

OSTOMY TORONTO

Reinventing Ostomy Toronto – IBM Celebration of Service Project

As I said in my President's message, in my professional life, I'm an IBMer. 2011 is a very special year for IBM and it has resulted in an incredible opportunity for Ostomy Toronto. On June 16, 2011 IBM will celebrate its 100th anniversary, you can read more about this at <http://www.ibm100.com> – I particularly recommend the video "They Were There" – the story of the Apollo 13 mission, gets me every time! For its 100th Anniversary, IBM has placed a special focus on service and our CEO has asked all IBMers, 407,000 worldwide, to join together in a celebration of service by donating a minimum of 8 hours of their IBM skills to their communities with the highlight being June 15, 2011. On June 15, IBM will celebrate its last day of its first century by having as many of their employees out volunteering in their communities. Some will be working on one day projects such as park cleanups and others will be holding special celebrations for their ongoing projects such as the one Ostomy Toronto is embarking.

In January, as a result of my story in Ostomy Canada magazine, I was asked to consider being a Service Leader for Celebration of Service. I immediately accepted as I'm always interested in anything to help Ostomy Toronto. However, I had no idea what exactly would be involved at the time. My project proposal was presented to IBM Canada's Director of Marketing and Communications, Carolyn Knott, to see if she would be interested in working on it. Carolyn came on board and quickly got up to speed and started recruiting volunteers. We now have 8 IBMers including myself volunteering with Ostomy Toronto and many more behind the scenes helping with developing a marketing strategy including a new logo, new brochures, redesigned website and newsletter template and a hopefully a video.

Our volunteers are very enthusiastic and have spent a great deal of time and effort researching and learning all about ostomies – they probably know more about ostomies than anyone not connected to the ostomy community! We are "Reinventing Ostomy Toronto" while keeping our mission and core beliefs the same. We believe this will help us impact our community and better reach new and existing ostomates of all ages and their families/caregivers and at the same time promote public awareness.

This will all lead up to a special event being planned for June 15 where we will launch all of the new marketing materials and have our membership, ETs, doctors, manufacturers and others related to the ostomy community present. We have a lot of work ahead of us before we can do this, but the work already coming out of this project is exceptional and I cannot wait to show it off!

This project is turning into more than I could ever have hoped or imagined when I agreed to be a Service Leader for Celebration of Service. We have a great group of volunteers, a Board that is committed to working with them and the future looks bright. This is a huge learning experience for me, and I'm so glad that IBM has chosen to focus on giving back to their communities as part of their centennial. I know what IBMers do for its business customers, but now we get to take those skills and apply them in new ways by volunteering for organizations like Ostomy Toronto and truly show what it means to be an IBMer.

I hope you will join us in this journey and attend the special event being planned for June 15 in conjunction with our manufacturers night. The location and other details will be in the next issue of our newsletter.

Mary Penner

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this article are those of the writer and don't necessarily represent IBM's positions, strategies or opinions.