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Corporate Employees Support Child and Adolescent Mental Health Patients

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Plan Group is helping Humber River Hospital reinvent patient care by being a donor, a building partner, and a supportive member of the community.

As a donor, Plan Group committed \$250,000 to the Humber River Hospital Foundation and as their naming opportunity selected the Play Therapy Room at the new hospital. But CEO Bill Kurtin wanted to do more than just donate. He says "we didn't just want to hand over a cheque." Since Plan Group has an interest in helping at-risk youth, they partnered with Humber River to launch our first corporate volunteer program with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit.

Three nights a week, three volunteers from a group of 14 Plan Group employees socialize and play with the patients staying in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit. During that time, the kids aren't thinking about their treatment or being in the hospital. They're just focused on having fun with the volunteers from Plan Group.

Doris Galas, Clinical Manager in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Program, says "the experience has absolutely been amazing. To have people take time out of their busy schedules to come and spend quality time with the kids, and make their time here more meaningful is very valuable and it means a lot."

For the kids, this time is a welcome change of pace. Instead of focusing on their treatment, they get to think about different things. This can range from playing cards or ping pong, being read to or doing art work, or talking quietly in a corner. Sometimes, the volunteers and teens engage in a two hour sing along, showcasing the unique talents of these kids. The Plan Group volunteers all agree that their visits are amazing experiences.

Doris says "it's all about having fun. The children may be dealing with serious illnesses and they enjoy the chance to just be regular kids when the volunteers visit. It's a different experience for the kids it gives them an opportunity to work on trust and socialization issues and draws them out of their shells in a non-threatening environment. The clinical staff are present during the recreation period, but it's a time where the volunteers bond with the patients and they engage with the kids because they want to – out of their own good will."

The generosity of the Plan Group volunteers keeps growing – they recently raised over \$1,000 through a 50/50 draw to purchase sport and recreational gear and they surprised the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit with presents at their Christmas party. "Things like new movies, a large supply of popcorn, a karaoke machine, and arts and crafts supplies. These things make the lived experience on the unit easier for the kids." says Doris.

She adds “it’s just a really cool program!” Doris has heard feedback from the kids that the Plan Group volunteers are a fun group that really care about them. This is something for which they are incredibly grateful. “Everyone here is so thankful for the volunteers at Plan Group!”

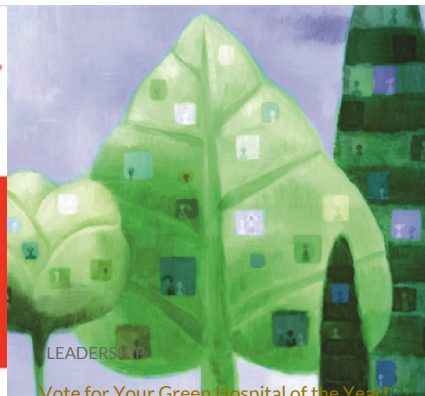
The employee volunteers at Plan Group echo the sentiment. They are thankful for the opportunity and can’t think of anything better to do with their time. As strong believers in the capabilities of youth, the team at Plan Group says: “These children and teens are our future leaders. They will shape the world we live in. We can affect their lives now by getting invested in their day to day occurrences and treating them well. From that, they will create a future where people aren’t discriminated against or feel left out. When we visit, we hope all of the patients feel included and loved. That’s our goal. That is our mission.”

As one of the vendors constructing the new hospital, getting involved with Humber means a lot to Plan Group. The Hospital is being built near their office, and their employees will be served by it. Plan Group is part of this community, and they want to improve it. They are an innovative multi-trade technical services provider, working closely with Humber River Hospital to ensure that the dream of a “fully digital hospital” is realized by coordinating the installation of the data communications and electrical systems needed to support their ICAT infrastructure. This will help ensure data is available where and when it’s needed, greatly assisting medical staff in their life-saving work.

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