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frontlines



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December 15, 2003 Issue #100

Vets' Angels bring joy to Colonel Belcher residents

Some of the best discoveries are made by accident.

For the Vets' Angels, distributing gifts at Carewest Colonel Belcher each month and at Christmas gives rise to plenty of pleasant discoveries.

"We have a good time," said Ewan Cameron, the programs and administration manager for the volunteer organization. "We laugh and talk with them and you end up finding out all kinds of things you didn't know before. They all have stories to tell, and not just about the war."

Four Calgary businessmen – one of whom flew Lancasters in the Second World War – formed the group in 1996 to help veterans at the Colonel Belcher who lacked family or had limited financial resources for basic necessities.

With the support of staff at the Colonel Belcher, the group began distributing Christmas gifts to the 135 veterans at the facility. The success of their Christmas campaign led them to hold monthly birthday parties, providing what has often been a forgotten group with year-round assistance. The program is supported by donations to the Calgary Health Trust, an organization that raises funds for the Calgary Health Region.

The Christmas gift-giving project has become a major undertaking. Staff at the Colonel Belcher provide the group with the veterans' wish-list, which could include anything from a bar of soap or new socks to items of clothing.

"If someone says they'd like a blue shirt, we try to get them a blue shirt," said Cameron, who has been with the organization for four years. Experience has made the shopping process easier, too. "I've gotten to know what they might like, so when I'm doing the Christmas shopping I can choose things with a certain person in mind."

A group of volunteers help with the organizing, shopping, labeling and gift-wrapping, which take about five weeks to complete. Cameron's wife, Gay Alderman, helps co-ordinate the effort.

The gift-giving takes almost an entire day. The group – which includes Santa – visits the veterans individually, giving them an opportunity to personally deliver the package and Christmas wishes. They also provide the residents at the Colonel Belcher with Christmas grab bags full of toiletries and treats.



Ewan Cameron visits with war veteran residents at Carewest Colonel Belcher.

Maja Swannie Photography

The veterans appreciate the gesture. "We get thank you cards from their spouses," Cameron said. "Or sometimes a small donation. The reaction has been very positive."

"We took stuffed animals to the veterans with Alzheimer's one year, and they loved them," said Cameron. "Now we do it every year."

In 2002, the Vets' Angels added outings to their calendar of events: the group took in an event at Spruce Meadows and took a trip on the Handi-boat at Ghost Lake.

For those who are unable to go on the outings, there's often in-house entertainment. The group has brought in a show-dog team and a variety of musicians who play the veterans' old favourites. "It brings a lump to your throat to see the fellows with Alzheimer's singing along.

They have big grins on their faces – they can still remember the words."

Bringing some happiness and camaraderie to the veterans has had an impact on the members of the Vets' Angels, too. A group that's more used to going about its business than talking about what it's been doing, their program has evolved from attempting to bring some joy to veterans at Christmastime into a year-round gesture of support for the men and women who fought for our freedom.

"What you find – when you start doing something like this – is that you discover all kinds of things by accident," said Cameron. "And suddenly, you're involved."

– Fiona Wren
Calgary Health Trust

Season's greetings from the CEO



Jack Davis, President & CEO

As the holiday season nears, I want to offer my best wishes to you and your family for a happy and safe holiday season and share a few thoughts as we look ahead to the new year.

The Calgary Health Region has succeeded by working together and we can be very proud of our accomplishments. As the new year approaches, we will keep the interests of the public and our care providers front and centre as we plan for the future. We are working on behalf of staff and the people we serve to address the challenges we face together.

This is a time to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year and to recognize the hard work of Region staff as they provide health care to a growing population of more than one million people. The challenges we have faced in the past year have been significant and will persist throughout the holiday season. I am grateful for the dedication and caring all of you have provided to the Region. My thoughts will be with all our staff during this time as you respond to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community and the public at large. I want to say thank you for a job well done.

I encourage you to make the most of the upcoming holidays. The holidays are a time for all of us to find ways to reflect on our considerable accomplishments, to find time for rest, to enjoy our families and friends and to recharge ourselves for the new year.

I want to wish you all season's greetings and a happy new year.

– Jack Davis
President & CEO

Region adds beds to address pressures; funding shortfall increases

The Calgary Health Region will open 20 beds as a contingency plan for city hospitals coping with influenza season and will fund additional elective MRI scans to help decrease growing wait times for health services.

