

**MARIANHILL
THE GREY SISTERS OF PEMBROKE
HEALTH SYSTEM PHILOSOPHY**

The Health System of the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Pembroke, responds to God's call to serve Him in the poor, the sick and the most needy homes, hospitals, clinics and other health related ministries.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Grey Sisters of Pembroke Health System is based on the following beliefs:

We believe in celebrating life by promoting health of the body, mind and spirit.

We believe that our healing ministry is a continuation of the charisma and mission of our foundress, Saint Marguerite D'Youville known for her trust in God and her compassionate love for the poor and needy.

We believe in the values, principles and goals inherent on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, the dignity of the human person and the right of all to quality of life.

We believe that our regard for life necessitates a refusal to allow any practice that would violate that respect.

We believe in excellence of service and responsible stewardship and have hope for a future whose challenge will be to continue Christ's healing ministry.

MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by the healing ministry of Jesus Christ and the life of St. Marguerite d'Youville, Marianhill provides love and compassionate care in the Catholic tradition to older adults within their homes, the community and Marianhill.

VALUES

Hospitality invites us to create an environment marked by openness, warmth and acceptance for all.

Spirituality calls us to nurture the body, mind and soul of each other and those we serve.

Integrity invites us to a life of honesty, respect and justice.

Dignity requires us to honour the sacredness of life.

Excellence challenges us to be innovative and accountable leaders in the care and services we provide.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND THE GREY SISTERS

The women to whom the committee for the hospital project turned in 1878 were the members of a relatively new Canadian Community – The Grey Sisters. Their founder was a Montreal widow – Marguerite Lajemmerais D’Youville who, 150 years earlier, had dedicated herself, along with three friends, to the service of the poor. That small group of women eventually re-built the Montreal General Hospital, which had been falling into ruin. One hundred years after the founding of the Congregation, Grey Sisters had responded to requests for help in St. Boniface, Quebec City, St. Hyacinth and Bytown (now Ottawa).

From Bytown, Grey Sisters had been invited to Pembroke in 1868. That same year they had begun the boarding school, the Convent of Mary Immaculate.

In defining the characteristic spirit of her congregation, St. Marguerite invited her Sisters “to learn from the heart of the Father the attitudes of love, tender concern and compassion they should have for the poor, the sick and the orphans.” (Fatherhood of God p. 69) St. Marguerite said the Grey Sister must choose Jesus Christ as her model. She told her Sisters, “The people must know that we never refuse to serve.”

The Grey Sisters remained true to that calling. Their affirmative response, when asked to begin the Pembroke General Hospital, was characteristic. They spoke and wrote little of the spirit by which they lived. No philosophy or mission statements were etched on the hospitals’ stones...yet the lives of these early pioneers spoke clearly of self-sacrifice, faithfulness and love that animated their actions. A few images come down through history.

Sister St. George traveling by sleigh in the harshest winter weather as she made her rounds of lumber camps and farms begging for the hospital...Sister St. Maurice’s tall silhouette in the lamplight as she made her rounds in the men’s ward, offering comfort of a sip of brandy to ease the pain...

A newspaper article at the time of the 1920 fund-raising campaign said this of the General Hospital’s spirit.

“It must be clearly borne in mind that an institution of this kind is not carried on for a profit...it is well known that the Sisters give their services freely, their whole time to the hospital and their whole heart and soul to the great cause of charity...”

Through the years the hospital continued to function in the large structure on the corner of MacKay and Bell. In 1954 a new hospital was opened and the original building became the first home for the aged in Renfrew County.

PURPOSE

Marianhill was founded in 1954 by the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and has since its inception, aimed at providing quality care for all residents from Renfrew and Pontiac County. A dignified and loving response to the elderly has its roots in the very early history of the Grey Sisters Community for St. Marguerite who herself joyfully dedicated to ministering to the aged. This tradition of loving respect remains today the vital basis of our present Home and Community programs.

The land on which Marianhill now stands is part of an 80-acre large property purchased in the late 1800's by the first Bishop of Pembroke, Bishop Lorrain. In 1946, the 4th Bishop of Pembroke, Bishop Smith, transferred the title of the land from the Diocese of Pembroke to the Grey Sisters.

