woodworking, and a host of other media. This issue of *Between Us* highlights how residents also benefit from the activities as they immerse themselves in music, dance, gardening, pet visits, walking, special events and more. Every resident is assessed soon after they arrive to see which kinds of activities they are interested in pursuing.

Recreational Therapists Sharon Tremaine, Cassy Hopkins and Dave Harris assess every resident's interests, needs and abilities by looking at their lifetime achievements, passions, current situation and potential. The residents include war veterans and community residents, people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and short-stay residents who have come to the Health Centre for rehabilitation. The recreational therapists also keep communications open with residents' families to ensure everyone benefits from the process.

"Our activities are designed to improve a resident's intellectual, physical, emotional and social well-being," explains Sharon Tremaine. "Our staff are assigned to specific units within the Health Centre and get to know the our residents, their special needs, their individual personalities and their likes and dislikes. We get to know the dynamics of what's happening on the residential units. We see how they live and we address their needs as a complete person. When we assess our residents, we try to see if their past activities and interest can be carried forward into the



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU! Perley Rideau resident Doris Jenkins saves the last dance for recreation student David O'Neil during her recent birthday celebration. Residents enjoy special events like this one and join in on the fun. The events are just a small portion of the Recreation and Creative Arts Service mandate.

future to enhance their health and happiness.

"We know it works well because many of our residents and their families see and feel the benefits," she adds. "After the assessment, we contact our recreational and creative arts staff to discuss how the resident can become involved. Some residents work well in groups and enjoy the social interaction, and others prefer one-on-one visits if they are not a joiner. The service also runs special events like Fun Day and our own Olympics to connect residents, staff, families and volunteers to promote community spirit."

Relocating can be traumatic for many

Seniors come to the Perley Rideau with a variety of achievements, temperaments and expectations. Some arrive after they have lived alone for many years and can no longer stay at home for health reasons. It is encouraging that many who arrive with initial apprehension soon feel reborn when they discover a social structure that offers new and exciting possibilities. Many realize that they were cut off from stimulation when they were at home, and moving into the Perley Rideau has introduced a new world of social potential.

"The nurses at the Health Centre do such a great job of taking care of residents' physical and emotional needs," says Sharon Tremaine. "And they tell us that the recreational and creative service we provide make their job much easier when residents feel more positive about life. All of our lives are spent getting up in the

morning, dressing and eating, but what do we do that for? We're getting ready for the day. We all need something meaningful to fill our day. A lot of our residents led very full lives and if they have been isolated and are declining in health, it's like we're giving them another chance to have a life again.

"Many residents and their families thank us so sincerely and you can see how important it is to them," she continues. "They appreciate that someone is taking an interest in them as a person and what their lives have meant. They see that they have contributed something to the world, and they still can contribute. When we have school children come to the Health Centre to visit, our residents want to share and be important to someone else. And, there is the same magic when a resident connects with another resident. Sometimes two veterans will suddenly start joking around and tease one another like they're young soldiers again. It's quite amazing when that light goes on. It's all about self-esteem. They need to know they're not seen as just a sick old person, they are seen as having a real value."

It comes as no surprise that some seniors are dispirited when they arrive at the Perley Rideau. Their recent history is often one of loss – friends, family members, spouses, driving privileges, health, finances, hearth and home, the energy of youth. By the time some residents walk or wheel across the threshold at the Health Centre, they are depressed because all they can see is the end of the

road. Thanks to the Recreation and Creative Arts Service, it is anything but the end. It is a new beginning for residents who allow themselves to reach for it. A life well lived is something to be celebrated, not mourned.

Dementia complicates seniors' aspirations

It can take a special effort to motivate residents with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Rehabilitation Assistant Anamarija Pecek says there are many great moments when Alzheimer's residents are stimulated by Recreation and Creative Arts Service activities. Residents affected by memory loss can appear confused and child-like, but they do find comfort and peace in day-to-day routines.

"Within the Special Approach units where many of our dementia residents live, we like to have social tea groups and the ladies enjoy having their hair, make-up and nails done," says Anamarija. "They especially enjoy visits to the unit from the music therapists. Sometimes we combine the social teas with music and singing. The residents love to go for a walk to the ice-cream parlour down on the main floor. Residents in our secure Special Approach units enjoy taking a little trip around the Health Centre with our guidance.

"Many Alzheimer's residents really enjoy coming to birthday parties with music and singalongs," she adds. "We try to come together with as many people as we can to socialize. Music does wonders. Some people who can't talk any more

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GOING FOR GOLD: The Perley Rideau annual Olympics create friendly competition where everyone wins. From left to right are Recreation Therapist Dave Harris, Perley Rideau resident Louis Guertin and recreation student David O’Neil. The Olympics are one of the important events staged by the Recreation and Creative Arts Service and funded by the Foundation.

will start singing with the group. We have one fellow who was in the navy and shows no expression and doesn’t smile until the group sings a Scottish song. He gets tears in his eyes whenever he hears Tipperary. The recognition is there and we know he hears everything.”

Recreation and creative arts stimulation can help to relieve “sun downing” in people with dementias. The symptom of sun downing can cause those affected to become upset or agitated in late afternoon and into the evening. The late-day confusion can be aggravated by fatigue, low-lighting, shadows and nearby activity. Staff arriving or leaving

can cue people with dementia to want to go home or check on their children, as they did in their past. When the Alzheimer’s unit gets restless at day’s end and residents try to walk around, they can get in each other’s way and conflict can result. Some low-key recreation and creative arts can help to distract and soothe the nerves.

