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# ***CURRENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS AT ST. MARTHA'S REGIONAL HOSPITAL***

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## **Artist in Residence**

This program offers art activities to both individual patients and small groups, who are exploring countless ways in which visual arts and storytelling can enhance our health – of the body, mind, and spirit. Art in healthcare experience has a positive impact on patients by aiding in their physical, mental, and emotional recovery, including relieving anxiety and decreasing the perception of pain. Art can serve as a healing tool, reducing stress and loneliness and provide opportunities for self-expression.

The volunteer will encourage and assist clients to participate in various art projects. The volunteer will establish rapport with clients while engaged in the art program, and the end of the session, the volunteer will assist clients in the cleaning up of the art program area, as required.

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## **Friendly Visitor**

The purpose of the Friendly Visitor Program is to improve the well-being of patients by offering support and social interaction, which contributes positively to the patients' quality of life. Volunteers visit one-on-one with patients to interact with them and provide friendly conversations and company.

## **Dialysis Unit**

The Dialysis Unit provides care to patients with kidney ailments, most of whom receive three treatments a week. The ages of patients, their conditions, care needs, and length of treatments varies. Each patient is unique.

The volunteer will visit patients, provide socialization, companionship, and comfort during their dialysis treatment. The volunteer will engage patients in conversation and activities as appropriate, such as playing cards or other games, reading aloud, watching movies, and/or other activities of interest to the patient.

## **G.A.R.U. & P.C.U.**

The Volunteer will visit selected patients once per week or as arranged by the unit's care coordinator. The volunteer will provide comfort and companionship to patients by sitting and conversing with them and by participating in their desired activities, such as card/board

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games, reading, working on puzzles and etc. In addition, on special occasions the volunteer will assist staff with special requests such as, organizing special events, decorating the unit, and more. If needed, the volunteer will report to staff any information that might contribute to the quality of patient care and/or life.

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## **Oncology Clinic Assistant**

Volunteers welcome patients and families as they arrive for their appointments. They provide support, comfort, assistance, directions, and information to patients, visitors, and staff of the Oncology Clinic. Volunteers will keep the patients/visitors company while they are waiting for their appointments, during treatment, and when needed.

Volunteers will help with keeping pamphlets/brochures and reading materials up-to-date. They will talk to patients and caregivers to help them feel welcomed, and the volunteers will offer activities to patients to help them occupy their time. Outside of the treatment room, the volunteers offer comfort items to patients/visitors in the waiting area, such as refreshments, warm blanket, tissue, reading materials, and etcetera. They will ask patients if they have received their new patient information packets, and bring to them, if they have not.

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## **Emergency Room Hospitality Volunteer**

Volunteers in this program provide assistance to the Emergency Department staff by greeting patients and their families upon arrival to the department and directing them to the appropriate area. Duties also include liaison between Emergency Department staff, patients, and family members. Volunteering in the Emergency department can be very busy and rewarding.

Volunteers greet visitors and direct them to the Triage/Registration area, and they will explain the Triage System to them, if needed. They will maintain friendly contact with and provide comfort items to the patients/visitors that are waiting, and act as their information liaison. In addition, volunteers will direct and assist relatives and patients (if permitted) to other areas of the hospital.

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## **Antigonish Health & Wellness Centre Ambassadorship**

Volunteers in this program provide assistance to the Health & Wellness Centre staff by greeting patients, their families, and visitors upon arrival to the Health & Wellness Centre and directing them to their intended destination. The volunteers will walk with the visitors, if required, to their intended locations. The Volunteers at the Antigonish Health & Wellness Centre may encounter low-traffic periods without much activity. However, their presence is highly reassuring and appreciated by the staff.

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## **Mental Health & Addiction In-patient Unit Recreation Program Assistant**

The goal of the recreation program of Mental Health Services is to support patients to participate in recreation and leisure activities within the unit. These activities include creative expression, music, relaxation, exercises, and games. In addition, this program gives the participants the opportunity to engage in regular mental and physical activities and to notice the benefits that these activities have on one's mental health.

Volunteers in this program assist with program implementation and facilitation. They encourage patients to participate and assist them in activities. Volunteers help with setting up and cleaning up, before and after the activities. Throughout each shift, volunteers are actively engaged with patients and provide companionship and socialization.

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## **Music Therapy Assistant**

This program will provide the volunteer with an opportunity to interact with patients, their family, and/or their loved ones. The volunteer will be orientated by the Music Therapist and will be able to interact individually with specific patients, as identified by the Music Therapist, or in small group sessions. The volunteer will have the Music Therapist present at all times. The music therapist will identify patients and family members who would be appropriate for the volunteer to work with. The volunteer will arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the therapy session to help get the patients to the designated location. The volunteer will stay for 15 minutes after the session to help with getting individuals back to their rooms.

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## **Palliative Care Volunteer**

Palliative Care is a special kind of health care for individuals and families who are living with a life-threatening illness that may be at an advanced stage. The goal of palliative care is comfort and dignity for the person living with advanced illness as well as the best quality of life for both this person and his or her family. "Family" is defined by whoever the person says his or her family is; it may include relatives, partners and friends. Volunteers enhance the quality of life for patients and families and work as members of a multi-disciplinary team. They contribute actively to the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual welfare of our patients and families.

Volunteers ensure that the unit is welcoming. They provide a presence for the patients and their families. They talk with patients, family members, and visitors and look for ways to offer appropriate help. They offer to relieve family members to give them the opportunity to go for a break, take a walk, get a bite to eat, and run an errand. If permitted, volunteers take patients for brief walks. Through their presence, volunteers bring comfort to patients and their families.