As a result of increased patient demand and lower than forecasted revenues, the Region in November updated its anticipated operational budget deficit for the 2003/04 financial year to \$58 million.

The Region had previously projected that its deficit for the financial year ending on March 31, 2004, would be \$25 million after expenses of \$1.8 billion. The Region's expenditures are

on target, but anticipated additional revenues arising from a new wave of initiatives discussed as part of the Mazankowski reforms will not be realized.

"We have been working closely with our provincial government partners and will continue to do so as we address the issues of increased service pressure and our expected funding shortfall," said Kay Best, senior vice-president and chief financial officer. "We are doing everything we can to control costs in areas that do not affect patient care."

Chair David Tuer said the Calgary Health Region's board is committed to good financial stewardship while recognizing the public's

urgent need for health services.

"Our effort to work with our partners in the provincial government to improve access continues to be our number one priority," he said.

The Region decided to open 20 medical and pediatric beds at a cost of \$500,000 as a contingency measure to cope with the anticipated surge of hospital admissions from influenza over the next few months.

The health system has been dealing with higher patient volumes during summer and fall. Between April 1 and Nov. 16, visits to the emergency departments at all four Calgary hospitals were up more than 10 per cent compared to the same period last year. The Region's

Emergency Department has also seen an increase in the number of patients who require additional resources and time to treat.

Wait times for elective MRI scans have also increased to nearly 200 days despite efforts by the Region to add new machines in the past three years. Extra funding will mean an additional 6,500 scans in 2004/05. MRIs have become an increasingly valuable tool for physicians, who are now using the technology to help diagnose heart disease and bone and joint problems, something not done a few years ago.

– Donald Campbell
Vice-president, Communications

Rural Communities Under Stress

Campaign helps rural communities cope with BSE

Weather, debt and BSE can add pressure to residents of rural communities who depend on agriculture to make a living. Several Calgary Health Region departments have been working together on a campaign to educate rural communities about stress, identify coping strategies and promote awareness of support services.

In late October, as area ranchers started to sell their calves, the Region began circulating a series of brochures and posters in rural areas as part of an awareness campaign called Rural Communities Under Stress. The campaign, which involved collaboration by the newly integrated Mental Health Services, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, rural staff from Strathmore and the former Headwaters Health Authority and a number of community based agencies, was designed to help individuals learn how to identify stress and deal with it. Chronic stress could lead to alcohol and drug

use, domestic violence and depression.

"Symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, high blood pressure, problems concentrating, anger and fear, are all normal during stressful times, but need to be dealt with in a positive way," says Maureen Speidel, a mental health practitioner. "We can help."

Speidel says mental health practitioners are available for rural activities and association meetings to provide information on how to cope with pressures such as this year's BSE scare – the discovery in Alberta in May 2003 of a single case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or Mad Cow Disease.

Dr. John Tuttle, medical director for Adult Mental Health and Psychiatry and chair of the Mental Health Response to BSE, says stress is a part of life.

"But at times it can be overwhelming," he says. "Asking for help to deal with stress is a sign of

strength – it's not something to feel ashamed about." Dr. Tuttle says cowboy culture does not always support seeking help.

"I hope we are getting past that," says Ralph Nelson, a rancher, whose land near High River is home to 170 cows. Nelson has been in the business all his life and knows the stresses of ranching well. "It would be unfortunate if the health region goes through this effort and someone who couldn't deal with this with their family and friends didn't use the service." Nelson says BSE is only one of the factors that creates uncertainty for people living in rural areas.



Dr. John Tuttle

"You can have sound business practices and do everything right on paper, and then be decimated by the weather," he says. "It's something that's out of your control and you need to resolve that it's the reality of working in agriculture."

Dr. Tuttle says the convergence of various health sectors in the Calgary Health Region to

respond to this issue is an example of how new and different departments can work together.

"This project has exemplified what integration of services can result in for the benefit of people in areas outside the urban centre of the Region," Dr. Tuttle says. "This was a totally new group of people who had never worked together, many from very different organizational cultures. This group transcended these challenges in support of a unique population in a unique situation."

The longer term goal of the project is to take what has been learned and turn it into a process to respond and support communities that may come under stress and pressure from any number of external issues and factors.

