



Wellwood Connections

The Newsletter of
Wellwood
Resource Centre

www.wellwood.on.ca | wellwood@hpsc.ca | Helping People to Live Well with Cancer | Fall 2008

The Worst of Times, and the Best of Times

According to Peter Mansbridge, I have the worst job in the world right now.

One night recently on CBC, Peter announced (and forgive me for paraphrasing, I did not have a pen with me) “if most of you are thinking that the worst possible job to have these days would be a broker, think again ...IMAGINE being the executive director of a charity right about now!”

As he went on to talk about dried up donations and crashing endowment funds, I felt a wave of panic.

These are difficult times, and they come just as Wellwood is embarking on a major expansion.

We will maintain the offices at Henderson, and are part of the front lobby plans for the new hospital. We need to be there to support people in crisis, people who have just heard bad news, those from out of town who are staying at Lakeview Lodge to receive treatment but without their personal support systems, people who are in hospital and those who are caring for a loved one there, or a loved one who is at the end of life.

But a hospital is not the best place, physically or emotionally, for most of our clients. It can be a place full of bad memories and painful reminders, and it can be a less-than-ideal place for our immune-compromised clients. We know that there are many people who do not use our services because of our current location.

So, we will have a community wellness centre based at Chedoke, thanks again to the support of Hamilton Health Sciences and Chedoke Corporation, and many donors to our capital campaign, including the Hamilton Halton Homebuilders Association, who, as we speak, are on site building a fabulous, single-storey, socioeconomically- culturally- and physically- accessible, beautiful and safe place for our clients.

With 200 volunteers designing and delivering our programs, and only a small team of staff, Wellwood is among the most cost-effective examples of health care services

anywhere. Our budget is tiny when one looks at it in the context of outcome, and what a return! Here are 200 (and 3) people working, via 25 programs and services, to meet the needs of cancer patients and their loved ones in this community.

With the new site, our expenses will increase, but our anticipated volunteer base will close to double in size, along with our programmatic output.

Still an incredible return on donor investment, and we save the health care system money by reducing the burden on more expensive supportive care services.

Now, more than ever, is the time to consider making a gift to Wellwood – or, if you are already donating, perhaps consider giving even more than you usually do.

We need your support to ensure that, in this very difficult economic climate, we can continue to do what we do.

As many of you know, thanks to Margaret and Charles Juravinski, we do have an endowment fund. The money that they gave to Wellwood was invested *in its entirety* and conservatively, to ensure the preservation of capital. It is *intended* that the fund generates enough money every year to cover our increased annual expenditures with two sites. Essentially, the endowment revenues will only be used to pay the additional bills to run our second home.

Anticipating the volatility of the market, we draw only a set amount, even in the good years when the fund generates more revenues, saving the balance for the lean years. This is the gift of much more than money – the gift of sustainability.

I tell you this because it is important for you to know that, when you invest in our work, you are investing in something that will be here for a long, long time. You don't want to invest your hard-earned money in something that may or may not be here in a couple of years.

Wellwood will be.

Yes, these are difficult times. But everyone who walks through our doors knows about difficult times. All of you know how devastating the cancer journey is for patients and those closest to them. It can be a shattering time, emotionally, financially and professionally, and can be overwhelming, confusing and isolating.

Cancer doesn't care if times are tight. Cancer doesn't care if your stocks have crashed, or that you have lost your job. Cancer will come calling, whether it is a convenient time or not.

Every day, I have the remarkable privilege of walking with someone on their cancer journey. Every day, I work with an incredible team of volunteers (and a few staff colleagues too) who reach into their own pain or loss and somehow find a way to use their wisdom and experience to help someone else. Every day, I meet a hero. The work that we do here is meaningful, it makes a difference, and my children are proud of what I do for a living.

So, to me – recession or no recession – Peter has got it wrong. I have the best job imaginable.

Thank you for the honour of working with you.

K.J. George
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To make a donation:

- By credit card, please call 905-389-5884 or visit us at www.wellwood.on.ca
- By cheque, please mail your gift to Wellwood at 711 Concession St., Hamilton, L8V 1C3

Many thanks for your continued support.



Afghan Program Prepares to Turn Ten....*Thousand!*

Our amazing Squares of Care afghan program delivered its 9,000th afghan this month and is now heading towards the magic number of 10,000.

The program is among Wellwood's most visible. Knitting baskets are located throughout the waiting areas at the Henderson Hospital and the Juravinski Cancer Centre, and their colourful and cheerful designs warm the hearts of many people. Each Monday, the team of volunteers who put the squares together deliver another load of packaged blankets, ready for distribution at Wellwood, at the hospital and cancer centre, at McMaster Children's Hospital, and throughout the community.

Every week, we receive a note, or sometimes a donation to Wellwood, thanking the volunteers for the lovely gesture of the gift of an afghan, and sharing a story of how it has brought comfort at a time of need.

We are delighted to recognize this amazing achievement, and we will have the camera at the ready to capture the moment and share it with all of you.

Thank you to everyone who has "knitted" a row or two, donated wool or squares, delivered or distributed blankets, matches, sorts, sews, makes the afghans, or contributes to this program in any way.

Wellwood Board of Directors 2008-2009

A warm welcome to Wellwood's newest governance team:

- Olive Wahoush – *President*
- Trish Nelson-Simmons – *Vice-President*
- Erin Podio – *Treasurer*
- Belinda Zylstra – *Past President*
- Rosemary Bland
- Mary Lou Dingle
- Carolann Fernandes
- Lynne Hopkinson
- Eric Nanayakkara
- Robert Philip
- Monica Quinlan
- Jonathan Sussman
- Kathleen Willison
- Jane George, *ex officio*

Board Consultants:

- Jan Kahehtio Longboat
- Alejandro Jadad
- Denny DePetrillo
- Barb Love
- Jack Laidlaw
- Maureen O'Connor
- Morteza Jafarpour

Strollin' for Your Colon



The 10th annual 1K/5K/10K Walk/Run for Colorectal Cancer was held on Sunday, October 19 at the campus of McMaster University. It was a glorious, sunny fall day, with more than 350 participants in attendance and, according to preliminary totals, raised about \$20,000 this year.

Every year, sisters Laura and Lindsey George of Dundas (no relation to Wellwood's executive director) bring a group of friends and family to the event. The team, affectionately called "Strollin' for Your Colon," participates in memory of Lindsey and Laura's mother.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer with 6% of the population developing it in their lifetime. People over the age of 50 should be screened, as should people with a family history, other cancers and chronic inflammatory bowel disease. A single colonoscopy decreases the risk of cancer by 60 to 70%.

The race, which became a collaboration with Wellwood four years ago, celebrated its 10th anniversary with the addition of a new 10K route. The planning committee has already met and things are underway for the 11th Walk/Run in 2009.

Many thanks to our team of volunteers and sponsors, as well as participants, who make this event possible.

WALK/RUN SPONSORS

We would also like to thank:

- Dr. Frank D'Alvise
- Bob & Ruth Philip
- Don Holenski
- Marta Stiteler

Join us again in 2009!

Sunday October 18

OFFICE HOURS:

- MONDAY TO FRIDAY • 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- MONDAY EVENINGS • 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- THURSDAY EVENINGS • 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

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