

Media Release



99 Cornish Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 1A2, Canada

www.misericordia.mb.ca

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December 13, 2012

Keeping in touch during the holidays: Resident email replies a first in Winnipeg

Keeping in touch with far-flung relatives during the holidays can be challenging, especially when loved ones are 80+ in a long-term care facility.

Volunteers at Misericordia Health Centre found an interesting solution to this dilemma by enabling residents to respond to emails from loved ones around the world.

Take resident Gladys Sourisseau, 85, for example. She congratulates her grandson Duncan, studying at the University of Lethbridge, for achieving 91 per cent on his last test. And enquires about son Kevin's new job in New Mexico.

"We send out 50 Christmas cards to friends and family from mom," says son Don Sourisseau. "This year, we're adding the email address in the cards ... it's so easy for the grandchildren to email."

For years residents could receive emails at Misericordia, but only recently did Misericordia find the right volunteer to craft replies: Marilyn McLeod.

McLeod brings her laptop and transcribes residents' responses to "a stack" of email.

"It's so rewarding," says McLeod. "The residents can get emotional receiving letters from relatives; I feel privileged to share in their lives. I tell the residents I'm going to send their message right away and their loved ones are probably going to read it that evening."

"Most of them say, 'My goodness! Is that so?' They're so used to snail mail that they can't imagine communicating this quickly."

PHOTO OP:

What: Meet resident Gladys Sourisseau and volunteer Marilyn McLeod, creating email

When: 11:30 a.m. Friday December 14, 2012



Where: Interim Care Activity Room (Room 536, Cornish building)

Misericordia Health Centre is proud to be the only hospital in Winnipeg to offer resident email replies.

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Media Contact:

Heidi Klaschka, Director of Communications and Public Relations

Tel: 204.788.8302 | Cell: 204.232.9918