Along with the brochures and posters, help is available at local mental health clinics and through Health Link at 943-LINK (5465) or toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465).

– Robyn Bellavance, Communications
– Brett Hodson, Health Promotion,
Rural South and Bow Corridor

An Apple a day...

Region's new magazine focuses on healthy living and illness prevention

The Calgary Health Region, in partnership with RedPoint Media Group Inc. and Calgary Co-operative Association Limited, has launched a magazine called *Apple* to promote healthy living and illness prevention.

Copies of the magazine, unveiled at a presentation in November, are being snapped up at sites around the Region and from racks in Calgary Co-op stores. Although the magazine is available for free six times a year, paid subscription requests have started trickling in as some readers take steps to guarantee delivery.

"We are excited about what this innovative magazine can do to help the people in the Region," said Dr. Richard Musto, executive medical director, responsible for public health and wellness and a member of the *Apple* editorial team. "It is our hope that *Apple* will give individuals the information they need to make the right choices and keep themselves healthy."

The concept of helping people stay healthy is the number one recommendation outlined in the Mazankowski report.

"What Mr. Mazankowski said is that the best long-term strategy for sustaining the health system is to encourage people to stay healthy," said Dr. Musto. "We agree that if we rely on simply treating people when they get sick, the increasing



Dr. Richard Musto and Jacqueline Osgood pose with enlarged *Apple* cover at the magazine launch at Calgary Co-op.

costs of new treatments and technology could bankrupt the system. This is why *Apple* is a vital tool in educating people about getting healthy."

A key partner in this venture is Calgary Co-op, whose 380,000 members will benefit from receiving 30,000 copies of the first edition of

Apple at 18 Co-op centres in Calgary, Airdrie and Strathmore. That distribution will grow to 50,000 copies of the second issue in January.

"Calgary Co-op believes *Apple's* message of healthy living and illness prevention fits well with our family oriented values and goals," said

Donna Burn, member and public relations director. "This magazine project builds on our strong relationship with the Region and adds value for Calgary Co-op members by providing important health information. Calgary Co-op, through its pharmacies, has a strong interest in promoting health and wellness in the community and we see *Apple* as an important vehicle to do this."

Apple's ability to communicate informative and compelling stories is strongly supported by its publishing partner RedPoint Media Group Inc.

"There is a clear need for an informative yet engaging publication that covers the spectre of health issues in Canada," said Dan Bowman, president and publisher of RedPoint Media Group Inc. "In terms of design and editorial, *Apple* will receive the same skilful treatment that RedPoint Media Group is well known for with its quality publications such as *Avenue* and *Calgary Inc.*"

The Region's fiscal approach to *Apple* is a prudent one for taxpayers. All costs for the publication will be recovered through the sale of advertising and the partnership with Calgary Co-op.

Region employees can find copies of *Apple* on newstands at the Region's facilities or can call Communications at 943-1234.

– James Millar
Communications

Around the Region

ROCKYVIEW GENERAL HOSPITAL

Phase I of the ophthalmology project is nearing completion. The clinic from the old area will move to the newly renovated area in December. This will ensure minimal disruption in the day-to-day operations of the department. Phase II of the project will begin in March 2004, culminating in a centre of excellence for the Calgary Health Region's ophthalmology program.

FOOTHILLS MEDICAL CENTRE

The Southern Alberta Renal Program at Foothills Medical Centre is in the midst of a minor expansion and renovation. Construction of a four-bed hemodialysis satellite station on Unit 46 was completed in November, and work will begin in January on the Hemo 1 side of Unit 27. The renovations consist of upgrades to the ventilation, lighting and power systems on the unit, the construction of a new nursing station and the installation of new flooring. The Unit 27 project is slated to begin Jan. 15 with completion March 15. Also underway on Unit 27 is a comprehensive indoor air quality investigation. Dr. Ian Wheeler, a certified industrial hygienist, has been contracted by the Region to look for mould or other materials that might be adversely affecting air quality on the unit. Any mould or other contaminated materials that are found will be removed and the affected area will be brought up to national standards. Dr. Wheeler's investigation began Nov. 24 and is expected to wrap up in early February.

ALBERTA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Construction on the new Alberta Children's Hospital is well underway, and now you can watch the progress from the comfort of your own computer! A live action camera, provided by Ellis-Don Construction at the new site, is available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The camera has the ability to zoom in and out, and pan left and right so site tours of the new hospital are now possible without setting foot outside! To view the camera, go to <http://j5700.tzo.com> or visit www.calgaryhealthregion.ca for a link to the site.

