

Care to imagine: More support needed for caregivers

Markham, ON, November 19, 2007 – Imagine being thrust into the role of caregiver – having to care for an elderly parent or ill spouse, without any preparation, special skills or training. For more than three million Canadians caring for loved ones at home, this is an everyday reality.

Increasingly, informal caregivers are under tremendous strain to provide front-line care, juggle their family responsibilities and earn an income, while coping with the impact of caregiving on their lives.

“This is where our *Caregiver Support Program* comes in,” says Susanne Williams, chair of the Saint Elizabeth Health Care Foundation, a charitable not-for-profit foundation dedicated to addressing the critical need for increased resources in the area of informal caregiving. At no extra cost, this unique program supports caregivers on their own terms and on their own territory, providing them with caregiving tools, resources and expertise, as well as much-needed respite.

Since 1997, the Foundation has distributed more than **200,000 free caregiver books** nationally to families in need (a value of over **\$4.6 million**), and provided **20,000 hours** of relief/respite care completely free-of-charge to overburdened caregivers.

In an effort to make information and education as accessible as possible, the Foundation today launched a new e-learning program for caregivers, known as **@YourSide® Caregiver Support**. Offered on a charitable basis, at no cost to caregivers, the interactive CD-Rom includes comprehensive caregiving information, tools and tips for taking care of your loved one, your family and yourself.

According to Williams, the outcome is one that's truly beneficial to all: “Families are empowered with greater confidence and control. They're able to make the best choices, and provide the most appropriate care for their loved ones. And they feel cared for themselves. To us, that's care to imagine.”

As Saint Elizabeth Health Care (SEHC) prepares to celebrate its 100th Anniversary in 2008, the Foundation is poised to further extend its leadership in this area through high-profile fundraising events such as *The Imagination Ball*, a black-tie charity gala scheduled for October 4, 2008, at the Royal Ontario Museum. In addition to raising public awareness, proceeds from the evening will benefit the *Caregiver Support Program*.

“Since our beginnings in 1908, caregivers have been our partners in meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of individuals and families in their homes and communities,” says Shirlee Sharkey, president and CEO of SEHC. “In our drive to transform how families experience and access care, we are empowering them with the knowledge, confidence and control they need to care for their loved ones at home, while thinking about those providing the care as well.”

Saint Elizabeth Health Care (SEHC) is a Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization that shares its talent and wisdom nationally and internationally through direct care and service, consultation, and education and e-learning to support the transformation of care for families, health organizations and communities.

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Caregiver resources

@YourSide Caregiver Support

@YourSide® Caregiver Support is a computer-based (CD-Rom) e-learning program for caregivers. Some of the key features include comprehensive caregiving information, tools and tips for taking care of your loved one, your family and yourself. This supports enhanced communication with the care recipient's health care team.

Information and instructional publications

Sponsored by the SEHC Foundation and written by author Harry van Bommel, the following books are available to support caregivers:

- **Caring for Loved Ones at Home**
- **Family Hospice Care: Pre-Planning & Care Guide**



Helpful links

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca>

Community Care Access Centres

<http://www.ccac-ont.ca/>

Federal Compassionate Care Benefits (Employment Insurance)

http://hrdc.gc.ca/en/ei/types/compassionate_care.shtml

For more information

About Saint Elizabeth Health Care

At Saint Elizabeth Health Care, we're taking health care in a new direction. By combining the expertise of our nurses, therapists and home support teams with the latest thinking and communications technology, we're bringing new health care ideas, innovative services and knowledge to people when, how and where they choose. Care to be amazed!

About Saint Elizabeth Health Care Foundation

Building on a solid foundation, Saint Elizabeth Health Care established a separate charitable not-for-profit foundation in 1997. Inspired by the mission of Saint Elizabeth Health Care, the Foundation is dedicated to raising funds for the advancement of knowledge and charitable initiatives in home and community health care.



For more information, please contact the foundation:

Tel: 905.940.9655 ext. 6516

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www.saintelizabeth.com

Getting the help you need



Support & Resources for Caregivers

INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF CAREGIVERS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



www.saintelizabeth.com

About the program

Caregiving is a growing issue. Currently, more than 2.8 million Canadians (one in four aged 45 and over, and one in seven aged 25 and over) are caregivers to people with physical or mental limitations as well as chronic health conditions.

The *Caregiver Support Program* provides caregivers with the practical skills and supports necessary to more effectively manage the home care needs of their loved ones.

The program offers:

- caregiver relief services (respite care) free of charge to those most in need
- counselling and support for the caregiver, care recipient and/or other family members
- health care education that emphasizes health and stress management, prevention, holistic care and caregiving instruction.
- e-learning for caregivers and care recipients through the @YourSide® Caregiver Support CD-Rom
- publications and resources for caregivers



Benefits to caregivers:

- Services free of charge
- Easy access to helpful resources
- Superb health care education for caregivers and care recipients through the @YourSide® Caregiver Support CD-Rom
- Counselling and support



The outcome is one that's truly beneficial to all. Families are empowered with greater confidence and control. They're able to make the best choices, and provide the most appropriate care for their loved ones. And, they feel cared for themselves. To us, that's care to imagine.



Testimonials

"[The caregiver program] has been a godsend to me in helping with my mother's care. I work full-time and go to school part-time, and this would not have been possible without the extra time allowed by your generous support. I would like to thank the staff of Saint Elizabeth Health Care, who come into my home and help with my mother's care. They are the best and I don't know what I would do without them."

"I can speak from experience of the many ways that the Saint Elizabeth Health Care respite service has enabled me to survive. As a result of this support, I now have more time to attend to my own needs and those of my family."

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Why does the SEHC Foundation provide a Caregiver Support Program?

The *Caregiver Support Program* helps to alleviate pressure on the caregiver by providing them with essential tools, resources, expertise and respite (relief) care.

How is the SEHC Foundation Caregiver Support Program funded?

This initiative is funded entirely by charitable donations received from individuals, families, corporations and organizations in the community. This charitable support is crucial as it enables us to offer the program to participants completely free of charge.