



Dear Friends,

From down the hall, I can start hearing people beginning to stir in their beds. It's not very early, but there's definitely no sleeping-in today!

I can hear the shuffle of feet, and the sound of some chatter.

I'm really excited, and nearly hopping from foot to foot.

I love being the first person to wish others a Merry Christmas, secretly wanting to run from room to room. But I'm not at home saying it to my family and all my young nieces and nephews. Today, I'm with my other family... patients and staff at Ajax Pickering Hospital.

You see, I'm Parsia, an RN.

No one chooses when to be sick. That's why to me, it's so special to celebrate the holidays with my patients. It's an easy way to bring a touch of home and normalcy - as well as cheer and joy - to the hospital.

As a valued supporter of Ajax Pickering Hospital, you need to know the important role you play. Your generosity helps us provide comfort, care and dignity to every patient who comes through our doors, whether the need is as complicated as providing lifesaving treatment or as simple as a comforting touch.

I know that you are probably receiving lots of requests at this time to year, but I'm hoping we can count on you again.

Will you please share a kind *gift of health* this holiday season? Your donation will mean so much to all my patients as well as my colleagues and I who are celebrating the season at Ajax Pickering Hospital this year rather than home with our loved ones.



By Christmas Day, our unit has already been decorated for over a month! Every year, different nurses on our unit will even hand-makes beautiful snowmen and snowflakes that we hang from the ceiling so that they twirl and spin as people pass under them.

A few years ago, one of my patients was a man named John. He was having a bit of a hard time. He used to be the person that family and friends would turn to if they needed something fixed in their house or their yard cleaned up. Now, *he* needed help just putting on his socks.

He told me that his favourite part of Christmas had always been putting the star above the tree. When his children were little, he would hold them up as they squirmed to hook it on. As they grew up, they would playfully squabble over who go to do it that year. And now, they have children of their own who squeal with delight when they triumphantly put the star in place.

So the next day, when the Christmas tree had been unpacked and set up by the nursing station, I went to find John. I told him that the staff were very busy (*wink!*), and wondered if he would be kind enough to help decorate the tree.

After getting him out of bed and into his chair, I wheeled him down to the tree putting the box of ornaments in easy reach. With some music to set the mood, he began to hook the balls and tinsel onto the branches, pushing his chair back a little every once in a while so that he could see they were all in the right place.

Admiring his work, another patient came over and asked if she could help him. In companionable silence, they hung the last of the ornaments together.

It was a beautiful moment to see John – his health challenges forgotten for just a little while – proudly place the star atop the tree!

And I couldn't have prescribed better medicine for him!

For many patients in our care, the loss of self-sufficiency can be devastating, especially when they're already worried about their illness or injury. Often, just offering some comfort and giving them back some dignity can make a huge impact on a patient's outlook and well-being.

And as our community has changed and aged, the people that we care for and their needs have changed as well.

Nowadays, patients are much more likely to have multiple, complex conditions that require longer hospital stays with interwoven treatments. For many, the struggle to maintain their dignity can be as worrisome and debilitating as their physical condition.

And that's why, as a team, we concentrate on the whole person, from head to toe, inside and out.

Over the years, donors like you have helped purchase instruments that our skilled surgeons use every day in the OR, equipment that our lab pathologists & techs use to review samples to determine the severity of a patient's cancer, as well as the MRI and other diagnostic imaging tools that reveal the tiniest spot on a test that could change a person's life forever.

But you have also made it possible for the staff to have other items that can make as critical a difference in a patient's recovery, and they aren't expensive, high-tech, or go beep.

Imagine two months of looking at the same wall. Two months of never putting on your own clothes. This, after a lifetime of being a parent and a spouse, of working hard and saving for your dream retirement. After decades of contributing to lives, your job and your community, imagine how you would feel confined to the same bed day after day, waiting to be fed or washed, or to have a visit from a loved one or friend.

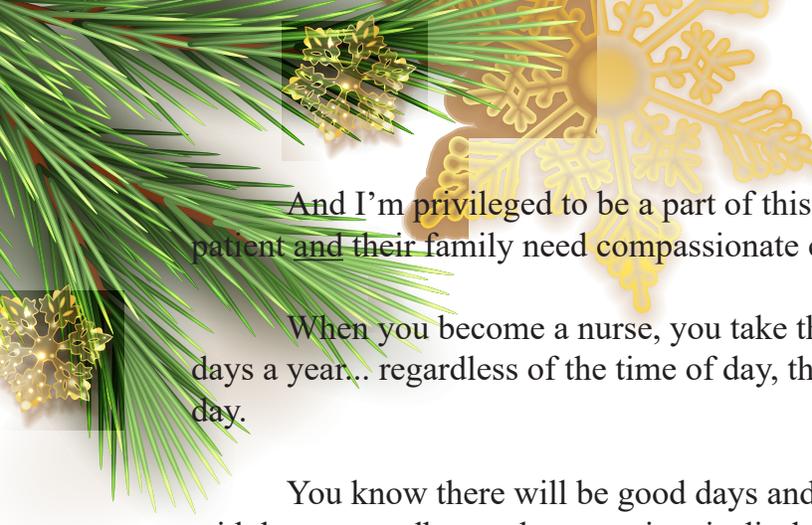
Then imagine getting out of that bed and being able to sit in a special chair – it's called a clinical care recliner – that allows you to feel independent, because you no longer have to interact with staff members from the confines of your bed and you can visit with your family outside of your hospital room.

Yet it's not just our patients who are spending the holidays in the hospital. It's also their families.

It's wonderful to see when loved ones arrive on Christmas Day loaded down with presents & items that make up their own holiday traditions. The patients' smiles really could light up a room!

But sometimes, it's a more solemn time because visitors might be spending the last days or hours with a beloved family member. For them, a comfortable chair that can be rolled up to the bedside - as well as be converted into a pseudo bed - is a god-send. They are able to be close by, maybe even grabbing a few winks of sleep themselves.

over...



And I'm privileged to be a part of this end-of-life journey, knowing that both the patient and their family need compassionate care during this tearful and stressful time.

When you become a nurse, you take the responsibility of caring for patients 365 days a year... regardless of the time of day, the day of the week or the specialness of the day.

You know there will be good days and bad days; shifts that end in sadness along with happy goodbyes when a patient is discharged to go home.

And your remarkable support is why we all pour our hearts and souls into our work, making sure our patients can count on us like we count on you.

This is even more evident at this time of year.

I hope you understand just how important it is for all of my nursing colleagues and all of our doctors to know that we can count on you to help us provide comfort, care and dignity to those in our care every day of the year.

Will you please share a meaningful gift with our community hospital this year? Your kind and thoughtful *gifts of health* help every person I work with provide the compassionate care to all of our neighbours and loved ones.

Thank you for being by our side.

All the best of the season to you and yours,



Parsia Hassannia
Registered Nurse
Ajax Pickering Hospital

P.S. Your special holiday donation means so much to me and the rest of the dedicated, hardworking staff at Ajax Pickering Hospital. Thank you for sharing the spirit of the season and for giving the *gift of health!*

