

# Hospice Wellington takes a green approach to building

The opening of the new Hospice Wellington Centre at 795 Scottsdale Road is the realization of a 30 year dream. Committed to providing both residential and community palliative care, the new 16,000 square foot Centre includes a floor designed to accommodate Hospice community programs as well as a comfortable residential floor that offers 10 intimate rooms for end-of-life clients. The new building is the culmination of efforts by J. David McAuley Architect Inc. and John Donato of CRD Construction and Project Management to implement an environmentally supportive consciousness in the design and also the construction. We therefore offer that this stunning new facility is worthy of the environmental stewardship acknowledgement of the Guelph Chamber of Commerce President's Business Recognition Awards.

As an organization with a passion for excellence and a commitment to a holistic approach to compassionate care, we understand the importance of sustaining the earth's natural resources and we see this as a natural extension of our care philosophy. With the planet's resources depleting and the costs of energy rising, being "green" has gained an increased importance in both the way we live personally and in our community spaces and environment. Building green is important to the protection of eco systems, to maintain safe air and water quality, and to conserve renewable and non-renewable resources.

We have made significant efforts to decrease the impact on the environment during construction through structural design, choice of furniture, finishes, fittings and appliances in addition to the choice of renovating an existing building within the existing suburban space of the City of Guelph rather than building on a "green field" site.

The existing 10,000 square foot building, formerly Kortright Presbyterian Church, has been left in place and utilized within the new design avoiding the costs and environmental impacts of potentially toxic demolition. Every upstairs and downstairs area has been altered and renovated both inside and out with careful thought applied to accommodate the multi-purpose requirements of many of the rooms. The car parking has been retained but not increased in size and a bicycle rack has been added to encourage alternative modes of transportation.

In efforts to minimize energy transportation costs and to preserve a commitment to "shop locally" all facility building materials were sourced locally and sub-trades were contracted from within a 20 mile radius. From the low-water toilets to paint, carpet, ceramic tiles and low wattage lighting, choices have been made that support energy efficiency and renewable or low impact harvested resources as well as allowing for possible hypersensitivity of Hospice Wellington clients.

Creating a high performance luminous environment through the careful integration of natural and artificial light sources improves on the lighting quality of a structure. Thus in Hospice Wellington skylights allow for a profusion of natural light into the building. Judicious positioning of windows, solarium and decks increase other natural light opportunities and low wattage energy efficient light fittings have been deployed throughout the building where artificial light is needed.

The windows are made of energy efficient glass to eliminate solar gain and retain heat as needed, but can open and close independently facilitating individually determined climate control and more natural seasonal adjustments to temperature as personal tastes dictate as well as increasing the buildings

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overall thermal quality. Solar blinds have been fitted to maximize internal climate control reducing heating and cooling energy consumption.

Further improvement of the indoor climate has been achieved with the installation of a living wall designed by Nedlaw Living Walls. This vertical arrangement of tropical plants and diverse microbial species function as indoor-air biofilters removing toxins and unhealthy contaminants from the air and contributing to improved air quality as well as the overall energy efficiency of the building. Indoor air quality is not only important for the health of residents, staff and visitors but provides an aesthetic reminder of the beauty and life giving properties of the earth a component of the style of holistic and complementary care offered to clients. Hospice Wellington's living wall is part of the main atrium and reception area of the residential floor and adjacent to the kitchen.

The landscape environment is also important to Hospice Wellington not only for aesthetic beauty but also for sound buffering. A particularly innovative addition to the building is the installation of a rainwater harvesting system to service the watering requirements of the garden. The design includes a roof drainage system to capture rainwater and direct the flow into a 5,000 gallon cistern for storage. Water from this cistern can be used to water the exterior planting through an underground irrigation system and avoids the demand on local aquifers by not using drinking water for irrigation purposes.

Green building measures cannot achieve their goals unless they work as intended. Building commissioning includes testing and adjusting the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems to ensure that all equipment meets design criteria. It also includes instructing the staff on the operation and maintenance of equipment. During the staff orientation there will be a 24 hour period where staff will "live" in the building experiencing the space from the perspective of client as well as staff. We anticipate during this time being able to apply the training around effective use of some of the energy efficient systems as well as fostering an appreciation of the choices and adaptations that have been made.

Hospice Wellington's new facility is an excellent example of collaborative efforts for a superior quality result. The support of project consultants Melex Engineering Ltd., Tacoma Engineering, Gamsby and Mannerow Engineers, The Landplan Collaborative Ltd., and Ltd. Consulting Group Inc. has been a significant contributing factor in this accomplishment. We hope that you will acknowledge the efforts of all involved through Guelph Chamber of Commerce President's Business Recognition Awards.

**Date started:**

January 1, 2009

**Date completed:**

ongoing

**Organization responsible for this Success Story**

[Hospice Wellington](#)

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