

***“RPNs can make a huge difference in the lives of clients and residents and their families. It is so rewarding to care and treat people in our care.”*** Diane Stroop



Diane Stroop has worked as a nurse for nearly 43 years, the past 22 of those in long term care at the Avalon Retirement Centre in Orangeville. Diane started her nursing career as a RNA before deciding to take additional courses to become an RPN. However she has a well rounded experience in health care as she also worked as a PSW for 15 years.

Last fall, Diane was one of four Ontario nurses recognized by the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) with the organization’s inaugural ‘Nursing Leadership Awards’. “It was a very humbling experience to receive that award,” says Diane. “Just to be recognized for something you do every day was quite amazing.”

As someone who has seen a significant amount of change in nursing throughout her career, Diane marvels at the opportunities that exist today for advancement in the profession. “There are many avenues an RPN can pursue,” she says. In her personal career journey, Diane has evolved from being a staff nurse to being in charge of a unit and in a given day, can be accountable for physical assessments, wound care, palliative care and liaisons with families. All aspects of her care require daily critical thinking. To support her career transition, Diane needed to acquire new skills, so she took Physical Assessment and IV courses to meet the demands of the more complex role she was pursuing. Diane, who describes herself as a lifelong learner, has taken many courses to update her daily practice, including 16 credits in Gerontology, a Palliative Care course and a Leadership course.

Throughout more than four decades of nursing, Diane has always made a point of rising to challenges in the workplace. When computers first arrived on the scene at Avalon, she adopted a proactive approach and prepared herself for the new technology by taking several computer courses. Her persistence and thirst for knowledge were not unnoticed. And when Avalon requested, she took the Joint Health and Safety Management Certification Course so she would be able to support the facility’s Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC).

She continued her education with the Back Care Course (trainer course for transfers and lifts for care givers) for JHSC and a Zero lift course. In addition, Diane also took courses to support psychogeriatric (P.I.E.C.E.S), wound care and became a RAO Best Practice Champion for fall prevention. And she quickly remarks that all of these additional learning opportunities enhanced the care she’s able to provide within her facility.

Diane also makes a point of participating on numerous committees aimed at supporting resident care, such as the Rainbow Auxiliary, of which she was a founding member (the group helps residents’ “dreams” or wishes to come true). She also helped develop the zero lift policy and logo, has been a JHSC member for over 20 years, participated in the ‘falls’ committee. She also played a significant role in the

development of the "Wear Red Day". Every Friday, individuals are encouraged to wear red to commemorate our veterans and to honour them for protecting our freedom. She says this action helps give some senior residents validation for their contributions. She also participates in the Big Bike fundraiser annually for the Heart and Stroke Foundation as part of the Avalon Angels team.

Dianne has been married to her husband George for 42 years, with whom she has raised seven children. Diane and George are now empty nesters but have 6 wonderful grandchildren, who they enjoy spending time with. And she's not showing any signs of slowing down. Diane still finds time to volunteer at church helping the sick and elderly and sharing the knowledge she has gained from her first hand experience with her youngest son (she describes as her sunshine), as a Down Syndrome parent support group member.