

## Mississauga branch:

# Mississauga branch takes caring into the community



**Bayshore Home Health's Mississauga – Private Services branch** may be one of the company's newest offices, but it has already established itself as a valuable partner in the well-being of its community.

The branch, which opened in the summer of 2008, serves Ontario's Peel Region, which includes Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. It has five administrative staff and about 100 field staff, and it provides care to private clients and those referred through insurance companies, workers' compensation boards and Veteran Affairs Canada.

Julie Curitti, Area Director, credits her staff members' enthusiasm and commitment for how quickly the branch has forged connections with the community. "We're not the biggest branch, and we're just starting to roll out programs as we need them, but we've got tremendous team spirit and culture going on," she says. "Not only that, but we've been heavily engaged in a number of things in the community. We contribute a lot of volunteer time outside of workday hours."

The branch has participated in numerous fundraisers to support its non-profit partners, such as Alzheimer Society Peel, Hospice of Peel, Square One Older Adult Centre, and The Mississauga Food Bank. Staff collected more than 700 pounds of food for the food bank last fall, and they have wrapped gifts, done walk-a-thons and gone bowling – all to raise money for charitable organizations. They have also provided health and wellness clinics at seniors' centres, to corporate clients such as Maple Lodge Farms, and at community fairs and trade shows. The branch is planning to have an osteoporosis education booth at the Mississauga Seniors' Centre and in August it will co-host a pasta dinner, in partnership with The Glen Erin Inn, to benefit The Mississauga Food Bank.

The branch's employees are so eager to give back to their community that as soon as one project or event has concluded, they ask what's coming next. "They understand that we're not only providing excellent service to our clients, but that what we do in relation to health care in general is important," says Curitti. "They've developed a real sense of community and their place in it."

Together, staff members decide how many events they

can manage. They try to space them out and create a fun atmosphere, whether they're walking as part of the national Hike for Hospice Palliative Care or making a presentation on sun safety. The result is that everyone feels a sense of ownership at the branch. "We all share in the success," says Curitti. "It doesn't matter what position you hold – everyone is very important and their input is welcomed."

The branch's participation in events has also encouraged the public to seek more health information. The staff have received regular calls, including queries from other health professionals. "Events are a great way to have a presence in the community, and we're raising awareness that we're an authority on health care and we can be relied on," says Curitti. "Even some of the pharmacists trying to serve their customers look to us for our wellness clinics, so they can give their clients more information than they can provide themselves."

To further enhance health knowledge in the community, the branch also provides workshops on topics such as injury prevention, infection control and lifts and transfers to the employees of various organizations. "We've also brought in people from Alzheimer Society Peel to train our personal support workers who interact with clients with Alzheimer's disease. These partnerships benefit our clients," says Curitti.

Curitti is thrilled that people in Peel Region are turning to Bayshore when they need home health care for themselves or loved ones. "Bayshore has a really reputable name. Clients coming to us have tried other services, but our "can-do" attitude and ISO 9001 accreditation stand out and make us different from the pack. People who are doing their homework know that we provide quality service."

She is excited about expanding the branch's programs and meeting new challenges alongside her staff. "The team spirit within the branch is really important. We try and set up a culture where we can all thrive and give back. As an Area Director, I'm really fortunate – it's a really good team!"

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Left to right: Cheryl Martin, Lyslie Alcantaro, Julie Curitti, Laura Gavila and Amanda Wilkinson.



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