



## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH PRIDE

An innovative health care initiative opened in the Burnaby community 30 years ago. St. Michael's Centre complex care facility on Sussex Avenue admitted its first residents on July 6, 1981. The defining feature was the fact that three denominations – the Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Churches – came together to make this much needed health care facility a reality.

The roots of the St. Michael's Centre project date back to 1974, when the Metropolitan council of the United Church of Canada met with the Vancouver Foundation, at which time the latter expressed interest in funding the construction of a facility to care for personal and intermediate care level residents. A Seniors Care Project Committee was endorsed by the Metropolitan Council, and that committee went on to obtain, within three months, approval from the Minister of Health for the funding of extended care level beds to be included in the project. Having multi-levels of care for the facility displayed great forethought on the committee's part, as allowing for residents to remain in the same facility as their care needs increase, is considered today as being a highly beneficial component of care. In addition, the committee laid the foundation for a holistic approach to resident care by ensuring that the facility has a multi-disciplinary team composed of care aides, an occupational therapist, nurses, a pastoral coordinator, recreation workers, a social worker, and a volunteer coordinator. The goal was to deliver good quality care which was respectful of the residents, and which supported independence of decision making as much as possible. In 1976, the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches were invited to participate in the project, and this multi-denominational approach was another aspect which made the project truly unique. In 1979, the formation of an Auxiliary, which participated in the planning, ensured grassroots community involvement and emphasis on the enhancement of the lives of those who would be receiving care.

Today, St. Michael's Centre serves the community by providing 128 complex care beds and 16 hospice beds. It continues to be totally non-profit, funded by the Fraser Health Authority, and relying on donations to its St. Michael's Centre Foundation and Auxiliary for much of its equipment and resident comfort needs. The St. Michael's Centre board and staff are proud that the qualities that set it apart 30 years ago define the facility today: multi-faith (and multi-cultural), respectful of those they serve, with care delivered by a close-knit team.

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