PETER LOUGHEED CENTRE

On Nov. 17, a new operating room was opened at the Peter Lougheed Centre. The new room brings the hospital's OR count to 14 rooms and will allow for up to 10 additional surgeries daily. "Whenever we add capacity in the OR we affect the entire hospital system," says Connie Schulthess, OR assistant patient care manager.

"The success of this OR is the result of efforts from departments throughout the site and the Region." Some of the many departments involved include Supply, Processing, Food and Nutrition and Planning. Clinical areas also play a part in managing increased capacity such as inpatient units, Recovery, Day Surgery, Pre-Op Assessment, and Diagnostic Imaging.

RURAL HEALTH

In October, Alberta Health and Wellness announced that the health services offered in the Didsbury area would transfer to the Calgary Health Region on Dec. 1. The Calgary Health Region now includes Didsbury, Carstairs, Cremona and surrounding area. Planning teams are working closely to ensure a smooth transition for staff and programs from the David Thompson Health Region to the Calgary Health Region. The goal throughout the transition period has been to maintain the programs and services provided from the Didsbury Health Centre. Senior executive leader, Lori Anderson, said she understands there has been a lot of change in the community over the past year. She said she will work hard to minimize disruption and maintain open communication with staff and the community.

COMMUNITY CARE

Prevention of unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections is a central focus for staff at the family planning clinics in the Region. The target population includes teens, those who cannot afford birth control supplies or those who need special services that cannot be obtained through a physician in the community. With a goal of increasing access to these services for those eligible individuals living in the northeast communities, family planning has consolidated services from the former Forest Lawn and Sunridge sites to Sunridge Professional Building, Suite 406, 2675-36 St. N.E. Expansion of service hours and Saturday clinics will allow clinical services to be accessed by more than 4,500 clients next year at this site.

Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation

Radiothon raises \$605,000 for children's hospital

A Radiothon to support the Alberta Children's Hospital has raised \$605,000.

The Country 105 Cares for Kids Radiothon Nov. 5 to 7 saw dozens of children, families and caregivers captivate listeners with stories of hope, help and healing at the Alberta Children's Hospital.

Deborah Apps, president and CEO of the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation, said the three-day event touched the hearts of all involved.

"We are extremely grateful for the generosity our community has shown in making our first ever Radiothon a wonderful success," said Apps. "We are especially thankful to Country 105 FM for all their efforts in supporting the Foundation

and the hospital."

Garry McKenzie, General Manager for Country 105 and Corus Radio in Calgary, described the Radiothon as an amazing experience.

"We were honoured to share our airwaves with such incredible children, families and caregivers," he said. "It really helped build a sense of community for us. And that's what Country 105 is all about."

On Friday, country music star Paul Brandt took part by co-hosting the morning and afternoon drive shows, in addition to debuting his new song *Hope*, which he dedicated to the hospital.

The hospital holds a special place in Brandt's heart, having been a nurse at the hospital before making it big in

the country music world. Brandt, who lives in Nashville, decided the song needed the vocal support of a children's choir, so he called on his former music teacher, Brian Farrell, and a group of elementary students from Master's Academy in Calgary to help him out.

"The faces of the children just lit up when they were singing this song – you could tell they knew they were doing this for an important reason," he stated.

Money raised from the Radiothon and the song *Hope* will go to the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation, which provides funding for innovative family-centred programs, state-of-the-art equipment, advanced medical training

and internationally recognized pediatric research.

"Paul and his wife Liz are special friends of the Foundation," said Apps. "They support the work of the Foundation in so many ways. We are thrilled at having such a beautiful song dedicated to our hospital and are even more excited at the opportunity of having the song debut as part of our first ever Radiothon."

Staff wishing to support the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation may purchase and download the song online from www.puretracks.com. For details, visit www.paulbrandt.com.

— Janet Mezzarobba
Communications

Anonymous \$1 million donation helps create thoracic centre

Calgary to become major centre for treating respiratory illnesses

An anonymous donation of \$1 million will pave the way for Calgary to become a major international centre for the treatment of respiratory illnesses.

