

MEDIA RELEASE:

For Immediate Release

November 14, 2018

Haldimand Norfolk Diabetes Program Celebrates 25 Years

“You have arrived and survived diagnosis and most importantly you have thrived in spite of it all” remarked Cindy Gekiere HN Diabetes Program Coordinator as she greeted nearly 250 guests to a 25th Anniversary Community event. This public event held November 7 at the Greens at Renton was a celebration of those in Haldimand and Norfolk living with Diabetes. A time to look back and more importantly look ahead.

As a Diabetes Educator, Gekiere said that she is humbled by the strength and courage of those gathered, “Strength to incorporate into your lives the lifestyle changes to help control your blood sugar and courage to trust and have faith in your healthcare providers as they guide you on what is best to do.” Guests living with diabetes for 20 years or more were given a special medal. All guests received a commemorative key tag marking the event.

The anniversary event featured guest speakers Dr. David Kennedy and Dr. Tim Bard. This was Kennedy’s 18th such presentation. His engaging afternoon talk to those with diabetes shared the latest research and expert opinions in diabetes management. Technology plays a huge role. One can now monitor blood sugars and check the time of day by looking at a wrist worn device. Dr. Tim Bard spoke at the evening gathering of Healthcare Providers about the new 2018 Clinical Practice Guidelines.

The HN Diabetes Program has reason to celebrate. Under Cindy Gekiere’s leadership the program has thrived. In 1993, Norfolk General Hospital hired Gekiere to start an outpatient Diabetes Program where none had previously existed. She and a dietitian saw 62 patients and did two insulin starts. In 1997, it was recognized that this growing program should be shared in Haldimand County by expanding to West Haldimand General Hospital in Hagersville and Haldimand War Memorial Hospital in Dunnville. Today the program has a database of 5500 across the three hospital sites – over 3500 at NGH. The program employs 7 certified Diabetes Educators (3 Registered Dietitians and 4 Registered Nurses) and 2 Clerks.



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“Cindy has displayed extraordinary dedication in building a program best serving those living with diabetes in both communities” stated Kelly Isfan NGH President and CEO “I am confident that she and her team will continue to grow services to meet future needs.”

As the program has grown its scope of service has expanded. Some milestones:





- 1994. First Community event was held in the basement of Norfolk Hospital Nursing Home.
- 1996. A monthly support group with guest speakers was created for those not interested in scheduled appointments. It is still running today.
- 1999. The first edition of the “Sugar Scoop” newsletter. It is sent out annually to the entire database. It is a way of helping those living with diabetes to keep up to date.
- 2004. Some patients who suffered strokes rode in the Big Bike for Heart & Stroke to raise awareness about the high risk for a person with diabetes.
- 2012. The program started a Healthcare Provider Community of Practice annual meeting and a newsletter from the team bringing together Community allies to build partnerships and further enhance and develop service to our counties.

For more information about the HN Diabetes Program visit www.ngh.on.ca

Or call 519-426-013 Cindy Gekiere ext. 4472 or/ Jessica Brown ext. 4473

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