



## Super Mom

Lynda Eskrick is just one of the many Heroes in the Home celebrated across the South West

At the Heroes in the Home event in Owen Sound, one woman stood out. She sported bright pink hair, a vivid yellow scarf, and a black coat. A fashionista? Yes, and also a deeply devoted mother and true hero.

Lynda Eskrick's son Darren was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy when he was eight. In his mid-30s now, he is a paraplegic, has a tracheostomy, uses a ventilator, and requires 24-hour care. Lynda is his caregiver, his advocate, and his biggest fan. "Darren's a really nice guy," she says. "He's friendly and outgoing, and he knows a lot of stuff."

Darren's case manager Janette Diebel nominated Lynda for recognition through Heroes in the Home. "It's amazing what she manages every day," says Diebel. "She gets him up in the morning, works the power lift, looks after his trach and ventilator, and drives the modified van. She makes sure he gets to every community event that goes on in Kincardine, winter and summer, and takes him to concerts and plays. She manages two homes, a farm with her husband, and Darren's apartment. She even introduced him to his girlfriend Diane!"

In addition to providing many hours of care for her son, Lynda is a powerful advocate for him. "It takes a lot of legwork and a lot of phoning to get everything in place," she says. "If I get stuck, I just have to call Janette and she's there." In addition to the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), Lynda works closely with organizations like Day Away, Community Living, Bruce County Housing, and manages oxygen and equipment suppliers.



Left to right: Diane Clifford, VON, Darren Eskrick, Lynda Eskrick and Janette Diebel

**"She has given up her own life to care for Darren and she is completely dedicated to him."**

She arranged for Darren to receive self-directed funding, so that he can make his own care decisions. The funding allowed them to hire caregiver Seth, who has become an important part of Darren's life. She has also arranged for Darren to attend a local summer camp. After years of advocacy from the family and the CCAC, Darren is moving into a new apartment in Kincardine designed around his needs. The CCAC continues to provide nursing and social work.

Lynda says she was "blown away" by her nomination as a Hero in the Home. "It really means a lot to me," she says. "I do a lot of care for him – we all do. We're always here for him, around the clock."

Diebel says she was inspired by Lynda's indomitable spirit. "She just takes life as it comes, no matter what goes wrong. She has given up her own life to care for Darren and she is completely dedicated to him."





## A Message from Sandra Coleman, CEO, South West CCAC

There's a lot of talk about quality in health care today. In fact, the Ontario government recently passed a new bill, the *Excellent Care for All Act*, that focuses on ensuring high quality health care.

We at the South West CCAC have always been committed to delivering the highest quality care.

What is quality in community care? It's safety, skill, compassion and respect. It's partnership with clients, families and other care providers to help clients stay well and get better. It's care that puts you at the heart of everything we do.

So far, the South West CCAC is doing well on the quality front. In our last client survey, 93% of clients reported their satisfaction with our services as good or excellent, the highest percentage of any CCAC in the province. On the Ontario Health Quality Council report, the South West CCAC out-performed the provincial average in 19 of 22 indicators. Our Care Connectors program has matched more than 5,200 orphan patients with family physicians. Our innovative Safe@Home and Wait@Home programs resulted in more than 85,000 hospital patient days avoided last year alone.

- \* You can now call any CCAC local office and get a live answer from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven days a week.
- \* If you are already a client, it's even easier. Just call your care team direct by using your VIP phone number provided by your case manager.
- \* If you can't find your VIP phone number, call your local office (see back cover) and someone will re-direct your call.

Car maker Henry Ford once said, "Quality means doing it right when no-one is looking." How true that is! Every day CCAC case managers and care providers go into clients' homes. Working independently, they deliver the highest quality of care.

Many clients also receive high quality care from caregivers — spouses, family members, friends, neighbours and community volunteers. They all are heroes in your home.

You, too, are a hero and have a role to play in delivering quality community care. By taking responsibility for your own health and safety (to the extent you can), and by supporting and working with your caregivers, you are an important part of the team.