The donation to the Calgary Health Trust will be used to create a Centre of Excellence for Multimodal Thoracic Endoscopy. The centre will provide patients with respiratory illnesses such as lung cancer and pulmonary hypertension new diagnostic options not currently available in Canada.

One example is pulmonary angiography – a procedure that uses a telescope to look at blood vessels in the lungs. San Diego, Calif., is the only centre worldwide that performs pulmonary angiography, but by 2005, the Calgary Health Region will be able to offer this procedure.

"Once created, we will become a nationally and internationally renowned centre," said Dr. Chris Mody, Head of Respiratory Medicine for the Calgary Health Region. "New equipment will allow us to practice the most recent techniques so that we will be a leader in thoracic endoscopy research and innovation."

Rachele James is one patient who will benefit from the new centre. "I traveled to San Diego for surgery on the blood clots in my lungs," said James, a patient who required treatment for pulmonary vascular disease. "While the care I received was excellent, it was difficult to be away from home. By having a centre where these procedures can be performed in Calgary, it will be more convenient and easier on patients as well as their families."

Among other things, the new equipment to be acquired by the Region will provide more detailed images of the airway with a precision that was unimaginable five years ago. It will also allow procedures that are more effective and less painful for patients. Some of these procedures will be done on an outpatient basis instead of surgery requiring overnight stays, increasing patient comfort and reducing costs.

"Without the generosity of this donor, the creation of this centre would not be possible and the Calgary Health Region would not be able to recruit the kind of world class leadership that this centre requires," said Eva Friesen, chief executive officer for the Calgary Health Trust. "This is a great example of how a donor's passion and commitment can be matched with the Region's needs."

The donation also means respirologists across Canada will be able to provide improved patient care.

"Respirologists will be invited to take part in thoracic endoscopy advanced training through a 12-month fellowship," said Dr. Douglas Helmersen, a respirologist who recently returned to Calgary after completing specialized training in San Diego. "Patients across the country will benefit from this centre."

Donors who would like to contribute to the Calgary Health Trust can call 943-0615.

— Robyn Bellavance
Communications



Former patient Rachele James with Dr. Douglas Helmersen at PLC.

Maja Swannie Photography

New flu strain no reason to panic

Calgary Health Region employees have no reason to fear a new strain of influenza making its way across the country.

Dr. Judy Macdonald, deputy medical officer of health for the Calgary Health Region, said A/Fujian influenza, which has been linked to several deaths this year, is no more dangerous than the more common types of flu.

This year, hospitals and clinics have been responding to an increased number of patients coming in with flu-like symptoms.

A/Fujian is related to A/Panama, the dominant form of influenza. While this year's flu shot doesn't contain A/Fujian, it does contain A/Panama, a similar enough strain that will either prevent flu or weaken the symptoms. When virus mutations happen, new strains are particularly hard on children as their immune systems are not effective in fighting back.

While flu strains may be mutating, the overall message remains the same. Get vaccinated, wash your hands often and thoroughly, eat properly, get lots of rest, be smoke free, reduce alcohol consumption, keep your hands away from your face and get plenty of fresh air. If you have an unusually high fever, severe headache, cough or sore throat, see your doctor.

Influenza and the complications it triggers, such as pneumonia, kill hundreds of Canadians each year. Health Canada says that on average 500 to 1,500 people die annually from the flu. The elderly and people with chronic ailments are most vulnerable, especially those with heart and lung diseases.

— Veronica Scott
Communications

"Get vaccinated, wash your hands often and thoroughly, eat properly, get lots of rest, be smoke free, reduce alcohol consumption, keep your hands away from your face and get plenty of fresh air."

Innovative operation broadcast live to 3,000 MDs in New York

With 3,000 surgeons in New York looking over his shoulder via a live broadcast from Calgary on Nov. 21, Dr. Randy Moore demonstrated a new technique for repairing an aortic dissection – the condition that claimed the life of actor John Ritter.

With the new technique, patients are likely to have better outcomes and can recover more quickly. The surgery using this technology has a one per cent death rate and one per cent paralysis rate compared to a 20 per cent death rate and 40 per cent paralysis rate with open-heart surgery, the

previous treatment for aortic dissection. Patients can expect a two-to-three-week recovery with the new procedure, compared to the six-month recovery time with open-heart surgery.

