

KEEPING THE SPIRIT ALIVE



LEADING WITH PASSION & PURPOSE

Monique became President & CEO in November 2024

At the helm of St. Patrick's Home of Ottawa is Monique Patterson, a passionate leader whose 35-year career has been dedicated to nursing and improving the way we deliver long-term care (LTC).

"From the time I was a young child, I knew that I'd be a nurse. Perhaps it was the spirit of my late grandmother guiding me. She was a midwife on Couchiching First Nation's Reserve. I don't know, but I never waived from that calling."

And so, in the late 1980's, when Monique graduated high school, she left her family home in Thunder Bay and moved to Ottawa to begin her studies at Algonquin College. The nursing program required students to complete a series of placements in different clinical settings; and it was during this time she realized,

"I was meant to work with seniors and focus on long-term care. I didn't enjoy the primary care rotations because my interactions with patients were transient. There wasn't the opportunity to build meaningful relationships – something that I really wanted to be a part of my work."

After college, Monique was hired by Extendicare where she quickly gained the respect and mentorship of her supervisor, Ferne Leigh. "I was so fortunate that Ferne taught me to trust my instincts, be confident in my skills, and embrace opportunities for growth. With her encouragement, I provided Palliative Care Training for all staff at New Orchard Lodge, and later led the Safe Transfers & Lifts Program as well."

Monique continued to study part-time at the University of Ottawa, and after eight years of dedication, she earned a Bachelor's of Nursing Degree while also raising her young daughter.

Eventually, she took her hard-earned experience and distinctive laugh to Revera Longfields Manor and several years later to St. Patrick's Home where she assumed the role Vice President of Nursing in 2016.

The Not-for-Profit Difference

When asked what the biggest difference was, moving from the privately-owned LTC homes to a not-for-profit home, Monique highlighted two things. First she noted that any surplus in the operating budget is directed back into the Home's funding envelope to further resident care.

And second, she emphasized the importance of **community donations and how they allow St. Pat's to provide programs that otherwise wouldn't be possible.**

In most LTC homes, for example Spiritual and Pastoral Care programming is coordinated by the Manager of Recreation, and its are expenses drawn from Program Support Services (a funding envelope provided by the Government of Ontario). Which means, without additional funds from a Foundation, most homes are limited to a single staff-led religious service per month.

By comparison, St. Patrick's Home employs a Spiritual Care Team which includes the Manager, Stephen Savel; a priest, Father Joe; three part-time staff; and a group of dedicated volunteers.

Together they deliver Holy Mass six days per week, perform sacraments of the Eucharist, Penance, and Anointing of the Sick, make pastoral visits, lead hymnal services, counsel staff coping with stress or grief, and, in tandem with the nursing staff, provide 24/7 end-of-life support to residents and their families.

"We simply could not offer these essential services without the Foundation and the donors who care so much about St. Patrick's Home, its residents, and preserving these vital programs."



A Vision for Person-Directed Care

Since becoming President & CEO, Monique has been guided by the Home's strategic priorities which include the advancement person-directed care. This means knowing each resident as a unique person (i.e., understanding their history, culture, interests, values and needs) and then developing an appropriate care plan.

"Providing consistent, person-directed care doesn't happen overnight. It takes time and an investment in education, home-wide engagement, and the willingness to change."

In fact, ongoing education is one of the best ways we equip personnel with the knowledge, skills and practical experience they require to care for people with complex needs. To that end, St. Pat's continues to offer **DementiAbility Methods Training** to its nursing and recreation teams. It teaches them how to investigate the root cause of responsive behaviours and empowers them to be problem-solvers, capable of developing practical solutions, in collaboration with their co-workers.

This year, St. Pat's also instituted a new, team-building workshop that explores the characteristics of effective teams because, **"We cannot provide person-directed care to 288 residents by working in silos. We need one team that's united in its purpose."**

Home-Wide Engagement

“To advance our mission, we have to be willing to change – to deconstruct the way we provide care, involve residents in daily life, and open our minds to new ideas and new conversations.”

Over the last year, this belief manifested itself in the development of two working committees comprised of residents, family members and staff from across the organization. The first committee is tasked with developing a more resident-directed dining experience that offers more choice.

The second committee was asked to analyze the way that recreation and leisure programs are planned; and how, as our resident population becomes more diverse, we can adapt and innovate to engage residents from various age groups, with different areas of interest and personal preferences for social and solitary activities.

It's all about being more in tune, responsive and flexible in how we approach programming.

“If we discover that eight residents from different home areas like to play bridge, or that a group of residents enjoy watching hockey, then let's find a time and place for them to get together.”



The Road Ahead

The pursuit of person-directed care is a work-in-progress at St. Pat's, but the thought, time and care that's been devoted to its development is inspiring.

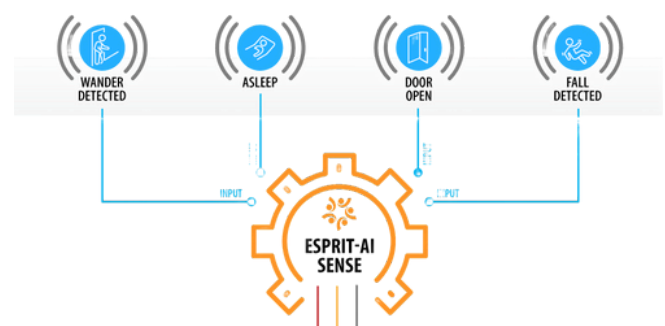
“When I see staff take a moment to pause from a task, whether it's filling a laundry cart, clearing dishes from a table, or doing medicine rounds, to sit with a resident for a few minutes and give them their full attention, I'm witnessing person-directed care in action. When I see PSWs or housekeeping staff spontaneously join a sing-along or dance with a resident, I see the teamwork and the progress, and it brings me joy.”

