

St. Patrick's Mercy Home Foundation

Newsletter



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Congratulations

St. Patrick's Mercy Home Foundation congratulates St. Patrick's Mercy Home on its 50th Anniversary of care and service to the elderly of the province.

50th Anniversary Ceremonies

January 7, 2008 Sister Helen Harding, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Mercy, welcomed approximately 300 people who gathered at St. Pius X Church for the opening celebrations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of St. Patrick's Mercy Home. The celebrations began with a Eucharistic Liturgy officiated by Archbishop Martin Currie, followed by a reception in St. Pius X Parish Hall. *A full transcript of Archbishop Currie's homily and Sr. Helen's Welcoming Address can be found on the Foundation's website: www.spmhf.nl.ca*

Why Celebrate 50th Anniversary?

- To recall the memories and stories of the many residents, past and present, their families and friends, who over the years shared with so many of us their life stories, their joys, and their struggles.
- To show a deep appreciation to present and former administrators, managers, staff, and volunteers for their quality and compassionate care of the residents.
- To express gratitude to the Sisters of Mercy, who took responsibility for the administration and day-to-day operations of the new Home when it opened January 6, 1958 and over the 50 years has called "the Sisters to a new expression of ministry, a new way to move forward in their mission of compassion and service to the people of the Province". **Sr Harding's Welcoming Address, January 7, 2008.**
- To acknowledge and show appreciation for the vision and leadership of Archbishop Skinner who undertook, as part of his social welfare program, the building of a Home for the aged, "to provide a desired haven of quiet and care ... open to all creeds, and to all classes, with and without sufficient means". **The Monitor, March 1953 p.24.**

Visit our Website at www.spmhf.nl.ca for an exciting contest. You could win two tickets to our next Dinner Theatre.

SPMH Foundation Launches 50th Anniversary Appeal

As this year marks the 50th Anniversary of the opening of St. Patrick's Mercy Home, **Rita Janes**, Chair of St. Patrick's Mercy Home Foundation, announced recently that the Foundation plans to use the occasion to fundraise to purchase eleven bathing systems (\$40,000 each) for the residents of the St. Patrick's Mercy Home. "Equally important," she said, "the anniversary year also provides an excellent opportunity to re-tell the wonderful story of the generosity and sacrifice of the people who contributed to the building of St. Patrick's and to ensure that story is not lost."

Kathy Turner, Administrator of St. Patrick's Mercy Home, indicated that most of the bathing systems in use at St. Patrick's have out-lived their functional lifespan and changing residents' needs now require new and innovative bathing systems that are ergonomically safe for both the resident and caregiver, as well as multipurpose, with multifunctions. These new functions include safety features such as temperature and volume controls; whirlpool options; infection control specifications and ease of access.

"These new tubs truly benefit the residents who no longer will need to be lifted/hoisted into a tub but now will be able to be wheeled in. Such a system adds quality, value, and dignity to a resident's life", she said.



With your support the Foundation recently installed a new bathing system like the one pictured above. Your donations also helped purchase a wheelchair bus, acquire hot-meal distribution systems, do chapel renovations and purchase Christmas gifts each year for all the residents.

By supporting this Special 50th Anniversary Appeal you will allow the Foundation to provide more of these bather tubs, which will greatly improve the quality of life of our residents.

With your support we can succeed!

Why A 50th Anniversary Appeal?

The 50th Anniversary Appeal is motivated by the history of how St. Patrick's Mercy Home was financed over 50 years ago.

In 1953 Archbishop Skinner announced a financial campaign with an objective of \$150,000 to support planned social programs, one of which was "*a desired haven of quiet and care for the aged and infirm, open to all creeds, and to all classes, with or without sufficient mean.*" This haven became St. Patrick's Mercy Home.

The campaign asked each family in the Archdiocese of St. John's to contribute, on average, \$15.00 but anticipated that there would be substantial donations from people of means, and generous support from Catholic societies and sodalities. The men of the Archdiocese went door to door to collect and the Campaign netted \$185,400 in the first 6 months. (That's approximately \$1,483,200. in today's money.)

Also there was a special envelope collection in all parishes each October for St. Patrick's Mercy Home. This continued throughout the building of the Home.

Cent-A-Meal

How many remember or have heard about the **Cent-A-Meal Campaign**? This was the other plank of Archbishop Skinner's strategy to raise money for the social welfare programs of the Archdiocese.

The Cent-A-Meal was launched March 1953 as an opportunity for families to make a small daily contribution, "one cent for each meal, that is, three cents a day".

A headline in the September 1955 Monitor quotes from the Archbishop's address about the Cent-A-Meal: "*The idea behind the contribution is that the family as a unit be reminded daily of the effort. The spiritual motive has been stressed from the beginning, that the family put an offering in a container on the table at each meal. In this way the family will be inviting to its table the aged who are to be provided for from this Fund.*"

Who Collected the Cent-A-Meal?

The women of the different parish sodalities, altar societies or whatever other women's groups existed in a parish undertook the task of collecting the **Cent-A-Meal** each month. The Archbishop recognized the women collectors when he said, "*the duties of the collectors who will call at each home once a month may entail some sacrifice of time, some extra work, this they are asked to contribute for the success of the campaign*".

The Cent-A-Meal Fund was under the direction of Fathers John Murray and Greg Hogan. Six priests campaigned throughout the Archdiocese in May 1954 and again in the spring of 1956 for the Cent-A-Meal.

In the first six months \$52,615.16 was collected through the Cent-A-Meal Campaign.

That's \$420,921.28 in today's money.

Memories of Cent-A-Meal

Mary Ennis of St. John's writes, my earliest memories of the Cent-a-Meal Campaign go back to Red Island, Placentia Bay. I recall my mother sending me "around the harbour" every Sunday to collect cent-a-meal.

In 1953 parishioners responded to Archbishop Skinner's appeal for funding to aid in the building of St. Patrick's Mercy Home in St. John's. I am sure not one of them, even my mother who coordinated the monies for the parish, ever dreamed of spending their later years at this Home.

When staying at home was no longer an option for my parents, mom quickly told us that she was going nowhere else but St. Patrick's Mercy Home and she added, "We built that place".

Catherine Henley, Captain/Collector for the Cent-A-Meal Campaign in the Basilica Parish during the 1950's says, "On reflection on my involvement in the Cent-A-meal Campaign, what made the greatest impression on me was the houses I visited very obviously had very little of this world's goods, and very often, occupied by an elderly couple who were waiting, with their cent-a-meal contribution ready, and usually in pennies. It was obvious they were very pleased to give. I usually left feeling I should be giving to them, but you could see the satisfaction they received from giving to such a good cause, a home for the elderly".

Do you have a Cent-a-Meal memory or story you would like to share?

Please contact the Foundation Office.

Your Donations at Work!

To the end of December 2007 St. Patrick's Mercy Home Foundation contributed \$400,000 to St. Patrick's Mercy Home.

With the help of our supporters we were able to purchase a new wheelchair bus for St. Patrick's-\$110,000.



How Can I Make a Donation to the 50th Anniversary Appeal?

You can contribute to the 50th Anniversary Appeal by bringing your donation to the Foundation Office on the first floor or by sending it to the SPMH Foundation P. O. Box 21191, 146 Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's, NL A1A 5B2.

Please make cheques payable to St. Patrick's Mercy Home Foundation. A tax receipt will be issued for donations of \$10.00 or over.

How much is a Cent Worth Today?

A cent in March 1953 is worth 8 cents today.