



**Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
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February 4, 2016
For immediate release

Family CARE Grants Announced

\$68,000 made available to fund grants to enhance patient care

Thunder Bay, ON – The spirit of giving was alive and well today at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. This morning, \$68,000 in new grant funding was announced by the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation and the Volunteer Association as they presented the 2015 Family CARE (Care Advancements Recommended by Employees) grants.

Employees at the Health Sciences Centre are encouraged to apply for the grants with ideas for new or improved equipment that will enhance the exceptional care they provide to patients and families. To ensure that the grants have a significant impact, each application requires a Patient and Family Advisor's endorsement along with that of a Manager and Executive Vice President.

"This grant program is very unique," said Barry Streib, Board Director, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation, "because it's a partnership between the Health Sciences Foundation and the Volunteer Association that's been in place since 2011. Together, we're able to fund some of the 'little things' that may otherwise not be funded. Items that provide that 'next level of care' within our academic Health Sciences Centre."

"The partnership is key," agreed Sharron Detweiler, President, Volunteer Association, "because it allows us to touch so many areas of the Health Sciences Centre. This year, there were 71 grant applications submitted, totaling \$151,971. As you can imagine, there's a lot of work to determine how to distribute the funding, but each year, the grant committee does a wonderful job of selecting worthwhile recipients. Thanks to the generosity of donors and the work of the Volunteer Association, we're able to fund quite a significant amount."

In total 39 Family CARE grants, ranging from \$80 to \$6,222, were announced which will fund the purchase of equipment that will benefit patients across the Health Sciences Centre. Some of the items making a difference in 2016, thanks to the 2015 grants, include:

- Equipment for the Regional Stroke Unit including a portable mechanical lift and slider boards to help move patients with greater ease and safety, as well as a dedicated vital sign monitor

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- Items for the Maternal/Newborn Unit and the NICU such as a sleeper chair, a new bed for the Parent Room, breast pumps and stands and baby swings to provide comfort to newborns who require neonatal abstinence scoring for maternal drug use
- A new wagon and ride-on car for Paediatrics to make trips to surgery or to other appointments a little more fun. Also a new pager system for the Outpatient Paediatric department to make waiting less restrictive.
- A buzzer/intercom system for Security to allow patients and families to enter through the Main Entrance when the doors are locked, instead of having to travel to the Emergency Entrance
- A new Doppler for the Ambulatory Care area to provide specialized wound care
- A wheelchair table for the slit lamp in the Lions Vision Care Centre, to allow patients in wheelchairs the comfort and security of staying in their chair, instead of transferring to a stool
- Multiple pieces of equipment for the Rehabilitation Department including a power seat lift, digital timers, a 4-wheeled knee walker and more

Additionally, one of the themes of this year's grant applications was seating needs, throughout the building. Of the \$68,000 funded, over \$18,000 will be dedicated to new seating, including new furniture within the main lobby, and chairs in patient units and the Emergency Department. Specifically, new benches will be installed in the Multifaith Spiritual Centre to provide greater access to those looking to participate in spiritual services. "Currently we are able to provide service to about 8 to 10 patients and family members at a time," said Lisa Laitinen-Egbuchulam, Spiritual Care Provider and grant recipient, "but with this grant, we'll be able to expand the space available by installing benches, make the centre feel more spiritual and better meet the needs of patients and families. Ideally, we're hoping to serve up to 20 people at a time, particularly for smudging ceremonies."

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Northern
Cancer Fund



Northern
Cardiac Fund



Health Sciences
Discovery Fund

One other area to receive grant funding was the Laboratory. Tucked away on the lower level of the Health Sciences Centre, it's an area rarely seen, but critical to care. Georgia Carr, Manager of Laboratory Services, explained the importance of the new fridge/freezer funded for the Chemistry. "Unfortunately our prior unit went out of service and we have only one functioning refrigerator that is overcrowded and aging. Not only that, staff have to leave their work area to go to another room to access this other fridge multiple times per shift, which greatly decreases their efficiency. Anytime we can enhance our efficiency, it leads to better turn-around-times for patient results, particularly for emergency and critical care, when timely results are so vital for patient care. Funding for this fridge couldn't have come at a better time, and we know it will significantly enhance the care our team is able to provide."

Seeing the impact of the Family CARE Grants for the first time, new President and CEO of Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and CEO of Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute, Jean Bartkowiak remarked, "I'm very happy to see the level of engagement our employees have in bringing forward these ideas. It is a wonderful way for them to contribute to improved patient care in inexpensive but significant ways. I commend those who took the time to submit an application, and I'd like to thank the Health Sciences Foundation and Volunteer Association for their commitment to this program that has such far-reaching impact across the Health Sciences Centre."

Since its inception in 2009, 222 Family CARE grants have been funded at the Health Sciences Centre. A full list of all 2015 grants can be found online at healthsciencesfoundation.ca/familycare

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