

Talk it up Victoria

Renfrew Victoria Hospital | Your Community Healthcare Centre



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Meet the people of RVH

In this issue of Talk It Up Victoria, we've asked a variety of people what they like about living in the Renfrew area and why they've chosen to work at Renfrew Victoria Hospital.

We hope you enjoy meeting them, and reading their stories about what makes our community, and the "RVH family", so special!

Enjoying every single day

As her 25-year career came to an end this summer, Marguerite Lepine found herself making an unconditional statement few people could match.

"I didn't have a day that I didn't enjoy here," she said, sitting at a table in the RVH cafeteria.

"I enjoyed every part of the hospital," she added. "You couldn't ask for a better place to work."

Then with a wink she confessed, "I'd stay for another 25... but I'm getting old."

Marguerite particularly appreciates the hospital's treatment of her when she was sick over the years.

"They were always good to me," she says, noting that the support included modifying her shifts to allow her to rebuild her strength.

Marguerite was 34 when she joined the RVH staff. Her job as a housekeeper was the perfect match for her meticulous nature.

While she enjoyed the detail work involved in keeping a hospital clean, after 10 or 11 years Marguerite was ready for a break from shift work.

"My kids were growing up around me and I wasn't there for them," she says, recalling the many afternoon shifts she worked.

An opening in the cafeteria offered her full-time day shifts.

It too, fitted nicely with Marguerite's background. Her mother had run a bake shop, so she was used to working with food.

Over the years, Marguerite has developed a solid reputation throughout the hospital for her great salads, sandwiches and her personalized service.

"It won't be the same without her," comments Julia Boudreau, vice-president of corporate services. "Marguerite always greeted you with a smile, and she knew what everyone liked and how they liked it."

"I'm a people person," Marguerite responds with her trademark smile.

In recognition of that, many of her retirement plans revolve around others. She plans to continue her role as a "hands-on grandma" to her five grandchildren who live in Renfrew and Kanata. She hopes to get a part-time job in the local retail field. And she'll begin with a well-earned holiday to Vermont with her daughter.

Did she feel any regret or sorrow as her August 31 departure from RVH neared?

"It's time," she said confidently. "I really don't think it's goodbye, it's just another phase of my life."

"We live in a small town," she added. "I'll be seeing everybody."



Marguerite Lepine serves up one of her famous salads.

Dr. Strader likes Renfrew's spirit of cooperation

When he graduated from medical school at McGill University, Dr. Bruce Strader immediately moved to Renfrew to join Dr. Kemp in his newly-established practice.

As a student, he had visited the area several times, staying with the Kemp family at their cottage on Lake Clear in the summer and skiing at Dacre in the winter.

More than 30 years later, the details have changed a bit – Dr. Strader now skis at Calabogie and cottages on Hurds Lake – but the appeal of the area remains as strong as always.

In his youth, Dr. Strader, moved with his family every three years to follow his father's air force career. He happily reports that he's never been tempted to return to that cycle nor to leave Renfrew, even for the bright lights he left behind in Montreal.

"Renfrew's a very central location. It offers everything you could possibly want," he says.

While the Ottawa Valley has been an ideal place to raise a family of seven children, it has also offered Dr. Strader a fulfilling medical career.

He enjoys a mix of private family practice and regular shifts in the RVH emergency department.

"I like the challenge and variety," he explains, adding,



Dr. Bruce Strader

"The pace is sometimes extreme, but that goes with the territory."

"From the very beginning, the medical staff have been very open and collegial," he says, "The professional atmosphere here for thirty years has been positive... never combative, petty or competitive."

Dr. Strader notes that the team spirit extends to the nurses and other hospital staff and is consistently focused on the needs of the patients and their families.

"'How can I help you?' I think is the motto of this place," he comments.

The positive effects of that attitude have really come to the fore as the Renfrew medical community has faced the challenges of fewer doctors, nurses and available hospital beds due to ongoing health care budget restraints.

