

NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2025

Inspiring Journeys



A warm hello from Waypoint,

As we start this new season, I'm reflecting on all of the people supported in the community, at the hospital, and through virtual services over the past year.

Waypoint has kept pace with the increased demand for mental health, addiction, and geriatric care thanks to the leadership and innovation of our team members, community partners, volunteers, and generous donors like you.

To highlight the impact, I'm excited to share this issue of 'Inspiring Journeys' with you. Inside, you'll read about the dedication of our staff, hear from generous supporters, and experience a family member's heartfelt reflection on their journey with Waypoint. Thank you for being a part of this.

As we prepare to mark **Mental Health Month in May**, we have a number of virtual and in-person activities this year—including our annual **Mental Health in Motion** event on **May 31st at Waypoint**.

Like you, I'm looking forward to spending more time outdoors and having the opportunity to see many of you at Waypoint events this spring and summer—a chance to personally share our heartfelt thanks for all that you make possible.

With sincerest thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nadiya'.

Dr. Nadiya Sunderji
President & CEO



Waypoint

CENTRE for MENTAL HEALTH CARE
CENTRE de SOINS de SANTÉ MENTALE



Finding comfort and care: Dan and Dorothy's Waypoint story

Dan and Dorothy O'Brien, Waypoint Patient, Family and Donor

For Dan and Dorothy O'Brien, life was an adventure. The couple, now both 77, have been married 51 years. They met in their early 20s in Scarborough and enjoyed time together boating, dancing and travelling.

Five years ago, their journey took an unexpected turn when Dorothy noticed something was wrong. It started with small moments of confusion, such as when Dan suddenly became unsure of where they were while driving. Then came the day he packed a bag, intending to visit his parents at their old Toronto home — unaware they were no longer there. As his dementia progressed, outings became perilous.

"If we went out, he would try to get out of the car," Dorothy recalled. "It was dangerous." A loving wife, she poured herself into caring for her husband. By late 2023, however, Dorothy was exhausted and overwhelmed. When Dan required hospitalization, she agreed to transfer him to Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care. He was admitted to the Horizon Program for Geriatric Psychiatry, a secure and compassionate environment designed to support older adults with psychiatric disorders and dementia.

Dorothy said her husband, in addition to being the love of her life, is also her best friend. That makes his absence from their home all the more heartbreaking, but she is buoyed by the wonderful care he receives here at Waypoint. Horizon has offered Dan a structured routine filled with engaging activities such as music, dancing, drawing and baking.

"He seems happy, and everybody is so nice to him," Dorothy said. "I've never come here once when the staff weren't just the sweetest. My husband is being taken care of very, very well."

Dorothy knows firsthand how devastating mental health challenges can be for families, noting no one is immune from the possibility: "It could happen to anyone — even somebody in your family."

That is why she recently joined the ranks of Waypoint benefactors. Dorothy knows her generous donation will help us bring comfort and support to families with loved ones facing dementia and other mental health challenges, helping them navigate this journey with hope and strength. Your donation can also make a difference. Please consider supporting Waypoint today.

Dorothy O'Brien says a donation to Waypoint helps ensure Dan, and other patients continue receiving compassionate and professional care.

Local Heroes Support Those Who Need It Most

Lynne and Steve Duquette, Waypoint Donors

Waypoint has many heroes on staff, but few have invested more decades in service than Lynne Duquette. With 36 years of work starting as the first staff Pharmacist and later retiring as Director of Pharmacy, Lynne and her husband Steve have now transitioned into committed donors.

Lynne has seen a decrease in the stigma attached to mental health and an increase in understanding of the programs available to help people at all ages and stages in life. She credits Waypoint's growing reputation to the "better public awareness of the incredible impact of the Centre thanks to the work of staff in making deeper connections to the community through advocacy." Lynne says that "for example, when I started, there was no outpatient program – now we have a successful 'care in the community model' that changes everything."

Lynne says there is also more understanding of just how big the Waypoint catchment area is, "people need to know that this place is working hard to help everyone in so many communities."

These are just some of the reasons that Lynne and her husband Steve Duquette decided to become donors to Waypoint. In an extraordinary act of generosity and trust, they did not specify the use of their gift but rather left it up to Waypoint to choose the area of greatest need. Their investment became a matching challenge that resulted in even more funds being raised to help launch a new Emergency Fund for patients, to support patients when emergencies threaten to derail their path to recovery.

