

## Sharon House AGM - April 26, 2014

### Report by the Board of Directors

The mission of Sharon House Corporation is, “To support Christian Science nursing and its availability to those relying on Christian Science for healing”. Over the past few years, Sharon House has had to execute this mission in new ways. Although the new ways show promise, we are still very open to improvements.

In summary, we are currently supporting a very active Christian Science nursing network available to our field from Halifax to Winnipeg. Visiting nurse service is quite widely available. Around-the-clock care is available when needed from a growing number of independent nurses. Sharon House has recently offered a simple retreat service known as Bible, Bed and Breakfast on a trial basis. For the first time in years, Sharon House Corporation is financially stable and with your help we hope to keep it so.

Now some details.

A few years ago, Sharon House had to lay off its employee nurses because our field was not meeting the annual costs of nurse wages. Through simple arithmetic, we see that it takes almost five full time nurses to provide even one nurse on duty around the clock for an extended time. The traditional model for a Christian Science Care Facility was not working in our field. With no paid employment following the layoff, three of the nurses that had been working at Sharon House left our field.

At that point a Christian Scientist could still engage an independent Christian Science nurse for visiting nurse services or even for a few days of around-the-clock care. But Christian Scientists with the greatest need had to travel to the U.S.A. or accept medical assistance.

The Sharon House Board looked for some means of making its then vacant facility available to independent nurses who sought a place outside of the patient’s home in which to nurse a patient. As soon as we solved the legal issues of renting nursing rooms at the facility, a team of independent nurses brought a patient to Sharon House.

In the new mode of operation, you do not call Sharon House if you need nursing care. But Sharon House still supports Christian Science nursing in big ways. Assuming that you are already working with a Christian Science practitioner, you engage a nurse. You can reach your nurse directly or you can call a number which will be answered at any time day or night by a Christian Science nurse. That service is paid for by Sharon House, but you are reaching an independent nurse – not Sharon House. You arrange for a nurse visit. If you and your nurse see the need for 24/7 assistance, a nursing team can be organized to provide that assistance at your home or at Sharon House.

Christian Science nursing is not truly available in a field unless 24/7 care is available. Unavailability of 24/7 tempts patients to turn to the medical or forces an ill person to make a long trip to a Christian Science care facility.

Care 24/7 can be provided by your lead nurse who has assembled a team that between them is willing to work the necessary hours at your home. Or a Journal-listed nurse can rent space at Sharon House to provide this care. This new operational model seems to solve many of the problems of the traditional model – especially for a small Christian Science field. Of course, the new model brings with it new problems to solve.

For several months following the first 24/7 patient's departure from the Sharon House facility, we had no further applications for room rentals.

Why not? We found that we had another lesson to learn. We found that because of the sporadic demands for nursing services, the available nurses had taken full time and part time jobs out of financial necessity. While they were nominally available for visiting nurse calls and wanted very much to help, they could no longer assemble a team able to provide around-the-clock care for more than a few consecutive days.

It then took several weeks of working with the nurses to put together an arrangement with six nurses who together were willing to commit to providing 24/7 care at either a patient's home or at Sharon House. Various, these nurses gave up non-nurse jobs, committed to being available on certain days of the week, agreed to come to Toronto for a solid week upon request, or moved permanently to Toronto from out of town. Sharon House contracted these nurses to stand-by. They agreed not to take non-nursing jobs that would jeopardize the 24/7 service. The total cost of these contracts was approximately the annual salary for one nurse.

Within weeks of reaching this agreement, the team was servicing its first 24/7 case. Cases have been served both at Sharon House and at the patient's home. With the exception of a couple nights when the Sharon House facility housed no patients, we have had one or more patients since August 2013 served by the 24/7 team. The guest count peaked at five for a couple nights! Members of the 24/7 team continue to provide visiting nurse and nurse consulting services from Halifax to Winnipeg. And a couple team members went separately to Victoria to help out temporarily for a few weeks at Wayside House.

Lest you think that Sharon House board meetings now consist entirely of reading appreciative fan mail as we enjoy lemonade and biscuits, we hasten to add that no human system reaches perfection. But, our challenges seem to get resolved.

Bible, Bed and Breakfast – now here is an experimental offering which we hope appeals to some serious students of Christian Science. We want to start gently, so we can only accept the occasional guest. We cannot provide the traditional "Rest and Study" service as the facility is never staffed by employee nurses and is not staffed at all unless

independent nurses are nursing a patient. But we do have a couple very comfortable rooms in beautiful surroundings which we can make available from time to time to those who are willing and entirely able to make themselves at home at the facility. We will provide the makings of a continental breakfast which you will have to assemble yourself. If there happens to be a nursing patient at the facility, just maybe a nurse will put your bun on a plate. We have free WiFi. You will have to bring in food to microwave for your main meals or you will have to go to one of the many restaurants within two or three blocks of Sharon House. If you want to give this a try, call the Sharon House office. You will probably have to leave a voice message. Nursing takes precedence, so we may have to decline a BB&B request.

The members of Sharon House Corporation have signed up, "To support Christian Science nursing and its availability to those relying on Christian Science for healing". We bring to this task our love of Christian Science and our best individual efforts to support the office of nurse as defined in the Manual of The Mother Church. In practical terms, this implies supporting individual nurses and their patients. We support the dignity of Christian Science so that others are not tempted to naysay its relevance and its applicability to healing. We are one in this effort.

## **Sharon House Corporation Board of Directors**