“Dementia residents can get uncomfortable during sun downing,” explains Anamarija. “They have had a long day and they’re getting more tired, yet a few residents can’t settle. They walk and walk and they’re so tired they can’t walk any more, but they don’t want to sit, either. That is a good time for us to sit with them

and hold their hand and talk to them so they will rest. Otherwise, they could fall or experience other difficulties.

“I honestly love working here,” says Anamarija, smiling. “We try to make it feel like home by having the residents take part in the activities they did at home. We have about 80 residents with Alzheimer’s and related dementias who really benefit from the activities provided through the Foundation funding.”

Horticultural therapy connects with nature

Horticultural Therapist Barbara Brown works closely with Perley Rideau residents to brighten their lives, both figuratively and literally. She encourages residents who enjoy gardening activities to help them connect with nature and the environment around them. She can bring the joys of spring to those who are in the autumn of their lives.

“It’s a wonderful modality to work in,” says Barbara. “The natural environment we work in together is constantly changing because we are growing things. We follow the life cycle of nature through the year by seeding, growing, tending and harvesting in tune with nature. We also enjoy tasting, preserving and celebrating the edible things we grow.”

Many of Canada’s seniors are familiar with horticulture because their generation was accustomed to working on farms and in backyard gardens. Lots of residents have played an active role in watching flowers and vegetables grow, so horticulture activities are familiar touchstones

with yesteryear. Both rookie and novice gardeners at the Perley Rideau can learn many techniques cultivated over the years.

“Growing things is great for any demographic, but particularly the elderly,” explains Barbara. “They are engaging in things that are fresh and vibrant and it allows them to see there’s still a spark in them that’s flourishing. It’s more than just busy work—it comes from a spiritual and human level. You feel the difference when you’re in a room with plants. It helps people to recognize that they’re part of this cycle of life. I think they recognize the parallel between themselves and this living, growing entity that is a plant. We all take up water and life flows through us. And plants support us because all of our food comes from plants or something that ate a plant. So, growing something from a seed and harvesting it reinforces our relationship with other people and things.”

Barbara opens a scrapbook with many photos of beaming residents alongside mammoth, crimson amaryllis flowers they grew from bulbs. There is great pride, joy and clarity in those faces. Some of the photos accompany short poems submitted by the residents that describe their accomplishment and how it affects them. Each photograph shows personal accomplishment created with a bulb, soil and water. The horticulture therapy service is also much in evidence in the Perley Rideau’s outdoor common areas where residents enjoy contributing their time and toil to beautify the Health Centre.

Kathleen Johnson has been a music therapist for 27 years and worked at the Perley Rideau for 12 of those years. She discovered early in her own life that music is a community endeavour that brings people together with a common purpose. Kathleen says virtually everyone has a musical instrument with them all the time, as long as they have a voice.

Music transcends language and age

“Music receptors are located all over the brain,” she explains. “As soon as music starts you see toes tapping. Even people who don’t respond to most things will often respond to music. We know it affects people from studies that monitor brain activity. Singing is very good physically, too. People take deeper breaths. Many seniors are sedentary and becoming involved in music is good for body and mind. It provides direct access to emotion, too.

“I see people’s eyes light right up when the music starts,” she adds. “They are suddenly right with me. It shows that people can have all kinds of complications, but the spirit is never sick. If you can connect with the soul, you can have a meaningful interaction. Sometimes people with dementia and memory problems want to sing the same song over and over and I’m perfectly alright with that. It’s not about me performing, it’s about interaction. In some cases with dementia residents, I just focus on their breath and I sing long phrases at the same rate as their breathing. That catches their attention, then we make eye contact, and then we can move forward because we’ve connected.”

In addition to using her voice, Kathleen plays guitar, banjo and ukelele to connect with residents. She recalls one gent who was not communicating with others when he arrived at the Perley Rideau. When Kathleen started to play a Patsy Cline song in his room, his barrier to the world melted and a lively conversation about his life ensued. Music can be the great equalizer.

The Perley Rideau Foundation redirects \$135,000 to the Recreation and Creative Arts Service because the benefits to residents and staff are important and beyond obvious.

“These programs and services augment the excellent care that the Health Centre provides,” says Perley Rideau Foundation Managing Director Daniel Clapin. “The generosity of our donors contributes directly to the well-being of everyone who lives and works here. The Recreation and Creative Arts Service is the engine behind the celebration and peace of mind that our residents enjoy. Our donors can take great pride in the positive results they have helped to nurture. Without their donation and without these services, the Perley Rideau would be vastly diminished. I would like to personally thank everyone who provides such high-calibre recreation and creative arts for our residents, and to our donors who make these programs possible.”

For information on how you can contribute to the happiness and comfort of Perley Rideau veterans and community residents, please email Daniel Clapin at dclapin@prvhc.com or call the Foundation office at 613-526-7173. **BU**

The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation

Memorial Tributes

November 15, 2012 to March 20, 2013

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

Joan Abbott • Don and Mary Aikens • William Andre
Lloyd Babcock • Florence Barclay • James Barter • Joyce Bates
J. E. Besserer • Douglas Bonell • Rod Boushie • Francis Brady
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