Working with a multidisciplinary team of doctors and nurses, Dr. Moore completed the procedure to repair a tear in the wall of the patient's aorta in about one hour at the Peter Lougheed Centre. The patient is reported to be doing well.

The operation was broadcast to more than 3,000 endovascular surgeons attending the Veith Endovascular Symposium – the largest meeting

of its kind held each year at Columbia University in New York.

"Since 1999, we've been using a new type of endovascular stent graft that repairs aortic dissection. Very few surgeons currently use this technology, so we're considered veterans in this field," says Dr. Moore, of the minimally invasive procedure, which sends the stent graft through main arteries to repair aortic dissection.

The stent graft is only available in a few locations in the world. Besides Australia and the Cleveland Center in the United States, Canada

is the only other country using the new technology, with Calgary leading the pack in experience with this technique.

"We're considered world leaders. We've already used the endovascular stent graft on 62 patients to date," says Dr. Moore.

Dr. Moore's team of vascular surgeons included Dr. Greg Samis and Dr. Paul Petrusek, interventional radiologist Dr. Peter Bromley, and echocardiologists Dr. Gary Dobson and Dr. Nanette Alvarez.

— Robyn Bellavance
Communications



Dr. Randy Moore

in the loop

The ultimate gift



GEOFFREY VANDERBURG
FRONTLINES EDITOR

Even though most people recognize that organ donations save lives, there's a scarcity of organs. In fact, there are more than 3,000 Canadians, including 400 Albertans, on the waiting list.

Co-ordinators from the Calgary Health Region's Human Organ Procurement and Exchange (HOPE)

Program work closely with the Southern Alberta Tissue Program and the Southern Alberta Transplant program to co-ordinate organ and tissue donations in Southern Alberta.

They're working hard to educate the public and health care professionals about organ and tissue donations. They say the demand for organs is not being met due to a number of factors. For one, you may wish to donate, but whether donation occurs is dependent on your next of kin. Consent is obtained from next of kin prior to recovery of organs or tissues.

About 140 people nationwide die each year before receiving a transplant. As our families gather to celebrate the season, let's take the time to talk about giving the gift of life.

For information, contact the HOPE team at 944-8700.

What's Up

THE CALGARY HEALTH TRUST is the catalyst that enables donors to actively and meaningfully participate in helping advance the Calgary Health Region's vision of becoming the healthiest population in Canada. Among the ways in which the health trust fulfills its role is through fundraising events such as the following:

- Zoolights: Now through Jan. 3. Join the Calgary Health Trust and the Calgary Zoo for a light display that will support both wildlife conservation and health promotion.

- Carewest FunDFest: Jan. 15, 2004, Fairmont Palliser Hotel. A fabulous black-tie dinner with entertainment, silent auction and special guest speaker, Peter Jordan from CBC television's *It's A Living*. All funds raised support palliative care at Carewest.

- Funny Bone Comedy Night: Feb. 26, 2004, Quincy's on Seventh. Gather for an evening of comedy and laughter in support of the Peter Lougheed Centre.

For more information on Calgary Health Trust events, please call 943-0615.

OSTEOPOROSIS UPDATE will present the latest research in the areas of mechanical loading, bone quality, bone strength, exercise prescription and the clinical implications of these findings. This is a collaborative program with Rheumatology, U of A Hospital, Edmonton and the Grace Osteoporosis

Centre, Mar. 2, 1230-1900h, at Southport. Registration is \$75. Registration information available from Maureen Sexsmith, Grace Osteoporosis Centre, 944-1883. Registration is limited.

The Winter/Spring 2004 **CPR AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION** schedules are now available on the Learning & Development website. Effective January 2004, the class time for Compulsory Education will be 0730 - 1300h as two new topics, waste management and spill response, will be added. To register, call SAIT at 210-4291. For information, contact Anita Mitzner in Learning & Development at 943-0438.

PALLIATIVE CARE UPDATES, Feb. 5 to 8, 2004, is at the Banff Park Lodge in Banff. Keynote speakers include Dr. Stein Kaasa (Norway) and Dr. Steven Passik (USA). Visit www.cme.ucalgary.ca/courses/9104180.html. Call Andrea Kinloch at 220-3988 or kinloch@ucalgary.ca.

THE OH&S WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAM is taking registrations for winter programming. The winter brochure is available at acute care OH&S offices, in display racks and on the internal web. Wellness will be moving to a new location in January 2004. To make sure we process your registration accurately, deadline for winter registrations will be Jan. 2, 2004. Call 943-1450.

