

YOUR IMPACT

SUNNYBROOK VETERANS CENTRE



 Sunnybrook
FOUNDATION

SUMMER 2022

Sunnybrook Veterans Centre is home to more than 300 Veterans of the Second World War, the Korean War and the Cold War, making it the largest Veterans' care facility in Canada. Because of your generosity, we are able to offer engaging programs that enrich the lives of our residents.



As we navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to prioritize the comfort and safety of our Veterans. Your generosity allows us to protect and enhance the physical and mental health of our residents. Thank you for giving back to the people who have given so much.

MORRIS AND RUTH'S SONGS OF LOVE

Donor support for vibrant recreational programs keeps our residents connected

Morris and Ruth Adams had always connected with each other through music. “My Ruthie, she sang, she danced, she told jokes,” says 95-year-old Morris of his wife of 71 years.

Ruth and Morris were residing in a Toronto-area seniors’ apartment building when they contracted COVID-19 in December 2020. Both were taken to Sunnybrook for care: first Morris, who arrived at Sunnybrook’s Emergency Department by ambulance, with Ruth arriving a few days later.

Morris was eventually transferred to St. John’s Rehab to recover and then moved to Sunnybrook Veterans Centre. With the help of their daughter, Carolyn Adams-Lewis, Ruth was admitted to the Palliative Care Unit in the Veterans Centre to be near Morris.

Although the couple were both in the same building, COVID-19 visiting limitations initially kept them apart. That’s where music therapists Teresa Ianni and Jill Hedican came in. Working together, they found a way for Morris and Ruth to share their love for each other through song.

Thanks to donor support, our recreational programs provide meaningful engagement for residents, including music therapy. With the help of an iPad, Morris began having virtual visits where he sang to Ruth, often the very songs she used to sing to him. Morris also recorded an album on CD, which he titled *Songs of Love for Ruth Adams*.

The support of our donors and the resourcefulness of our staff allows these life-enhancing programs to continue safely throughout the pandemic. The music therapy program helped our Veterans remain socially connected during a difficult and often isolating time.

As visiting restrictions eased, Morris was able to reunite with Ruth and sing to her in person on their wedding anniversary, not long before she passed away in June 2021. He was accompanied by Teresa on guitar, and Jill on violin.

Morris is grateful to Sunnybrook for that final visit and for the music therapy program. “Ruthie was a dancer and a singer. The songs I sang were her songs,” he says, “I like to think she heard them.”



Top: Morris and Ruth sharing a laugh.
Below: The couple on their wedding day in 1950.

Comfort and dignity in end-of-life care

The staff, spaces and services at Sunnybrook’s Palliative Care Unit made the end of Ruth’s life as comfortable as possible. With donor support, led by McDermott House Canada, we have embarked on a renovation project that emphasizes the value of family presence, a home-like environment and patient privacy during palliative care. You can read more about how these renovations will help create the most comfortable and dignified end-of-life experience on page 5.



Original artwork by Indigenous artist Philip Cote honours the contributions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Veterans.

A BANNER YEAR FOR OPERATION RAISE A FLAG

2021 was an outstanding year for the Operation Raise a Flag campaign, which broke fundraising records with the highest amount raised in a decade. Over the years, the campaign has contributed more than \$1.2 million to directly support the comfort and well-being of our Veterans.

This year, 427 volunteers planted more than 30,000 flags as a symbol of honour and appreciation. The campaign also incorporated artwork designed by celebrated Indigenous artist Philip Cote.

Sunnybrook's Indigenous Advisory Council engaged Mr. Cote – who is Shawnee, Lakota, Potawatomi, Ojibway, Algonquin and Mohawk – to create this artwork as a special tribute to the contributions made by First Nations, Métis and Inuit Veterans in service to Canada.

His painting was printed on flags, and also painted in large-scale on the lawn outside the Veterans Centre as a complement to the display. It featured vibrant colours and rich symbolism depicting the beginning of humanity, Indigenous ancestry and good deeds done in life – and of course, the poppy for remembrance.

Thanks to the remarkable support of donors, Operation Raise a Flag once again offered our Veterans a beautiful message of gratitude.

Proceeds from Operation Raise a Flag provide Veterans with special amenities, enabling them to achieve their best quality of life through continued learning opportunities, innovative equipment and unique programming. Donations are also used to support enhancements to outdoor spaces such as the Veterans Therapeutic Garden.

Support from Veterans Affairs Canada

In February 2022, Sunnybrook Veterans Centre was awarded funding through Veterans Affairs Canada's Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund. Established in 2018, the fund provides financial support to organizations for innovative initiatives that improve the lives of Veterans. We received funding totaling \$240,000 for two new enrichment programs. The first offers yoga to Veterans and caregivers to promote well-being and stress relief, while the second focuses on reducing the risks of isolation for seniors who need to quarantine for medical reasons.

