

Montreal branch: Culture of caring expands to serve pediatric patients



Bayshore Home Health's Montreal branch has provided high-quality nursing and home care services in Quebec for over 20 years, mostly to seniors living in Montreal, Quebec City and their surrounding areas. The branch also offers palliative care, often to patients referred by the Fondation Jacques-Bouchard and the Jewish General Hospital, both located in Montreal. In addition, the branch offers enterprise services to companies, including health days, workshops and seminars.

With the addition of its new pediatric department, the branch is expanding its reach to a very vulnerable group of patients – children with chronic illnesses, as well as new parents who are overwhelmed by the challenges of caring for a newborn. The branch is also beginning to provide services to Leucan, an association that has enhanced the well-being and recovery of children with cancer, and ensured support for their families across Quebec since 1978.

Linda Lefort, the branch's Area Director, joined the team in May 2009. She is confident that the branch, which is located in downtown Montreal, can meet any challenge. "We have a lot of competition. I think there are more than 200 other home care agencies. A lot of them are mom-and-pop companies that offer good rates, but I think Bayshore has several advantages. The high points are that we're a national company with more resources. We also deal directly with insurance companies that provide care funding, which makes things easier for families. Our rates are slightly higher, but we do a lot of training and follow-up training, so the employees representing Bayshore are very qualified, and I think that makes us better than other companies."

The branch has a roster of 400 field staff and 10 administrative employees. Each day at the office is hectic, but effective teamwork helps keep tasks manageable. (Something that's unique to Bayshore's Montreal and Quebec City branches is that all documents must be translated into French to meet the requirements of Quebec's language regulations.)

"The administrative staff here are really busy. We take time to talk to field staff when they come in, but otherwise we're

working!" says Lefort. "We work as a team. When I joined the branch, I encouraged collaboration between staff members, and brain-storming together to find solutions to problems. Everybody knows they can count on each other to help."

Lefort is proud of the branch's warm, supportive culture, and how everyone strives to make new employees feel welcome. "I like to have an atmosphere where everybody feels like they're part of a great big family. Even if there are a lot of employees, we're so close it makes a family. The door is always open if people want to talk."

To show appreciation for its staff, the branch holds a popular barbecue each summer, plus a luncheon at Christmas time. In addition, each month, the administrative team chooses a field worker who has gone above and beyond the call of duty, and presents that person with a small gift.

The branch is whole-heartedly embracing its role as a care provider for children, and this extends to its charitable activities. The branch is a supporter of Le Phare (*The Lighthouse*), a non-profit organization in Montreal that was established in 1999 to provide support and assistance for parents who have a child with a degenerative or terminal disease or a serious disability requiring complex care.

"Recently, the children at Le Phare were making bracelets, and I bought 100 for our staff here," says Lefort. "That helped create a good atmosphere for the residents. Last year, we also participated in a fundraising walk for the organization. This year, we're doing an auction to raise money for them."

The branch's culture of compassion and collaboration has made it a care provider of choice, as well as a great place to work. "Some employees have been here many years – one has been here for 20 years," says Lefort. "Everybody is devoted. The staff who work here are very nice, warm people with big hearts."

For more information, please contact llefort@bayshore.ca

Back row, left to right:
Linda Lefort, Pamela Tor,
Melanie Berthelotte, Tania
Pariente-Muller. Front
row, left to right: Annette
MacDonald, Louise Roy.



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