

THE ONTARIO LONG TERM CARE ASSOCIATION MORNING REPORT

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Long-Term Care Sector Rallies to Support Haiti Crisis

Homes across the province holding luncheons, bake sales and clothing drives to bolster relief effort



Impressed by residents, families and staff members contributions, the Kensington Health Centre Foundation's board of directors donated \$25,000 to World Vision's Haiti relief efforts.

When Kathy Lashley first approached staff members and residents at Kensington Health Centre following the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti, the director of client services had no idea her actions would catalyze a tremendous outpour of support, with donations totalling more than \$29,000.

It all started with the north building's residents' council, which upon hearing the news, immediately pledged \$500. Hugh Jackson, president of the north building's residents' council, then asked the south building's residents' council to match the donation — which it did.

Staff members and families also responded with abundant support, with staff donating a minimum of \$2 to wear jeans to work and

families offering monetary donations. Approximately \$3,000 was raised through these efforts.

Raising a total of \$4,000 in a very short time frame was the source of inspiration for the home's board of directors, which unanimously passed the resolution to donate \$25,000 to World Vision's Haiti relief efforts.

"I am so very proud of our residents for leading the charge," says Bill O'Neill, the home's executive director.

While this event represents a significant contribution to Haiti

relief efforts from long-term care, it is one of the many donations and fundraisers that are highlighting the sector's commitment to social contribution and community.

Long-term care homes across the province have been holding fundraisers in numerous forms including luncheons, bake sales and clothing drives.

Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) president Grace Sweatman is commending the variety of ways long-term care is stepping up to the plate to assist others in their time of need.

"Once again OLTCA members have the opportunity to confirm their active participation in the community and caring for others," she says.

Long-Term Care Responding to the Crisis:

OMNI Health Care:

Several of OMNI long-term care homes in eastern Ontario have a significant Haitian community and the Jan. 12 earthquake has affected the families of some staff members working in these homes, according to Garden Terrace administrator Carolyn Della Foresta.

In the days following the earthquake Della Foresta contacted OMNI president and CEO Patrick McCarthy to keep him up to date on how the home's Haitian staff members were dealing with the tragedy and to inform him that eastern homes are raising money for the relief effort.

McCarthy responded via e-mail by offering OMNI's support and to inform Della Foresta that the organization will double match contributions up to \$2,000.

Della Foresta says this type of camaraderie is part and parcel of what belonging to the OMNI family is all about.

"This has reminded me of the heart we all have, the fact that we all care and we all want to give something, and that we are a family," she says.

Country Terrace, near London, also held a fundraiser to benefit the Caribbean nation. Dubbed the Have a Heart for Haiti initiative, the fundraiser has raised more than \$300 to date.



Country Terrace resident Helen Van Stavoren and life enrichment aide Christine Moore pose in front of a map of Haiti designed by Moore. The map displays the names of those who have donated to the Have a Heart for Haiti initiative.

Leisureworld:

Leisureworld O'Connor Court hosted a Haitian Earthquake Relief fundraiser Jan. 20, offering breakfast of a muffin, bagel and a coffee for \$2 and collecting clothing donations to send to Haiti.

Sharon Steele, the Toronto long-term care home's senior director of administration, says the home decided to hold the event after watching the countless news reports highlighting the level of need currently in Haiti.

"We all just said, 'You know we have got to do something,'" says Steele. "We are all very much into community, we are all very much into helping people and we just felt like it was the right thing to do."

Leisureworld's corporate office is applauding O'Connor Court and everyone else who is



Leisureworld residents and staff members held a day-long fundraiser to raise money for the devastated Caribbean nation.

taking initiative to help those in need by responding with an offer to match fundraising efforts up to \$3,000.

In a letter addressed to staff, Leisureworld says it employs team members with a variety of cultural backgrounds, some who are from

Haiti and have loved ones there.

O'Connor Court's initiative netted \$970 and the home's residents' council plans to contribute \$400 to \$500 more. With the corporate office matching the donation, the home's fundraising efforts could reach a final total of \$3,000.



Avalon resident Hazel Kennedy offers the home's administrator Chan Sooklal a muffin while resident Eleeta Frewin looks on. The home's bake sale raised \$275.

Avalon Retirement Centre:

The retirement and long-term care home says the recent tragedy in Haiti has been on the minds and in the hearts of residents who wanted to do something to help. The home came up with a "Resident's for Relief" campaign and dedicated Jan. 26 as "Toonie Tuesday," selling a muffin and a coffee to staff, visitors and residents for \$2.

Sarah Murray, the home's activity director, says they baked six dozen muffins and set up a schedule for residents to work one-hour shifts at the refreshment table.

According to Murray, the home was "abuzz" and every muffin was sold by the end of the day.

"In the end, we raised \$275 and similar to other fundraising campaigns we've done, the residents finished the day feeling that they'd made a difference, even in a small way," she says, adding the proceeds will benefit the Canadian Red Cross.

"We will continue with our efforts to make a difference as other needs arise."

Iler Lodge:

It was the management team at the Essex long-term care home that decided they wanted to do something to help Haitian people in crisis. The home decided to host a hot soup lunch for staff members and the residents' council agreed to match the staff's contribution. All combined, the home raised \$500 for the Holy Mary of Food Fund, a local charity that supports an orphanage in Haiti. Sara Tracey, Iler Lodge program manager, says the donations from staff and residents shows the home's giving spirit.

"I think this says that they are very caring and very willing to support when they know it's a good cause," says Tracey. "We did it on very quick notice and the food was all donated."

Christie Gardens:

It was three residents living at Christie Gardens, a Toronto retirement and long-term care residence, that took initiative to begin fundraising for Haiti Jan. 20, the same day Haiti experienced a 6.1 aftershock.

The residents asked the home to act as the facilitator for donations. Grace Sweatman, Christie Gardens CEO, says the home has filled this role before, collecting funds for the Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina.

The home tucked a letter under residents' doors directing people who would like to contribute to leave cheques with the home.

By the next day, the home collected more than \$12,000 from residents and staff members to donate to the Canadian Red Cross, World Vision and Plan Canada.

North Park Nursing Home:

Staff members at the 74-bed long-term care home initiated a fundraiser to support disaster relief in Haiti in the wake of the Jan. 12 earthquake. The North York long-term care home posted signs, published an article in the home's newsletter and spread word to its family and residents' councils and to staff members. Residents, staff and family members responded with considerable support, donating food, clothing and toiletries that filled three large barrels and five boxes, as well as monetary funds. North Park Nursing Home will continue to accept donations and is working with the Consulate of Haiti in Toronto and the Canadian Red Cross to distribute the donations.



Registered nurse Epifania Santos, personal support worker (PSW) Gemma Balaoing, PSW Dablia Charles and PSW Violet Comrie, stand next to three barrels filled with food, clothing and toiletries they will be sending to Haiti.