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WE SALUTE OUR VOLUNTEERS

Georgetown Hospital Volunteers raise \$37,000 for equipment

By JANET BAINE
Staff writer

Last year the Georgetown Hospital Volunteer Association had a record year, raising \$37,000 for equipment for the hospital, more than ever before.

"There's less and less money coming from the province to meet the gap of all the equipment that (the hospital) needs," Volunteer Association president Dorothy Bodnar said.

The province is unlikely to kick in funds to buy a picture or mirror to make a room more comfortable, let alone buy all the capital equipment that the hospital needs, and this is where the Volunteer Association (formerly the Hospital Auxiliary) often steps in.

Fundraising went well, partly because lottery ticket sales increased from \$1,100 last year to \$22,000 this year. The lottery tickets are now being sold at the Delrex Smoke Shop, instead of the hospital gift shop which has less people coming through.

The money was used to buy a \$20,000 patient lift, used to lift people in the Bennett Centre right from their beds into the bath.

"It saves a lot of money in back injury problems for the staff," Bodnar said. A \$9,000 emergency trauma stretcher was also purchased with the money, and the remaining \$8,000 will go to new chairs and rugs in the waiting room, which is still under construction.

In addition to a more successful fundraising campaign, the volunteers are offering more services to patients, visitors and staff. They have extended the gift shop hours, which helped increase revenue, and have set up an information desk and escort service in the front lobby.

"It has been really well received. We have two people on the desk. It's made it a far friendlier in the lobby and it's something the volunteers

are enjoying," Bodnar said.

Volunteers also take photographs of newborn babies, help in pharmacy and rehabilitation, offer hairdressing, give patients (and plants) fresh water, make beds and keep supplies like kleenex stocked up. Nineteen volunteers also help out in the Bennett Centre.

There are 152 volunteers at the hospital and together they put in about 5,000 of volunteer labor annually.

The volunteer association started before the hospital was built in 1961. Bodnar joined as a young mother, like many others who joined at that time. Now a problem they face is that young people aren't joining anymore.

"We need new blood and new ideas," Bodnar said. "All volunteer groups know that the young girls are now out working, or they can't do volunteer work unless they get a sitter, if they're at home." There are also a multitude of service groups for every interest, so that there are many more opportunities for volunteers.

"People want to give back to the community and the hospital is clearly a focus for this community," Linda Dawson, the staff liaison for the Volunteer association said. "There are a wide variety of things that volunteers can do within the hospital. Most volunteers find there is something that will meet their need and their time frame."

Dawson said that while volunteer organizations have had a hard time recruiting in recent years, this is beginning to change, and volunteering is coming back into vogue.

"It's difficult recruiting young people and this is a need that is going to have to be dealt with somewhere," she said.

"(The Volunteer Association) is essential. They are an integral part of the operation of the hospital and their service is greatly appreciated," Dawson said.



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