

## **Partnership creates new workforce development opportunities to meet community need**

**KITCHENER - April 14, 2015** In preparation for the opening of Innisfree House, Kitchener's new 10-bed residential hospice, Lisaard House is working with Conestoga College as the college launches two new Palliative Care Certificate Programs that will train caregivers in end-of-life care. The new certificate programs will bring palliative care, research, and teaching activities together to improve end-of-life care for future residents and the training of the next generation of front-line staff.

The two new pilot programs, one designed for Registered Nurses (RN) and the second for Personal Support Workers (PSW), are the result of an education partnership between the college and Lisaard House, Waterloo Region's only residential cancer hospice. Lisaard House formally approached Conestoga College in early 2014, expressing the need for top-notch education in the field of palliative care. The two organizations have been working together for several months in the development of these specialized programs. The program content was developed by Lesley Hirst, president of the Palliative Care Nurses Interest Group within the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, who also delivers the RN training. Current Lisaard House staff will complete the training later this year. The programs will be available to nurses and PSWs across the region in the future.

Lisaard House, a front runner in the hospice movement in Ontario 15 years ago, is now taking the lead again by innovating on a practice development initiative with a leading partner in post-secondary education. The partnership with Conestoga College goes beyond these new programs and the team at Lisaard House is looking forward to continued collaboration in the future.

"Developing specialized training programs that meet the needs of our community is a priority for Conestoga," said Marlene Raasok, Executive Dean of the School of Health & Life Sciences & Community Services at Conestoga. "We're very pleased to have the opportunity to work with Lisaard House to build a workforce with the capabilities required to enhance palliative care across our region."

Support for the delivery of the programs has been provided through the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), with funds flowed through our local Community Care Access Centre and the Canada Ontario Jobs Grant. According to the Canada Ontario Jobs Grant, the introduction of the Ontario-Canada Job Grant program supports the goal of better aligning training with employer needs, ultimately building a more skilled work force. Employers are partners in the skills training system.

"The new funding we are providing will enhance palliative and residential hospice care in Waterloo Region," said Bruce Lauckner, CEO Waterloo Wellington LHIN. "Building a better health-care system is one part of building a better community and we cannot do it alone. We are thrilled with the partnership and support from Conestoga College. The training they will provide will help those who deliver compassionate palliative and end-of-life care each and every day."

Vincent Suh, Employment Outreach Advisor at Lutherwood adds "Lutherwood is glad to assist Lisaard House with their efforts to enhance the skills of their existing and new employees through the Canada Ontario Jobs Grant. Funded by the Government of Canada and delivered through Employment Ontario, the funds will enable Lisaard House to invest in their employees and provide new employment opportunities in the community."

According to Connie Dwyer, Executive Director, Lisaard House, hospices provide an alternative for the growing number of palliative patients in our community who do not wish to spend their final days in hospital, however, require more support than can be provided at home. The goal of the end-of-life care

offered at Lisaard and Innisfree is aimed at excellent pain and symptom management while providing compassionate professional care and support for the residents and their families.

“At Lisaard House, we are dedicated to support living every day to the fullest with meaning and respect,” Dwyer said. “We look forward to continuing that culture at Innisfree House.”

Innisfree House will provide 10 additional palliative care beds, providing an alternative to institutional care facilities and home care for those facing end-of-life diseases. It is scheduled to open in the summer of 2015. For more information, visit [www.innisfreehospice.com](http://www.innisfreehospice.com)

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