



## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **NHH honours its volunteers with annual National Volunteer Week event**

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, April 23, 2026**—In celebration of National Volunteer Week—held annually during the last week of April—Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) recently hosted an appreciation event for hospital volunteers.

Held at the Best Western in Cobourg on April 22, the luncheon event was the largest to date, attended by more than 185 individuals representing close to 400 volunteers who support the hospital in a variety of roles.

NHH is the recipient of over **40,000 hours of volunteer support** given generously in the past year from eight distinct groups, namely:

- the NHH Auxiliary Board and volunteers;
- the NHH Board and Community Committee members;
- the NHH Foundation, comprised of Board, committee volunteers, event cabinets and others;
- Patient and Family Advisory Council partners;
- Spiritual Care volunteers;
- St. John Therapy Dog volunteers;
- Transplant Ambassadors; and
- Integrated Stroke Peer Support Visitors.

While each is unique in their respective roles, the different volunteer teams share a common commitment to support local hospital services and care.

Reflecting on her own first positive impression of NHH, which began when she was greeted by two NHH Auxiliary volunteers, NHH's President and CEO Susan Walsh said: "That first impression set a tone—a feeling, a warmth—that has stayed with me. In fact, it has only grown stronger. I sincerely hope all NHH volunteers understand how widely this appreciation is shared."

"At NHH, we come together around a shared purpose: *People First*," explained Walsh. "It's about more than delivering exceptional clinical care; it's creating an

environment where every interaction helps to foster a positive relationship with patients, families, staff, providers and partners. NHH wouldn't be NHH without volunteers and the support, creativity, compassion and energy that you bring to our hospital.

"Today's celebration is about appreciation and connection. It's our hope that the experience of volunteering enriches your lives as much as it enriches the experience of care at NHH," added Jennifer Gillard, Vice President of Patient Experience, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, who shared results of the hospital's second annual Volunteer Experience Survey.

"Our latest volunteer experience survey showed that 96 per cent of NHH volunteers 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they feel valued for their contributions at NHH. Additionally, 99 per cent 'agreed or strongly agreed' that they would recommend NHH as a place to volunteer, an increase from last year's survey results and a sentiment reflected in many volunteer teams' positive recruitment efforts over the past year," explained Gillard.

Speaking to the exceptional support NHH receives from local volunteers, Gillard said: "This support has always been strong, but it has grown over time. It is something precious we all have a part in preserving. It's our hope that, by gathering information on your experience as volunteers, tracking it over time, and developing actions to address opportunities, we will continue to foster an environment where all volunteers feel welcome, empowered and appreciated."

Keynote speaker Amy Coupal, CEO of the Ontario Caregiver Organization, drew on this year's National Volunteer Week theme, *Igniting Volunteerism*, with an inspiring address highlighting the importance of encouraging volunteerism to support social interactions and to strengthen community bonds. Coupal, whose organization exists to support Ontario's caregivers, celebrated programs like the Essential Care Partner program that is being piloted at NHH with the support of the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland, and the Ontario Caregiver Organization's Support Hub.

"Three out of four of Ontario's 4.2 million caregivers say they are so burnt out they don't know if they can keep going. Volunteers are so deeply important to the giving and receiving of care, especially in the hospital setting. I congratulate NHH on their Essential Care Partner program that recognizes the importance of including caregivers as part of caregiving team and the importance of providing support. ...Volunteers are so deeply important to giving and receiving care. At NHH your volunteer community has been 'ignited.' Now the goal is to maintain that fire burning to ensure we have a pipeline of volunteers to sustain and meet the needs of our communities," said Coupal.

Gillard concluded the event by thanking the 2026 event's organizing committee led by Rachael Milne, Interim Volunteer Lead, with support from Courtney Shields, Director, Health Information, Patient Experience and Privacy, and Micol Marotti, Communications Officer. Community supporters for the 2026 event were also recognized, including the VOS Theatre in Cobourg and the Capital Theatre in Port Hope, for contributing door prizes, as well as Jeff Gibbons, of Gibbons Wealth Management and RBC Securities who supported the floral gifts.

"To all NHH volunteers, your community is grateful for you. NHH is grateful for you. On behalf of every member of our team, thank you for all you do," said Gillard.

Find photos from the event on NHH's social media feeds and website, [nhh.ca](http://nhh.ca).

For information on volunteer opportunities at NHH, please see the hospital website or reach out care of [info@nhh.ca](mailto:info@nhh.ca).

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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, cancer and supportive care, dialysis and 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 67,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope, Alderville First Nation and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs more than 850 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East)—formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network—and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. For more information, please visit [nhh.ca](http://nhh.ca) or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp) and LinkedIn [Northumberland Hills Hospital](https://www.linkedin.com/company/northumberland-hills-hospital).