To maintain quality, now and for many years in the future, we must all continue to work together. If you ever feel less than satisfied with the care you are receiving, please let your case manager know or call your nearest CCAC office.

# Staying Safe and Well This Winter

"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home." — Edith Sitwell

Whether you agree with Sitwell's pleasant view of winter or groan at the first sight of snowflakes, there's no doubt that the season is on its way and will be with us for several months. For many CCAC clients, winter can be a time of special challenges, reduced mobility, and in the worst case scenario, seasonal illness.

Gwen Vanderheyden, Regional Manager, Client Services, says that the key to thriving in winter is to plan carefully.

"Flu is a big issue for many people at this time of year," she says. In addition to getting your flu shots, it's important to wash your hands regularly. "Hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of most infectious diseases and infections," says Gwen. "That's why we've launched our second

annual hand washing campaign."

In addition to keeping your own hands clean, it's important that your care providers also practice good hygiene. In the next few weeks many CCAC care providers will be wearing buttons that read, "Ask me if I washed my hands." A recent survey found that nearly 85% of health care professionals are comfortable with being asked whether they've washed their hands. "Don't hesitate to ask," says Gwen. "After all, it's your health, and it's in your hands!"

It's also important, she says, to pay special attention to your general health during the winter season. "Be sure you're well fed, well rested and well hydrated. That way if you get the flu, it won't be as severe."

In icy conditions, slips and falls are another major concern. Many CCAC clients can benefit from using canes or walkers. Vanderheyden recommends having lots of salt on hand, and even carrying a small bag of it with you when you're out. It's important to have someone shovel your drive and sidewalks, making it safer for you and for your CCAC care providers. In the worst weather, stay home.

But what do you do when winter really delivers a wallop? In bad storms, roads can be impassable and hydro can be disrupted. Every CCAC client should have a **backup plan** in case a nurse, personal support worker or other care provider can't make it through at the appointed time. Gwen notes that there is a form in each client's *Record in the Home* binder to document the backup plan. The binder also includes an *Emergency Planning Awareness Checklist*. "Complete them both," she recommends. "That way you and your family have thought through what to do if we get severe weather, and you can face the situation calmly."



## Basic Emergency Kit

Take a few moments to put together an emergency kit.

### It should include:

- + Four litres of bottled water (enough for one person for two days)
- + A selection of canned food, energy bars and dried food (remember to replace the food and water once a year)
- + Manual can opener
- + Flashlight and batteries
- + Battery-powered or wind-up radio, and extra batteries
- + First aid kit
- + Special needs, such as prescription medications or medical equipment
- + Extra keys for your car and house
- + Cash



Take the hand washing survey at [handwashing.thehealthline.ca](http://handwashing.thehealthline.ca).





< Owen Sound



< Woodstock

# Celebrating Heroes in the Home

"She has lifted me up. She is an angel, just an angel. She does everything for me, looks after me. She is a caring person, a loving person, a very human person." — Barbara Bernat



That's cancer patient Barbara Bernat, talking about her nurse Kathy Daugharty to a reporter from the *London Free Press*. Daugharty was one of more than 450 people recognized as part of the South West CCAC's annual recognition program, Heroes in the Home.

Any caregiver can be nominated through the program – a family member, friend, community volunteer, support worker, case manager, nurse, therapist or other health care professional. All nominees are celebrated at events across the region. This year Heroes events were held in Mitchell, Woodstock, Owen Sound and London between October 14 and November 4.



^ London

The program has proved so successful that CCACs in Champlain, Haldimand-Norfolk-Hamilton-Brantford, and Mississauga-Halton have adopted the concept.

"Heroes in the Home events are truly remarkable," says CCAC CEO Sandra Coleman. "The stories you hear are deeply touching and inspirational. In doing this program, we celebrate the quality of care our Heroes provide, which is second to none. We also celebrate their qualities – kindness, compassion, partnership, perseverance and good humour."

