

MEDIA RELEASE

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LHSC Celebrates Patient Experience Week

LONDON, Ontario – Sheila Weir channels her experience as a former patient, and her experience of losing her daughter, Shaye Marie Ashworth-Weir, in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) into helping others as a Patient and Family Advisor at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC).

Shaye was born prematurely when Sheila experienced eclampsia, or seizures as a result of pre-eclampsia. Born at 25.5 weeks, Shaye weighed just one pound, four ounces. “Both Shaye and I were fighting for our lives,” says Weir. “While I was being treated, nurses carefully wrote the details of Shaye’s day, her care, and took pictures for me until I could be with her. Because of the NICU, I was given six weeks with my child.” Shaye’s head nurse even gave her baby blanket to Sheila at the funeral.

Following a period of healing, Weir was inspired to become a Patient and Family Advisor to help caregivers make a difference in the way patients and families experience care at LHSC.

“Patient and Family Advisors are involved in many different aspects of the organization from participating on committees to partnering with staff and physicians on special projects, all with the focus of improving the health care experience for others,” says Chris Harris, Director, Patient Experience, LHSC.

LHSC is celebrating Patient Experience Week, April 23–26, to celebrate over 200 Patient and Family Advisors and the staff they work with who make a difference to the way patients and families experience care.

To improve the patient experience, Advisors work closely with staff and physicians helping keep a patient and family focus on the decisions that impact quality of care. In Weir’s experience, “LHSC staff have been unbelievably welcoming and receptive and are glad parents and patients are providing their input.”

She provides the parent perspective on the Perinatal Loss Committee, and meets with parents whose baby is receiving care in the NICU during ‘Parent Hour.’ “Parents are invited to come and chat with Advisors who have been in their shoes. We understand their journey in a way that others cannot,” she explains.

Weir also spoke at nursing orientation with an aim of sharing the patient perspective, and keeps “an eye on medical jargon in patient communications to make sure patients are being communicated with in clear language,” she explains.

LHSC’s Patient Experience Week celebrations include Patient and Family Advisors along with staff greeting those entering the hospital each morning, information booths are located at Victoria Hospital, University Hospital and the Kidney Care Centre at Westmount Mall, an education session for advisors, and the first annual Patient Experience Awards.

Patient Experience Week falls just before Shaye would have turned 11 on April 30. Weir’s involvement is a reminder of the care and compassion they both received. “It’s a great opportunity for those who are ready to get involved,” adds Weir.

LHSC continues to recruit more Patient and Family Advisors. Those interested are encouraged to contact the Patient Experience Office by phone at 519–685–8500 ext 75457 or [email](#).

About London Health Sciences Centre

London Health Sciences Centre has been at the forefront of medicine in Canada for 144 years and offers the broadest range of specialized clinical services in Ontario. Building on the traditions of its founding hospitals to provide compassionate care in an academic teaching setting, London Health Sciences Centre is home to Children's Hospital, University Hospital, Victoria Hospital, the Kidney Care Centre, two family medical centres, and two research institutes – Children's Health Research Institute and Lawson Health Research Institute. As a leader in medical discovery and health research, London Health Sciences Centre has a history of over 70 international and national firsts and attracts top clinicians and researchers from around the world. As a regional referral centre, London Health Sciences Centre cares for the most medically complex patients including critically injured adults and children in southwestern Ontario and beyond. The hospital's nearly 15,000 staff, physicians, students and volunteers provide care for more than one million patient visits a year. For more information visit www.lhsc.on.ca

– 30 –

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