



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Paddling Program Through Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health Services Supported by Community Partners

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY – Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health Services' (NHHCMHS) Peer Program was able to introduce a new paddling group this summer with support from Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club, and thanks to a generous donation from Cameco Corporation. This paddling opportunity was provided to local adults as part of the Peer Program's Teaching and Education Learned through Living (TELL) Talks series and was one of the most popular groups of this series so far, with attendees sharing feedback on this program positively impacting their mental health.

"I am most grateful for the opportunity to try Paddleboards," shared one participant. "This activity came at the perfect time for me to try something new. The experience has brought some much-needed peace, joy and a sense of accomplishment. Thank you to the people that were open to allowing this to happen. The magnitude of this gift will certainly help on my journey forward."

"TELL Talks are open to any adults willing to identify they have a mental health concern and that they want to improve their mental wellness," says Alexandra McPhee, a Peer Support Specialist with NHHCMHS. "We had 21 attendees join us consistently throughout the summer."

McPhee, a paddleboarder herself, came up with the idea for this group after seeing youth paddling programs taking place in the Cobourg Marina. She reached out to Jeremy Fowlie of the Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club to inquire about adult programs and the potential to partner and Jeremy and the Club were quick to support the idea, offering a deeply discounted rate for participants to try paddling canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards once a week for six weeks with Club staff teaching and supporting attendees of all skill levels.

In late 2020, NHHCMHS received a grant through The Cameco Fund for Mental Health, which supports mental health projects that benefit Northumberland County. This grant was specifically earmarked for the TELL Talk program and a portion of these donated funds was used to cover the paddling program's discounted registration costs for all participants, removing any financial barriers for adults interested in joining.

"I think the success of this particular group and the testimonials we've heard from participants really shows how important these activities are for adults we serve," says McPhee. "Many people don't have the resources or access to activities like this, and we are so grateful we were able to provide this experience thanks to generous community partners."

"The Cameco Fund for Mental Health has supported a wide variety of projects and programs throughout Northumberland County over the past two years," said Dale Clark, vice-president of Cameco's Fuel Services Division. "I'm happy to see that the fund has helped the TELL Talk

program to offer unique experiences to provide growth and learning opportunities for participants.”

The paddling group has now ended for the season, but those looking for more information on upcoming TELL Talks can contact TELLTalks@nhh.ca.

“I would like to thank the Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club, Cameco, and my peer support worker, Alex McPhee, for having the NHH group attend on Thursday nights,” shares another participant. “It has been amazing during such a difficult year to be able to meet my supports outdoors while getting physical activity. I believe a large part of my healing comes from discovering hobbies and the Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club helped me discover my love for paddleboarding. I also appreciate how the staff, instructors/lifeguards are so kind, polite and nonjudgmental. If every agency could operate like the Cobourg Dragon Boat and Canoe Club and support local mental health groups, I know the world would be a better place.”

For more information on NHHCMHS, visit www.nhh.ca or for ways you can support NHH, including NHHCMHS, visit www.nhhfoundation.ca.

Additional participant testimonials:

- “I really enjoyed my time kayaking. Once I got the hang of it I did pretty well. It was very calming and peaceful paddling on the water. It felt like I was in another world where nothing mattered. It was very relaxing. Thank you for the opportunity.”
- “I didn’t think I would be able to do this. When I realized I could, I loved it. I even bought my own Kayak.”

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For more information, please contact:

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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 more than 700 full- and part-time staff 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).

About the Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation – The mission of the Northumberland Hills Hospital Foundation is to inspire generous giving to enable exceptional patient care at Northumberland Hills Hospital. With a dedicated team of enthusiastic volunteers and staff, the NHH Foundation is passionately committed to improving health care and the quality of life for people living in west Northumberland. Since 2002, the NHH Foundation has raised over \$64 million to build and equip Northumberland Hills Hospital. This support comes from generous community support through a variety of programs including major gifts, planned giving, signature and third party events, direct mail and commemorative giving. For more information, visit: www.nhhfoundation.ca or [like us on Facebook](#).