

St. Catharine's branch: Building relationships is part of providing top-notch care



Bayshore Home Health's branch in St. Catharines, Ontario, has been serving the community for more than 20 years. Located at the north end of the city, the branch provides care to clients across the Niagara Region, from Fort Erie to Grimsby. It offers nursing and personal support, and its on-site clinic provides a convenient location for the infusion of intravenous administered biological in the treatment of various health ailments. The branch also provides overflow nursing services to the St. Catharines Community Care Access Centre (CCAC).

"We service private clients in their homes, provide supplemental staffing and palliative care. As of late, we've taken on a number of pediatric cases, and we've received many compliments from families regarding our excellent caregivers" says Jodie Schaefer, Area Director, who joined the branch in December 2008. "We also service a number of complex care clients – not all agencies have the capacity to service such individuals but we've been fortunate to properly train and provide appropriate support in some really unique environments."

The branch has 70 staff members, including five administrative employees. Although there are other home care agencies in the region, Schaefer says that Bayshore's national status as an ISO-certified and being one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies for the past four years sets her branch apart. "We're backed by such a large company that has built its reputation on solid values – values that make a difference in the lives of those we service."

Schaefer proudly reports that her branch frequently receives praise about its caregivers. "We continually receive positive feedback from clients we serve, as well as the CCAC and other agencies we work with, about our caregivers' skills, reliability and commitment. We really value our employees and are always thinking of ways to show our appreciation."

The branch has an open-door policy, with continuous communication between the office and field staff. To help keep everyone connected, the branch sends out its "Niagara Staff Newsletter" by email and in print.

"We try to engage our field staff as much as possible. We host lunch-and-learn workshops, where we invite staff to come

into the office to learn about a variety of topics, such as client diversity," says Schaefer. "Typically, our Manager of Clinical Practice, Barbara Joyner, leads the monthly workshops, but sometimes our nurses get involved too. We recently had foot care training sessions, for example, that our advanced foot care nurse presented. Also, one of our personal support workers just finished an advanced acquired brain injury course, so she'll lead a training session to share what she learned."

The branch plans to participate in this year's Hike for Hospice to benefit The Stabler Centre (Hospice Niagara). In 2009, staff members raised nearly \$3,000, and they hope to raise \$3,500 this year. The branch has also made donations to Community Care St. Catharines-Thorold, a local non-profit organization that assists people in need of emergency provisions, such as housing and food.

Branch staff visit Niagara College and Brock University to talk to personal support and nursing students, respectively, about Bayshore and what opportunities it offers. The branch also takes part in community health fairs and provides free N-95 mask fitting for staff and volunteers at Stabler Centre (Hospice Niagara) and area doctor offices.

"Our branch is open and relaxed yet definitely has a sense of purpose. We are very busy but we make it a priority to build relationships with our clients, staff and community," says Schaefer. "We are known for quality service. We take nothing for granted, and each day is viewed as a new day to build on what we have. Whether it's a relationship with an existing client or new community partner, office and field staff alike take a vested interest in promoting Bayshore and demonstrating our values. I believe our branch is the epitome of 'team' – we provide support and encouragement, and we're always there for each other. Everyone is very willing to step up and help out when necessary – it's really nice to be part of such a caring group of individuals."

For more information, please contact jschaefer@bayshore.ca

From left to right: Lindsay Gammon, Jodie Schaefer, Glenis Fothergill and Barbara Joyner.



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