

The Perley Post

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Perley Health, Ottawa, Canada

Painting a Captivating Diversion

By Tom Lilly, Senior Branding and Communications Specialist

Sometimes, improving quality of life requires a creative approach. In 2017 Andréa Fabricius, a Creative Arts Instructor at Perley Health, introduced the idea of tromp l'oeil illusions, otherwise known as diversion doors. The art installation painted on doors in a resident unit can promote activity, foster positive interactions and generally improve the quality of life for a person living with dementia.

Diversion doors are created by painting the exit doors on secure units. Secure units offer safe environments for residents with varying levels of dementia. The designs are intended to engage and entertain residents who can be exit-seeking residents. These art installations can lower anxiety and reduce the desire to linger by the exits, fiddling with the handles. By shifting residents' perception to something more familiar, the art on these doors can create a calmer, less anxiety-inducing environment that benefits everyone.

"My mother worked for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and she used to tell me about diversion doors in long-term care homes. They were mostly stickers or simple paintings." Andréa remembers. She took that concept to her manager in 2017 and

then improved on the idea. Andréa's vision for what diversion doors could be are so much more than stickers or a simple painting. Perley Health's first diversion doors were completed in 2017, on the Gatineau Residence secure units.

Andréa starts each project with a line drawing over a photo of the door which she uses to then create three water colour sketches. These sketches create a blueprint of design options that are shared with residents and family for their input. The community is asked to vote for the design of their choice. The selected design then becomes a spectacular hand-painted illusion on the door using high quality paints and finished with a varnish to protect the paint and allow for proper surface cleaning.

In late 2025 Andréa created new murals on Rideau 1 North, a secure Specialized Veterans Unit that opened in 2023. One of the new designs is a large poppy covering the door, with the door frame painted gold to mimic a framed artwork. The second door was painted like a bookshelf with a vase of poppies (styled after a familiar Vincent Van Gogh painting), a ship in a bottle, a wooden duck and many other items familiar to residents.



Andréa Fabricius, Creative Arts Instructor, reveals the new art installation on Rideau 1 North. Look for some of the personal touches in her work.

"It adds some colour and homeyness, it's recognizable." says Andréa. "I also paint antiques, not modern furniture. I paint something that they might have had in their home; like a wooden duck, or a clock, vases or other knick-knacks we've all had in our houses."

On the bookshelves, you can find trinkets, books, and flowers holding hidden connections to the people living on the unit. In one of the 2017 murals she included the Grey Cup to connect with the personal accomplishments of one resident. The new 2025 bookshelf design includes an unassuming ship in a bottle with a connection to a resident who used to build them model ships. Some of his creations are on display in the pub.

"Within that environment, the diversion doors pull in who the resident is," says Samantha Halgren, Psychogeriatric and Palliative Care Registered Nurse at Perley Health.

"They decrease exit seeking and decrease responsive behaviours. Residents aren't triggered to want to get out, to want to get out the door, so it offers this home environment of safe space and connection."

Perley Health Celebrates International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026)

The theme for volunteering in Canada in 2026 is "Ignite Volunteerism" and the year has been proclaimed the International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026) by the United Nations.

At Perley Health, we are incredibly grateful for more than 400 volunteers whose contributions improve quality of life for Seniors and Veterans at Perley Health. This generous team, ranging in age from 13 to 92 years, provides companionship and activity support, serves in the Residents' Pub and Ice Cream Parlour, and runs Deborah's Gift Boutique. Through their caring and compassionate presence, they spark joy and create a sense of belonging, every day of the year!

Watch the May edition of the Perley Post for memories from the April celebration at Perley Health.



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER YEAR 2026

Your feedback is important to us!

Let us know your thoughts on the Perley Post. The good, the bad and the ideas. Email - info@perleyhealth.ca

Healthy Feet, Healthy Life

Professional Nursing Foot Care at Perley Health

At Perley Health, we know that expert foot care is vital to your overall well-being. Our dedicated team of Registered Practical Nurses provides high-quality, sterilized treatments to keep you comfortable and mobile.

New Service Rates

Effective May 1, 2026

- Initial Assessment: \$70
- Regular Foot Care: \$55
- Foot Care & Fingernail Trimming: \$65

Veterans: Coverage funded by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) may be available. Please inquire with your care team.

Now Open to the Public!

We are proud to serve:

- Perley Health LTC Residents & Convalescent Care Clients
- Senior Living Apartment Tenants
- Members of the Community via The Care Clinic

Our Services Include:

- Management of corns, calluses, and ingrown nails
- Diabetic foot care and sensation assessments
- Professional nail trimming (including fungal nails)
- Footwear and circulation education



Book Your Appointment

Hours: Mon–Fri, 8:00 am – 2:00 pm

- **Residents:** Request a referral through your unit care team.
- **Tenants & Public:** Contact The Care Clinic to book:
 - **Phone:** 613-526-7125
 - **Online:** PerleyHealthCareClinic.janeapp.com/#/foot-care-nursing
 - **Email:** careclinic@perleyhealth.ca

Centre of Excellence Webinar Series



Now available on the Perley Health website: watch our March webinar featuring Annie Robitaille, PhD, and Diana Munteanu. Gain exclusive early insights from the Andrew Fleck Children's Services Intergenerational Early Learning Centre at Perley Health. This session explores the research initiative's purpose, stakeholder engagement findings, and the profound implications for intergenerational programming. Learn how these innovative connections foster social engagement and significantly enhance the well-being and quality of life for Veteran residents in long-term care.

Watch here:

PerleyHealth.ca/webinar-series



From Tech Strategy to Care With Heart

By Danielle Sinden, Director, Centre of Excellence

What a whirlwind week in Toronto in late March at the Together We Care convention! It was an honour representing Perley Health while connecting with leaders dedicated to the future of seniors' care.

I moderated a dynamic panel on making technology truly impactful. My takeaway? Innovation isn't about gadgets; it's about resident-centered co-design and proven solutions that improve your daily life.

A true highlight was accepting the Leading with Heart Recognition on behalf of our team. This award celebrates our decade-long partnership with the True Patriot Love Foundation, ensuring our Veterans live with the purpose and connection they deserve.

Despite our official booth getting lost in transit, the "minimalist" look didn't stop us! We proudly shared our SeeMe® frailty tool and implementation guides with homes across Canada.

Upcoming Events

- **Hymn Sing**
 - Friday, April 10
10:30 am - Lupton Hall
- **Peter Foret Concert**
 - Saturday, April 11
2:00 pm - Cafeteria
- **Documentary Night: Easter Island Origins**
 - Thursday, April 16
6:30 pm - Games Room
- **Perley Health Choir Spring Concert**
 - Friday, April 17th
2:00 pm - Cafeteria
- **Valley Concert Band**
 - Thursday, April 23rd
7:00 pm - Cafeteria
- **Johnny Vegas Concert**
 - Saturday, March 28
2:00 pm - Cafeteria
- **Ottawa Police Chorus Concert**
 - Wednesday, April 29th
6:30 pm - Cafeteria

Exceptional care, research, education, and innovation at Perley Health is supported in part by the generosity of our community. To donate to the Perley Health Foundation, visit: www.PerleyHealthFoundation.ca

