



## NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### NHH honours its many dedicated volunteers with annual *National Volunteer Week* celebration

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, April 19, 2018**—National Volunteer Week is being recognized across Canada this week and yesterday (April 18<sup>th</sup>) volunteers from the hospital came together in the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) Education Centre for an annual celebration of volunteers and volunteering.

From fund-raising to governance, way-finding to quality improvement, spiritual care to a heart-warming hello, more than 600 volunteers play an essential part in the daily operation of NHH.

Recognizing the past year's achievements of all its volunteer groups, NHH opened the celebration with a tribute to the outstanding \$2.6 million in community donations raised through the work of NHH Foundation volunteers in the past year—an achievement that surpassed the Foundation's annual target for the year of \$2.28 million. Hospital beds, trauma stretchers and vital signs monitors are just a few of the pieces of much-needed equipment the hospital was able to purchase this year as a result. Under the guidance of **Executive Director Rhonda Cunningham**, **Foundation Board Chair Tyler Hathway** and team, the volunteers continue to answer the 'ask' placed upon them in creative new ways and the community is all the better for this.

Likewise, the volunteers of the NHH Auxiliary, led by **President Pat Page-Hoisak**, were recognized: "dedicated individuals of all ages who work alongside hospital staff every day supporting the work of virtually every department."

Highlighted was the recent expansion of the Auxiliary's service to establish a new team dedicated to the orientation of incoming patients to the hospital's busy Medical/Surgical (2B) unit. Also recognized was the Auxiliary's steadfast commitment to many long-standing activities, including their Inquiry Desk service, operation of the hospital's on-site retail operation—The Little Treasure Shop—and, under the leadership of volunteer **Lorrie Phipps**, management of Petticoat Lane, the thrift shop on Munroe Street in Cobourg.

Combined, the NHH Auxiliary—through its retail operations and other fund-raising efforts—raised \$200,000 for the hospital's high priority equipment needs in the past year alone.

Another very dedicated group was recognized at the celebration: NHH's volunteer Board of Directors.

The Board, and its community committee volunteers, are called upon to dedicate hundreds of hours of service to the governance of the organization each year, monitoring strategic priorities, quality and fiscal health. Gratitude was expressed to attendees **Elizabeth Selby**, NHH Board Chair, Vice Chair **Pam Went** (who also leads the Board's Governance Committee) and community committee member **Barry Gutteridge** to pass along to their fellow Board members.

Many other generous individuals support NHH beyond the larger groups of the Foundation, Auxiliary and Board volunteers and all were recognized at yesterday's event, including student volunteers, volunteers with NHH's growing network of spiritual care volunteers (represented by **Janice Buck** and **Dr. Ewen Butler**), and dedicated volunteers with the local St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog program who visit NHH daily with their pets.

Now in its second year, NHH's Patient and Family Advisory Council was also represented and recognized. These volunteer advisors are bringing the patient and caregiver voice to quality improvement and decision making across the hospital, with seats at program-based Quality and Practice Committees, special project tables as well as the full Council table. **Mary McLeod**, **Barry Vail** and **Irene Kavanagh**, who work with medicine, surgical services and emergency rooms respectively, represented PFAC at yesterday's celebration.

The keynote address, entitled "Honouring Your Giving Self," was delivered by **Maryanne Brown**.

An advanced practice nurse with 35 years' experience in gerontology, Brown has a Masters of Science from the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto and a research focus on interventions for people with dementia. She has presented at numerous provincial, national and international conferences and was introduced to NHH eight years ago as a geriatric specialist.

For the past 20 years, Brown has also operated an active practice in the healing arts—specifically, energy and energy psychotherapy. It was in this capacity that she spoke to the NHH volunteers, bringing the message that "volunteers cannot give fully to others unless they also take care of themselves."

Beginning with an explanation of chakras and meridians—energy systems in the body more associated with eastern traditions than the western science she was trained in as a nurse—Brown spoke to the holistic concept of wellness she has come to appreciate that is mindful to the needs of the body, mind and spirit.

Connections with others are so important, Brown explained. Every experience we have is stored. "Stories—our life experiences, as well as the experiences and stories shared with us from others—get stored in our chakras, in our body and brain, and contribute to our personal energy system."

We connect to one another through that energy system, Brown explained, and "our ability to give back, to be compassionate to others, is inseparably linked to our own wellness." When we are not fully well, she added, or when we hear or bear witness to experiences that are difficult, compassion is more difficult to share.

"Compassionate people often feel sensitive, drained, overwhelmed," said Brown, "and that's all normal for compassionate people, doing what we care about."

What is most important, she stressed, is to take care of ourselves, too. "Honour your giving selves by caring for your whole self... mind, body and soul," said Brown. Different actions are meaningful for different people. Maybe taking a walk makes one feel better, or getting out into nature. "Whatever they may be, pay attention to the things that soothe you, fill you up, and take the time to do them, for yourself, so you can continue to give back."

Happy Volunteer Week to all our volunteers. NHH would not be the hospital it is today without the support you provide. Thank you for all you do!

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**About Northumberland Hills Hospital** – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute

services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit [www.nhh.ca](http://www.nhh.ca) or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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