

Nurses recognized for improving patient care in remote Aboriginal communities

November 6, 2013

Nurses are a cornerstone of Canada's health care system, including those who play a critical role in maintaining patient care in isolated Aboriginal communities in Canada's North. Two such nurses have been recognized by the Canadian Nurses Foundation for their exceptional contribution to the nursing profession.

Edith-Rose Cairns, recipient of the 2013 Sanofi Pasteur Limited Scholarship in Public/Community Health, knows there is no such thing as 'just being a nurse' having worked in Manitoba's War Lake First Nation, a community of 145 people, where fly-in doctor visits are limited and no other health professionals live in town. Cairns knows first-hand, the title 'nurse' is holistic, and also means serving as a trusted confidante, teacher, mentor, neighbour and friend to the community.

In her effort to deliver proactive health care, Cairns set up a makeshift office in the school kitchen to discuss healthy lifestyles and habits with community children. She also organizes an annual health expo barbecue for the entire community. When she's not dealing with emergencies, she makes sure immunizations are delivered, new mothers know how to breastfeed, and copes with the fight against communicable diseases.

"I am fiercely committed to the health of northern people, but it can be very challenging. The key to working in the isolated sub-Arctic is building trust in the community."

Edith-Rose Cairns, nurse

"Sanofi Pasteur appreciates the critical role nurses play in public health – both in terms of patient care and delivery of health services. We are very pleased to provide this scholarship fund to support nursing research and education."

Mark Lievonon, President of Sanofi Pasteur Limited

Mary Smith, one of 17 TD Aboriginal Nursing Fund Award recipients this year, never dreamed that she would be a nurse completing a PhD program.

Related information

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www.cnf-fiic.ca

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Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada
www.anac.on.ca

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“Being a nurse allows me to care for others and stimulate positive change through education and research. I have known great personal losses and I wanted to push ahead with care for those suffering from addictions and mental health issues. Becoming a nurse is a way to make things better not only for yourself and your family but also for your people and community.”

Mary Smith, nurse

"TD is committed to Aboriginal communities and supporting the Canadian Nurses Foundation and to help improve health care is part of this commitment. We're pleased to offer our support through the TD Bank Aboriginal Nursing Fund, which will support 17 Aboriginal nursing students and encourage educational development, ultimately improving health outcomes in Aboriginal communities."

Monique Bateman, Senior Vice President, Prairie Region, TD Canada Trust

Mary will be presenting at the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada's National Forum, "Honouring the Nursing Spirit at the Heart of Aboriginal Healing" November 9 and 10, at the Marriott Vancouver Airport in Richmond, BC.

“Advancing nursing knowledge is crucial to every aspect of patient care and health service delivery for all Canadians. As Canada's only national nursing foundation, we are pleased to partner with corporations like Sanofi Pasteur and TD to administer these valuable scholarship funds.”

Christine Rieck Buckley, Executive Director of the Canadian Nurses Foundation

“It is a firm belief of the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada that by increasing the number of Aboriginal nurses, and bolstering funding for Aboriginal nursing research, we will increase the overall health status of our Aboriginal communities across Canada. Aboriginal nurses bring knowledge of the language, culture, and the lived experience of Aboriginal peoples. This intimate knowledge of the historical events and current conditions that invariably shape our communities and our health status is invaluable in working with and understanding clients and developing community relationships and best practices.” *Rhonda Goodtrack, President, Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada*

Founded in 1962, the Canadian Nurses Foundation fosters national nursing excellence through the provision of research grants, awards and scholarships. For interviews and more information about the Canadian Nurses Foundation, visit www.cnf-fiic.ca, e-mail info@cnf-fiic.ca, or call 1.800.361.8404 ext. 250