

# Recognizing Halton's Physicians

In Halton, we are fortunate to have first-rate medical care available to us, thanks in large-part to the skilled and dedicated physicians who have chosen to make this community home to their practices.

At Halton Region, we believe it is important to recognize these physicians for their contribution to the health and well being of our community, which is why we have designated May 17th to 23rd Physician Appreciation Week.

Physician Appreciation Week serves as a reminder of the valuable resource Halton's medical community is, and gives the Region an opportunity to say thank you to our community's physicians for the excellent care they provide.

Below, you can read about four of Halton Hills' many talented physicians, and find out about their daily routines, why they enjoy serving our community, and even a little about their lives outside of medicine.

We encourage you to thank your physician(s) for the great care they provide to you and your family, today!

If you would like to find out more about Halton Physician Appreciation Week or Halton Region's Physician Recruitment Program, contact Angela Sugden Praysner, Physician Recruitment Coordinator, at 905-825-6000, toll free at 1-866-4HALTON, or go to [www.region.halton.on.ca](http://www.region.halton.on.ca).



## Dr. Debbie Zeni Family Medicine

Meeting Dr. Debbie Zeni is rather like shaking hands with a whirlwind. She blows into the room on a rush of energy that rather takes your breath away. After talking to her for a while, it's apparent that she needs all that vigour to keep up with the demands of her life.

In addition to her duties at William Osler Health Centre, Dr. Zeni maintains a busy community medical practice, supplies paediatric consultation services to other physicians, and provides palliative care for children coming home to the Georgetown area from the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. In the past, she has also been active in hospital administration, participating in many aspects of the amalgamation of William Osler's three campuses, and serving as both President and Vice-President of the Georgetown medical staff.

She says, "By about grade five, I had decided that I was going to be a doctor. I had read biographies about women doctors in North America — they were my heroes — and I wanted to become one of them."

That early decision never changed. She went on to medical school where she met Paul Zeni, and they were married by the end of her fourth year. Nine months later, she was doing her internship and expecting their first child. "We managed to get married, move out of house and home, start our internship program, have a honeymoon and...uh...make a baby all in the same week," Dr. Zeni laughs.

Together with their young child, the Zenis went to St. Lucia to work in a mission hospital for a year and then came back to Ontario, where she did a year of training in paediatrics at the University of Western Ontario.

Both doctors then worked on a locum (temporary) basis for a while before eventually coming to Georgetown. Here they found a welcoming work environment, a pleasant community and a strong church family. When they were offered a chance to stay, they didn't hesitate. Over the years, their family has grown — four boys aged 17 to 24 years — as has their practice.

Although she enjoys family medicine, Dr. Zeni has always maintained an early interest in paediatrics. In addition to volunteering many hours at Hugh Macmillan Children's Centre in Toronto, she has worked in paediatrics at hospitals in England and Scotland and includes a number of special needs children in her practice. She upgrades her skills through training and occasionally working in intensive care and neonatal intensive care.

The best part of the job is seeing children get better, Dr. Zeni says. "It's just thrilling when you see children who are very ill come back for their follow-up visits and they're doing well."

Her passion for caring for children also extends to their spiritual needs. She is the diocesan director of a Catholic Church-based religious program for children aged three to 10 years and teaches several of the classes.



## Dr. Carla Ockley Family Medicine

A native of Alberta, Dr. Carla Ockley grew up in Calgary and received her medical training at the University of Alberta. When she was a teenager she showed an aptitude for sciences that prompted a high school guidance counselor to suggest a career in medicine. The idea intrigued her and soon she was training to be a physician.

She did her residency in Calgary and operated a medical practice there for five years, before moving to Georgetown in the 1980s, initially to provide medical care for her Jehovah's Witness church community, which has its headquarters in Ontario.

She liked the town, with its blend of small town appeal and proximity to a big city, and in 1990, joined the hospital in Georgetown. It offered a scope of practice not always available at larger hospitals where physicians tend to be more specialized. Here, Dr. Ockley was able to work in various departments, such as emergency and inpatient care.

Currently, she is the physician leader in complex continuing care, a field she loves. Family medicine continues to be a primary focus though. "I like family practice," she says. "You get to see people over a span of time, see how they meet life challenges, how you can help them in that and earn their trust and respect."

Outside of her role as a physician, family and her church form a large part of Dr. Ockley's life. Her husband of two-and-a-half years — she met him in Georgetown — is a minister and she has a teenage son from an earlier marriage who has recently completed high school. She participates in a number of church activities and occasionally is called upon to provide advice on medical issues that affect members.

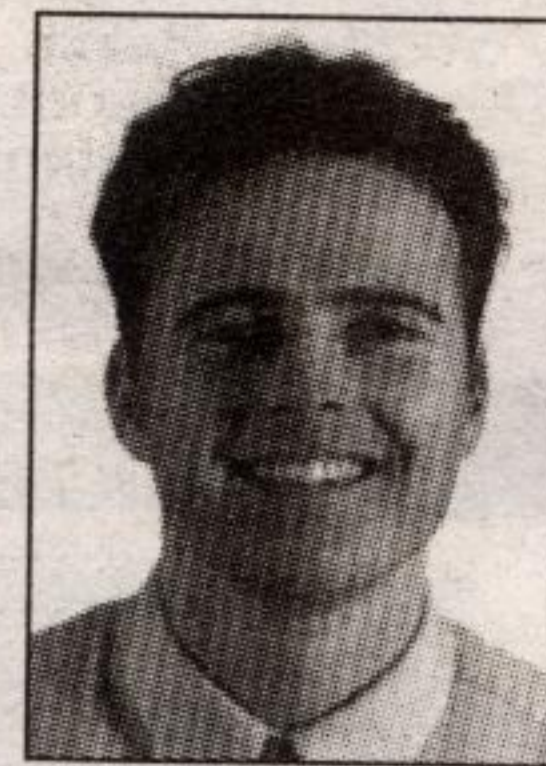
As for the future, Dr. Ockley is looking forward to the possibilities that it holds for both the hospital and the community. She finds the changes that have taken place in the past few years — amalgamation and the formation of William Osler Health Centre — have benefited Georgetown and area residents with better access to specialists and other health professionals.

"What I appreciate about William Osler is that there is a drive for quality, despite the fiscal constraints we're facing," she says. "It's exciting to be part of a growing organization. And it will be fascinating to see what the new hospital will be like."

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