

Chaplain Mary prefers people to paper

Mary Stinson knows how to make a caller comfortable. Although her title is director of pastoral nursing, she answers her telephone as Chaplain Mary.

Hurononia District Hospital, St. Andrew's Centennial Manor, The Villa, and the Midland District Ministerial Association, collectively employ her.

She spends 50 per cent of her time at Huronia District Hospital. The rest is divided evenly between

St. Andrew's and the Villa.

After 20 years as a nurse, she decided to change careers. She came to Midland after eight years as the chaplain of St. Joseph's Hospital, Hamilton.

Her decision to become a chaplain was correct, she says.

"You see miracles happen. You are present at miracles. It's well worth it."

While she was a nurse she found she spent more

time than she liked "pushing paper."

"I wanted a different type of contact with people. That's why I made the change."

"I got tired of it. I thought, 'This isn't for me.' I made the switch. I went back to school." She became a chaplain after 16 months at university.

She has a piece of paper which identifies her as a specialist in institutional ministry. She thinks of herself as an enabler.

She believes her job is to help people tap into their source of inner strength.

Enabling is not laying down the law, telling people, she says, what they must do to make their peace with God.

Her flock is the staff of the three institutions as well as the patients and the residents.

Helping staff with their grief and personal concerns has a ripple effect. The HDH patients and the nursing home

residents benefit directly, she says.

She gave a patient very worried about a heart problem as an example.

"If you can by talking relieve somehow their anxiety, you help their prognosis and help everyone with whom they're in contact. That's

where you see the benefits of what you are trying to do."

She sees people at their request, or at the request of another person, "or I wander around and see if anyone wants to talk to me."

Her job also entails co-ordinating the religious

services conducted by members of the ministerial association.

The chaplain position in Midland is new. Stinson started Jan. 23.

She was impressed by the interest of, and co-operation among, HDH, St. Andrew's, and the Villa.



Chaplain Mary

Mary Stinson was impressed that a hospital and two nursing homes would join financial forces to hire a chaplain. She is dividing her time between Huronia District Hospital, The Villa and St. Andrew's Centennial Manor.

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