



in the news



Broad scope of education and networking highlights of 5th annual PSW Conference

It's really a great opportunity for them to celebrate what is so great about being a PSW

Tuesday October 27, 2009

By Camille Jensen

Preferred Health Care Services' fifth annual Personal Support Worker (PSW) Conference provided a broad scope of educational sessions and a forum for celebration and networking, say two Leisureworld team members.

Held Oct. 14 at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Toronto-Markham, the event attracted more than 200 PSWs, including many from Leisureworld and Preferred Health Care Services.

Several staff members also delivered educational presentations including Preferred Health

Care Services professional development specialist Michelle Donald, who presented Mental Health and Seniors: Demystifying the Myths, and Leisureworld Caregiving Centre Scarborough dietician Dennis Collier who presented Meaning at Work.

The day-long conference concluded with a drumming session conducted by native drummer Lila Tabobondung.

Leisureworld Barrie PSW Sandra Johnston was a first-time attendee at the event and says in addition to meeting other PSWs the conference reinforced previous learning and brought forth new

ideas and practices.

"The speakers were wonderful," says Johnston. "I have been in this field for a while so it just refreshes things and tells you what's new out there."

Johnston adds she was able to learn new practices to take back to the Barrie long-term care home such as a type of sling for lifting residents that is disposable and can be used when a resident has an infectious disease.

"It was really good, I would recommend the opportunity for anyone," she says.

Preferred Health Care Services event planner Meagan Whitehorn says she hears from many PSWs that the event is an annual favourite.

"It's an opportunity for them to connect with their colleagues and it's something that they look forward to throughout the year," says Whitehorn.

"Most of them say they wish every PSW could come to this day because it's really a great opportunity for them to celebrate what is so great about being a PSW and an opportunity for Preferred Health Care Services to thank them for doing that hard work."

According to Whitehorn, several weeks after the event takes place the Preferred Health Care Services planning group meets to debrief and discuss the conference and begin planning next year's event.

From this year's conference Whitehorn says they learned that sessions on palliative care were "hugely popular." PSWs also seemed to enjoy longer educational sessions and presentations that involved the entire group.

"We know now that this is something to take forward to 2010 in our planning," says Whitehorn.

