



News from
Peace Country Health

Fox Creek

Peace Country Health: In Your Community

Program Provides Nurses Ready-made For Rural Practice

Fox Creek Health Care Centre is enjoying the benefits of a unique rural nursing program offered through Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton.

Kimberly Labonte is a registered nurse working at Fox Creek on a casual basis. She wrote her nursing exam in February and will be graduating this spring from Grant MacEwan's degree program.

Through the three-year rural program, nursing students can take much of their training in small towns and rural areas.

Alleviating a shortage

The intent behind this program is to help alleviate the nursing shortage in rural Alberta. It's hoped that when RNs graduate while working in these smaller communities, they will be more likely to stay there once they completed their program.

Labonte was one of 12 students taking the program in Whitecourt, her hometown. Grant MacEwan has similar programs set up in small towns in Alberta, including Barrhead, Hinton, Wainwright, Bonnyville, and Westlock.



Kimberly Labonte is Grant MacEwan nursing student and Whitecourt resident who was able to do much of her training in the area. A registered nurse, she now works casual shifts at the Fox Creek Health Care Centre.

Labonte did most of her clinical training in Whitecourt and Mayerthorpe, with a three-month stint in Edmonton. She also worked in acute care in Mayerthorpe, learning with an RN who had worked there for three years.

'Hectic'

She says working in the smaller communities was a good way to learn. It also provided a look at how busy rural hospitals can be.

"The rural program allowed me to learn just how hectic rural nursing truly is. On a unit in a big-city hospital, it can definitely be busy, however, in rural nursing you have no idea what can walk through the door," she says.

"There is a major learning curve with regards to it. However it has been an amazing experience that I am so proud to be a part of."

Do you have some good news to report about a staff member or event in Fox Creek? E-mail the hospital's administrative assistant at Amanda.Branden@pchr.ca. Or check on Peace Country Health's Intranet site by clicking Corporate Services > Communication.

Read us on the web at www.pchr.ca

Second Life for Outdated Medical Equipment

Outdated biomedical test equipment will soon start a second life as training tools for students.

A recent donation of \$65,000 from the QEII Foundation to replace equipment at the QEII Hospital paved the way for the contribution. The old equipment went to the Biomedical Electronics Engineering Technology program at the College of the North Atlantic in St. John's, Newfoundland.

"I would have loved the chance to work on equipment like this when I was in school," said Darcy Russell, Regional Biomedical Equipment Technologist at the QEII Hospital and a graduate of the Electronics Technology Program at NAIT.

"Although it is important to have hands-on experience, new equipment is expensive and used items are in short supply," Darcy said.

The idea to donate the equipment came from Devin Pilgrim, who graduated from the College of the North Atlantic in 2004. He also works with Darcy in the Biomedical division of the Information Management department in Peace Country Health.

With the limited availability of Biomedical technologists (Newfoundland will be graduating six students this year and hopefully 12 next year) the



Darcy Russell shows the outdated equipment that's been donated to a college in Newfoundland for teaching purposes.

hope is to increase the profile of Peace Country Health and attract new graduates.

"Last year we [College of the North Atlantic] graduated 13 students and of those, 10 went west," said Kelly Spencer, an instructor in the Biomedical Engineering Technology program at the College of the North Atlantic.

The donated test equipment will train between 7-15 students a year.

| Location | Type of event/Theme | When |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Peace River | Tea | April 27 |
| High Prairie | Tea | April 27 |
| Fairview | Pancake breakfast | April 28 |
| McLennan | Pancake breakfast | April 29 |
| Spirit River | Tea | April 29 |
| Manning (with FCSS) | Volunteers Create Magical Moments | April 30 |
| Grande Prairie | BBQ supper and program | May 1 |
| Grande Cache | Tea | May 2 |
| Grimshaw | Tea | May 2 |
| Beaverlodge/Hythe | Sunflower, BBQ | May 23 |

Thank you, volunteers!

Through late April and early May, Volunteer Resource staff in Peace Country Health will be hosting celebrations for those who lend a helping hand.

National Volunteer Appreciation Week runs April 27 to May 3 and celebrates the efforts of the 2,000 volunteers who work in Peace Country Health during the year.

The impact of volunteers is incredible and they also have a strong effect on the quality of health care provided. These volunteers work in a variety of departments and are an essential part of our team.

There will be a number of events taking place throughout the region to show our appreciation for our registered volunteers.