



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Congratulations Meyada Widaatalla and Kate Giroux! Exceptional local pharmacy and nursing students recognized with scholarships from NHH

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, June 8th, 2016—Pharmacy student **Meyada Widaatalla** and nursing student **Kate Giroux** are the recipients of Northumberland Hills Hospitals 2016 Health Professions Scholarships.

Presented by NHH Board Chair Jack Russell at the opening of the Board of Director's June 2nd 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.

"This year's recipients demonstrated an impressive combination of academic skill and commitment to their community," said Russell, who shared details of their achievements as follows.

Kate Giroux, who recently completed her first year of university, is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT), in Oshawa. A graduate of Cobourg's St. Mary Catholic Secondary School, Kate finished her high school studies with a final average of 88 per cent.

One of her former science teachers, Drew Quemby, described Giroux in his reference as "*an outstanding student who loves to obtain knowledge and to share what she has learned with others.*" Quemby went on to say that Giroux's goal to become a nurse is "*inevitable due to her natural ability to want to help others*"—a sentiment that was echoed by Dr. Michael Barrie, a GP Anesthetist at NHH, who endorsed her application as well.

"I see in [Kate Giroux] self-confidence and calm," said Dr. Barrie, "most certainly empathy, and above all, a true, kind heart. She is an excellent communicator and impresses me with maturity and wisdom beyond her years."

In addition to her attention to her studies, Giroux showed great commitment to her community, including hours dedicated to NHH as a volunteer receptionist in the Women's Health Centre. A volunteer dance teacher, student council president and a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity are other examples of Giroux's active community involvement—efforts that, with her academic performance, earned her one of UOIT's highest honours in 2014/15, the President's Scholarship.

Farther along in her studies, **Meyada Widaatalla** recently completed her third year in the Doctor of Pharmacy program at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Toronto. From Cobourg, Widaatalla also spent time as a volunteer with Northumberland Hills Hospital, in 2011.

"I have always enjoyed living and attending school in this town," she noted in her application, "and I would like to return to Cobourg when I graduate, to find employment as a full-time pharmacist."

If the opportunity were to present itself, she would be happy to consider working at NHH, in part because of the positive experience she said she had at NHH while completing her Pharmacy Student Placement in May 2014.

"Although I had previously volunteered at NHH during my undergraduate studies, it was through my student placement that I had the chance to interact closely with other health-care providers, NHH staff and patients," she wrote. "I enjoyed working with friendly and approachable staff not just on the pharmacy team, but also everywhere throughout the hospital. The environment was warm and welcoming, and very conducive to learning.... This is the kind of environment I would like to work in as a pharmacist."

Widaatalla's experience in the health-care field has already been extensive, in large part due to her volunteer pursuits. President of the Global Medicine Initiative in her faculty of pharmacy, she served as an intern with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland last summer and, prior to that, as a drug information volunteer at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. A grant recipient, Widaatalla worked as a Canada Student Researcher with the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. Before all of these experiences, she volunteered her time as a high school student with YMCA Northumberland.

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

Applications for consideration for the 2017 Health Professions Scholarship are due by February 15, 2017. For further information please 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).