

## **WELL AWARE – WINTER 2019**

February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The North Bay Regional Health Centre is pleased to provide you with our quarterly e-newsletter update! NBRHC Well Aware is designed to keep you up to date on changes to our services, new initiatives and news that impacts our communities

### **Didn't get your flu shot yet? It's not too late**

It's back. Coughing, sneezing, sore throats, fever and muscle aches—influenza season is here.

Seasonal influenza, also known as “the flu,” is a common respiratory illness caused by the influenza A and B virus. It spreads very easily from person-to-person and can cause serious illness and complications, especially among vulnerable populations.



Everyone over the age of six months is encouraged to get the flu shot to protect against the disease. This year's flu shot covers four different strains of influenza, and it is the best defense to reduce the chances of getting sick and spreading the virus.

Even though it's recommended to get vaccinated as soon as the flu shot is available, getting the vaccine later can still be helpful. Flu season peaks from December and can last until May.

“If you're vaccinated and you come into contact with one or more of the viruses that cause the flu, you're less likely to develop flu symptoms,” says Dr. Tim Percival, Head of Emergency Medicine at NBRHC. “Even if you become symptomatic, the vaccine may decrease the length and severity of the illness.”

If you can't get a flu shot there are other things you can do to stay healthy this flu season.

“Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer often to help prevent the spread of the virus. If you are coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or cough into your upper sleeve,” explains Dr. Percival. For more information on how to protect yourself from the flu, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/flu-facts>

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## From high school to hospital: how volunteering at NBRHC was the perfect place for an aspiring physician

The volunteer program at the North Bay Regional Health Centre (NBRHC) is a popular choice for young adults looking to gain a hands on experience in a healthcare environment. Many of our youth volunteers (16-29 years of age) are keen to pursue careers in the healthcare sector while giving back to their local hospital. The Health Centre has served as a positive springboard for several former volunteers in their chosen professions. We reached out to one of these volunteers to find out what NBRHC meant to them and what they are doing now.



Dr. Zahra Merali, Resident joined the Health Centre as a volunteer in 2011. The newly built hospital was the perfect place for the aspiring physician to gain hands-on experience in a healthcare setting.

As a grade 11 student, Zahra had an interest in biology and wanted to explore careers in medicine. The Health Centre's new volunteer Ambassador Program offered an opportunity to gain knowledge of the entire health system. The way-finding role was created to ease anxiety for new patients and visitors by creating a welcoming environment and directing people to their destination in the facility.

For Zahra it was a memorable volunteer experience. "Since the hospital just opened, Ambassadors were the only ones who knew our way around the building! We were even instructing staff and physicians where to go at that point," she fondly remembers.

Later Zahra joined the Day Surgery volunteer program to further connect with people and minimize stress in the often busy clinic. "Patients can be quite vulnerable and scared before surgery, so I felt like I could really make an impact in that volunteer position," explains Zahra.

Zahra says volunteering at the Health Centre was a very influential experience. "It was my first exposure to healthcare. After volunteering I decided I wanted to commit myself to a lifetime profession of helping others at times where they are most vulnerable – particularly when people are sick or in hospital," she explains.

After pursuing medical school in Ireland, Zahra returned to Canada as an Internal Medicine Resident with McMaster University. An Internal Medicine Physician is a specialist who applies scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment and care for adults across the spectrum from health to complex illnesses.

Now Zahra's days are spent reviewing blood work, helping staff physicians, assisting junior residents and taking care of upwards 35 patients at a time from admission to discharge. After residency, Zahra plans to work as a General Internist and have a role in academics and teaching.

"If you're thinking about volunteering but you're not sure- just go for it!," says Zahra. "Don't leave any stone unturned. High school is the place to try everything out and to start seeing where your interests lie. Volunteering is a great way to get a flavour for life in different workplaces and professions."

The Health Centre's summer program is a great chance to get involved. The program is open to young adults interested in volunteering between May and August, and provides them with an opportunity to learn new skills, explore interests and meet new people while giving back to a variety of areas throughout the Health Centre.

