

We're Celebrating Successes

Stephanie **Moving Forward**

WHEN STEPHANIE FIRST VISITED the Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre (“the Centre”) in January 2011 she had one goal in mind; to get a job and make money. Nine months later, Stephanie has an entirely new outlook on life. Stephanie struggles with the same life stressors that many young adults face; feeling alone, depressed and ‘just not good enough’. Stephanie has always struggled to save money, which meant finding a safe and secure place to live was often a challenge.

Today, Stephanie is a vibrant young woman with new life goals, but getting to this happy place was not always an easy task. “At times it (visiting the Centre) was confusing and difficult”, explained Stephanie, “they asked tough questions and didn’t always tell me what I wanted to hear.”

Getting to a better place physically and mentally is not easy, but Stephanie is very thankful for the helpful, friendly and supportive staff at the Centre. “They taught me to listen to my heart. They made me realize I am good enough,” added Stephanie. Stephanie has new goals today; to finish high school, work towards a career in retail and always benefit herself first – a valuable lesson for any young adult to learn.

Stephanie has most enjoyed her time working with the Centre’s dietitian, “She taught me how to cook on a budget, which is a big help when you’re trying to save money”. Making use of the counselling and nutritional counselling services at the Centre, Stephanie now has a much more positive outlook on life, “The staff at the Centre were so helpful. They always brought me up even when I was down”.

Currently, Stephanie is taking correspondence courses to complete her high school diploma and is working part-time at Giant Tiger. The Centre has truly helped Stephanie reach a happier mind set and she’s excited to move forward into the future.

Ruth

Thinking Differently

RUTH BELIEVES IN SECOND CHANCES. So when she was diagnosed with diabetes in June 2010 she knew it was time to 'grab the bull by its horns and change her lifestyle'. The challenge being, where to start. Ruth's family doctor was from Tavistock, Ontario and travelling back and forth from Woodstock for appointments was often a challenge.

When Ruth applied and was accepted as a patient at the Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre ("the Centre") she could not have been happier. Having a doctor and support system within walking distance of her apartment was only going to improve her health, thought Ruth.

Hearing horror stories of diabetes patients losing their limbs and going blind, Ruth knew she needed advice. "My doctor had told me I needed to lose 30 pounds, change my diet and exercise, but I didn't know where to begin", explained Ruth, "In July 2010, I was blessed with a dietitian at the Centre who helps me think differently about food and life".

Exercise, diet and regular check-ups are the best way to care for Ruth's diabetes. "The dietitian at the Centre has really helped me," said Ruth, "I'm so happy to be a patient at the Centre". Today, Ruth understands that diabetes is a manageable disease and by changing her old habits, she feels much better not only physically, but mentally too.

"The Centre is a cheerful place to be. The receptionists know my name and I always feel welcomed when I walk through the front door," says Ruth as she explains her experience with the Centre. The Centre, and more importantly the staff, make Ruth feel important as a patient and she appreciates that the doctors and nurses never make her feel rushed or pressed for time.



Ruth has lost 30 pounds since last summer and is now able to manage her blood sugar without any medication. "I am so happy a community health centre has come to Woodstock", exclaimed Ruth, who appreciates everything the Centre has done for her.



Because of the Centre, its staff and their support, James has become a true member of the Woodstock community.

James **Gaining Independence**

JAMES IS NO STRANGER to health care institutions. Struggling with depression and anxiety for most of his life, James often feels like he lives in the doctor's office.

In need of a new family doctor, James applied to become a patient at the Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre ("the Centre") when it first opened in April 2010. Two weeks later, James was accepted as a patient - something he swears was one of the best moves he's ever made. "Before going to the Centre I was not well mentally. I was 40 years old and still living at home in London, Ontario. I never left the house," James explained, "I wanted to become more independent".

James' first appointment at the Centre was not easy. James was scared, nervous and not sure what to expect. "The staff at the Centre were very comforting. I felt welcomed from the beginning," began James, "I knew when I walked in to the Centre that this was going to be the nicest health care facility I had ever been in".

James often visits the nurse practitioner and dietician at the Centre, "I can talk to them about anything. I never feel rushed during my appointments and I appreciate that. The cooking classes are a big help too".

Before becoming a patient at the Centre, James felt socially different from everyone else and was scared to leave his home. Now, James feels confident enough to live on his own in an apartment where he is responsible for cooking and taking care of himself. James is now a member at the YMCA and goes regularly to the Woodstock Public Library.

Robin

Consistent Support

ROBIN AND HER HUSBAND have dealt with medical issues for most of their lives. When a family matter uprooted them from their hometown to Woodstock, Ontario, Robin feared she and her family would not receive appropriate medical care.

In February 2010, there were no family doctors accepting new patients in Woodstock and Robin didn't know where to turn to next. Their trusted family doctor lived in St. Thomas, but travelling back and forth for appointments was no longer feasible. Robin suffers from bipolar disorder and her husband has been diagnosed as a diabetic - missing doctor's appointments is simply not an option for this family.

When the Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre ("the Centre") opened in April 2010 Robin felt a huge weight lifted off her shoulders. "They are truly a full-service health centre", explains Robin, "From teaching you new recipes, taking your blood, providing advice, support or caring for your feet because you're a diabetic, they really do it all. The Centre is so much more than just a doctor who prescribes your medication". In addition to outstanding medical care, the Centre has helped Robin and her family feel welcome in the Woodstock community. "We're at the Centre so often because my husband is a diabetic... we have made friends who are also patients. We can always find a friendly, smiling face on the street and that makes me feel good," explains Robin.

Robin most appreciates the counselling services at the Centre, "I can call no matter what time of day it is. There is always someone to talk to". Robin has also attended a variety of cooking classes offered by the Centre, "The dietitian tells me what to eat, how to cook and she even knows where I grocery shop! She tells me where the sales are and I really enjoyed her cooking on a budget class".



The Centre has been an influential part of Robin's life for almost two years now. If Robin could share one other thing about the Centre it would be that, "The friendly, supportive, informative staff is what makes the Centre such a wonderful place to be. Thank you so much".

Rebecca

Healthier Ways

“WONDERFUL, FRIENDLY AND KIND. There when I needed support,” that’s how Rebecca describes the Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre (“the Centre”).

November 2010, one week before her family doctor was killed in a car crash, Rebecca found out that she had some serious medical issues; very high blood pressure, amongst other things. To say the least, Rebecca felt alone and scared. Rebecca’s family doctor had been a trusted friend and support system for many years. Rebecca wasn’t sure where to turn to next.

Applying to the Centre in the spring of 2010, Rebecca only hoped there would be a family doctor available for herself and her family. There was. Accepted as a patient just a few weeks later, Rebecca could breathe a sigh of relief.

Rebecca has struggled with weight gain, depression and anxiety her entire life and in 2010 it was imperative that she get her blood pressure under control. Although reluctant at first, Rebecca started to see a social counsellor and nurse at the Centre on a regular basis.

“My counsellor is always there for me”, explained Rebecca, “she has great advice and new ideas. It’s nice to get a fresh perspective from someone who seems to understand me and my current situation”.

“The nursing staff at the Centre are great. They’ve directed me towards healthier ways and I’m starting to get my weight under control,” beamed Rebecca. Rebecca is now off her blood pressure medication and is starting to feel healthier every day. To Rebecca, the services, support and guidance she and her family receives from the Centre is immeasurable.

“I truly feel that the Centre was there for me when no one else was”, said Rebecca, “I’m so thankful that my family has the medical support that they need once again”.



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We empower.