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Media Release

Hospital Volunteer Association Celebrates 50 Years of Giving Back

RICHMOND HILL, ON – On January 30, 1962 in the midst of a blinding snow storm community minded residents of the town of Richmond Hill, met at the Lions Hall to discuss what they could offer to help the then-future hospital and its patients. That night, the Volunteer Auxiliary (now called Volunteer Association) was born along with a lifelong commitment to giving for many community residents. Fifty years later, volunteers continue to play a vital role at York Central Hospital. Today we are hosting a special ceremony to celebrate 50 years of volunteering at York Central Hospital.

Nancy Cutler, the President of the Volunteer Association of York Central Hospital says, “when the hospital opened, 15 services were offered by the volunteers including staffing the information desk, an escort service, a gift shop and a messenger service. That number has grown to 80 different volunteer opportunities today and well over a million hours of volunteer time has been given in the past 15 years alone.”

Since the initial volunteer meeting, women, men and teenagers, have supported the hospital, its patients and staff and conducted fund raising events to enhance services at the hospital. The commitment from residents across southwest York Region from all areas of Richmond Hill, Thornhill, Vaughan and King Township has been strong from the very beginning. Even before the hospital opened in 1963, volunteers have worked hard to increase awareness about the then future-hospital, raise funds to provide the very best equipment for patients and help in any way possible. Some charter members even continue to offer their time today through fund raising events and/or in-hospital service.

“Our volunteers have consistently demonstrated their dedication to providing the best service to the community,” adds Altaf Stationwala, the Hospital’s President and CEO. “Whether raising funds through community events, directing patients or families or offering support, our volunteers are always there with a smile and a helping hand. Without the volunteers, York Central Hospital would not be the friendly caring organization it is known to be.”

Dina Palozzi, Chair of the Hospital’s Board of Directors says, “I would like to thank all of the volunteers; past, present and future, who help shape the volunteering commitment at York Central Hospital. Our volunteers are truly members of the healthcare team. They offer directions when someone is trying to navigate the building, they assist in various clinics and patient care settings, they offer their expertise through committees and meetings and they raise much needed funds, enabling us to offer the very best in patient care services. “

York Central Hospital Foundation President and CEO, Bill Leacy shares that “the Volunteer Association has been one of the longest and most loyal supporter of the Foundation.” In the 37 years since the Foundation was established, the Volunteer Association has donated more than \$4.6 million and Volunteer Association has been instrumental in funding a number of projects including: the recently renovated state-of-the-art Intensive Care Unit, the hospital’s new Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and their pledge to fund upgrades to the Hospital’s Operating Suites.

The dedication of the charter members of the Volunteer Association of York Central Hospital continues 50 years after their initial meeting. Members of the original founding (charter) members of the Volunteer Association as well as a number of Past Presidents of the Volunteer Association will also be in attendance at today’s celebration. In the time since the inception of the Association, upwards of 30,000 people have volunteer their time and talent to the hospital, enhancing the hospital experience for countless patients and families. The Hospital is a better place because of all their effort.

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Media Contact:
Stefanie Kreibe,
Consultant, Communications and Public Affairs
York Central Hospital
Tel. (905) 883-1212 ext. 7484
e-mail: skreibe@yorkcentral.on.ca

Backgrounder

About York Central Hospital:

- 506-bed hospital located in one of Canada’s fastest growing communities
- The Hospital has more than 80,000 visits annually to its Emergency Department
- York Central Hospital serves more than 500,000 people in Southwest York Region and beyond
- The Volunteer Association currently has more than 900 members
- Last year, volunteers contributed more than 85,000 of service hours at the hospital
- The Volunteer Association has provided more than \$4.6 Million in donations to York Central Hospital Foundation, since the Foundation began in 1974.
- In 2009, a major expansion of the Hospital’s Trench Street site in Richmond Hill, included a new and expanded Emergency Department, Intensive Care Unit, Family Birthing Centre, Diagnostic Imaging Department and Minimally Invasive Surgery Suites
- York Central Hospital is working to create a Major Regional Health System for Southwest York Region that will include building a new hospital in Vaughan and further development of the existing York Central Hospital. Volunteers will play a key role as we work toward this new reality.