A NEW CLINICAL TRIAL: USING AI-TECH FOR FALLS PREVENTION

Before Joe Plunkett moved to St. Pat's, his daughter Lynn was concerned about his mobility and the risk of him suffering a fall at home, especially as his dementia and tendency to wander increased. Consequently, she opened her laptop and began researching at-home falls prevention technologies to create a safer environment for Joe and provide reassurance to her mother, his primary caregiver.

Lynn discovered a local start-up company called Esprit-ai Sense™, that was **developing AI technologies to monitor residents in LTC and predict their care needs before they arise.**

Their smart sensors i.e., wall-mounted sensors and bed alarms) connect to a software platform that automatically sends an alert to the nursing call system, whenever an at-risk behavior is detected.



Lynn shared, “I initially reached out to Esprit.ai because I wanted to know if we could install their technologies at home, but we didn’t have time because my Dad moved to St. Pat’s soon after. Instead, I brought forward what I knew about Esprit.ai to the leadership team at St. Pat’s.

I had a good idea that Columbus Club – Charitable Foundation, a chapter of the Knights of Columbus that is dear to my dad’s heart, might be interested in making a strategic investment in this program.”

She was right. Given their deep connection to St. Pat’s as a Catholic, faith-based home, and its long history of support for its spiritual and pastoral care programs, it was an easy yet deeply meaningful decision to fund this trial that could benefit so many.

Dan Sullivan wrote, *“The founders of our organization are strong supporters of St. Patrick’s Home. We appreciate the compassionate care provided to the residents and their families. Joe, who was one of our directors, is fortunate to be at St. Pat’s, where he receives excellent care that goes beyond expectations.”*

Beginning in August 2025, representatives from Esprit.ai will be onsite at St. Pat’s to install sensors and train the staff on all three shifts. The pilot will take place over eight weeks and involve a selection of residents from the Donegal and Waterford home areas.

IMPACT OF AI TECH ON FALLS PREVENTION



This part of the pilot project will focus on residents with a **tendency to wander and therefore, have an increased risk of falling.** To mitigate this risk, Esprit.ai will fit a Smart Bed Alarm under each resident’s mattress and mount Smart Motion Sensors on their walls and doorway. Then, if a resident is unexpectedly in motion, the system will send an alert to the care team on duty.

The bed alarms also create a baseline for each person’s movement pattern and then tracks their sleep. So, if someone is unusually restless, or in a poor sleep state, the system will send an alert to prompt a quick check-in.

IMPACT OF AI TECH ON REDUCING PRESSURE INJURIES

The second part of the pilot will focus on residents with limited mobility who are at risk of acquiring pressure wounds. In this case, if a person has been in a stationary position for too long, the Smart Bed Alarm will signal that it’s time to reposition the resident.



Lynn summarized her hopes for this project, saying, *“We’re excited for this work to begin to see how these devices may assist staff in making timely interventions and contribute to the residents’ well-being. It’s an example of how community donations can play a critical role in the health of residents.”*



THE PEOPLE OF ST. PAT'S

MIKE FERRIGAN, MIKE O'BRIEN & THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

The Ladies Auxiliary of St. Patrick's Home was established in 1866, when The Grey Sisters of the Cross were approached to provide care for ten children and four elderly persons in a rented house on Church Street.

The Auxiliary's membership were **dedicated, community-minded women who undertook countless initiatives to support the growing needs and expansion of St. Patrick's Home.**

One such initiative was the sale of shamrock pins to the parishioners at St. Patrick's Basilica in the weeks before St. Patrick's Day. However, in 2011 the dissolution of the Auxiliary due to an aging and shrinking membership base, spelled the end of this annual campaign.

Then in 2017, the **Knights of Columbus Chapter 12158 resolved to resume the shamrock campaign under the leadership of Mike Ferrigan and Mike O'Neil.** In short order they built and painted dozens of donation boxes, filled them with handcrafted pins, and set out to distribute them to parishes, pubs, and other establishments across the City of Ottawa.

This year, the two Mikes, along with Paul Newcomb and Don McDonald, not only confirmed the participation of 22 parishes and 7 Irish pubs, they also delivered and collected 47 boxes, counted and rolled a mass of coins, and raised \$7,500 (net proceeds).

In total, their effort, combined with the generous involvement of each parish and business has resulted in **\$43,000 being raised for priority needs at St. Pat's.** This includes The CEO Discretionary Fund which discretely covers the cost of transportation, paramedical fees, and other personal needs of residents with limited financial means.

Third-Party Fundraising starts with a good idea and ends with a meaningful donation

If you're planning a milestone birthday celebration, a neighbourhood garage sale, a workplace barbecue or golf tournament, and you'd like to leverage the event as a means to raise funds for St. Pat's, let us know! We'd be happy to help you get started.