Mitchell >

**Nominate someone special in 2011.**



[www.caregiverexchange.ca](http://www.caregiverexchange.ca)  
[www.sw.ccac-ont.ca](http://www.sw.ccac-ont.ca)

# Winter Tip Sheet

## Outdoor Safety

- ✓ Choose a good pair of winter boots – warm and waterproof with a thick non-slip sole. Use ice grippers on your footwear, but remember that grippers can become slippery and must be removed before walking on smooth surfaces.
- ✓ Use a cane or walker to help with balance. Attach an ice pick at the end of your cane. Consider wearing a hip protector (a lightweight belt or pant with shields to guard the hips).
- ✓ Wear bright colors or add reflective material to clothing.
- ✓ Wear a warm hat, scarf, and mittens or gloves. Dress in layers.
- ✓ Drink lots of fluids, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- ✓ Keep entranceways and sidewalks clear of ice and snow.
- ✓ Carry a small bag of grit, sand or non-clumping cat litter in your jacket pocket or handbag, to sprinkle when you are confronted with ice.
- ✓ Ask a passer-by to help you cross an icy surface.

## Indoor Safety

- ✓ Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your house and check the batteries every month.
- ✓ Keep any space heater at least three feet away from anything that can burn.
- ✓ If you use a wood burning fireplace make sure you have a glass front or screen large enough to catch flying sparks and rolling logs and have the chimney flue pipe checked once a year.
- ✓ Get an ABC multipurpose fire extinguisher. Learn how to use it and check it yearly to be sure it's working.

## Staying Well

- ✓ Wash your hands thoroughly on a regular basis. Ask people who are providing care to wash their hands.
- ✓ Talk to your doctor about getting the flu shot.
- ✓ Find someone to handle snow shovelling and other strenuous outdoor tasks.
- ✓ Keep in shape indoors by walking in place or using a stationary bike. Do daily stretching to stay flexible.
- ✓ If you are caring for someone with dementia, consider installing an alarm system that signals whenever an outside door is opened.
- ✓ Keep home temperatures above 65 degrees and dress in layers to maintain body temperature.
- ✓ Make an effort to spend time with family, friends and neighbours. If you can't visit, talk on the phone.

# Working well with your CCAC Case Manager

“What I love most is the interaction with clients. I love working with clients to help them stay in their own homes, because that’s what most people want.” — Caroline McWhinney

That’s Caroline McWhinney, who has been a case manager with the CCAC for more than 20 years. During her time, she has seen a big change in how the CCAC approaches its work.

“With Client-Driven Care, we’ve let go of the medical expert model and we now see our role as an opportunity to engage in communication,” she says. “We focus on listening to clients, hearing your stories, and then building on your strengths.”

Communication is at the heart of the client-case manager relationship. Caroline encourages clients to be open and honest about their goals and challenges. “You have the right to make your own choices,” she says. “I’m not there to judge, just to gather information.”

## Tip Sheet

- Be open and prepared to discuss your strengths and challenges.
- Work with your case manager to develop your care plan.
- Speak up when you’re not happy about some aspect of your care.
- Speak up when you’re pleased with the care you’re receiving.
- Do what you can for yourself.
- Remember that the *Record in the Home* binder is yours.
- Remember, you’re the expert on you!

Open communication is critical with care providers and other health professionals too. “We are invited guests in your home,” she says. “If you’re not

totally happy with what a worker is doing, you should speak to the worker, the worker’s supervisor or your case manager.” On the other hand, if you’re pleased with the care you’re receiving, let your worker know that.

Caroline emphasizes that the *Record in the Home* binder belongs to you, not the case manager or care provider, and that you have full access to all its contents. Clients and families can use the communication sheet in the binder to share information with the case manager and care providers.

## South West CCAC office contact information:

### London (Head Office)

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Toll Free: 1 800 811 5146

### Owen Sound

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### St. Thomas

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### Seaforth

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### Stratford

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### Strathroy

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[www.sw.ccac-ont.ca](http://www.sw.ccac-ont.ca)

For information about health and social services across the South West visit [www.thehealthline.ca](http://www.thehealthline.ca).

