

# **Stan Cassidy Centre Provides Rehabilitation for all NB**

*by Jane Barry*

*The Greater Saint John Community Foundation*

If you've been the unfortunate victim of a disabling injury, condition or disease, the name Stan Cassidy is probably familiar to you. But for those in New Brunswick who have not been touched by the Centre which now bears his name, he was a man who dedicated a large part of his life to establishing a first class Centre for Rehabilitation. The Fredericton engineer was later honoured by his Alma Mater, UNB, for his foresight and determination in bringing together business leaders, government and the medical community to establish the Forest Hills Rehabilitation Centre in Fredericton in the 1950's. The First Board of Directors were Stan Cassidy, Jack Morrison, Ted Gilbert, Harold Richards, Hubert Kerr, Willard McNutt, A. F. Thorrie and Lloyd Wilson.

Today a shiny state-of-the-art \$28M facility, the Stan Cassidy Centre of Rehabilitation (SCCR), stands beside the Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital, the result of many community volunteers who have worked diligently to ensure New Brunswickers affected by disabling conditions, including children, can return to life, work and families as effectively as modern medicine allows.

With a goal of optimal self-sufficiency and independence, tertiary rehabilitation serves patients who have suffered a traumatic brain injury, stroke, degenerative neurological diseases, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, ALS, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries or neoplasms. It is Atlantic Canada's only Paediatric rehab centre and the province's centre for autism. It has 20 beds and 5 transitional living units.

Carlie Currie, a physiotherapist, states "The Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation becomes a "home away from home" for many of our patients and their families. I enjoy working in our new facility and helping patients on their road to recovery in a bright, accessible, and technologically equipped setting — an environment that suits the specific needs of patients with neurological disorders throughout New Brunswick."

Dr. Rob Leckey, the Centre's Medical Director adds "I've many times seen the fantastic teamwork that helps pick up broken people, families and dreams and lets them heal, move, live and hope again. I've seen the child with a disability grow up to go to school and work, as well as seen the adult with disability return to a meaningful family and societal role."

Terry Leavitt, 19, of St. Stephen, who suffered a diving accident, making her a quadriplegic, says "I've always wanted to scratch my nose, put my glasses on or get something to eat or drink by myself. Now I can do that. I only wish more people could have this equipment. It's fantastic!"

Chris Guérette is the new Executive Director of the Centre's Foundation, and responsible for growing resources and building an endowment to keep the SCCR at the top of its game. "The SCCR truly has a provincial aspect. It serves patients from all over the province, receiving patients, visiting them in their communities and being in touch with their local professional teams via live teleconferencing services. We are truly bilingual, offering services in both official languages" she states. She notes that Saint John patients of Dr. Shawn Jennings would know "his book, Locked in Locked Out, which really describes quite well the SCCR and the world of rehabilitation for New Brunswickers. He spent much time here, at our old location, and is a good supporter of the Foundation."

The SCCR has had two very successful fundraising campaigns, the 2006 \$1.5M Dream Again Campaign and more recently, a \$1M effort for a new Therapeutic Park, slated to open in September 2010. The first provided for 5 Transitional Living Suites, an Environmental Control Suite, a Telehealth Centre, adapted children's furniture and appropriate-sized equipment, computerized communications equipment and software, an adapted vehicle and more. Thanks are largely due to the volunteer board who teamed up with community members from around the province to meet their goals. David Thorne, Chair, Lynn Irving, Vice Chair, David Macneil, Secretary-Treasurer, Brian Cassidy, John Barry, Becky Burgess, Courtney Keenan, Norah Mallory and John Robison, along with ex officio members Dr. Ron Harris, Dr. Robert Leckey and Chris D. Guérette currently serve as Directors. Dr. Donald Savoie and John Barry co-chaired the Dream Again Campaign and are grateful to individuals, businesses, foundations like the Greater Saint John Community Foundation and community events like "UltraSounds", a popular variety show, put on by local physician musicians, which raised over \$50,000 in the past 2 years. The volunteers look forward to another sold-out audience, on January 23, 2010 at the Playhouse in Fredericton. Tickets are available at the Playhouse.

The Foundation has already dedicated \$90,000 towards the future rebuilding of Kiwanis House, one of their new projects, which will be a hostel for patients' families while at the SCCR.

## SCCR Fast Facts

### Unique facility...

- A recognized training centre for rehabilitation professionals and Dalhousie University medical residents
- Paediatric physiatrist training
- Only powered prosthetic clinic in Atlantic Canada (2<sup>nd</sup> largest in Canada)
- Only Rehabilitation Engineering Clinic in Atlantic Canada

### New Brunswick adults served 2008-9...

- 129 inpatients - 20% spinal cord injuries, 30% acquired brain injuries, 21% stroke and 29% other neurological conditions
- Average inpatient age 44; Outpatient age 32
- Inpatients - 49% from Acute Care and 42% from home
- Average length of inpatient stay – 48 days, longest stay 193 days
- 62% discharged to their homes
- 9319 outpatient appointments; 6177 inpatient days
- Bilingual service: 70% English, 30% French

### New Brunswick children served 2008-9

- 288 new paediatric clients from across NB - Youngest less than 1 year
- 10% developmental delay, 11% muscular dystrophy 11% autistic spectrum disorders, 34% cerebral palsy, 34% other neurological conditions including brain injury, developmental delay, feeding disorders, genetic syndromes, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida and spinal cord injury
- 2103 outpatient visits
- Offer assessment, treatment, consultation, training, equipment, and education
- Outpatient interventions offered in each region province
- Bilingual service: 70% served in English, 30% in French.

[www.stancassidyfoundation.ca](http://www.stancassidyfoundation.ca) | [www.fondationstancassidy.ca](http://www.fondationstancassidy.ca)



**Photo: The Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation provides state-of-the-art tertiary rehabilitation for New Brunswickers of all ages. Volunteer Executive Committee members Norah Mallory, left, and John Robison, walk through the new therapeutic park that is being constructed at the Fredericton-based Centre.**



*Community Profile is a weekly column highlighting community causes and work done by non-profit organizations in the Greater Saint John area. It is contributed by Jane Barry, executive director of The Greater Saint John Community Foundation. Contact the foundation at 506-672-8880. To view other Community Profiles go to [www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca](http://www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca)*