

YOUR IMPACT

SUNNYBROOK VETERANS CENTRE



 Sunnybrook
FOUNDATION

WINTER 2021

The largest Veterans' care facility in Canada, Sunnybrook's Veterans Centre is home to 375 Veterans of the Second World War, the Korean War and the Cold War. Your generosity allows us to offer a variety of programs that keep our Veterans engaged, active and connected.



As the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our world in recent months, it has been more important than ever to protect the physical and mental health of our Veterans. Thank you for giving back to the men and women who offered so much during previous times of need in our country.



375

**Veterans in
our care**



50

**wishes
granted in the
past year**



10

**years of
Operation
Raise a Flag**



Celebrating a decade of success for Operation Raise a Flag

Since 2010, Sunnybrook's Veterans Centre has marked Remembrance Day by raising a sea of Canadian flags.

Every year, hundreds of volunteers have assembled to plant thousands of small Canadian flags outside the Veterans Centre, honouring the legacies of Canadians who have served at home and around the world.

By its tenth year, Operation Raise a Flag raised \$677,541 (as of October 2020) with more than \$150,000 raised in 2019 alone.

Although pandemic safety measures prevented volunteers from gathering in 2020, Operation Raise a Flag proceeded with Sunnybrook staff and members of the Canadian Armed Forces stepping in to raise the flags in time for Remembrance Day, while observing hand hygiene and physical distancing guidelines.

Spotlight on: Grant a Wish Program

The Grant a Wish Program is a cornerstone of the personalized support we provide to every resident at the Veterans Centre. Veterans receive three wishes in the form of experiences, objects or events that hold special meaning to them.

Last year, we granted 50 wishes to our residents, made possible by the gifts of donors and community sponsors like you. Wishes bring excitement and surprise into the lives of our Veterans. Here is one Veteran's story about the impact of the program.

UNFORGETTABLE TRIP

One Veteran's Grant a Wish experience

A family trip to the CN Tower left a lasting impression on Richard Lake.

It numbers among many highlights of a storied life for the 95-year-old resident of Sunnybrook's Veterans Centre. A diesel electric mechanic for the Royal Canadian Air Force's Western Air Command during the Second World War, Richard ran a power plant and maintained generators on an air force base on Vancouver Island. He travelled from Toronto shortly after he enlisted at age 19.

"Even though he has short-term memory loss, he remembers the visit," says Terry Rutledge, the youngest of Richard's three daughters.

Richard never stopped smiling, from the moment Terry's youngest son travelled with him by bus from Sunnybrook to the CN Tower. It was Thanksgiving weekend in 2019, and a turkey dinner with a view was waiting at the top.

The trip was enabled through Sunnybrook's Grant a Wish program, supported entirely by donors. "When he first heard about the Grant a Wish program, he said he didn't need anything," recalls Terry. "We came up with the idea when we realized he had never been to the top of the CN Tower."

Terry couldn't believe the puff of steam they first saw across the lake: it was Niagara Falls. "We had the perfect opportunity to show my dad all the neighbourhoods he had lived in and around Toronto."



Richard and his daughter Terry at the CN Tower

As the restaurant rotated, Terry pointed out West Hill, where Richard was born; Oshawa, where he grew up; downtown neighbourhoods where Richard rode his bicycle as a young delivery boy for a butcher shop and grocery store; the Masonic Temple at Yonge and Davenport, the ballroom where Richard met his soul mate Audrey just after the war; Keele St. and the 401, where Richard built a house in the 1950s; Birch Cliff, near Scarborough Bluffs, where he lived as a child; and St. Catharines, across the lake, where Richard and his wife of 60 years eventually retired.

"It brought back so many memories," says Terry. "We reminisced and reviewed his whole life."

VETERANS CENTRE MILESTONES

We have recently celebrated several milestones – both in the lives of our residents as well as the Veterans Centre itself



50 wishes

50 wishes in the past year

As detailed on the previous page, the Grant a Wish program connects Veterans with memorable experiences. The program has continued throughout the pandemic, with a notable 50 wishes granted in the past year.

The program has helped one Veteran “see the world” during COVID-19 travel restrictions. Resident Robert Chartre enjoys watching the news to keep up on global events, then opening his atlas to learn more about the different countries.

As his prized atlas had come apart over the years, Robert made a wish to have it re-bound. “Because of the virus we can’t go out, so it helps me see the world,” says Robert.



107 years

Two men, 107 years

A major milestone for a resident in the Veterans Centre was shared by another Veteran across the province. On January 26, 2020, resident John Boyd celebrated his 107th birthday – as did Alex Boucher of Britt, Ontario.

When staff at the Veterans Centre discovered the connection, they arranged for a joint celebration over Skype. Both men served in the Second World War and shared the title for the fifth oldest known man in Canada.

On January 12, 2021, two weeks ahead of his 108th birthday, John Boyd received his second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sunnybrook began administering the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to Veterans Centre residents in late December 2020. The vaccine is administered in two doses, given 21 days apart.



Est. 2019

The Johnny Bower Arms

The Veterans Centre pub has long been a favourite spot for Veterans to gather with guests and enjoy a drink and a game.

Last October, the pub was renamed to honour the late Johnny Bower, the famed hockey goalie who helped the Toronto Maple Leafs win four Stanley Cups.

Bower often visited the Veterans Centre, sharing good times and great memories with residents. The pub celebrated its new name, *The Johnny Bower Arms Pub*, in recognition of his support.

OUR THANKS TO YOU

It is our priority to ensure our Veterans have the best possible quality of life. Through engaging programs, unforgettable experiences and personalized care, we bring comfort and safety to our Veterans.

We couldn't do it without your support. Your generosity allows us to give back to our Veterans after all they have done to serve our country. Thank you.



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