

Volunteers helps beautify the grace

By Stefani Venere

On a cloudy day in June, employees from Unilever Canada volunteered their time planting flowers in the gardens at The Salvation Army Toronto Grace Health Centre as part of the Arts at the Grace initiative. Volunteer programs are an essential component to enhancing the quality of life for patients. Volunteers at the Grace may assist directly with patient care, or with initiatives such as Arts at the Grace that develops artistic programs to advance the physical environment as well as the lives of patients and families.

Community is important to Unilever Canada. Unilever offers employees a chance to volunteer their time three after-

noons per year at an organization of choice. "Volunteerism at Unilever Canada provides our people the opportunity to make a social contribution. We're putting the power of our company, our people, our brands and our Foundation to work, to help more communities become Vital Communities. Places where people come together to improve things so that everyone can get more out of life. As a result, last year Unilever employees across Canada gave over 3,300 hours or approximately 440 days to community, social and environmental causes," says Shannon Ketelaars, Assistant Manager, Community Affairs at Unilever Canada.

This year, the Grace was delighted to have a team of enthusiastic Unilever employ-

ees volunteering their time to improve the grace gardens that surround the entire facility. "It's great to give back to the community and help beautify the area," says Jack D., a Unilever employee. "I like knowing that patients have a nice environment to enjoy where they can relax. It makes me feel good."

Whether students or professionals, fostering partnerships to obtain volunteers is critical to the success of any volunteer program. Michael Fliess, Director of Volunteer Resources at the Grace says, "Developing collaborative partnerships and training opportunities is an ongoing goal for Volunteer Resources. Some of our past and current partnerships have included The Toronto District



Unilever Canada volunteers plant flowers at the Toronto Grace Health Centre.

School Board, George Brown College, University of Toronto, International Language Schools of Canada, Therapeutic Paws of Canada and a number of corporate companies. These partnerships help support the growth of the volunteer pro-

gram, help us achieve special projects and provide an important link to the broader community."

Stefani Venere is a member of the communications team at Toronto Grace Health Centre.

Tragedy often breeds hope and change

By Pierre Lachaine

When Lori Martin lost her battle with esophageal cancer in 1995,

52 short days after her diagnosis, many lives were changed. Her parents, Lorna and Doug, started a tribute fund in her honour - *Lori's Room*, which would benefit St. Joseph's Health

Centre's Oncology Clinic, where Lori was treated.

For Elizabeth Seibert, Lorna and Doug's neighbour in their tight-knit Toronto neighbourhood, Lori's death was a call

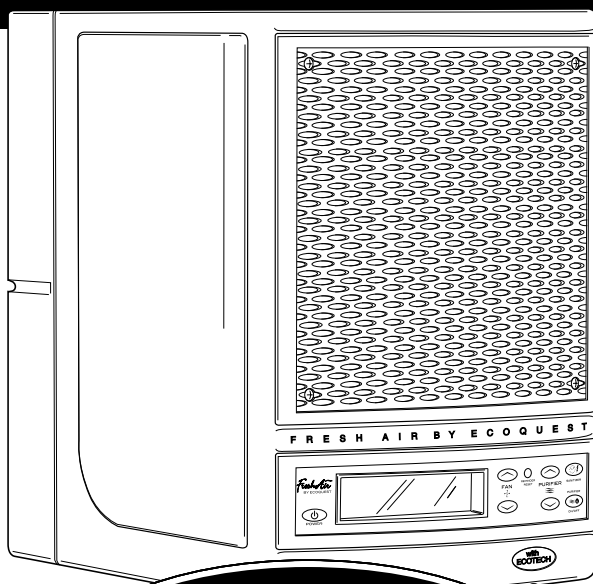
to action. Elizabeth, along with many other members of the community, offered to lend a hand with *Lori's Room* - since renamed *Lori's Legacy*.

Last September, after surviv-

ing breast cancer herself and rising to co-chair of the *Lori's Legacy* Walkathon Committee, Elizabeth decided to volunteer her time at St. Joseph's oncology clinic to help others get through what she'd been through. The fact that she can relate to the patients on a personal level has created a sense of community among the patients and Seibert. "There is a certain club, whether you want to be in it or not. And that goes for the caregivers, too. It's incredibly satisfying," says Seibert, who mainly acts as a greeter at the clinic, making sure those seeing the oncologists are properly checked in. She also serves lunch and juice - anything to make the nervous patients feel more comfortable. Having survived cancer herself, Seibert is a living and breathing example for patients that there can be life after treatment. "My experience helps a lot. It isn't a depressing environment. Until you're in it, you forget how many people survive cancer," she says.

Lori's Legacy tribute fund has grown tremendously since its humble beginnings and, these days, the oncology clinic is a much more comfortable place to be. "It's a lovely environment. There's a million dollar view of the lake, you get lunch, your own television and access to all the medical specialists in one place," Seibert notes. Being a volunteer is important to her and she cherishes the face-to-face interactions of being a volunteer on the ground. "Sometimes I joke that my greatest function is demonstrating that hair grows back,"

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