THE DIVERSITY PROGRAM at ACH invites you to celebrate The Festival of Lights display for Hanukkah (a Jewish Festival) and Christmas (a

Christian Festival) from Dec. 22 to 26. The booth will be staffed on Dec 22 and 23 from 1000-1300h. The Diversity Program staff would like to extend its thanks to all those who provided artifacts for Ramadan (the Muslim Festival) in November.

Calgary Chapter of the **ALBERTA GERONTOLOGICAL NURSES ASSOCIATION** is hosting a three-month free lecture series for registered nurses on care of the older adult. Organizational meeting is Jan. 5, 1900h, Bethany Calgary Link Auditorium. Lecture series will begin Jan. 12, 1900h, Bethany Calgary Link Auditorium.

DEALING WITH DIABETES - The Highs and the Lows, Jan. 22, Red & White Club (north end of McMahon Stadium). Guest parking on the east side of McMahon Stadium. Pre-registration required. Functional centre numbers accepted. Cost is \$50. Breakfast and lunch provided. Call Kelly St. Germain at 944-1643. Limited registration accepted until Jan. 16.

Dr. Gene Flessati, a psychologist at **PSYCHIATRIC OUTPATIENT SERVICES** at Peter Lougheed Centre, is a regular guest on A-Channel's *The Big Breakfast*. Dr. Flessati discusses diverse mental health topics such as helping kids cope with stress, strategies to deal with temper tantrums, effective treatments for anxiety and phobias and Shy Bladder Syndrome. Watch for his appearance on Dec. 29 when he offers tips for making and keeping New Year's resolutions.

Patient returns to thank staff for the care of her angel Gabriel

SCENE in the REGION

The life of a baby who died shortly after birth and the compassion of the staff who cared for the family were celebrated at the Peter Lougheed Centre in November as part of the hospital's annual staff recognition day.

Early in her pregnancy, Jean Lucas went for an amniocentesis - a procedure that can diagnose chromosomal abnormalities. She wanted to rule out the possibility of Down's Syndrome. The baby didn't have it, but doctors discovered he had a different chromosomal disorder that meant his heart wasn't developing as it should. The baby wasn't expected to survive the pregnancy, and if he did, Jean and her husband Chris were told his chances for survival were low.

The Lucases decided to let the pregnancy develop naturally. As things progressed, the couple met with staff to determine the best way to bring their child into the world. Their baby would be named Gabriel.

"The staff was amazing," said Lucas, who gave birth on April 8. "We met with a doctor to outline our wishes and our plan was communicated to the nurses and the obstetrician. A very important wish for me was to have Gabriel immediately placed on my chest after his birth, instead of being taken away to be assessed. It was a sad but wonderful experience. He lived for an hour and a half and we got to spend that time as a family."

In November, just over a year after the amniocentesis, the Lucases returned to the Peter Lougheed Centre to say thank you to those who cared for their family. Kerry Duval and Annette Fex were the two primary care nurses who were by the family's side during and following the birth.

"The care we received from Kerry and Annette went beyond our expectations. We realized it was



Nurse Kerry Duval, dad Chris Lucas, baby Liam, and mom Jean Lucas.

Maja Swannie Photography

hard on them as well, but they cared for us in a way that made it easy. Their compassion and genuine concern was apparent," said Lucas.

"I tried to support Jean's wishes by staying close, but making sure the family had their own experience. It was a difficult night," said Duval, who's been a nurse for just over two years.

Annette Fex has been a nurse for 23 years and knows it's never easy on a family when there's a loss. The impact of such a loss may be lessened somewhat by the care and compassion of the team on Unit 35A at the Peter Lougheed. "This is one of the only units when one of the happiest times in a parent's life can also be the saddest. We just try to keep the family as comfortable as they can be by listening and feeling emotions with the family," she said.

To help the Lucases and the staff with the loss, social workers were involved early on and during the Lucases'

stay in the hospital. The Region's Pregnancy and Infant Loss Program is designed to help parents cope.

"Our program helps parents say hello to their baby before they say goodbye," said Lucy Pascal, a social worker with the program who was there for the family during their hospital stay. "We encourage parents who experience the death of their baby during pregnancy or shortly after delivery to create memories. This means naming the baby, keeping a lock of hair, taking photos and other activities that validate that the baby had an impact in the lives of the family."

