

The Circle of Care:

Setting a new standard for dementia care



Photography: Patrick St-Arnaud

Circle of Care (CoC), part of the integrated Sinai Health system, is a leading not-for-profit home and community care provider for people with dementia and their caregivers. Serving the Greater Toronto Area, the Center's compassionate staff and volunteers are dedicated to supporting independence at home and enhancing quality of life for people in the community.

The Center originally opened in 2008, serving 20 people. Now, approximately 15 years later, they moved into a newer space spanning 7600 sq. ft. This accommodates up to 60 people and ultimately allows the CoC to engage their clients along their entire dementia journey.

Engagement Along the Entire Journey

Located within a larger community center and educational complex, the newly opened space creates a light and airy feel. The Circle of Care sits across the hallway from a local school that serves children from Junior Kindergarten to Grade Eight, providing a wonderful opportunity for intergenerational connection and programming. Upstairs, a medical center provides easy-to-access and ongoing medical support for the CoC's clients.

From the moment clients and their caregivers enter the new CoC space, the objective is, as Madeline D'Arpino, Supervisor of the Adult Day Program explains, "to stimulate each client in a way suited to them, to allow them to continue being active and really live life to the fullest, and to confirm that having a diagnosis of dementia doesn't mean life stops."



“Ultimately, our goal is to prove that we can bring joy to the lives of those people with dementia, regardless of the stage they are in. And I believe we are well on our way to achieving that in the Center.”

Madeline D’Arpino
RN & Supervisor of Adult Program

This translates into a variety of programming opportunities within the space specifically structured to all stages along the dementia journey. A beautiful kitchen forms a pivotal role in the space. The ritual of preparing and cooking food helps bring clients back to activities they have always enjoyed. Programming spaces for activities like yoga and Tai Chi blend into more lounge-like living spaces where visitors can interact, exercise, create or just settle in, watch television and feel at home, all within a safe and supported environment. State of the art immersive technology enables clients to ‘visit’ the opera or the golf range, or create digital art on an interactive art palette. Additionally, the Center is building a spa with full services for both patients and caregivers alike, to provide an extra layer of comfort and care. Finally, a safe and accessible inner courtyard sets the stage for outdoor programming when the weather permits.

It’s Good to be Home

On the design of the space, Dara Zarnett, Vice President of Quality, Strategic Partnerships and Communications explains, “When we started with the architects, we really wanted the space to feel homelike, not clinical” Dara adds with a smile, “But no doilies! We wanted a contemporary, elegant space that welcomes, and comforts, but doesn’t date.” Furniture within the space has been carefully selected to support both the safety and ability of clients and caregivers. All the chairs and tables within the space incorporate ergonomic features to allow easy access and egress for clients.

The Center staff also appreciate details like the Global ‘lift mechanism’ on dining room chairs that enable caregivers to safely and easily move both chair and client without disturbance. But perhaps, most importantly, the careful consideration and application of furniture settings with the space sends a larger message: Dara adds, “The aesthetics of the furniture play a crucial role in the first impression of the space. It conveys the message that we take care of our clients, their caregivers, our staff and volunteers. It says to all those who see and use it, they are important and valued.”

Madeline concludes, “Ultimately, our goal is to prove that we can bring joy to the lives of those people with dementia, regardless of the stage they are in. And I believe we are well on our way to achieving that in the Center. There is so much more to come in our journey of redefining the standards for dementia care within our community and the world at large.”

FEATURED PRODUCTS

Coast Glider, Primacare HT Dining, Primacare HT Guest Seating, Zira Storage Credenza, Vion Task Seating, Bridges II Desking and Storage, Swap Table

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