

MEDIA RELEASE



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CMH team members share how International Women's Day inspires them

March 7, 2022 - Campbellford Memorial Hospital (CMH) is proud to mark International Women's Day on March 8, 2022, by spotlighting a few of the many women (in fact 88% of CMH employees are women) who make CMH a great place for the community to receive care – and for the staff, physicians, and students to work, learn and develop.

Alysia English, Chief Nursing Officer

Alysia always knew she wanted to work with people and nursing gave her the chance to do just that. Her eventual role in nursing leadership has continued to allow her to connect with people by supporting and coaching her team.

"Nursing provided me the opportunity and privilege to care for people in some of their most difficult moments," she shared.

When Alysia reflects on female mentorship, three women stand out for their instrumental roles in her personal life and professional life – her mother, her best friend, and her wife.

"My mother has always been a source of strength and perseverance – this has supported me as I went through my nursing education and helped sustain me through the challenges of the pandemic. My best friend, Melissa, has been a constant since high school and has grounded me as I stepped forward to follow the next challenge. Finally, my wife has always demonstrated support and dedication – supporting me during my Masters of Nursing and always allowing me the freedom to try something new."

For Alysia, International Women's Day is about celebrating equality.

"It is about each of us working in our own way to create a future where gender, culture, class and sexuality are no longer barriers. We are all individuals who are celebrated for the gifts and talents we have to share with the world. We share them freely and without fear of being treated differently, paid less, or having opportunities withheld."

Ashley Coady, RN, Inpatient Unit

When Ashley was nine, she was diagnosed with Crohn's disease and spent a significant amount of time at Sick Kids. It was hard for Ashley to be at the hospital away from home, but the nurses made it easier, and this left an impression.

"I knew when the time came to choose my future career, nursing was exactly what I needed to do," reflected Ashley, who will be starting her Masters of Science in Nursing this spring. "I wanted to be able to give back the care that I received as a patient to others."

Ashley has been fortunate to have some exceptional female mentors throughout her nursing career.

"Each of these women have inspired me to pursue my goals and aspirations in life. I strive to do better every day so that I can be at the same level of excellence they role model."

International Women's Day reminds Ashley that there is nothing that can stop her from pursuing her dreams.

"I've always been a proud advocate for women and as a nurse, I now have the opportunity to advocate for women in health care and to show other females you can make anything possible if you believe in yourself and work hard."

Chantal Stapley, Physiotherapy Assistant, Restorative Care

Chantal took an interest in health care at an early age and considers herself lucky to have the chance to pursue her career in her beloved hometown community.

"It is rewarding to be an active member of the multidisciplinary patient care team," said Chantal. "We collaborate with patients and their family members to devise and facilitate the rehabilitation process so they can achieve a level of functional mobility to return home safely. Receiving patient and caregiver gratitude provides me with a great sense of accomplishment."

Chantal reflects on how she's had the opportunity and pleasure of working with some amazing women throughout her career.

"These women have contributed to teaching, motivating, and supporting me in becoming the healthcare professional I am today. I am fortunate and thankful for their positive impact on my success."

For Chantal, International Women's Day reminds her of positive changes that have been made towards gender equality.

"It is a day to acknowledge and honor women for their contributions made to society each day—and to remind us to uplift, support, and motivate one another."

Dr. Kelly Parks, Physician, CMH and Trent Hills Family Health Team

Medicine has been *the thing* for Dr. Parks as long as she can remember – it just took some time to get there. After practicing as a physiotherapist for 17 years, Dr. Parks made the brave move of starting medical school at the age of 42.

Throughout all parts of Dr. Parks' life and career, women have mentored her – including her time in competitive figure skating, physiotherapy, pre-med, medicine, and when she made her choice of sub-specialty in palliative care.

"I feel lucky enough to not be surprised by women's excellence but humbled by it. Without strong female role models, I would not be Dr. Kelly Parks, and I would not have taken on the quantity and quality of work I currently carry. A little push here, a little encouragement there, and a lot of understanding along the way made the journey doable."

The difficulties in health care during the pandemic has given Dr. Parks even more reason to celebrate International Women's Day this year.

"International Women's Day is a day to be proud, to be kind, to have gratitude for what we've been able to accomplish, to celebrate the wins, mourn the losses, but mostly to reflect on how some amazing women before us have even made this possible."

Lee-Ann Reid, Clinical Case Manager, Community Mental Health

Since Lee-Ann was a child she knew she would work in the realm of social work because of her keen interest in human behaviour.

"I enjoy walking beside people while they discover what they need and want from life and learning how to take control of their world to work towards those things in a healthy way," she shared.

When Lee-Ann was hired for her first social work position at a Violence Against Women Agency, a group of women who had been at the agency for many years took her under their wings and gently guided Lee-Ann as she learned best practices and developed her skills.

"This group of women had the biggest impact on my career as our connection on the team was strong which enabled us to learn, grow, challenge and over-come together. This experience with this team laid the foundation of all my work, grew my confidence and abilities, and encouraged life-long learning."

Leading up to International Women's Day, Lee-Ann has thought a lot about why this day is important to her.

"For me, International Women's Day allows me to take a moment to recognize and to celebrate the strength and determination of all the women in my life. It's also a day to honour those women who fought for our rights to be seen and treated as equal. It is a day for active reflection about how I can continue to support and encourage women in my life to be safe, continue to grow, find balance amongst their responsibilities and push through the glass ceiling."