On a portion of this property, the first General Hospital was built in 1892. In subsequent years, when the hospital became inadequate to serve the needs of a growing community, a new General Hospital was constructed. After extensive renovation the former hospital became Pembroke's first Home for Senior Citizens, and Marianhill officially opened its doors on May 14th, 1954.

This building continued to serve the community for another 25 years. However due to the need for a more modern facility as well as an ever increasing population of elderly in the area, it was decided to embark upon the construction of the present building. The new building is home to over 200 residents and provides long term care, complex care, and private services. Special environments are provided for residents needing less supervision in community group homes as well as residents with severe cognitive impairments through the special Alzheimer programs.

Following the example of St. Marguerite D'Youville we continue to offer compassionate care to the elderly in the home and in the community through assisted living services, day care, and respite care.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Saint Marguerite D'Youville

Marie Marguerite was born to Christopher and Marie Renee Lajemmerais in Varennes, Quebec, October, 1701, the eldest of six children. Her happy carefree childhood came to an end at the tender age of seven when her beloved father died. Over the next several years Marguerite knew hardships as she helped her mother to care for her younger brothers and sisters. Her father, being a military man, had sufficient funds to support his young family, however, he had no savings and his widow was left penniless. It was six years after his death before his widow received any aid from the Government. At the age of ten Marguerite made the canoe trip up the St. Lawrence to Quebec to attend school at the Ursulines' Convent. Two years later she again traveled the St. Lawrence back to her beloved family and again took up the duty of helping her mother and educating her sisters and brothers.

Among her friends as a young woman was a young gentleman of excellent lineage. It was thought among her friends and relatives that this would be a perfect match. However, when her mother at age thirty-eight suddenly married a young practitioner, of ill repute, Timothy Sullivan, the relationship broke up.

Timothy moved his family to Montreal and it was here that Marguerite met Francois D'Youville who had inherited the fur trading business from his father. Marguerite looked forward to using her skills to provide a comfortable home for her family. However, this was not to be, her mother-in-law was not about to surrender any part of her authority over the house, moreover she deprived Marguerite of her social life and even proper nutrition.

Her husband within a few days of their marriage showed his true character, he was crude, selfish and indifferent. He was not by her side for the birth of her children except for two, nor was he there to comfort her at the time of the death of three of her six children. The sixth child was born after Francois' death and died at five months.

After only eight years of a tragic marriage, Francois D'Youville died from acute inflammation of the lungs leaving Marguerite to face the future alone to raise two children, Francois now six and Charles one year, and the third one on the way. The future was bleak. She was not only penniless but she faced a debt of eleven thousand pounds and a name held in dishonour. It was under these circumstances that Marguerite began to put her life back together. She opened a store in the market place to make money to pay off the debts, and to educate her children. Marguerite through her suffering had already been drawn close to her God. It was under direction of Father Normont that Marguerite continued to grow spiritually and developed her work among the poor.

On Nov. 21, 1737, Marguerite gently guided Françoise Osseour, a blind lady, up the steps of her home, thus began her work among the poor. Marguerite stretched her hand to other needy people, including those paralyzed, blind and crippled. Three other women were attracted to her and her work thus these four women were the humble beginning of the Grey Sisters.

In 1747, Marguerite assumed management of the General Hospital which had greatly fallen into ruins. This building which she restored and added on to is still standing today.

In 1868, the Grey Sisters of Ottawa were invited to come to Pembroke to operate a hospital for the lumbermen. The house which was the first hospital still stands on Pembroke Street.

The land on which Marianhill now stands is part of an 80 acre property purchased in the 1800's by the first Bishop of Pembroke, Bishop Lorraine. In 1892 the General Hospital was built on a portion of this property.

It became apparent that there was a need for an English branch of the Grey Sisters, thus in 1926, an English community of Grey Sisters were formed. "The Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception". They took over the operation of the hospital.

When the present hospital was built in 1953, the old building was renovated and became Pembroke's first home for senior citizens, Marianhill.

DATES

1701	Birth of Marguerite Lafemmerais (D'Youville)
1737	Birth of Congregation
1753	Congregation of Grey Nuns confirmed by Royal Charles Houls XV
1868	Grey Sisters of Ottawa opened up first General Hospital in Pembroke
1892	General Hospital built on corner of MacKay and Bell
1926	Formation of Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
1954	Marianhill opened its doors in the former General Hospital
1981	Opening of present Marianhill