



“Exemplary” still describes QCH’s staff, Physicians, Volunteers and services after 40 years



Catharene Smith has worked at Queensway Carleton Hospital for 18 years. She’s the Team Leader in C4 Medicine, and if there’s something she’s proud of, it’s the team she works with. You can see it in the way she speaks about them; she’s all smiles and relaxed posture, when talking of her friends.

In fact, her coworkers are part of the reason she loves working at QCH. “First of all, the people! I have met lifelong friends in my unit; we’ve gone through so much together. The opportunities I’ve been blessed with are another thing. Whether it is making things better for the patients, or having a say in changes/improvements to the unit I work in, or the hospital. The educational opportunities I’ve gotten over the years, and being able to care for the patients in our community as well. There really is that feeling of community when working here.”

Smith has been working here for almost half of her life. So it makes sense that this hospital has become a large part of it. “QCH has always felt like a family. Going back to the “old” days when it was only one building, you knew everyone! The doctors, the people working in Admin, the support staff. Everyone knew each other. That hasn’t changed, even when our hospital has grown. Working full time, you can’t help but feel that this is a big part of your life.”

Smith has learned many things from working at QCH, but the most important thing she’s been taught is collaboration. “It’s most important in providing excellent patient care, and by working together as a team it makes our very hard jobs easier!”

During her almost two decade turn at the hospital, Smith has experienced and accomplished many things that are memorable. Something that stood out the most for her was winning the D. Aubrey Moodie People Excellence Awards – Employee of the Year in 2014. “I felt honored to be recognized. That’s something you really feel here, the recognition. You don’t feel like a number, you’re valued here and you get recognition for the work you do.”

Smith lit up when asked if there was something she wanted people to know about QCH. “QCH is a great place to work! It truly has the patients and the staff’s best interest in mind. Even though it has expanded greatly it still has the “home town feel” it has had since it opened.” Smith went on to talk about her department specifically, mentioning the daily huddles, the Kudos cards that their unit hands out to one another, and the CEO. “Tom will sometimes drop in on the huddles. He won’t take over them, he’ll just stand back and watch and listen, and if he knows something about whatever topic we’re on, he’ll chime in. The nurses really appreciate that he does that.”

Catharene Smith took a moment when finding the perfect word to describe the hospital, even joking that she'd had to look some up on a thesaurus to get that that sounded just right. "Exemplary." She finally settles on. "QCH has always strived to do what is best for patients, staff, volunteers, and the community. The patients we care for on my unit have noticed this, and, for the most part at least, they seem quite happy with their time spent here, and they're satisfied with their care."

"It's hard to summarize my experience here," she admits, noting that she's been here for half of her life. "Working at QCH has been a great opportunity for professional development, while providing great care to my community."

Smith has indeed been given some great opportunities for professional development. In fact, her unit in C4 has been chosen to move to the new ACE unit once it's completed. "We're all very excited. C4 has been dubbed the ghetto unit, it hasn't been updated in a while, and we've worked very hard with what we have. The nurses are eager to get new equipment, and to learn new things in relation to taking care of the patients. Our unit is already similar to what the ACE Unit will be doing, but there are still some new things we will be learning. A few nurses have already signed up for some of the courses the hospital is providing. I really think this unit deserves this chance. My coworkers have worked so hard for it, and I'm so happy that they have this great opportunity."