

Barrie branch:

Social responsibility and drive for excellence distinguish branch



Bayshore Home Health's Barrie, Ont., branch is a vital part of its community's health care system, as well as a socially responsible corporate citizen. Bayshore acquired the branch, located in downtown Barrie, Ontario, 10 years ago. It serves Barrie, Orillia, Midland, Collingwood, Wasaga Beach and Innisfil.

"We offer all the services that Bayshore has – home support and nursing, a community care clinic, advanced foot care, housekeeping and companionship. We also provide pharmaceutical programs that are nationally driven, and infusion therapies in our clinic. And we work with the North Simcoe Muskoka Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) and Veterans' Affairs Canada," says Taro Shako, who has been Area Director of the branch for nearly five years. "Our team includes RNs, RPNs, personal support workers and administrative staff."

The branch opened its Community Care Clinic in April, in collaboration with North Simcoe Muskoka CCAC, to assist the CCAC in avoiding a wait list for community nursing care and to help the CCAC meet fiscal restraints. Clients visit the clinic to receive treatment and nursing services, rather than enduring long waits at local hospitals or waiting at home for a nurse. Many patients also receive instructions on how to continue caring for themselves at home. The clinic is wheelchair accessible and offers plenty of free parking.

There are other nursing agencies in the county, but the branch has distinguished itself as one that strives for excellence. "I think Bayshore's philosophy of making a difference *every time* sets us apart from the competition here," says Shako. "We know that from the numerous compliments we've received from clients."

Shako is enthusiastic about a new initiative. "The branch is buzzing this fall as we implement an exciting project that will provide every visiting nurse with an electronic tablet so that the nurse can complete electronic documentation at the bedside and have access to best practice resources at their fingertips."

The branch's practices are certainly praise-worthy – the staff go to great lengths to ensure that patients' needs are met. "It's our culture to try our best to fill all referrals that come our way. We'll do our best to support our clients," says Shako.

Cultivating a positive workplace is also a priority. The branch strives to create a great place to work, for the administrative staff as well as field staff. The branch's Social Advocacy Committee is very active in organizing events and encouraging staff to contribute to a happy and healthy workplace. There are monthly birthday parties in the office and an annual Christmas party. Staff are invited to bring their children, nieces and nephews to a children's party in December, a tradition that the branch started in 2008. Employees also receive discounts on admission to summertime family attractions such as Great Wolf Lodge, Canada's Wonderland and Splash Canyon.

The branch's caring attitude extends to its involvement in the community. It has participated in the Hike for Hospice for three years. In 2009, more than 70 Bayshore staff raised \$7,000 for Hospice Simcoe, and the branch also sponsored part of the hospice's new residential building. "We've committed to a pledge of \$20,000 over five years, starting in 2008," says Shako.

The staff also support charitable organizations such as the Alzheimer Society of Greater Simcoe County, the MS Society of Canada, the Cancer Society and the Children's Aid Foundation of Simcoe County. During the holiday season, the staff raise funds to support families registered with the local Children's Aid Society. In addition, each year, the branch awards a Georgian College student \$300 to help with education costs.

"All of our actions support our organization's values/beliefs that we share and practice with our clients, colleagues and other stakeholders. These values include compassion, respect, reliability, patience, professionalism, ethics and continuous learning and improvement," adds Shako.

Shako explains that her team lives these values every day. "We even came up with our own code of conduct in the office – it's about respecting each other and allowing each other space, and recognizing when people need help," she says. "We're a team of hardworking, dedicated individuals who really want to make a difference for our clients, and we're creating a great place to work."

For more information, please contact tshako@bayshore.ca

Front row, left to right: Sheena, Terra, Amber, Pat, Wendy, Catherine, Taro, Cheryl, Jill. Back row, left to right: Lisa, Ashley, Angela, Peggy, Michele, Barb, Tanya.



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