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MEDIA RELEASE

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MHA Volunteer Recognition Evenings

In April the Middlesex Hospital Alliance took an evening to formally acknowledge the contributions volunteers make at the Strathroy site and the Four Counties site. At the MHA, volunteers are an integral part of the daily routine of the hospital. It is interesting to note that at the Strathroy site, 100 people volunteered a total of nearly 10,000 hours last year. At Four Counties, approximately 60 people volunteered nearly 4,800 hours.

According to MHA Volunteer Coordinator Judy Peters, volunteers provide an invaluable service to the hospital. "The volunteers are an important part of the hospital," said Peters. "They are able to do many tasks that assist the staff to provide the best care possible.

To celebrate National Volunteer Week in April, both hospitals hosted dinners for their volunteers. The theme this year was Passion, Action and Impact. At SMGH, volunteers were treated to a delicious meal in the hospital cafeteria, prepared and served by the hospital dietary staff. Ken Williams brought greetings from the MHA Board of Directors and Chief Operating Officer Nancy Maltby-Webster spoke on behalf of the hospital administration. The Five Guys from the Rodney/Glencoe area provided entertainment. The evening ended with door prizes for the volunteers.

As a volunteer at the Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital information desk, Betty Bolton helps guide patients and visitors to the appropriate place they are seeking. After she retired, Betty was looking for something to do outside the home and she decided to volunteer at the hospital. For the past 12 years, Betty has devoted four hours once a week -- usually on Monday or Wednesday-- to assist at the information desk. "The role has changed a bit," explained Betty. "We have many more people coming in the front door now that everyone who has an appointment needs to register." For Betty, volunteering is very satisfying and she enjoys meeting new people, and seeing old friends as well. "You get to know people who come to the hospital on a regular basis," said Betty. "It's nice to see familiar faces."

At Four Counties, the dinner was held in the hospital auditorium and the meal was prepared and served by the hospital dietary staff. Bonita Berge brought greetings from the MHA Board of Directors and Paul Long, Chief Financial Officer, spoke on behalf of the hospital administration. Entertainment was provided by Full Circle from Rodney and the evening ended with door prizes for the volunteers.

Cathy Smith has volunteered for the past six years at Four Counties in both the Rehabilitation Department and the Adult Day Program. She started volunteering for just a half day in the Rehab Department, but was then asked to help with the Adult Day Program. Now she volunteers on Wednesday and Thursday for about five hours each day. "My mother was a volunteer here, so I'm following in her footsteps," said Smith. "It is very rewarding to know you are helping out." While she was volunteering at the Adult Day Program, Smith explains that her mother became ill and needed care at home. "It is interesting that my experience with people at the Adult Day program helped me to better help my mother," said Smith. "I'm not sure if things would have been different if I hadn't been a volunteer."