With a focus on supporting individuals and families in greatest need, the new Fund is meant to help in urgent, one-time situations where patients have nowhere else to turn for help and does not replace short or long-term solutions for assistance. With this 'just in time' helping hand, the Emergency Fund stabilizes the lives of those in crisis, allowing people to focus on their longer-term recovery and well-being.

As donors, Lynne and Steve Duquette have stepped up in a way that is quite rare right now. They both agree that "by sharing our story, we hope others will be inspired to get involved."

With his own wealth advisory team that operates from Midland, Steve Duquette says that "we've all seen that, especially since Covid, so many people are struggling and need help – that's where Waypoint comes in. Mental health can be a big challenge for everyone from youth to seniors."

Steve and Lynne want donors to know that "small or large gifts, or time spent volunteering is truly going to make a big difference. Mental health is just one other dimension of health, and as a community we need donors to get involved." Lynne adds, "you can make positive change and help to build a closer community – you can see the results." With a smile she notes, "and it's good to be reminded that you can even boost your own mental health as a donor or volunteer."





Join us in celebrating **Mental Health Month** this May!

Mental Health Month is a time to raise awareness, break the stigma, and prioritize well-being. At Waypoint Centre, we believe that mental health is just as important as physical health. That's why we're inviting you to join us for engaging virtual and in-person events, inspiring conversations, and wellness activities designed to support you and your loved ones.

Your mental health matters. Whether you're looking to learn more, or simply want to be part of a caring community, there's something for everyone.

Here's what's happening in May:

- Workshops & Webinars – Learn about managing stress, self-care, and building resilience.
- Community Gatherings – Connect with others through events and mindfulness sessions that promote physical activity and well-being.
- Sharing & Awareness – Help break the stigma by sharing experiences and learning from others.

Visit www.mentalhealthmonth.ca to see the full schedule and join us in making mental health a priority!

This May, let's lift each other up and celebrate the strength found in community.



SCAN HERE



Mental Health in Motion is back on the gorgeous grounds of Waypoint



Mark your calendar for May 31st!

That's when this year's **Mental Health in Motion** event happens at Waypoint.



SCAN HERE

Bring your friends and family and join us for:

- 1k and 5k walk or run
- BBQ
- KidsZone with fun activities
- Dunk tank
- Scavenger Hunt
- And prizes

To register and attend this active and fun-filled day visit www.mentalhealthinmotion.ca

"Life is busy and can be stressful. Incorporating fitness or any physical activity into your day-to-day structure is a healthy routine that enhances our well-being."

Waypoint's Mental Health in Motion is a great reminder for us to engage in physical activity to help support our mental health well-being not just during this campaign but to make it part of our everyday."

Avery Bassett,
Mental Health in Motion attendee and long-time supporter





Myth Busting to Create Positive Change

**Vittoria Trainer,
Employment Specialist, Rehabilitation Services Waypoint**

"One of the things I really love is myth-busting about what patients can contribute to the community – and showcasing just how important programs like this are," says Vittoria Trainer. Vittoria knows about the rehabilitation programs at Waypoint, having worked in both the recreation and vocational employment skills training programs.

As one of the many extraordinary staff members at Waypoint she says, "since 2015, I've worked with patients to support their recovery, build self-esteem, and help them when they may be ready to rejoin the larger community." Vittoria Trainer has witnessed first-hand what impact tailored employment rehabilitation plans can have on the unique needs and aspirations of determined patients. She says that "we have so many dedicated staff, who make good things happen for the people we serve every day."

Vittoria says that while food and housing and medication keeps the body alive, "it is work and recreation that keeps clients truly alive and interacting with others. Employment skills training provides meaning, goals, and skills that lead to a sense of pride. We work to help patients know that they're a valued part of a group, and important part of a larger community."

While mental health treatment has come a very long way, and better understanding has improved through experience, research, and many advances in medicine, people diagnosed with mental health issues can suffer from the negative stigma associated with that condition. No one asks to have a mental illness and there is no productive use to blame people or somehow hold them responsible for something out of their control.

