

## GRAND ROUNDS

Amidst the excitement of the festive season there is a wonderful group of people who ensure that everyone in the community has the opportunity to enjoy a delicious traditional turkey dinner on Christmas Day.

For the past 20 years, the Renfrew chapter of the Knights of Columbus has been proudly sponsoring the annual Community Friendship Dinner at no cost to those who partake in the event.

"It's something we do every year using our own funds," explains Knights treasurer, Brian Long. And although many offer to pay, Long says they are more than happy to provide this meal completely free of charge.

These kind-hearted gentlemen prepare, serve and, in many cases, deliver a home-cooked meal of turkey, vegetables, dressing, potatoes, gravy, and dinner roll, all topped off by homemade Christmas cake for dessert to more than 200 people every year.

According to Long, that works out to no less than a dozen turkeys plus all of the

fixings that need to be baked to feed the folks of Renfrew.

"Two Knights, Paul and Marcel Ouellet, are in the hall at 5:30 a.m. to prepare the veggies and dressing," he says.

Long has been involved for about 14 years and is one of the many Knights who help organize the people working behind the scenes. He has a roster of about 20 dedicated volunteers who are busy in the kitchen or at the wheel driving to deliver the freshly cooked meals to shut-ins.

"We've got quite a system," he says of the serving line and the procedure for packaging the meals for delivery.

Chauffeurs are available to go out into the community and bring people into the Knights of Columbus Hall on Raglan Street during the dinner time of 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"There's no reason for anyone not to have a Christmas dinner," he adds.

The Knights make a point of taking the dinners directly to Renfrew's service provid-

ers who happen to be on duty on Christmas Day. They ensure lunch-time deliveries are made to local police officers, firefighters, paramedics, Hospice Renfrew and to RVH staff, some patients and their families.

Staff members Stephanie Wright, RPN, and Nancy Dunn, RN, were both on the active care unit over Christmas last year.

Wright reflects that it was very nice they were able to enjoy a great home-cooked turkey dinner from the Knights of Columbus

when they were at the hospital for the holidays. "It meant so much to staff, patients and their families to know that people wanted to share some Christmas spirit with them," adds Dunn.

Many of these professionals are accustomed to taking care of others, so it is incredibly touching that someone is providing a taste of the comforts of home while they are working during the holiday.

"It is an extremely kind gesture that provides food for about 50 people working in

the hospital and our patients' family members who are visiting on Christmas Day," says Christene Ferguson, RVH Vice President of Patient Care Services.

"All of us at RVH want to thank Knights of Columbus for doing this as it truly is in the spirit of Christmas. Every year the staff comment on how wonderful the meal was, but even more importantly how kind it is of the Knights to do this for them on Christmas Day," she adds.



**MJ Lemke (Knights of Columbus member), Brian Long (treasurer) and Don Coyne (member), key organizers behind the 20th annual Community Friendship Dinner. Missing are Paul and Marcel Ouellet.**