A completed volunteer application must be submitted by April 15 to be considered for the summer program. For more information, visit </join-our-team/volunteers/>

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## Putting smiles on the faces of NBRHC's littlest clients

The North Bay Regional Health Centre (NBRHC) unveiled three revitalized spaces at its Wordplay Jeux de mots site in Sudbury.



*A ceremonial ribbon cutting with representatives from Smilezone Foundation and NBRHC, as well as patients and families of Wordplay Jeux de mots.*

Generously donated by the Smilezone Foundation, Wordplay Jeux de mots now boasts a refreshed and welcoming Main Waiting room, Infant Hearing Screening room and Group Programming room featuring new wall murals, vibrant paint, custom furniture, storage and equipment.

The preschool-aged children and their families were previously greeted with plain tables and chairs surrounded by white walls. Now the new Smilezones create a more fun, interactive and functional space for the young clients to enjoy. Over 1,700 families annually are expected to benefit from the new Smilezones in the new year.



*Before the main waiting room at Wordplay was a plain and simple environment.*



Now children and their families are greeted with new wall murals, vibrant paint, custom furniture and equipment.

A four-year old client of Wordplay Jeux de mots was so enchanted and excited by the murals that most of the session was completed in the waiting room. He pointed to many of the animals, and repeatedly commented “Regarde, (Look) Grand-maman” with a huge smile on his face. Since the Smilezone’s were opened, families at Wordplay Jeux de mots are constantly commenting on how the transformation has created a happier, more engaging and welcoming space. The littlest clients can be heard saying, “Wow, this is amazing!”, “I like moose” and “What’s that?”.

Scott Bachly, Chair of the Smilezone Foundation says their organization is honoured to brighten the experience of children receiving services at Wordplay Jeux de mots. “Our mission is to create comfortable spaces where kids can feel uplifted while receiving treatment,” says Bachly. “We are overjoyed that children and their family members now have these new Smilezone spaces to help make their visits more enjoyable.”

The Smilezones will serve to complement the care and early intervention delivered by the Wordplay Jeux de mots dedicated inter-professional team. “We are exceptionally grateful to the Smilezone Foundation for the improvement to such important areas in our program,” says Tanya Nixon, NBRHC Vice President Mental Health. “The transformation is more than just a cosmetic makeover. The new spaces make children feel comfortable and confident, enhancing their overall experience and creating an environment that promotes optimal communication skill development.”

## Shining a light on NBRHC volunteers

The North Bay Regional Health Centre (NBRHC) is pleased to once again open nominations for the Lottie Frenssen Volunteer Award.

The award shines a light on the remarkable NBRHC volunteers who make a difference by generously sharing their time and talent, delivering compassionate and respectful service to our patients and their families.

Recipients of the award share the same efforts and devotion to the NBRHC as its namesake. For a full half-century, Lottie Frenssen volunteered tirelessly to support a culture of philanthropy at the Health Centre.

In its first two years, 27 volunteers have been nominated by patients, staff and peers for their significant contributions to our health care facility.



*NBRHC volunteers in the Emergency Department were recognized for their unfailing respect and support for the patients and staff.*

Volunteers like James Bunker who wanted to gain hands on experience to complement the more technical aspect of his schooling. He was credited for making patients more willing to complete components of a delirium prevention program.

Or, Cathy Hefkey who sought to inspire and support fellow stroke survivors. She's been able to address ongoing frustrations, fears and challenges that comes along with the diagnosis.

And Wally Kearney, a retired educator who wanted to give back to the hospital community. After 16 years, he has helped to minimize stress and promote a positive patient experience.

The NBRHC has over 300 volunteers who provide service in district hospital and regional mental health programs, support fundraising initiatives and share their expertise as volunteer board members.

If you know a volunteer at the Health Centre that deserves recognition for their outstanding contributions, you are encouraged to nominate them for the Lottie Frenssen Volunteer Award by completing the [online nomination form](#). Nominations are open until Friday March 1, 2019.

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## Scent Free Zone



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FREE  
ZONE**



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HEALTHY AND FRAGRANCE-FREE**

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aftershave and other fragrances.  
Use unscented personal care products.**

Thank you from North Bay Regional Health Centre.