Jean Lucas and her family continue to celebrate Gabriel's life. The family recently adopted a son, Liam Jaden, who was born on Sept. 29 - the Feast of St. Gabriel.

Staff recognition day is held annually at the Peter Lougheed Centre during the Region's Employee Recognition Week.

Congrats & Thanks

Learning & Development congratulates the prize winners of the Career Development Week promotion in November.

- Mary Widas, RN, Unit 51- PLC -will job shadow Dr. Francine Girard, VP professional practice, research & chief nursing officer for four hours.
- Deanna Dillabough, Transfusion Medicine, FMC - won the learning basket worth \$250
- Joanne McNair, RN, instructor, Day Surgery, RGH - won a \$200 computer course from Polar Bear Campus

Merry Christmas and an enormous thank you to the nurse preceptors, patient care managers and other health-care professionals who have supported our nursing students at the University of Calgary during the past year! Your enthusiasm, energy and experience have enriched our students' clinical learning in invaluable ways. We extend our gratitude and warmest wishes for a memorable and meaningful holiday season with family and friends.

The faculty of nursing, University of Calgary

David A. Hanley, MD, FRCPC, has won the Osteoporosis Society of Canada Volunteer of Distinction Award. The award is given to one person each year in Canada. It honours an exceptional

individual who has made superior and sustained contribution to the organization through outstanding contribution in numerous capacities, and as an exemplary leader within the organization and amongst his own peers. Further, this remarkable individual has acted as a catalyst for enduring change, furthering both the cause of osteoporosis and the Osteoporosis Society of Canada. Dr. Hanley is medical director of the Grace Osteoporosis Centre and a professor in the faculty of medicine at U of C.

The ninth draw of the *Big Money Rumble* was held Dec. 3 at the Calgary Health Trust. The winner of the cash prize of \$1,000 is Sandy Kruse, Payroll, Southport. Congratulations!

HELP PROMOTE HEALTH LINK TO YOUR PATIENTS AND CLIENTS!

WE'VE GOT POSTERS, TEAR-OFF BOOKMARKS, AND TENT CARDS.

CALL CHERRY MULLER AT 943-1518.

Fives Lines Free

For Sale: Fitness equipment, E-Force Cross Trainer, \$50; Total Body Gym, \$50 943-1423.

For Sale: Two seater chariot stroller/bike trailer. \$200 OBO. Call 263-5805 after 5:30 p.m.

For Sale: Afghans, knitted and crocheted oversized afghans, 1 beige, 1 multi-coloured granny squares and 2 multicoloured. \$75. Call Helen at 293-3608.

For Sale: Circle "Y" Western Saddles, excellent condition, 15112, chocolate, \$1,200; 16, tan, \$1,000 OBO. Call 995-9885.

Wanted: MS Word CD with certificate. Email Gaye.Laing@calgaryhealthregion.ca

For Sale: Unique wedding dress, size 6, white satin, tank-style, empire waist, A-line full-length with detachable train, elaborate beadwork at bodice, at hemline and on train hemline. \$500 OBO. Photos available. Call 403-802-2261.

Free: Kittens to give away to a loving home, 3 beautiful black and white kittens. Litter trained, 6 weeks old. Call Debra at 286-2337, or work 944-2415.

Wanted: Solid wood table wanted, seating minimum 4, maximum 6. The state of the table doesn't matter. Prefer solid hard wood, but will consider pine. Willing to pay up to \$50. Can pick up. Please call Sam at voice mail 943-7739.

To submit an item or for the complete list of Five Lines Free announcements, including vehicles for sale and homes for rent or purchase, please visit *News You Can Use* on the internal Web.

Wellness tip

For most healthy people, winter is no excuse to get cold feet about outdoor exercise. Staying indoors, and not getting enough fresh air, exercise and exposure to natural light, can lead to seasonal depression and general grumpiness. Our animal instincts say "hibernate." We tend to eat more and gain a few pounds. Regular exercise can help hoist us out of the winter blues and help us make friends with winter.

The Region's Workplace Wellness program is designed to help employees take ownership of their physical, mental and emotional well-being. For additional wellness tips, click on Workplace Wellness under Health Information on the internal web or call Barbara McKenna at 943-1449.