



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

inspiring strength, dignity and compassion

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Generous high school students donate time, talent to NHH surgical patients, expanding project initiated by Auxiliary volunteer

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Tuesday, July 22, 2008 – A volunteer with the Northumberland Hills Hospital since 1996, Dorothy Lowe enjoys donating her time to a worthwhile cause. Invited last year to take on a project sewing pillows for NHH patients undergoing breast surgery, she seized the task with characteristic enthusiasm. That enthusiasm was contagious and, this spring, NHH again witnessed first-hand just how the kindness and care of one can inspire others with great results.

The pillows Dorothy Lowe sews for NHH are small, cotton pillows, stitched with care, decorated and filled with sachets of lavender grown in her own garden. Distributed by the patient care staff members who meet with breast surgery patients prior to their operations, the pillows are intended to be tucked under a patient's arm following breast surgery to relieve pain and pressure. While the pillow may seem small (it's slightly smaller than an 8.5 X11 sheet of paper), to those who receive one from the hospital at their pre-operation appointment, the significance can be great.

As Patti McCarthy, an RPN in the Pre-Operative Clinic with NHH's Ambulatory Care unit explains, many patients who receive the pillows remark on the comfort they bring, both physical and emotional. "Breast surgery often carries with it some strong emotions. These pillows are one more example of the personal touch we try to bring to patient care here at NHH. Thanks to our volunteers and, now, students in the community, we're able to offer our breast surgery patients that little something extra, and it seems to make a real difference."

From Dorothy Lowe's perspective, the opportunity to help has inspired her. "I like doing this, and I feel it's a good cause. My mother had both breasts removed, so there's a personal connection too."

As is often the case with a successful project, however, demand quickly exceeded supply. A contact was struck between the NHH Auxiliary and St. Mary's Secondary School in Cobourg and what was at first a one-woman project, soon became a community volunteering project for St. Mary's students ranging from grade 9 through to grade 12.

While the students involved shared attendance in a St. Mary's fashion course taught by Mrs. Jane Ludolph, Mrs. Ludolph points out that many completed the work during after-school hours.

In total, close to 100 pillows have been donated to the hospital to date, including those sewn by Dorothy Lowe and the St. Mary's students. In the spring of this year, some of those students met with Dorothy Lowe, their teacher Mrs. Ludolph and hospital staff to present their latest handiwork. Students Maria Domingo, Ainsley McNaught, Lauren Reid and Brittany Garner were humble about their contribution, and pleased that their volunteer hours were making a difference.

"We continue to hand out these pillows every week," confirmed NHH RPN Michelle Smith. "We hope that Dorothy Lowe and St. Mary's will continue this project next year."

For more information, please contact Jennifer Gillard at 905-377-7757 or jgillard@nhh.ca

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – The Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto. The 137-bed acute care hospital delivers a broad range of services, including emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, complex/long-term care, rehabilitation, palliative care and obstetrical care. A variety of ambulatory care clinics are also offered at NHH. In addition to these, NHH also sponsors a Community Mental Health Centre and an Assertive Community Treatment Team. 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 close to 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East LHIN. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca.