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DECEMBER 2025



HOLIDAY CHEER

This jolly fellow made a special stop at our Home this month! There were smiles, laughter, and plenty of holiday cheer as Santa spent some time visiting with our residents and team. See page 12–13 for more photos!



HOLLY JOLLY SOIRÉE

What a night! Thank you to all our team members and guests who joined us on Friday, December 5, 2025 for our annual Holiday Party. See page 9 for more photos!



CONNECTING WITH OUR DRDH TEAM AND COMMUNITY

Looking Back on 2025, Looking Ahead to 2026

As this year comes to a close, I find myself reflecting with a great sense of pride and gratitude on everything we have accomplished together over the past twelve months. 2025 has been a year of meaningful progress, steady growth, and important milestones - a year that has both challenged us and reaffirmed what we are capable of when we move forward with purpose, optimism, and a shared commitment to our community.

Throughout 2025, we continued to build momentum across our campus and within our organization. This has been a year marked by approvals, planning milestones, and visible progress, particularly in our capital projects, that signal not just expansion, but thoughtful and intentional growth. Each successful step forward has been the result of countless hours of work behind the scenes, strong collaboration across teams, and sustained advocacy on behalf of the people we serve.

One of the most powerful reflections of this year has been seeing plans become reality. Projects that once lived on paper are now real, visible, and advancing steadily. These developments represent far more than

physical structures; they represent long-term investments in care, dignity, and community well-being.

They are a direct response to the evolving needs of our region and a testament to the trust placed in us as stewards of local health services.

2025 has also been a year of organizational strengthening. We welcomed new team members, supported each other through change, and continued to build stability and alignment across the organization. Like others across the healthcare sector, we navigated ongoing system pressures and workforce challenges, but we did so together, with creativity, resilience, and a shared determination to continue delivering safe, compassionate, high-quality care. I am continually inspired by the way our teams show up for one another and for our patients, residents, and families, even during demanding times.

As we look ahead, there is a great deal to be excited about. 2026 will be a year of continued growth and opportunity. We will continue advancing our capital projects, further shaping how care is delivered within new and evolving spaces, and deepening our focus on culture, teamwork, and leadership development. Just as importantly, we will carry forward a positive, solutions-focused mindset, grounded in the belief that our best work is done when we approach the future with openness, collaboration, and confidence.

Entering a new year is always a moment of transition - a chance to pause, reflect, and then look forward with intention. As we move into 2026, I am deeply optimistic about what lies ahead for our organization and our community. The progress we have made together positions us well for the next chapter, and I am confident in our collective ability to continue growing in ways that are thoughtful, sustainable, and centred on the people we serve.

Thank you for everything you contributed throughout 2025 - for your dedication, professionalism, compassion, and your willingness to embrace change and opportunity. I am incredibly proud to work alongside such a committed and capable team, and I look forward to continuing this journey together in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Janna Hotson
President and
Chief Executive Officer
Deep River and District Health



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Click [here](#) to read the latest edition of our Board Meeting Highlights.



MANDATORY EDUCATION

JANUARY 2026

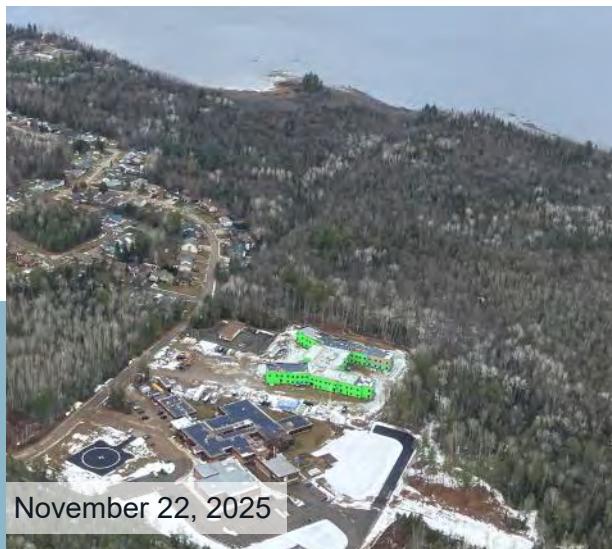
Please see the assigned education for the month of January on Surge Learning. This is due to be completed by **January 28, 2026**. Please contact Rebekah if you are having any issues accessing the education.

Topic	Target Staff
Code Yellow/Amber	All
Code Red Fire Safety Plan	All
Code Red Fire Safety Plan – Quick Facts	All
Musculo-Skeletal Injuries - Module 2	All
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Healthcare	All
General Lifting: Body Mechanics & Back Care	All Staff
Fire Watch	AOC, RN, Maintenance
Client Communications Etiquette	Finance
Public Health Ontario – Environmental Cleaning – Module 1 – Introduction to Environmental Cleaning and IPAC in Health Care	Environmental Service
EKG Like a Boss Part 1 & 2	RN, RPN, DI
Pain Management Program for Registered Staff	RN, RPN
Managing Pain and Distress in LTC for Non-Clinical Team Members	PSW, Physio, Rec, Environmental Service, Dietary
Downtime Procedures Introduction	RN, RPN
Downtime Procedure – Medical Inpatient	RN, RPN
Downtime Procedure – Emergency Department	RN
Downtime Procedure – Registration	RN



Please contact Rebekah (rebekah.thompson@drdh.org) if you are having any issues accessing the education.

LONG-TERM CARE BUILDING PROGRESS

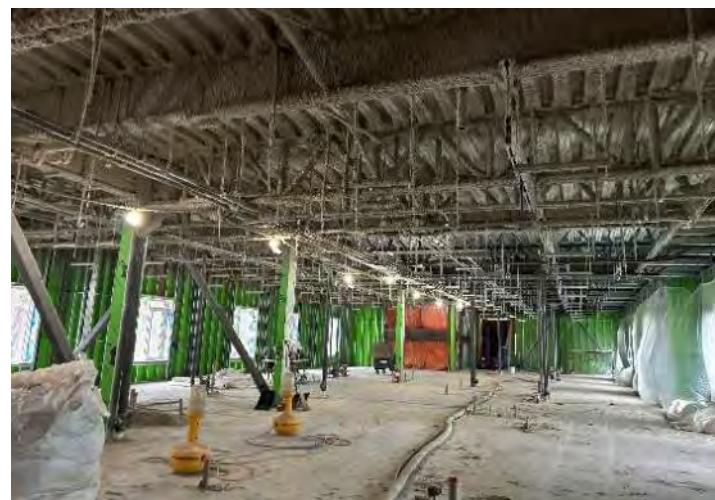
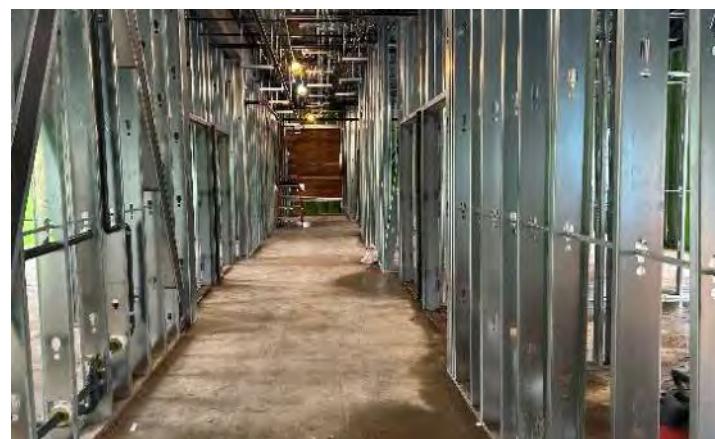


November 22, 2025



Construction continues to move forward on the new Four Seasons Lodge Long-Term Care Home, with several key milestones underway. The building is nearing full enclosure, an important step that helps protect interior work and keeps the project moving through the winter months. Work is also progressing on preparations to reinforce the main gas line servicing the site.

Stay tuned for more updates as construction progresses!



AUXILIARY HOLIDAY TEA



Our incredible Auxiliary volunteers hosted a festive and cheerful Holiday Tea for our organization on December 4, 2025 - complete with delicious treats, holiday warmth, and a welcome opportunity to connect.

We are so grateful for the Auxiliary and all they do throughout the year to support our patients, residents, families, and team. Their generosity, dedication, and holiday spirit made this afternoon truly special.

Thank you to our amazing volunteers for bringing so much joy to our organization, and to all our team members, board members, and physicians who stopped by to celebrate the season with us!



FESTIVE FUN



Before the holiday season, our teams took time to connect, celebrate, and enjoy each other's company. From sharing great food at a potluck with our Family Health Team to a fun night of bowling with colleagues it was a wonderful way to wrap up the year together.

We also took a moment to wish a fond farewell to medical students Agia and Dhruv — we wish you all the best as you continue your medical training and thank you both for your many contributions to DRDH.



PHILOSOPHY OF CARE INPUT SESSIONS



Sessions to shape the Philosophy of Care for our new Long-Term Care Home have now been completed. These thoughtful discussions brought together DRDH team members, residents, and community partners, ensuring a wide range of voices to help inform the future of care.

Work is now underway to consolidate the feedback and finalize our Long-Term Care programming approach early in the New Year. This important step will support the next phase of planning, including staffing, as we continue to build a home focused on compassionate, person-centered care.



CAREGIVER COFFEE TIME



Janna, our CEO, as well as Michael, our Social Worker, recently attended *Caregiver Connection* sessions, hosted by the Deep River Public Library.

The sessions provided information on caring for the caregiver, navigating challenging family relationships, and plenty of health campus updates. The sessions also included open Question & Answer sessions which provided information on DRDH activities including medical recruitment, primary care, long-term care development, and hospice planning.

Feedback was received to support development of both the Long-Term Care Philosophy of Care, as well as to help inform community engagement for upcoming hospice planning.



We all experience moments when emotions take the lead—an argument that lingers in your mind, a stressful meeting that leaves you tense, or a conversation that suddenly feels harder than expected. These reactions are part of being human. What really matters is how we understand and respond to them. That's where emotional intelligence comes in.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence, often called EQ, is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions—both your own and those of others.

It involves being aware of how you feel, expressing emotions in healthy ways, and tuning in to how others might be feeling too. The concept was first explored by psychologists Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer in the early 1990s and was later expanded and popularized by psychologist Daniel Goleman, who brought the concept to a wider audience.

Goleman identifies five key components of EQ:

1. **Self-awareness:** Recognizing your own emotions and how they affect your behaviour.
2. **Self-regulation:** Managing your emotions in healthy, constructive ways.
3. **Motivation:** Using emotions to support your goals and perseverance.
4. **Empathy:** Understanding and connecting with how others feel.
5. **Social skills:** Communicating effectively, resolving conflicts, and building positive connections.

Together, these skills help us manage stress, strengthen communication, and build relationships rooted in understanding and respect. Unlike intelligence quotient (IQ)—a standardized measure of mental ability—which tends to remain stable throughout life, emotional intelligence can grow and evolve. With practice and reflection, anyone can strengthen these skills, regardless of age or experience.

Recognizing Emotional Intelligence in Action

EQ includes a wide range of abilities that can be learned and strengthened over time. Here are some everyday signs of people who show higher and lower emotional awareness:

People with lower EQ may:

- Struggle to express their feelings clearly.
- Feel easily misunderstood or frustrated.
- Get overwhelmed by strong emotions.
- Find it hard to stay calm or assertive during conflict.

People with higher EQ often:

- Understand how their emotions influence their actions.
- Stay composed and thoughtful in stressful situations.
- Communicate in ways that encourage teamwork and cooperation.
- Manage disagreements with empathy, tact, and respect.

Whether these traits come naturally or take time to develop, understanding where you are on the spectrum can help you focus on the areas that matter most.

[Click here to read the full article](#) by Homewood Health.



SOCIAL COMMITTEE NEWS—HOLLY JOLLY SOIRÉE



What a night! Thank you to all our team members and guests who joined us on Friday, December 5, 2025 for our annual Holiday Party. The room was full of laughter, great food, and plenty of holiday cheer - exactly what we needed to kick off the season together.

A big congratulations to everyone who took home one of the amazing prizes throughout the evening! Of course, a heartfelt shout-out to our incredible Social Committee for their creativity, hard work, and behind-the-scenes magic in hosting such a memorable event.

A MESSAGE OF THANKS

Below is a message of thanks we received from a grateful family member:

Good morning DRDH,

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all of the team at DRDH who cared for my [loved one]. Your gentle, compassionate, accommodating care for all of our family from admission to [my loved one's] peaceful passing was truly amazing. Please extend our families' heartfelt gratitude to the entire team, with special thanks to Ann in Dietary, Nurses Craig, Sue, Melissa, Sarah, and of course, Dr. Ceponis and Dr. McVey.

Despite the sadness with our loss, I'm comforted to know that such great palliative care is available so close to home,

Your kindness will be forever remembered!

Sincerely,

A Grateful Family Member



SOCIAL COMMITTEE NEWS – DECEMBER ACTIVITIES!



Deep River & District Health December Festivities 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Decorate your Door/Department Competition Begins 10:00-4:00 Foundation Appreciation Cafe	3 Resident Secret Santa Communication	4 2:30 Auxiliary Holiday Tea	5 5:00 Dinner Onsite (Maven Catering) 5:30 Holly Jolly Soiree	6 Trim the Tree (5:15 Tree Lighting) Town of Deep River Parade of Lights
7 11:00 Dip to Donate - Polar Plunge!	8 Elf Hunt	9 12 Days of Giveaways Kick Off! (Get a gift; give a gift!)	10 Hot Chocolate & Treats Cart 11:00 Musical Guests at the Lodge	11 Ugly/Holiday Sweater Day	12	13
14	15 Elf Hunt	16 Red & Green Day	17 6:30 Caroling with the Cubs at the Lodge	18 Hot Chocolate & Treats Cart	19 11:00 Musical Guests at the Lodge 4:00 Visit & Photos with Santa 5:00 FSL Holiday Dinner	20
21	22 Resident Secret Santa Gifts Due Back	23 Decorate your Door/Department Voting! Hot Chocolate & Treats Cart	24 Christmas Eve	25 Merry Christmas 12:00 Lunch Onsite 5:00 Dinner Onsite	26 Boxing Day	27
28	29	30	31	JAN 1 Happy New Year 12:00 Lunch Onsite 5:00 Dinner Onsite	Stay tuned to your email for communications on festive fun throughout December!	

The holiday spirit was alive and well at DRDH again this year! Thanks to our Social Committee, our team enjoyed festive fun all month long. From mobile candy and hot chocolate carts to holiday sweater days, elf scavenger hunts, door decorating, and the 12 Days of Giveaways - there was something for everyone!

Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make the season extra bright. Check out some of the highlights on the next page and be sure to let us know your favorite holiday activity for next year!

SOCIAL COMMITTEE NEWS – DECEMBER ACTIVITIES!



CONGRATULATIONS sELFie SCAVENGER HUNT WINNERS:

Felicity

Rebeccah



We also offered each daily winner a chance to pay it forward! Each winner was able to select a colleague to grab a mystery envelope and gift them a little something!



CONGRATULATIONS 12 DAYS OF GIVEAWAYS WINNERS:

Melissa

Kerri-Ann

Ian

Melissa

Paige

Alesia

Jordan

Aneta

Ann

Jordan

Rachel

Linda

Jena

Victoria





This jolly fellow made a special stop at our Home this month! There were smiles, laughter, and plenty of holiday cheer as Santa spent some time visiting with our residents and team. It is moments like these that remind us just how magical this season really can be - no matter your age! Thank you again Santa for dropping in to visit with us this holiday season. See even *more photos on page 15*.

RESIDENTS' COUNCIL CORNER



The Residents' Council recently met to review several important updates and policies. The group reflected on the Philosophy of Care session held on December 9, 2025, sharing positive feedback on the updated information presented by Janna and the team. Residents appreciated the detailed explanations and visuals that helped illustrate the planning phases.

Council members also reviewed the Pet Therapy and Home Pet Therapy Program Policy with Jenny, who provided an overview of how the Home ensures animal safety and wellbeing, including vaccination and veterinary requirements. As part of this program, paw print stickers will be used outside residents' rooms to indicate whether they would like a pet therapy visit and whether they are comfortable having Cesar in their living space.

Resident, family, and staff education plans for 2026 were reviewed. While no additional suggestions were raised at the meeting, residents shared their confidence that staff are completing required education and noted they would bring forward any ideas in the future.

The Council also reviewed Resident Bill of Rights – **Right #19**, which focuses on residents' rights to participate fully in their plan of care, make informed decisions about treatment and services, consent or refuse care, and have their personal health information kept confidential.

Regular agenda items, including IPAC reminders and review of the dashboard with current data, were also discussed.

FOUR SEASONS LODGE NEWS

More Holiday Cheer and Music by the Monday Niters



Smiles, music, and a little holiday magic! Residents and our team enjoyed a special visit with Santa and live music from the Monday Niters, bringing festive cheer, familiar tunes, and plenty of joy to the Lodge this season.



FOOD AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Food and Recreation Committee met on Tuesday, December 16, at the new meeting time of 1:30 p.m. Members reflected on the recent Tour of Lights outing, which residents greatly enjoyed, and shared interest in planning another group outing when the weather improves.

The Committee also celebrated the success of the Holiday Bazaar held in late November, which raised over \$600 through the sale of resident-made crafts. Plans are underway to use these funds for a special treat, such as a pizza party or takeout, and early discussions have begun about hosting a spring bazaar.

Looking ahead to programming, residents shared interest in refreshing the traditional Taste of Home series. A new idea—*Taste of Around the World*—was enthusiastically received, where residents can learn about different cultures while sampling dishes from around the globe. Ideas were also shared for themed

events like a spa night, casino games night, and a beach or cruise ship party to brighten the winter months.

In terms of community engagement, the Cubs were unable to visit in December due to cold and flu season, but we look forward to reconnecting in the future. Moose continued his much-loved pet therapy visits, and residents enjoyed live music from the Monday Niters, as well as a new musical duo who will be welcomed back again in the new year.

Thank you to everyone who continues to bring ideas, energy, and creativity to our Food and Recreation programming - we're excited for what's ahead in 2026!





FOUR SEASONS LODGE NEWS

Tis the Season



Christmas at the Lodge was filled with connection and kindness. Residents enjoyed a festive Christmas dinner with loved ones, followed by a cozy Christmas morning with our team, opening gifts from our Resident Secret Santa. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated and helped make the season extra special for our residents.





FOUR SEASONS LODGE NEWS

Happy New Year



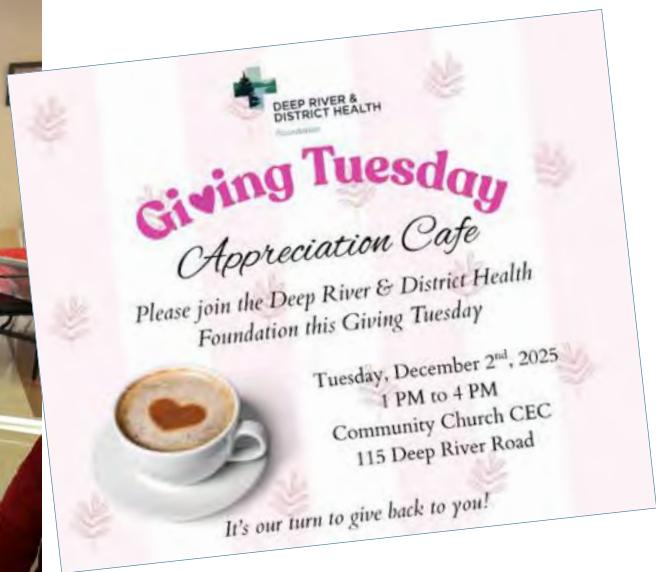
Ringing in the New Year at the Lodge!

Residents welcomed the year ahead with good company, festive treats, and plenty of smiles. Here's to a year filled with joy, connection, and many special moments together!

**Happy
New Year**
2026



GIVING TUESDAY—APPRECIATION CAFE



This Giving Tuesday, we were thrilled to celebrate our amazing donors and supporters at the Foundation's annual Appreciation Café. It's one of our favourite traditions - a chance for us to give back to the people who give so much to our organization and community.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for a festive afternoon filled with warm beverages, sweet treats, great conversation, and of course, beautiful live violin music from Megan Jones.

Your generosity inspires us every day. We're grateful for your continued support and for helping us make a meaningful difference at DRDH.

POLAR PLUNGE



Thank you to everyone who braved the cold at the second annual DRDH Foundation Dip to Donate Polar Plunge, which raised over **\$20,000** in support of local health care. From courageous plungers to generous donors, volunteers, and cheer squads on the shore, this event was a powerful reminder of what our community can do when we come together. A huge thank you to members of the Deep River Police and Deep River Fire Fighters for helping us to hit our goal, and for being such amazing sports. Also, a huge thank you to our Polar Bear Sponsors: Northern Credit Union who served hot apple cider on the day and Rosehall Consulting, Penguin Sponsors: Navi K9 who also provided four prize packs, Pharmasave-Cahoon's Pharmacy, Doran Sushi, Seal Sponsor: Mike's Hardware and Otter Sponsor: Petawawa Physiotherapy & Sports Injury Clinic, as well as Sweetened by Shelly for sending her troops down to make gourmet hot chocolate! And to our amazing volunteers, especially Clinton Sarrazin for helping out with the changing tents, the heaters, and the soup! Because of you, the Polar Plunge continues to grow—bringing energy, awareness, and vital support to the care provided at DRDH. We're already counting down to next year!

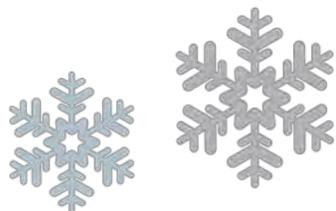
POLAR PLUNGE



Our brave (and slightly frozen) DRDH crew took the plunge on December 7, 2025 at the Foundation's annual Dip to Donate Polar Plunge - and they did it with big smiles, bigger energy, and very cold toes!

A huge shout out to our incredible team members who jumped in to support our organization, including Mary, Jeff, Rebekah, Michaela, Agia, Dr. Quenneville, Megan, and Lynne. Your courage, commitment, and "type 2 fun" enthusiasm helped make this year's event one to remember!

Thank you to everyone who participated, donated, or cheered on our dippers!



POLAR PLUNGE



Our local MPP proved he's not afraid of a little cold and a big challenge! A huge thank you to MPP Billy Denault for accepting our friendly challenge and bravely taking the leap at the Foundation's Dip to Donate Polar Plunge! We're grateful for his enthusiasm and support for DRDH. Community leadership comes in many forms - sometimes it's diving into freezing water for a great cause!

TRIM THE TREE



A tree trimmed with love and generosity! Each ornament on the DRDH Holiday Tree tells a story. Through our annual Trim the Tree fundraiser, donors had the opportunity to honour loved ones, celebrate special memories, and support care close to home. Hanging proudly on the Town of Deep River tree, and then in our lobby throughout the season, these ornaments served as a beautiful reminder that those we hold dear are never far from our thoughts.

Thank you to everyone who took part in Trim the Tree and helped make the holidays a little brighter for our community and for the patients, residents, and families we serve.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



This holiday season, we pause to celebrate the incredible people who make our work so meaningful. To our team members, physicians, volunteers, partners, donors, Foundation & Auxiliary, and the patients, residents, and families we serve - you are the heart of Deep River and District Health. Your dedication, kindness, and collaboration have made this year truly remarkable.

This season, we reflect on the milestones we've reached together and the moments of connection that define our community. Because of your support, we continue to care for every person like a loved one and look ahead to the promise and possibilities of 2026.

Wishing you joy, warmth, and peace this holiday season, and a New Year filled with hope and happiness.

With heartfelt appreciation,

The DRDH Team

CALL FOR CONTENT

Is there something you would like to see appear in the next issue of The Zinger newsletter? Please submit your photos and information to Amy at amcdiarmid@drdh.org.

*Deep River and District Health receives funding from Ontario Health.
The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of Ontario Health.*