

Fort St. John Hospital Auxiliary raises \$35,000 for art project

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FORT ST. JOHN - Images of landscapes, flowers and rustic settings now adorn the Fort St. John Hospital thanks to the hospital auxiliary who believed that patients heal faster when they are surrounded by colourful and cheerful-looking objects. The auxiliary raised \$35,000 through fundraisers and profits from the gift shop to help support the venture "Art for Health and Healing."

Since patients need to stay inside while in recovery or going through treatment, the auxiliary wanted them to feel at home and comfortable while in the facility's care. With those thoughts in mind, a project was born.

"One of the mandates in our theme was to bring nature indoors because the new hospital was so huge and so many halls and so sterile looking. It was really very cold when we first moved in," said Rosemary Landry, auxiliary president.

Landry explained that at the start of the project, when the new hospital was being built, there was a bit of a budget left

over for art so they brought over old pieces that once adorned the walls of the previous health care facility and hung them in the new building. The auxiliary members first needed to categorize the pieces and make sure they were appropriate for their new home. They then cleaned up the older pieces and added new frames. She said they did this because with the lack of colour and bland walls, the hospital staff's morale was low.

"A lot of the frames were pretty old and beaten up before and then anything we felt we still wanted to keep but didn't have the funds at that point to reframe," she said, "those pictures went into the Peace Villa because it's more treated like a home."



Photo Credit Submitted
George Kantz, a member of the auxiliary, smiles in front of one of the 55 pieces of art.

The president explained that when they were sorting through the different pieces of art, and came across a few that wouldn't necessarily go well in the modern building, they always had a backup plan.

"[The art] then went into an office category and staff were then able to put it up in their offices," she said.

Once the older pieces were framed and lined the halls, the art committee decided to extend the art into the 55 private rooms. They asked up and coming local artists and photographers to submit their work and the committee chose from over 500 entries.

"We looked at the patient rooms upstairs and every patient has a single room which is wonderful but they felt terribly isolated and in those single rooms they now can be isolated if they are on infection control precautions," she said.

Before the art was added, the walls only had medical equipment hanging off of

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