



# NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

## NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Annual National Volunteer Week event honours the exceptional “*volun-caring*” delivered by NHH’s volunteers

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014** – Northumberland Hills Hospital’s annual Volunteer Appreciation event was held April 9<sup>th</sup> in the hospital Education Centre.

An opportunity to thank the kind people who donate their time, talents and energy throughout the hospital, the event is one of many held across the country during National Volunteer Week.

“Hundreds of people choose to volunteer at or for NHH each and every year, and we simply couldn’t do all we do without this support,” said NHH President and CEO Linda Davis.

“To all our volunteers, on behalf of everyone here at NHH, thank you for your dedication to this hospital... for your grace and humour... and the support you provide to help us do our job.”

Volunteers support patients and staff at NHH through a wide range of affiliations, including:

- the NHH Foundation;
- the NHH Auxiliary;
- the NHH Board of Directors (either as full Board members or community volunteers on one of the Board’s various committees);
- PATH (Partners Advancing Transitions of Care), an exciting local collaboration with seniors, caregivers, community partners and The Change Foundation to co-design improved transitions of care for seniors with chronic conditions; and
- many other community-based organizations, including NHH’s spiritual care network, volunteer drivers and the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog program.

Guest speaker [Dr. Michelle Nelson](#) shared highlights of her research into the specific ways volunteerism supports today’s hospitals. A Research Scientist at [Bridgepoint Active Healthcare](#) in Toronto, Dr. Nelson had a strong message for the volunteers: “You are an inspiration! Your day-to-day commitment greatly improves the quality of care delivered in hospitals.”

Few in the country can make this statement with as much authority. Dr. Nelson is the lead researcher for a research program looking at the power of hospital volunteerism in addressing the challenges of complex chronic disease.

Through the project, funded by Manulife, Dr. Nelson—together with researchers, volunteer service managers, and clinical leaders—will develop a best practice volunteer program, a new framework for hospital volunteer programs and study the effect of volunteerism on patient experience/outcomes.

“There is a lot of literature supporting the work of volunteers in hospitals,” she said, “I like to think of what you do as *volun-caring*.”

Many examples were given by Nelson to demonstrate how “volun-caring” directly affects quality and patient satisfaction in hospitals.

- 1) Volunteers offer a strong link to the community (“hospitals are a spot in the community, not a destination in and of themselves”).
- 2) Volunteers can provide skills and talents that aren’t on the paid staff roster (“complementary, life-enhancing skills, come from volunteers, like music appreciation or an art experience class, which can remind patients that there is life beyond their illness.”)
- 3) Volunteers bring a sense of normalcy to a hospital stay (“by offering a conversation that is not about being sick, a glimpse back at life beyond the illness.”)

“This is about doing exponentially more with the same amount of staff, to a higher quality,” she said. “Volunteers are an essential program.”

The memory of one particular volunteer, Reta Bevan, was honoured earlier the same day at the Auxiliary’s dedication of a new flower cooler donated by Reta’s family and members of the Orange Crystal Circle to recognize her support for the NHH Auxiliary and NHH. The cooler now stands outside the shop where Reta volunteered, with a plaque in her honour.

Reta was active in the Little Treasure Shop, Petticoat Lane, Chemotherapy and second floor medical units. In a [related news release about the cooler gift](#), the NHH Auxiliary wrote: “When illness struck, Reta did not give up easily. Long after most of us would have yielded to such an illness, Reta got up every morning, put on her makeup and her jewellery and her positive attitude and came to NHH to fulfill her various commitments. Her family has lost a staunch ally and loving supporter. We thank them for including NHH in their commemoration of a valiant life.”

For more information, please contact Jennifer Gillard, 905-377-7757 or [jgillard@nhh.ca](mailto:jgillard@nhh.ca).

**About NHH** – 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, and obstetrical care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care, rehabilitation and palliative care. 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 Alwick/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).