



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Congratulations Monica Closs and Melanie Toope! Exceptional local nursing and occupational therapy students recognized with scholarships from NHH

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, May 4th, 2017—Nursing student **Monica Closs** and occupational therapy student **Melanie Toope** are the recipients of Northumberland Hills Hospital's 2017 Health Professions Scholarships.

Presented this year by NHH Board Chair Jack Russell at the opening of the Board of Director's May 4th meeting, the scholarships were first introduced in 2003 to assist students from west Northumberland who have chosen to pursue a career in the health-care sector.

"By helping our local students achieve their academic goals, we hope to encourage them to consider opportunities at NHH when the time comes to select an employer," said Russell.

In addition to being enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a full-time study program, applicants are evaluated on a combination of criteria, including:

- academic achievements;
- extra-curricular activities;
- a letter explaining their career goals; and
- written references.

"We have a high degree of interest in this scholarship, not just in the days leading up to the winter deadline for applications, but really throughout the year. All of our 2017 winners demonstrated an impressive combination of academic skill and commitment to their community," said Russell.

Details of the 2017 scholarship winners' achievements were shared at the evening presentation. They are summarized below as follows.

Monica Closs has just completed her third year of university studies. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Trent University, in Peterborough.

A graduate of St. Mary Catholic Secondary School in Cobourg, Monica finished her high school studies with high honours. Though she has not formally started her career in nursing, she has had significant exposure to the hospital in both a volunteer and student capacity.

In high school Monica was a member of the NHH Foundation Youth Cares Committee, where she supported the fund-raising work of that team. As well, in the course of her clinical rotations through Trent, she has had an opportunity to be mentored by Sarah Gibbens, NHH's Geriatric Emergency Management Nurse.

Under Sarah's guidance, Monica gained skills in elder care by assisting in the development of a toolkit to prevent delirium and functional decline in older patients seen in the NHH Emergency Department.

Monica's current clinical rotation is also at NHH, on the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit, where she is continuing to gain insight into the needs of residents here in Northumberland County.

From Grafton, **Melanie Toope** has just completed the first year of her graduate studies in Occupational Therapy at Queen's University in Kingston. She holds an undergraduate degree in Kinesiology (Bachelor of Arts) with a major in Rehabilitation from Western University, where she was on the Dean's List.

An Ontario Scholar through high school at CDCI West, Melanie received an entrance scholarship to Western for her greater than 92 per cent high school average.

Her strong work ethic, high grades and volunteerism were recognized locally with numerous awards through high school, including the Town of Cobourg Civic Award, the Grade 12 Leadership and Recreation Award, the CDCI West Tenacity Award and the Lou Rinaldi Citizenship Award.

Like Monica, Melanie also supported NHH in high school as a member of the NHH Foundation's Youth Cares Committee. She credits her involvement with Youth Cares for sparking the beginning of her interest in pursuing a career in rehabilitation.

Most recently Melanie has brought her growing knowledge and interest for occupational therapy back to Northumberland in another context – through a clinical placement with Kawartha Therapy Services where she is applying her recent research experience into the environmental barriers faced by clients in their homes and in the community, particularly as they age.

"Occupational therapists both in hospital and in the community have a very important role to play in facilitating [older adults] desire to age in place," she noted in her application. "It would be rewarding to be able to give back to community members wishing to remain independent in a town that has afforded me so many opportunities through my life."

Melanie's references, including Dr. Carri Hand, Assistant Professor in the School of Occupational Therapy at Western University, highly endorsed her suitability for her chosen field and the NHH scholarship.

"The values and commitment to excellence that these students share are a tribute to the support they've received from their families, teachers and mentors," said Jack Russell. "Congratulations and best wishes to you both as you work toward their goals."

Applications for consideration for the 2018 Health Professions Scholarship may be submitted at any time before the deadline of February 15, 2018. For further information see the Careers tab of the NHH website, nhh.ca, or contact Jennifer Gillard at jgillard@nhh.ca or 905-377-7757.

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 or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).