"The atmosphere here clearly helps," Dr. Strader says. "We're all going in the same direction, and at least 95% of the time I'd say we're happy where we're going."

He credits the hospital leadership for providing the progressive workplace that fuels the overall spirit of cooperation and dedication.

"We've always really had the best of equipment or best of facilities either available or very rapidly coming available," he comments.

"I just see commitment to meet patients' needs and also with training," he notes. "That allows all of us to really focus on the important aspects of our roles."

Finding top-level care in a true community setting

Ramon Molina chuckles when he's asked how he came to live and work in the Ottawa Valley.

"I took a wrong turn in Memphis," he quips.

In fact, the Texas native and his wife chose to settle here, where they would be near her parents and their local cottage.

"It's a beautiful area. I love the nature and the rolling hills," Molina notes.

But his enthusiasm really comes to the fore when he talks about Renfrew Victoria Hospital, where he has worked as an ultrasound technician since last January.

"I love working at this hospital," he states. "It's a community more than anything, and it's just a great experience."

Molina's career has offered him lot of other work sites for comparison. As an agency sonographer, he travelled throughout the United States for about five years, working on contract everywhere from Alaska to New York. His resume includes experience at a number of advanced, large care centres.

"Here, the level of care is just as great," he declares. "The doctors are very knowledgeable."

"Working with Dr. Lyons and Dr. Cunningham (RVH's radiologists), you're always learning," he adds.

He is equally impressed with the investments in technology at RVH, especially the \$1-million digital diagnostic imaging system installed early this year.

Molina's career choice was clear from a very early age.

"I was always playing with a stethoscope," says the son of a registered nurse. "It was something I grew up with."

Now, he's found an ideal place for his own children to grow up. Molina and his

wife, who is a registered nurse and a high school teacher in Barry's Bay, have made their home in Killaloe.

He reports that the most likely place to find him when he's not at work is in their backyard, bouncing on the trampoline with their three children aged 10, eight and seven.



Ramon Molina

Opportunities abound in a smaller team setting

Belinda Holmes has found more professional opportunities in Renfrew than she could have possibly experienced in a larger centre.

Just a little more than a year after completing her Masters in Social Work, she is the program manager and social worker for Renfrew Victoria Hospital's regional assault care program.

Specially-trained professionals in each of the county's five hospitals make up the assault response team, which provides care and counselling for adults or children who have experienced domestic or sexual assault.

Holmes originally applied for a different social work position at RVH. During her interview, she mentioned that she had just completed her Masters thesis on violence against women and child custody issues.

She was asked if she would be interested in co-leading the assault care program.

"I lucked out and I said yes," she reports. "This was exactly what I was looking for."

"It's a little bit of everything," she says of her role at RVH. "That's what's interesting about being in a small community."

Holmes's background has included work at a maximum security male prison, in outreach programs in Ottawa and at the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre.

"I tend to like variety," she says, noting that in a larger centre "you have your slot and that's what you do."

"Here, everybody's happy to have you help out."

While she admits that assault response can make for a demanding career, Holmes says Renfrew's location helps her deal with the stress.

"That's what the drive is for," comments the resident of west-end Ottawa, noting that her commute is no longer than when she worked at The Ottawa Hospital, but she's traded bumper-to-bumper traffic for a more peaceful drive.

Holmes also spends a considerable amount of time visiting the five local hospitals that make up the assault care network. Those drives provide an opportunity to reflect on the needs of the people she serves, and to scout out new opportunities for her favourite ways to unwind.

"I'm either kayaking, hiking or biking," she says of her leisure time, noting that Renfrew County has an ample supply of routes for all three activities.

"It's a great place to be," Holmes concludes.



Belinda Holmes unwinding in her sea kayak.

Coming home to the Valley offers a focus on family

While she felt like she was coming home, Janice Verch-Whittington wasn't quite sure how her life would change when she made the move back to the Ottawa Valley.

She and her husband were both working long hours in the city, and wanted more time to focus on their two young sons.

Verch-Whittington had been a hemodialysis nurse at the Ottawa General Hospital for eight years, so her interest was naturally piqued when she saw an advertisement for the dialysis nurse manager position at RVH.

"We thought this might offer us a better quality of life," she says.

"It seemed like a very supportive and very

progressive workplace," she says of her initial assessment when she came to RVH for her job interview.

"My first impressions of the hospital and the organization have been reinforced every day," she adds.

For Verch-Whittington, the nurse manager role in a small facility offers the perfect opportunity to advance her knowledge and skills.

"I've always liked the teaching and the leadership role," she says, adding, "You learn every day in nephrology."

And her leisure time is dedicated primarily to family pursuits, including regular camping trips at Golden Lake this summer which have been extremely popular with the two boys, who are now eight and three.

"I almost feel like we've found a little secret," she concludes. "I can see us staying for a long time."



Janice Verch-Whittington

Finding the caring side of technology

Tom Morgenstern joined the information technology team at RVH last November because he wanted to increase his skills and knowledge in computer networking.

Less than a year later, he's discovered the job has much more to offer.

"It's really gratifying to see the technology change or improve patient care," he says. "It's nice to feel like you're not just producing widgets. It's nice to feel like you're maybe making a difference in somebody's life."

Morgenstern came to the job from the retail computer sector. He was attracted by the hospital's investment in a \$1-million PACS digital diagnostic imaging system, which he was hired to administer.

"That's what drew me here, was the opportunity to work with this very new and cutting-edge technology," he says.

He quickly found himself equally inspired by the hospital staff.

"I've been very impressed with the calibre of the people here," he says, describing his co-workers as "highly-trained, sensible and personable".

"It's quite a team," he says. "I've had to ask a lot of questions, and everybody's been extremely helpful."

"I'm learning more about the medical side of things every day," he reports.

And he has no doubt that those opportunities for growth will continue.

"There are many exciting things coming up that will be great to be involved in," Morgenstern says, listing as examples the refinement and expansion of the PACS implementation, the emergence of nation-wide electronic patient records, and increasing remote access to health information.

Having grown up in Petawawa, Morgenstern lives in Pembroke but notes that he has worked in Renfrew for the past five years and seems to be drawn by the open and friendly people in the area.

"For me apparently, all roads lead to Renfrew," he says, adding that his time on the road is one of the pleasures of life in the Ottawa Valley. "The drive to Renfrew is tailor-made for a motorcycle commute," he happily reports.



Tom Morgenstern gives the area a thumbs-up.

RVH pharmacist enjoys the variety of professional challenges

Paul Buchner was never destined to settle in a large, urban centre.

Instead, he looks back on his university days in Toronto as his chance to experience life in the city, and to appreciate his Ottawa Valley roots.

Having spent five of his seven years since graduation as the hospital pharmacist at RVH, he can now confidently say that he's found where he belongs.

"I've never looked back," he says, noting that he loves the variety and fast pace of providing medication for a hospital population that includes oncology and dialysis patients.

"You have to be a resource for these extremely



Paul Buchner with his dog, Dude.

varied and specialized fields," he says. "It's challenging. It gives me a chance to use everything I've learned, plus I've had to learn more."

Buchner has tapped into a variety of resources to support him in his role. He subscribes to a drug information service, he participates in educational activities as a member of the Ontario College of Pharmacists, and he works closely with the pharmacists at the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre as well as the physicians who serve RVH.

To complement his hospital experience, Buchner works one Saturday each month at Conway's Pharmacy in Eganville. His time there keeps him up-to-date on developments in over-the-counter products, and also keeps him abreast of the latest developments in third-party drug payments.

Job opportunities currently abound for pharmacists, and Buchner admits that he has been offered other positions.

"It's flattering," he says, "but I've always chose to stay here."

