

# Living Heritage at Work

## PROFILE

### **Linda Ostryzniuk, Recreation Therapist**

Linda Ostryzniuk was born to serve within the healthcare field. Her mother and grandmother were both nurses and her grandfather was a doctor. And her brother, he is an ICU nurse. Although Linda has pursued a slightly different path, she is dedicated to making life better for others.

A city girl, she grew up in Edmonton and the family lived in Vancouver for a time as well. She came to Saskatchewan with her family when she was in grade 10. She is a fast learner, only seventeen when she began university classes in education. It didn't take her long to realize she was too young to be teaching school and since she enjoyed athletics she decided to pursue kinesiology. She graduated from the University of Regina, worked for a time in northern Saskatchewan and then in Weyburn. Opportunity brought her back to Regina where she has been working for the past sixteen years at the William Booth Special Care Home.

In her current position, Linda acknowledges that she will only know the residents for a short period of their lives and respects the vast amount of living they have done before coming to stay at the Care Home. Her respect for each resident as an individual with a full life informs the programming she implements. She tries to put herself in each resident's position. Activities must be age appropriate, of interest to the resident, and enjoyable. They are not designed to fit the routine of the staff or for the convenience of the staff, but rather to ensure that the resident's leisure time is spent in a meaningful way. People like to know what their choices are so she offers a range of options, depending on their interests and abilities.

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For example, reminiscence is part of therapeutic recreation and Linda provides opportunities for residents in her programming schedule. As a therapeutic intervention, reminiscence necessitates an understanding of past events and the particular experiences of the individual resident in order to engage them in a meaningful exchange. In order to spend quality time with residents, Linda believes she needs to get to know them and the people she works with feel the same way.

Given the broad definition of living heritage, Linda believes “everyone here is a heritage worker, everyone, from the cook to the housekeeper, the nursing staff, all are heritage workers.” With staff members from many different backgrounds as well, everyone benefits from the rich heritage of both the residents and the staff at the William Booth Special Care Home.



Linda Ostryzniuk with resident Joe Dorosh

Heritage Saskatchewan Alliance is the collective voice of all those who value heritage in Saskatchewan. Our vision is to see heritage as a valued and dynamic legacy that contributes to our sense of identity, creates an understanding of our past, is used to build communities in the present, and informs our choices for the future.