Vittoria knows firsthand how people see physical illness so differently from mental illness. When she was diagnosed and being treated for breast cancer, she was surrounded by friends and family offering sympathy and support. That isn't always the case for people diagnosed with a mental illness.

She says that "Vocational services had the opportunity to sell their patient made products such as wooden charcuterie boards, braided leather bracelets and wet felted mittens at a local event and people were amazed at the quality and creativity of the items for sale. The community was happy to buy knowing all the funds go directly back to Patient programming."

Donor contributions play a pivotal role in enhancing the reach and effectiveness of Waypoint programs. When people make a gift, they help to create opportunities that can help people thrive. At Waypoint, a gift of any amount will help to buy more and better work materials – and provide the opportunities to grow that can make a huge difference in people's lives.

And the impact? Employment skills training and rehabilitation can change people's lives. The staff at Waypoint see this happen all the time. With help, many people can turn themselves around and see the world and their possibilities for the future in a new way.



Take Your Place at Waypoint

Tribute gifts are a meaningful way to honour, remember or celebrate a loved one and create a memory that lasts a lifetime.

Is there someone in your life that you would like to honour or celebrate? If you have been touched by the care and treatment offered at Waypoint as a patient, family member, volunteer, or employee, adopting a tree or bench can be the perfect way to honour a loved one, family member, or celebrate a milestone that will last for many years to come.

Your bench will have a wonderful view no matter which one you choose and can be drenched in sunlight or in a spot in the shade. Imagine sitting on your bench with the words you've chosen to inscribe on your plaque. You may select your bench location from available sites across Waypoint's beautiful property.

Your tree may be a favourite that you've walked by on several occasions. Or, you can choose one in a spot that has the best view of the water, where it will grow strong over the years. Either way, it will be a living memory that will last for generations to come.

Waypoint's grounds are home to places where hope and healing happen within the setting of 100 acres of magnificent natural forest on the shores of Georgian Bay. With sweeping views of nature and peaceful water scenes, your tree or bench will be part of Waypoint's landscape.

- \$750 for a tree
- \$1,000 for a bench

Each bench or tree will have a personalized plaque for your dedication. While it can take up to eight weeks for the plaque to be installed, a personalized certificate can be provided immediately to notify the recipient that a bench or tree has been adopted in their honour.

Donations for benches and trees receive a charitable tax receipt for 100% of the amount.

To learn more, please contact Fund Development at 705 549 3181 ext. 2073, or by email at donate@waypointcentre.ca.

Information & Resources

Need Help?

- 9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline. You're not alone. Call or text 9-8-8.
- Speak with your primary care provider about a [referral](#).
- Visit your local emergency department for urgent care.

For Your Mental Health

- [Ontario Structured Psychotherapy](#).
- [ldoor.ca](#)
- [Rapid Access Addiction Medicine \(RAAM\) Clinics](#)
- [Quick Access Counselling Clinic for children, youth and their families](#)

In the News

- [Waypoint staff help patient return to Nunavut](#)
- [Patient giving back to Waypoint program that saved his life](#)
- [A focus on stress](#)
- [Waypoint helps clients drive toward independence](#)
- [Striking a chord: Changing brain chemistry through music](#)
- [Patient's wife grateful to staff for dignified, compassionate care](#)
- [Past Waypoint Talks and Newsletters](#)

Events

- **[Mental Health Month - May 2025](#)** - a powerful movement of awareness, engagement, and community support with activities all month long
- **[Orange Door Project - May 27 to June 22 at Midland Home Depot](#)** - All funds raised support local youth through the North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub
- **[Mental Health in Motion - Saturday May 31 at Waypoint](#)** (500 Church Street, Penetanguishene)
- **[Report to the Community - June 20 at Waypoint](#)** (500 Church Street, Penetanguishene)
- **[InSPIRE 2025 Conference - June 3-4](#)** at the [Village Conference Centre](#) in Blue Mountain
- **[An Evening to Shine the Light - Nov 21](#)** at the Midland Cultural Centre

Ways to Support

- **[You can make a donation](#)** - waypointcentre.ca/get-involved/donate/ways-to-give
- **[You can become a volunteer](#)** - Contact Diane Desroches, Talent and Volunteer Services Coordinator dledesroches@waypointcentre.ca | 705-549-3181 ext. 2219

