

London branch:

Impressive growth from humble beginnings



Bayshore Home Health's London, Ont. branch has unusual origins – it started out in a house in the country.

In 2003, Bayshore decided to have a greater presence in the London area, due to the growing clientele in the community being served by the Windsor branch. The company asked Mary Carter, who was working in the information technology department at Bayshore's main office and who is now Area Director of the London branch, to build up the business in the area. For the first year, Carter ran the branch out of her house, 70 kilometres outside of the city. She drove back and forth, making contacts in London and managing the business at home.

After a year, Carter moved the branch into a one-room office in London. She eventually hired a full-time co-ordinator and, as she puts it, "The rest is history." The branch now serves the city and all of Middlesex County. It also has clients in Ingersoll, Woodstock and as far away as Hanover. Now located in the Bradley Medical Centre in south London, it has five office staff and about 100 field staff providing nursing, personal support and home care services. It has several clients at any given time.

The branch has grown at a phenomenal rate – more than 20 per cent growth annually for four consecutive years – and has quickly become a vital part of the community. For example, the branch's on-site community care clinic, which has been open for two years, is usually humming with activity. "We try to make anyone who comes in feel like welcome and comfortable," says Carter. "It's a more relaxing experience than going to a hospital clinic to have an infusion."

About a year ago, the branch acquired an overflow contract with the South West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC). "We knew there was a need. Community nursing was short here in the London area, so we approached them and said we have a clinic up and running for infusions and wound care," says Carter. The CCAC began sending clients and within six months it was also using Bayshore's nursing and pediatric care.

"I attribute our success to the great team here in London.

They do their best to make sure that we service all of the referrals from CCAC and any other requests that come in," says Carter. "We are known as the 'go-to' agency for any shifts that cannot be filled by other agencies."

She adds that the branch has an excellent working relationship with pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies. "They know that if they get a challenging case, we'll go above and beyond to try and meet the need, so their attitude is 'We can always call Bayshore,'" says Carter. "They know we'll do what we can to fill it."

The branch prides itself on its relationships with the people it serves. "We don't have a lot of big, service contracts, so everything we do needs to have a personal touch," Carter explains. "Clients have a choice of going to seven or eight different home care agencies here in London, but they often choose us because they feel that we give a little more personal attention."

The branch's staff are very involved in the London community. They attend health trade shows and CCAC meetings, and seek out partnerships with the health care and legal communities. To support Hospice of London, they participate in "dress-down Fridays" and the annual Hike for Hospice Palliative Care.

Carter herself contributes to several organizations: She is president of the Brain Injury Association of London and Region, and also sits on the boards of Hospice of London and Camp Dawn, a recreational camp for people who have sustained a brain injury. She also serves on a committee for Childreach, a unique service providing play based learning programs for young children and their families in the London area.

Carter is anticipating further growth for the branch in 2009, with the support of the staff at Bayshore's national office. "Bayshore has a real 'can-do' and positive approach," she says. "It's exciting and rewarding to be part of such a company."

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Left to right are:
Mary Carter, Karen Hardy
and Diana VandeGoor.



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