

## Staff Member Profile – Ronnalea Hamman

Nov. 2007



My name is Ronnalea Hamman and I am the Patient and Family Education Manager for BC Children's Hospital and Sunny Hill Health Centre. I will celebrate four years at BCCH this January.

To say the learning curve for this job has been steep would be an understatement. I have been given a great opportunity to define and set some strategic direction for patient and family education here. My principle role is to manage the inventory of patient and family education materials that are developed by the staff at BCCH and SHHC. This involves working with staff to make sure that all of our materials are written in plain language, meet copyright and design standards, and involve patient/family feedback during development. Right now, there are just over 500 print resources in my inventory that have been developed by staff here at the hospital.

I have two goals that I would like to achieve over the next year and will work with Susan and the Partners in Care committee closely to achieve both of them. One is to develop an '*admissions package*' for all families admitted to the inpatient units at BCCH. After speaking with many families, I have found out how important it is to have information about the hospital, and to have a package in which they can collect information for future reference. The second goal I have is to work with staff to assist them on developing their web pages on the BC Children's Hospital website to meet the needs of patients and families and enhance communication.

Although there is enough work to keep me busy 24/7, this role is only part time so it takes a bit longer to see the end result, but things are certainly going in the right direction. The rest of my time is filled with spending time with my family which includes my husband and my two children (ages 12 and 9). Working part time allows me to be home for them most days when they get home from school, which is really important to me.

My not-so-secret hobby is my love for martial arts. Both my kids and I practice Sun Hang Do Martial Arts, and the *do-jang* (school) has become a second home to us. My son is a second Dan Black Belt and my daughter is Purple Belt. I got my first Dan Black Belt last May which I will put down as one of my proudest accomplishments. But not to worry, I don't go around picking fights. What I have found is that doing martial arts helps me to accomplish many other things, including some of my goals at work. I have learned to "face my fears" and move forward confidently to do what I want to do. Sport always provides a great metaphor for life doesn't it? The other bonus is that my husband always feels well protected with his family around him ☺.

I look forward to continue working with Partners in Care. The families involved work very hard and they are an inspiration. It is always a reminder that this is what we are here for.

## **Staff Member Profile – Diane Hart**

**Dec. 2007**

My name is Diane Hart, and I am the Supervisor of the Child Life Department at BC Children's Hospital. On June 1, 2008, I will celebrate 20 years of working at BCCH...through times of change and growth, of cutbacks and prosperity, of sadness and joy...what an incredible two decades!



In 1988, I began working as a child life specialist on the Adolescent Unit, which was located where 3F currently resides. The area that is now the OT/PT gym was our teen lounge, only then, it did not have walls, just orange dividers! I spent the next nine years working with youth – until a very exciting opportunity came up. I collaborated with Mary Paone, a youth health nurse and Dr. Sandy Whitehouse, a physician in youth health on a very exciting project. It was called On TRAC, and the project focused on transitioning youth from a paediatric health care centre to an adult facility. A steep learning curve related to project management, grant writing and teaching staff, youth and families about transition issues ensured – but it was worth it. I spent almost 3 years working on developing all of the On TRAC materials, before taking the job I currently hold.

I was also very fortunate to have worked in the BC Children's Hospital Foundation. In 2001, I assumed the portfolio of one of the fundraising managers while she was off on a one-year maternity leave. I was responsible for working with seven corporate and community groups who were all raising funds for the Telethon. That experience left me with such an appreciation of the work the Foundation does and the amazing people in our community who support BCCH.

My involvement with Partners in Care has spanned much of the time I have worked at BCCH. I have had the privilege of being on the committee with numerous parents and staff whose commitment to family centred care and family issues is unwavering. A highlight for me was seeing the Parent Liaison position come to fruition – it was a defining moment for Partners in Care.

I truly believe the time I spent working with patients and families helped me through one of the most difficult personal times of my life. In September 1997, in the early morning hours, I received a call from an ICU physician in Calgary, who explained my husband of four years had been in a terrible car accident. I flew to Calgary immediately, but arrived a half-hour after he passed away. I garnered strength and support from my hospital "family," but also from the wisdom and courage of the youth and family's I had worked with over the years. "Living each day to the fullest" was no longer a cliché phrase but became a philosophy to live my life by.

When I am not at work, my time is occupied in a number of ways. I am a Board member of the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation, and was the co-chair of their signature fundraising event called "Sparkle." I am also President-Elect of the Canadian Association of Child Life Leaders, and I will assume the President's position in November, 2008. I also love to run, and completed my fifth half marathon in October with my best time ever (I am contemplating a full marathon...but need to overcome a few injuries first!). My husband Warren has also taken up running, so we have been enjoying the North Shore trails (and all those hills!) together. We also love to travel and are planning a return trip to Europe next fall.

I believe that we should all learn at least one new thing a day and never fail to do that in my workplace. In large part, this is thanks to the perspectives and ideas shared so openly and willingly by families – it is truly a pleasure to be a committee member of Partners in Care.