

## *Chatham branch:* Employee recognition is essential to success



**Over the past five years, Bayshore Home Health's Chatham, Ont., branch** has steadily built a reputation for excellence – not only as a health care provider, but also as an employer.

The branch opened in June 2004 to provide nursing and home care to clients of the Erie St. Clair Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) in the municipality of Chatham-Kent. The branch currently has 20 administrative employees and approximately 180 field staff, including RNs, RPNs and 118 personal support workers.

The Chatham branch works with many serious injury clients referred by Parkwood Hospital in London, Ontario. "They like the way we deliver service, so we're the first ones they call," says Area Director Carol Markham, who has worked at the branch since it opened.

The branch also has "government add-ons," or clients who need more services than those available through the CCAC. For example, some people are eligible for care from a personal support worker once a week, and they request additional visits which are covered by their personal insurance or paid by the patients themselves.

The Chatham branch's community care clinic opened in January 2009 in a building located about five minutes from the office. The clinic offers drug infusions, wound care and health education, such as diabetic teaching and wound care training, to clients referred by the CCAC. The branch also participates in clinical drug trials and its nurses visit patients at their homes to teach them how to self-administer the medications.

Markham is looking forward to meeting the needs of Chatham-Kent's rapidly greying population. "In our catchment area, the population is certainly aging and the baby boomers are coming along, so they are going to need service as well," she says, adding that the branch raises awareness about home care at seniors' health fairs in the region's smaller towns, such as Wallaceburg and Tilbury.

Bayshore is also well known in the community because of the branch's charity work. "We did two large fundraisers for hospice palliative care," says Markham. "The Bayshore Gala raised \$12,000 each year."

The hospice that received the funds has closed, so this year the branch hopes to furnish a room in the local hospital. "Right now in Chatham, that's the only place where palliative patients can go," explains Markham. "They have five palliative beds, so we're hoping that through various fundraisers we can furnish a room and add beds."

Markham feels that her branch's focus on education sets it apart from competing health care agencies. "Education allows our caregivers to provide the highest quality of care. We have a huge in-service training program and we're also looking at rolling out a program for our staff who look after palliative care patients, to help them cope with grief."

The branch is eager to recognize its employees' achievements. It holds a large luncheon for National Caregivers Week in October, and staff who go above and beyond the call of duty are commended with a notice on the office's "Take A Bow" bulletin board.

The branch also holds events for employees' families, including a summer picnic and a Christmas party. "We're getting an excellent turnout. The staff like to have a little bit of fun at work and involve their families," says Markham.

During the holidays, the branch collects goods for the Wallaceburg food bank, and toys and household items for needy families. The branch is also an enthusiastic supporter of Bayshore's annual food bank draw, in which \$5,000 is donated to one community's food bank.

Every week, the branch has Happy Wednesday, when everybody gets together for a draw – the winner receives a gift valued at about \$25. The gathering also offers staff a chance to ask questions and hear Bayshore updates, in addition to the branch's more formal monthly administration meetings.

"We have an open-door concept, with a focus on employee recognition and excellence in client care," says Markham. "We have a comfortable, family-like environment – it's a very active but happy branch."

For more information, please contact [cmarkham@bayshore.ca](mailto:cmarkham@bayshore.ca)

Front row, left to right: Lynne Lucier, Carol Markham, Kerry Haggith. Middle row, left to right: Marion Ashby, Darlene Scotney, Elizabeth Thain, Jackie Duffy. Back row, left to right: Gail Cannon, Loree Bailey, Mary Lee Cantelon, April Leblanc.



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