

Saint John branch:

“Go big or go home” approach drives new ideas and initiatives



Bayshore Home Health’s branch in Saint John, New Brunswick, has an unofficial motto: “Go big or go home!” It’s an exuberant philosophy that’s reflected in every aspect of the branch, whether it’s staff members who go above and beyond the call of duty, or the team’s commitment to charity work.

Located in central Saint John with a view of the Bay of Fundy, the branch has nine office staff and about 160 field staff, and it serves over 300 clients. Brian Kierstead, Area Director, has been at the branch since it opened in 1985. He says that a key part of the branch’s culture is its willingness to act on great ideas. “We seem to have the ability and the determination to do that. We foster innovation and thinking outside the box – we just make it happen.”

Innovation enables the branch to meet the community’s needs. One example is the unique Youth and Adult Support Program. It started in 1985 when the New Brunswick government closed a hospital that housed children with special needs. The children moved into the community, and they became some of the branch’s first clients.

Darlene Tracey, Program Manager, explains that the program has evolved with the community. Its team of human service workers and family support workers now focuses on social services for youth and families – including child protection, social development, support for new parents, independent living for teens and child-development assessments – and works with a multidisciplinary team of health professionals, teachers, family members and others.

Innovation also plays a role in the branch’s charity work. When Bayshore decided to sponsor hospices across Canada, the Saint John branch embraced the challenge. “We have developed a unique partnership and are proud to be associated with Hospice Greater Saint John,” says Tina Landry, Client Service Coordinator.

Over the past three years, the branch has helped the hospice raise funds to build a residential facility, the first of its kind in Atlantic Canada. “We’ve been part of raising almost \$175,000, either through direct sponsorship or by getting involved in their events,” says Brian.

In 2006 and 2007, the branch organized two palliative care conferences, which provided a forum for health professionals, caregivers and the public to explore end-of-life issues. “We’ve

had phenomenal feedback, and a tremendous turnout from across the province,” says Nicole Hamming, Manager of Clinical Practice. The conferences also raised \$16,000.

The branch also sponsors the annual Hike for Hospice, and was the title sponsor of its 2008 Valentine Gala, which raised over \$70,000. “The Saint John gang works in an incredibly fast-paced environment – the background music in our office is ringing phones,” muses Tina. “However, we still make time to get involved in our community. In Saint John, we feel that if you are going to lend your name to support something, make it count!”

It’s not only the community that benefits from the branch’s ideas – Bayshore’s staff does, too. “We were the first to organize an administrative conference for Bayshore offices in Atlantic Canada,” says Brian. “That was the result of great, creative thinking and hard work by our staff.”

Nicole and a colleague from Fredericton, Karen Bower, hit upon the idea last year while at Bayshore’s annual management conference. They were chatting about how the event enabled them to travel and meet colleagues, and how it helped validate their roles. “We thought it was too bad the administrative staff couldn’t attend something similar,” says Nicole.

That spawned the idea for an administrative conference for Bayshore’s eastern branches. Nicole and Karen submitted a proposal, developed a steering committee and began planning. The conference was held in May in Moncton, and 30 people attended over three days. Consultants led discussions about conflict resolution and other topics relevant to working in a demanding environment.

When not coming up with great ideas, the branch provides the friendly, excellent service for which Bayshore is known.

Brian’s pride of his staff is evident: “The Saint John branch is what it is because of the people who work here. We have a great group of people who are dedicated to what they do, who believe in providing quality care and great services to the people of Saint John who are, in many cases, our neighbours.”

For more information, contact bkierstead@bayshore.ca

Top, left to right, are: Pauline Coyle, Brian Kierstead, Tazi Oulton, Lori Hill and Sonya Stephen. Bottom, left to right, are: Tina Landry, Nicole Hamming, Gail Doucette and Darlene Tracey.



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