



## Success with student nurses comes easy for Extendicare Lakefield

By: Nancy Ross RN, Director of Care, Extendicare Lakefield

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### Extendicare Lakefield, Lakefield

Extendicare Lakefield is a long-term care home (LTCH) committed to providing clinical placements to nursing students. We strive to make the learning journey meaningful.

When I get a call from the local university or college asking if I would be willing to take on a student, I jump at the chance. To me, it is a win-win for everyone. Here are 5 upsides to having student nurses at the home for their clinical placements.

**1. You can use their skills for implementing best practice.** I often link Connie Wood RN, Best Practice Coordinator from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) with the students. She assists our team to complete a gap analysis on specific clinical issues. Once we see where the gaps in practice are and set priorities, it provides the students with a focused, meaningful project. The student's effort is twofold. It meets their learning objectives and assists my team to apply best practices. From the development of jeopardy games, to posters, simulations and making videos, we have seen many creative approaches developed by the students.

**2. You support potential future employees.** The joint venture with academic settings provides me with a pipeline of new nurses to our home. We find that once the new nurses are familiar with long-term care and the career opportunities, they are more willing to stay on as staff. It lowers staff turnover and the schedule is less strained. The students are encouraged to apply for summer holiday positions as PSWs. This helps alleviate shortages and replaces staff for summer holidays. The knowledge students' gain from utilizing the RNAO best practice guidelines strengthens their skills at the bedside. We get nurses who are critical thinkers, are leaders and can make good decisions.

**3. Raises the bar for all staff.** Learning isn't all one way when nursing students come to Lakefield Extendicare. Our team has an open mind and a humble spirit. They enjoy the opportunities for new learning's to enhance resident safety, quality care and their nursing skills.

**4. You get a fresh set of eyes.** Being around students on the brink of a new thrilling career is refreshing and motivating. Student nurses have insight into the latest evidence-based practice being taught in the classroom. It helps our nursing staff to reconnect to the wide-eyed nurse they once were and why they choose nursing as their profession.

**5. You are doing your part to promote nursing in long-term care.** Taking on student nurses is a worthwhile thing to do. Our home is keen to welcome the students and make them feel part of our team. We all act as ambassadors' for the long-term care workforce. I like to think we are helping equip the students to apply best practice to their own skills. I hope my role encourages students to choose a career in geriatric nursing.

#### - About Extendicare Lakefield -

*Extendicare Lakefield is a 100 bed facility nestled in the Kawartha Lakes region of Ontario. Nancy Ross is a Registered Nurse and the Director of Care. She partners with Trent University and Fleming College to host clinical placements for nursing students. Her home has implemented 3 RNAO best practice guidelines over the last 4 years.*



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