GREATER COMFORT WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

Enhancements that promote compassionate end-of-life care in new, comforting spaces are taking shape as our Palliative Care Unit enters its next phase of renovations, thanks to generous donor support.

The first phase of renovations, completed in 2016, created beautiful, modern new spaces for patients and their loved ones to relax and gather, with more natural light, open-concept shared areas and a peaceful garden room.

Phase 2 of the renovation, which began in June 2021 and is scheduled for completion in early 2023, is well underway. Renovation of the first hallway is close to completion, at which point we will close the second hallway and begin work there.

Improved amenities in the renovated patient rooms will include features that families told us were important: individually controlled lighting; quiet spaces; built-in, pull-out sleeping areas for families; and glass showcases for each patient to display personal items that bring them comfort.

This project has been entirely funded by donors like you, helping us give more families the peace of mind that their loved ones are receiving the best possible end-of-life care.



Visits with Wilson bring joy

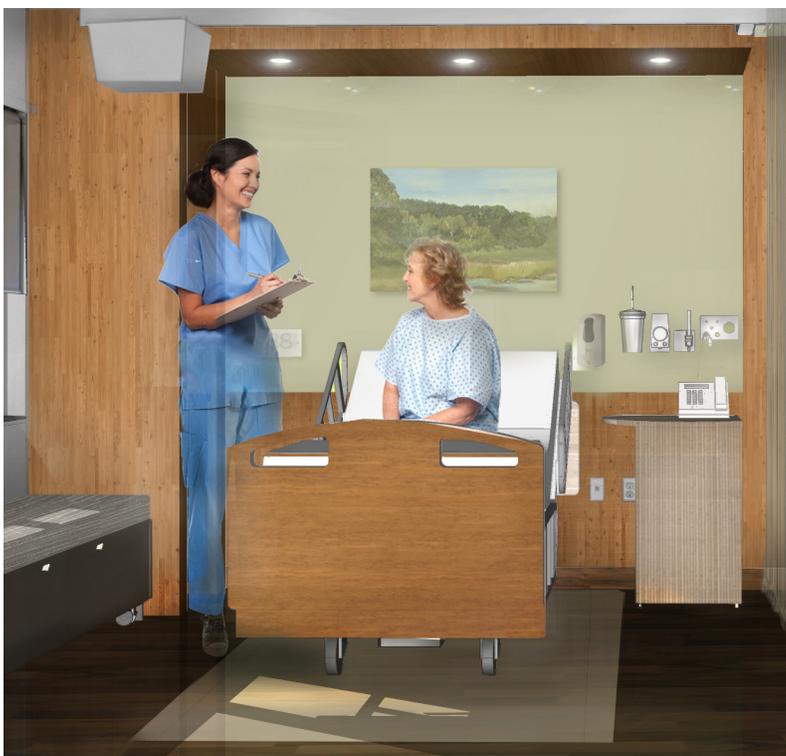
Jenny Smith's dog Wilson was literally born and bred to help others. "He's an Australian Labradoodle," says Jenny. "The breed was created to make a service dog that was hypoallergenic. And he looks like a big teddy bear!"

As longstanding volunteers with St. John Ambulance's Therapy Dog program, Jenny and Wilson have dedicated time in Sunnybrook's Dorothy Macham Home with Veterans who have advanced dementia.

Jenny says volunteering with Wilson allows for a unique point of connection for patients. "I'm trying to give someone a positive break or moment in their day."

Sunnybrook is grateful to have wonderful, dedicated volunteer therapy dog teams working with patients and residents to bring them joy and calm. Jenny and Wilson look forward to being able to return in person to the Veterans Centre.

"At the end of each visit, I hear from many patients that we have made their day. In turn for mine, I feel the same."



An artistic rendering of a newly renovated patient room.

The Veterans population is changing in Canada, and the average age of residents at the Veterans Centre is now 97 years old. Five strategic aims outlined below were recently developed to ensure we continue to provide the highest quality of interprofessional, person-centred care for our residents as they age, as well as for seniors and people at the end of life. Your support helps make this happen.



High-quality spaces and care

Sustain an excellent home environment for our Veterans



Coordinated support

Establish a Centre of Excellence that provides “one-stop” interprofessional support and enables more personalized and precise care



Comfortable transitions

Sustain our specialized palliative care, and develop our capacity for transitional stays for others who will return to their homes



Focus on mental health

Build a Centre of Excellence for post-traumatic stress disorder, operational stress injury and psychological symptoms of dementia



Sharing and collaboration

Build capacity for excellence in care across Ontario, through knowledge-sharing, advocacy and consultation

OUR THANKS TO YOU

We are committed to helping our Veterans achieve the best possible quality of life. This means ensuring that they feel safe, engaged and comfortable through meaningful programs and personalized care.

Your generosity makes this possible. With your support, we are able to serve those who have done so much to serve our country.

On behalf of all our staff, residents and their families, thank you.



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