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*For immediate release*

**April 2, 2007**

## **New wheelchair improves quality of life for spinal cord injury patients at PCCC's St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital**

Providence Continuing Care Centre's St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital has purchased a specialized titanium wheelchair for people with spinal cord injuries courtesy of a donation from the Rick Hansen Foundation.

The state of the art wheelchair is ideal for active patients with spinal cord injuries who want to be as mobile as possible. "It is very lightweight and easier to use than conventional chairs," says occupational therapist Richard Lenart, a member of our spinal cord team. "It is the only wheelchair of its kind in the hospital so this gives patients a chance to try it out and order one if they like it."

The purchase of the wheelchair was made possible by a grant for almost \$4,400 from the Rick Hansen Foundation. PCCC's spinal cord injury program was chosen by the Foundation to receive the quality of life grant as a result of its annual fundraising in Kingston.

Last year the St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital "Road to Rehab Team" was the highest fundraiser for the annual Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion event, raising \$3,450. Several staff members from St. Mary's took part in the event; including Dr. Karen Smith, head of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at St. Mary's. The local Civitan Club played a key role in organizing the event.

"I'd like to thank the staff at St. Mary's and all of the event organizers for their support," says Dr. Smith. "Without their dedication and the support of the Rick Hansen Foundation, we would not have this specialized wheelchair to improve the quality of life for our patients with spinal cord injuries."

"We're extremely grateful to the volunteers and participants who continue to help make this annual event a success. For more than 20 years my dream has been to make communities accessible and inclusive, for people living with spinal cord injury and to someday find a cure. The generous contributions of Canadians has brought that dream one step closer to being a reality," said Rick Hansen, CEO and President of the Rick Hansen Foundation.

The spinal cord injury clinic at PCCC's St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital is the leading provider of rehabilitation and therapy for about 240 spinal cord injury patients in southeastern Ontario.

On Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007 people of all ages and abilities will come together to wheel, bike or walk with friends and family along a designated route to support Rick Hansen's dream of a brighter future for people living with spinal cord injury. The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Rick Hansen Wheels In Motion event, presented by Scotiabank in Kingston, will take place at Kingston Confederation Basin. For more information on the wheel/walk and wheelchair challenge, please visit [www.rickhansen.com](http://www.rickhansen.com).

Since its inception in 2003, Wheels In Motion has supported over 500 Quality of Life projects in communities across Canada, and research funds have helped to launch the Rick Hansen Spinal Cord Injury Registry in 11 acute care and rehabilitation centres throughout the country. Each year, Wheels In Motion brings us one step closer to achieving the goal of a fully accessible and inclusive Canada, and a cure for spinal cord injury.

University Hospitals Kingston Foundation is the fundraising arm for Hotel Dieu Hospital, Kingston General Hospital and Providence Continuing Care Centre. It celebrated its first anniversary in October. In the last year, some \$4 million from almost 13,000 donors has been raised for patient care, new equipment and research. The Foundation raises money for programs, equipment, education and research that benefit the 500,000 people in Kingston and Southeastern Ontario served by its three teaching hospitals.

To find out more about giving opportunities or to make a donation go online to [www.kingstonhospitalsfoundation.ca](http://www.kingstonhospitalsfoundation.ca), call 613-549-5452 or toll-free 866-549-5452.

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*Editor's Note: The media are invited to a photo op of the new wheelchair at St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital cafeteria at 2:30 p.m. on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.*

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**Rick Hansen**  
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