"I really enjoy my co-workers here, and the physicians are amazing," he concludes.

Besides, the Ottawa Valley has fulfilled his main priorities in life.

"It was always my dream to own a house in the country, a pick-up truck and a hound dog," he says with a grin. "Now all I need is the right girl to complete the picture."

Talk it up Victoria - the Renfrew Victoria Hospital newsletter

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CARING *for* TOMORROW

News from the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation

If you would like to learn more about the various ways you can contribute to Renfrew Victoria Hospital, please contact us:

Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation, 499 Raglan Street North,

Renfrew, Ontario K7V 1P6

Phone: (613) 432-4851, ext. 263



Kent Tubman – A foundation profile

As the chair of the Renfrew Victoria Hospital Board of Directors, Kent Tubman serves as an ex officio member of the hospital foundation board.

He finds it an inspiring and energizing part of his role.

“Every time I have an interaction with the foundation, I’m astounded by the level of support this community offers its hospital,” he says.

“As a volunteer, it’s very easy to be involved with something that’s so successful,” he adds.

Tubman could be accused of understating his involvement. Serving on the two hospital boards involves countless hours of meetings and homework.

He juggles the volunteer commitment with a very active business he operates with his wife, Marg. Together, they’ve built Tubman Marketing and SmilingHost.com, offering a full-service professional package of internet design, marketing and hosting.

Their clients are based from Ottawa to Toronto and beyond, and the business has grown steadily since it was launched by the Tubmans in 1998.

Their business commitments are matched by an active family life centred around their three children. The family is especially involved in the local figure skating and soccer scenes.

“We have lots on the go,” admits Tubman.

So why add a demanding volunteer commitment to an already full agenda?

“We gain so much from this community by living here and working here. We want to give back,” Tubman explains.

He adds that the hospital is an essential service for the community, and one their family has relied upon.

“It’s an organization that is near and dear to our hearts,” he notes.

“For me, it’s definitely a win-win,” Tubman quickly adds, highlighting the business skills and people skills he’s observed by being so closely involved with such a large organization.

“I’m learning every time I go,” he says. “I would encourage others to get involved and take those opportunities – to give back as well as learn.”



Providing a solid foundation for health care in Renfrew

The Renfrew Victoria Hospital Foundation is dedicated to raising funds for RVH.

Guided by a volunteer board of directors, the foundation coordinates a number of fund-raising activities in the area and serves as the first contact point for anyone wishing to make a contribution or host an event to benefit the hospital.

The purpose of the foundation is to:

- raise funds for RVH,
- guarantee that funds raised are used for capital equipment purchases and construction or renovations,
- ensure that funds donated to the foundation are not used for operating purposes, and
- protect donated funds to ensure that they stay within our community.

The people of this area have been most generous with their time, talents and donations throughout the years. They have taken the opportunity to contribute to RVH through a variety of avenues including one-time contributions, fund-raising events, pledges to hospital campaigns, planned giving and more.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can support our community hospital, please contact the RVH Foundation office at 432-4851, extension 263.

Broadway: Beyond the Curtain

Renfrew audiences came out in record number for this production by Really Cool Initiatives. Proceeds from the show will be donated to the Renfrew Victoria Hospital oncology department – yet another example of the amazing support RVH receives from our community.

To all those who shared their talent on the stage, and all those who worked so hard behind the scenes, we offer our sincere appreciation.



Norm and Kathy Dagg devote countless hours and endless energy to the Broadway-based productions they create. Once again, in their third successful show, they've brought together a tremendous ensemble to create a magical theatrical experience.

Their Really Cool Initiatives creative team builds a homegrown show from the ground up, beginning with an original script to tie all of the numbers together. Peg Laverty's wardrobes, the sets, lighting and sound all add a professional touch that complements the performers' amazing abilities.

Broadway: Beyond the Curtain truly was the hottest show in town, and the coolest show in town!