

Critical care nursing Dedicated to healing and helping

“It’s go, go, go for the nurses in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at the Lakeshore General Hospital,” says Sophie Caron, Head Nurse of the unit. “We take care of the sickest patients and we also support their family members who are often in deep distress. My team of nurses is exceptional. They react quickly and know just what to do when a patient is in crisis.”

The ICU’s highly trained team of 52 nurses is used to working in an intense, fast-paced and stressful environment. They treat people who have suffered a heart attack, stroke, major injuries, breathing disorders or other ailments as well as patients recovering from major surgery. “Team work is essential,” says Ms. Caron, “because not only does it make the job easier and more efficient, it enhances patient care.”

Great joy and great sorrow

“It can be a very emotional job. We get very attached to our patients, some of whom are with us for months at a time. We experience unimaginable joy when they recover and come back to say thank you,” adds Ms. Caron. “But we also cry with family members when a loved one doesn’t pull through.”

“The nurses in the ICU treat patients with extremely complicated medical conditions. My team is ultra-specialized and incredibly skilled and dedicated. Being a nurse is something that is part of us, part of our DNA. You have to love what you do, you have to be compassionate and willing to give 100 percent every day,” concludes Ms. Caron. •



Far left: Sophie Caron, Head Nurse, ICU and (2nd row) Dr. Robert Salasidis, Chief Intensivist with some members of the ICU nursing team.

The man behind the mascot Bill Wexler says volunteering is just ducky!



Mr. Bill Wexler, in and out of costume

If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it must be a duck! Right? Wrong! It might be Bill Wexler dressed up like Lakeshore Louis, the giant-yellow duck mascot of the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation. Waddling around like a duck might sound daffy, but Mr. Wexler says representing the Foundation during the annual Duck Race (celebrating its 20th anniversary this September) and at other Foundation events is loads of fun and a great way to raise awareness.

“It is rewarding to see the big smiles of kids and adults alike when Lakeshore Louis gives them a high five, air kisses or a loud “quack quack”. I love to get folks laughing,” he confesses. “Add music and I’ll dance around, wagging my tail. I’m normally pretty shy but, as the mascot, I act like a silly goose!” Yes, the duck dance is part of his repertoire.

It might sound easy, but it is a tough gig. The costume weighs about 14 kg. Plus, goofing around on a hot day means the temperature inside the costume can climb to 38 degrees Celcius.

Expressing his gratitude

Mr. Wexler has been volunteering with the Foundation for over 10 years. “A number of years ago, I was very sick and spent three weeks in the Lakeshore General Hospital. I received superb care and remain grateful to the doctors and nurses. Dressing up as Lakeshore Louis is one way of giving back,” he confesses. •

*Volunteers are the heart of the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation. Would you like to make a difference?
Join our team of incredible volunteers.*

To sign up for volunteer opportunities go to foundationlakeshore.ca or call 514-630-2081.