

# Sunnybrook's Veterans Centre is **SPECIAL**



**Thanks to generous donor support, Sunnybrook is prioritizing the health and well-being of Canada's Veterans.**

This past year, you helped Sunnybrook achieve several major milestones in our efforts to support Veterans and seniors in our community.

Construction is progressing on Sunnybrook's new Peter Cipriano Centre for Seniors Health: a hub dedicated to meeting the unique and complex needs of seniors with coordinated, compassionate care. This innovative space is set to open in 2025.



As part of its construction, we have relocated and renovated several highly frequented areas in the Veterans Centre, enhancing quality of life for our residents and their families.

What's more, the Cenotaph restoration is now complete. The newly revitalized outdoor space offers moments for remembrance and reflection.



Donors have made these achievements possible. Thank you for giving back to Canada's Veterans in honour of their service and sacrifice.

**Top:** A resident enjoys Sunnybrook's Veterans Centre facilities, many of which have been renovated this year thanks to donor support.

**Middle:** A rendering of the entrance to the Cipriano Centre.

**Bottom:** Donor support for Operation Raise a Flag has fueled many of this year's milestones, with \$277,604 raised in 2023.

Sunnybrook is home to the largest care facility for Veterans in Canada. Thank you for helping us give back to the people who served our country. Your support ensures we can provide a uniquely supportive environment to more than 200 Veterans from the Second World War and Korean War.



Donor support for Sunnybrook's Veterans Comfort Fund provides residents with memorable events, entertainment and innovative equipment to enhance their quality of life. Here, Richard Ratcliffe stands next to a helmet with painted collage, one of his many artworks. Read more on the next page.

## MEANINGFUL PROGRAMMING ENHANCES QUALITY OF LIFE

"At Sunnybrook, the average age of our Veterans is 97 years old," reflects Katherine Baldwin, Manager, Recreation Therapy & Creative Arts Therapies. She shares this impressive figure as testament to the meaningful programming provided to Veterans, much of which is only possible because of donor support.

"Everything we do for our Veterans, we do with the intention of enriching their quality of life," says Katherine. "We embrace a holistic approach, and we are able to give back to the people who fought for us and our freedoms because of our donor community."

This Fall, the popular yoga pilot program returns, thanks to donor support.

"We heard how much our Veterans missed the gentle movement. We're thrilled to bring back our meditative breathing and the connection fostered by moving together," says Katherine.

With donor support, Veterans also had a chance to take part in playful activities, such as weekly therapeutic clowning sessions, with miming and other moments of fun now back for its second year.

There aren't many therapeutic clowns in Canada, but the unique opportunity is rooted in strong evidence on the scientific benefits of laughter and smiles, as well as how it can reduce feelings of isolation, pain and stress.

Donor support for Sunnybrook's Veterans Comfort Fund and Grant a Wish Program also created many special moments for Veterans, including a trip to Ottawa to see major historical sights, floral arrangement sessions and a visit to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

**"We are so grateful to our donors, who allow us to explore the latest and greatest possibilities to enhance the lives of our Veterans," says Katherine.**

## Providing comfort and unique experiences **FROM THE HIGH SEAS TO HOOK ART AND MORE**



Over the summer, more than 20 Sunnybrook Veterans enjoyed a gentle lakeshore cruise on the historic *Wenonah II* replica steamship on Lake Muskoka, thanks to the generosity of our donor community.

The two-hour excursion was part of the Recreation Therapy Program providing a range of leisure experiences for Veterans Centre residents.

“These types of outings into the community are often the highlight for many of our Veterans,” says Katherine Baldwin. “These trips focus on what is important and meaningful to them, bringing joy and enhancing their quality of life.”

Korean War Veteran Joseph Cournoyea, who was born in Tweed, Ont., recalls time spent on Lake Muskoka as a young man. For Joseph, being out on the water brought him right back to those days.

“It brought the memories from way back, forward in my heart,” says Joseph. “It was a lovely day... the food was good and the friendship was extra good.”

Throughout the voyage, a guide provided a running commentary including interesting facts and information about the Muskoka area and its rich maritime tradition. A blast from the ship’s steam-whistle would occasionally interrupt the sound of waves lapping up against her hull.

### **A job well done for Richard Ratcliffe**

Richard Ratcliffe is a born leader. The 96-year-old Navy Veteran served Canada for close to 25 years on 12 warships, including captaining HMCS Qu’Appelle at the height of the Cold War, and two tours during the Korean War.

It is perhaps no surprise that a man who once stood on the captain’s bridge quickly rose to become president of the Veterans Council. With donor support, Richard spearheaded initiatives to improve the lives of his fellow residents.

Richard was at the helm of one such initiative – the 100 Club, which celebrates Veterans who reach their centennial birthday. “It is always so wonderful to see our residents engaged and excited for new initiatives,” says Dr. Jocelyn Charles, Medical Director of the Veterans Centre.

With a nod to his shipboard days, Richard also launched the Bravo Zulu Award (a naval signal meaning “well done”) for Veterans who distinguish themselves through their accomplishments, which includes involvement with recreation and creative arts activities.

Richard was also an early champion of the critical revitalization effort to restore Sunnybrook’s Cenotaph.

A nine-year resident of the Veterans Centre, Richard enjoys his days engaging in enriching activities, like the hook art he produces in his spare time. He beams with pride at a recent tapestry he made of one of the ships he served on, hung up on his bedroom wall.

**“I want our donors to know their biggest impact is helping us get out of our rooms and doing the activities we love,” says Richard.**

# ELEVATING HOW WE CARE FOR AND HONOUR OUR VETERANS

To establish the Peter Cipriano Centre for Seniors Health within existing spaces at Sunnybrook's Bayview campus, several facilities as part of Sunnybrook's Veterans Centre have been relocated and renovated.

**Donor support has been critical in our efforts to build the Cipriano Centre as well as improve spaces at the Veterans Centre.**

During the renovation this past year, key spaces in the Veterans Centre were relocated from K-Wing to L-Wing. Notably, this included the library branch as well as the physiotherapy and occupational therapy gyms, which underwent major improvements in their new locations.

Additionally, donor generosity fueled enhancements for other spaces across the Veterans Centre, including the games room, reception area, speech-language pathology and staff sites, such as storage and laundry.

Renovations throughout the Veterans Centre reflect improvements in both form and function.

Newly designed spaces are meant to be welcoming and comfortable by maximizing natural light and upgrading outdated decor.

Meanwhile, the mobility and safety of residents were top priorities in the renovation. Features that reflect this include barrier-free access, slip-resistant flooring and spaces that accommodate mobility devices.

Taken together, upgrades across the Veterans Centre as well as its close proximity to the new Cipriano Centre will enhance quality of life for our Veterans. **We have our donors to thank for making this possible.**



## Restoring Sunnybrook's Cenotaph

In addition to critical space relocation and revitalization within the Veterans Centre this past year, donor support also enabled the restoration of Sunnybrook's Cenotaph.

Standing as a tribute to Canadians who have served in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and ongoing conflicts, the restored Cenotaph offers space for remembrance and quiet reflection.

The refreshed landscape architecture also provides a welcoming outdoor area frequented by Veterans Centre residents, Sunnybrook staff, and patients and their families.

The Cenotaph was rededicated on June 6, 2024, the 80th anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy.

# SPECIAL THANKS

Donors like you make Sunnybrook special. Thanks to you, we are prioritizing the well-being and quality of life for residents of Sunnybrook's Veterans Centre, ensuring that we give back to honour their service to Canada.