



A tradition of care

In the early- to mid-1900s, Winnipeggers were living with a host of threats to their health and lives. Typhoid, the Spanish flu, and polio were an everyday reality. [The Convalescent Home of Winnipeg \(The Home\)](#) was there throughout it all, ready to step in and provide professional and compassionate care.

As Manitoba's first personal care home, The Home's roots can be traced back to 1906 when it was created to help relieve overcrowding in the Winnipeg General Hospital during the typhoid epidemic.

"In the beginning we were more of a post hospital environment," says Sherry Heppner, development coordinator at The Home. "There weren't enough beds for people while they convalesced after surgery, recovery from injury, or acute illness."

As the city grew, need grew and The Home's role expanded beyond convalescence. Today it provides a different yet equally vital kind of care for older adults.

"We've been a charitable organization all along," says Sherry. "It's really due to the goodness of the community that we've been able to carry on."

84 residents live at The Home, with approximately 110 staff members who provide care 24/7.

"Ultimately the more time you're able to spend with the residents, the better their quality of care will be," says Sherry.

Ideally, staff at The Home are hoping to have enough funds one day to move to a small house concept. "Long-term care is best delivered in a home environment," says Sherry. "Home Care is a tremendous service that enables many older adults to live in the community either independently or with their families, but it can only take you so far when there are other kinds of medical needs. The Home is trying to fill that gap."

In addition to supporting the residents, Sherry says they are also there to support the families who must make the decision to place their loved ones in care. "Especially when there is acute illness involved, it can be the hardest decision you have to make," she says. "It really is a journey that you're going on, and we want to be there for the family to support them and let them know that it's the right decision placing their loved one into a homey environment."

Sherry says families should never feel they are failing their loved ones by putting them in care. She says they will understand and don't want you to give up your life providing medical care for them. She shares her own experience where she had to place her mother in care. "The nurse said to me, 'Now you can go back to being a daughter.'"

With an aging population, the need for personal care homes and long-term care will continue to grow, Sherry says. "There are so many groups who won't have someone to look after them in their later years. What will happen to them? Everyone deserves a home."

Sherry says the money from the Share the Light contest will go toward initiatives that benefit The Home, its cherished residents, and/or its amazing staff.

To the people in the community who nominated them, Sherry says she cannot thank them enough. "I'll use a quote that was given to me by a friend, and that is "it takes community to build community," she says. "We absolutely want to be able to give back in our own way and support our older adults on their life journey."