

CapitalCare Dickinsfield continues to reinvent itself to keep up with modern times and the increasing complexity of continuing care.



Clients of the CHOICE program at Dickinsfield

CapitalCare Dickinsfield: Then and Now

WHEN THE DICKINSFIELD EXTENDED CARE CENTRE

opened in 1979, it was a state-of-the-art building that set a new standard for long-term care facilities.

As the first facility in Alberta to combine auxiliary hospital and nursing home levels of care in a home-like setting, Dickinsfield led the way with establishing specialized units and programs to accommodate entirely new populations of people needing long-term care.

Thirty-four years later, CapitalCare Dickinsfield has earned its reputation for providing quality long-term care for both young and elderly adults, and is modernizing its once award-winning building to pave the way for its latest endeavor – person-centred care.

Victoria Anderson explains.

IN THE 70S, Edmonton had experienced a major construction boom. Between 1971 and 1978 the city had built Commonwealth Stadium, the Edmonton Coliseum, the Muttart Conservatory, and the

Kinsmen Sports Centre. By the end of the decade, it seemed as though Edmonton had it all.

However CapitalCare, then-Hospital District #24 and already operating three auxiliary hospitals and the new Angus McGugan Nursing Home, had identified a need for a long-term care facility on the north side.



Hospital District #24 trustee William Lobay (left) with Roger and Dorothy Parker.

In 1974, Roger Parker, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, approved planning for the new Dickinsfield Extended Care Centre. The idea was to integrate

auxiliary hospital care – the highest level of continuing care – with nursing home level care, in one, less institutional and more home-like setting. Combining these two levels of care meant that residents would not have to relocate as their medical conditions changed.

On May 28, 1979, the 300-bed Dickinsfield Extended Care Centre officially opened its' doors. Not only did the centre offer the only integrated care in Alberta, it also boasted an impressive rehabilitation centre, including a pool where residents could work on muscle therapy.



Care manager Connie Bleau, then a recreation attendant, works with residents in the pool that used to be a part of Dickinsfield's rehabilitation centre.



Dickinsfield's rehabilitation centre

Dickinsfield also had an on-site pharmacy, which dispensed pharmaceuticals for all of CapitalCare's sites, a warehouse (called Stores) for materials used by the centres, and heated underground parking for staff. The building was so impressive it earned the 1979 Architectural Award from the City of Edmonton.

The Staff

Many staff for the new centre came from CapitalCare's three other centres.

Nursing attendant Adrien Mortensen recently celebrated 35 years of employment with CapitalCare. She joined Dickinsfield a



Nursing attendant Adrien Mortensen receiving her award for 35 years of service on May 16, 2013.

week before it opened and remembers spending her first days on the job cleaning the building from the construction, then admitting 10 residents a day to unit Main C/D.

"It was hard work," she recalls, "but it was fun too because the building was so new."

The Residents

Years later, Adrien still enjoys working with the dementia population because of the "little things" that happen while caring for someone that make her feel valued and appreciated.



Married couples could live together at Dickinsfield.

Adrien recalls that among the first residents to be admitted was a married couple. One advantage of the two levels of care at Dick-

insfield was that married couples with differing needs could remain together.

Betty Kolewaski is the current administrator of Dickinsfield. She says that there are currently four couples residing at Dickinsfield.



George and Anita met on the Young Adult Unit at Dickinsfield, and were married there in 1994.

"We've worked with couples who have been separated and placed in different care centres, and brought them back together here," Betty confides. She says that "it's too hard for them to be separated at this later stage in their life."

The Auxiliary

Besides its state-of-the-art building and trained staff, Dickinsfield benefitted from the efforts of a core group of dedicated volun-



The Dickinsfield Auxiliary with original member Myrna Bridges (far left) in the Tuck Shop.

teers, including the Dickinsfield Auxiliary.

The original Ladies Auxiliary formed three months prior to the centre opening and had already swung into action assisting staff members with admissions, then conducting tours and serving tea to guests on opening day.

Myrna Bridges, an original member of the Ladies Auxiliary and now the current president, was instrumental in establishing the Tuck Shop, a shop run by the auxiliary that sells personal amenities such as shampoo and deodorant, as well as small gift items. Tuck shops have always been a way for Auxiliaries to generate funds to provide residents with extra amenities that government funding does not cover.

Since their formation, the Dickinsfield Auxiliary has provided funds for pianos, a resident bus, and a chapel among many other things. Now the Auxiliary is helping to raise funds for resident dining room renovations.

Ruby Reedman is an Administrative Support Clerk at Dickinsfield, and is also currently serving as the Coordinator for Volunteer Services. She says she can't imagine Dickinsfield being without their beloved auxiliary.

"We cannot do without their support, and every day that they continue to serve CapitalCare Dickinsfield is a blessing for our residents and ourselves; so often they are the unsung heroes who work very hard to improve the lives of our residents."

The Young Adult Unit

In the 1980s long-term care in Alberta started to head in new directions. Programs were developed for specialized popula-

tions and Dickinsfield's home-like setting made it an ideal setting for young adults with disabilities.

In 1984, Dickinsfield opened the Young Adult Unit (YAU), one of only two such units in the province and a first for CapitalCare.



The original furnishings at Dickinsfield were very home like.

To accommodate the unique interests and more active lifestyles of a younger population, Dickinsfield adopted a look and feel that was more rec room than nursing home; plush carpeting, wood paneling, sofa sets, coffee tables, fireplaces and even shuffleboard started to make their way into the centre's décor.

In Dickinsfield's auditorium, residents could gather to watch



A resident from the Young Adult Unit gets a visit from Edmonton Oiler Theo Peckham.

the Oilers and the Eskimos rather than Lawrence Welk, play wheelchair floor hockey, and dance. The young and old mixed at pub nights in the centre's social club, The Great Escape, and staff volunteered to serve drinks.



Staff members volunteer their services at Dickinsfield pub - the Great Escape - for a Valentine's Day dance.

Connie Bleau has worked at Dickinsfield since 1986. She started as a STEP student in recreation therapy, and managed seven different departments before becoming Care Manager.

She recalls taking residents of the YAU on different trips. "We took some of the residents on a trip to Las Vegas, and we took some of them to Expo 86. Those were nice experiences for them."

Community Programs

If the 80s were about expanding nursing support to specialized populations, then the 90s were about expanding nursing care and services to the community.

In 1993, Dickinsfield led the way by introducing the Young Adult Day Support (YADS) program. This program enabled participants between the ages of 18 and 55 to come to the centre for social and rehabilitative activities, while still living at home and maintaining their independence.

Then, in 1996, CapitalCare (known then as The Capital Care

Group) took the concept of caring for young adults to the next level by opening the Young Adult Duplexes – care homes in the community – as a satellite of Dickinsfield.

Fourteen residents from the YAU who could live with more independence were moved to the Duplexes, located in a residential neighborhood on Edmonton’s north side.



Residents of the Young Adult Duplexes enjoy their spacious yard.

Trish McGrath, Manager of CHOICE and Community Programs, explains what makes the program so unique. “It’s specifically for younger adults who are active and want to be engaged in the community. It really feels like a home for the 14 residents who live there.”

That same year, Dickinsfield began operating CapitalCare’s first CHOICE (Comprehensive



Trish McGrath with participants in the CHOICE program.

Home Option of Integrated Care) program, a day program designed to help seniors stay in their own homes longer. Participants travel by bus to the CHOICE centre where they can socialize with other seniors, participate in activities and get support for their medical needs.

Keeping up with the times

Thirty some years later, and since the advent of smaller, more residential long-term care facilities, Dickinsfield continues to reinvent itself to keep up with modern times and the increasing complexity of continuing care.



Pharmacist Lynn Salanchy received her award for 30 years of service on May 16, 2013.

Lynn Salanchy is a clinical pharmacist at Dickinsfield and recently celebrated 30 years of service with CapitalCare. She says technology has improved efficiency in the busy pharmacy.

“We would not have been able to do the work we do now with the low-tech resources we had back then,” says Lynn.

Practical Nurse Training

In 2008, when materials management services were amalgamated with Alberta Health Services,

the closure of the old Stores space made way for another CapitalCare innovation: a classroom in a continuing care centre.



NorQuest’s Practical Nurse training program, held in a classroom at CapitalCare Dickinsfield.

CapitalCare, in partnership with NorQuest College, now offers the Practical Nurse training program at Dickinsfield.

Students and residents alike benefit from the daily contact and students gain practical experience in the continuing care sector.



Lynnette Drouin was a student in Dickinsfield’s LPN program.

Several graduates of the program have gone on to work at Dickinsfield or other continuing care centres.

The program is one way CapitalCare and NorQuest are ensuring a competent future workforce for the continuing care sector.

Dining Room Renovations



CEO Iris Neumann (right) tours one of the dining room construction sites with (from left) Administrator Betty Kolewaski, MLA Janice Sarich, and Culture Minister Heather Klimchuk.

Currently Dickinsfield is one of three aging CapitalCare centres renovating its dining rooms with funds raised by the CapitalCare Foundation's *Cooking Up Quality of Life* campaign. The first of nine new dining rooms was unveiled at the end of June.



New dining rooms at Dickinsfield.

Culture Change

The biggest change at Dickinsfield in recent years however is not to the physical structure, but rather in the culture of care. Dickinsfield, along with all CapitalCare centres, is embarking on a new journey towards person-centred care.

Person-centered care puts the emphasis on the wholistic needs

of residents, while still providing for their medical needs. The idea is that continuing care facilities should not just be home-like, but a resident's true home for their remaining years.

Betty Kolewaski believes person-centred care is an important initiative because it restores the resident's quality of life.

"When residents have had so many things taken away from them, it's nice to give them as much independence and choice as we can."

Karen Dixon's mother Jean currently lives at Dickinsfield. At first glance, Karen admits she was put off by the building's age. Then she got to know the staff and witnessed the effect of person-centred care on her mother's well-being.

"I love that they accommodated all of mom's needs and 'isms'. They were gentle, warm, and kind, and they're hopefully who might take care of me one day."



Dickinsfield resident Rose Chow celebrating her 103rd birthday.

Meal Enhancement

In conjunction with the dining room renovations, Dickinsfield is

changing its meal service to become more person-centred.

"Everybody looks forward to mealtimes, especially our residents," says Betty. "It's the single biggest change we can make to improve their quality of life, and that's what residents and families want most from us."



Larry Ostapiuk has been a cook at Dickinsfield since 1981.

Larry Ostapiuk has been cooking the meals for residents at Dickinsfield since 1981. He takes pride in preparing personalized meals for residents.

"Whether it's lactose-free, gluten-free, vegetarian meals, you name it, it's worth it if it means residents eat food they like."

Larry remembers how one resident thanked him for his work: "She said 'remember, you are not people who are simply doing a job, you are doing a job that takes care of people.'"

One thing that hasn't changed at Dickinsfield since it first opened its doors is its commitment to caring.

"Over the years we've made a difference in people's lives and for staff, there's great satisfaction in that," says Lynn Salanchy.

"I'm always happy when I can do something that makes a resident's life better, even if it's only for a short time."