SAINT BRIGID'S

and its Foundation

A Tradition of Caring Since 1856

(IHQ)

Sister Bertrand with assistants in the kitchen, 1970s (SBH)

Dog-pulled wagon at the orphans' picnic in Sainte Foy, c1940s (IHQ)

Concert outside the old Saint Brigid's Home, Avenue de Salaberry (IHQ)

Welcome Aboard!

Excursions have always been part of Saint Brigid's history. In the summer of 1894, the orphans piled into horse-drawn trams and wagons headed for the rural hinterland of Sainte Foy, where they enjoyed a picnic on Mr. Boyce's farm. While horse-drawn trams are a thing of the past, and Sainte Foy now has more parking lots than farms, the home's residents still enjoy trips to see the fall colours, go fishing, or enjoy a spot of shopping. In the following pages, the **SAINT BRIGID'S HOME FOUNDATION** invites you on a different sort of journey: a trip through time that takes you from the beginnings of the home to the present day.[1]

Although Saint Brigid's has changed since 1856, it continues to be nourished by the same desire to look out for those in need and provide them with a warm and comfortable atmosphere. This desire lies at the core of the Saint Brigid's Home Foundation's mission to improve the health and well-being of residents.

Calèche ride at Montmorency Falls, 1986 (SBH)

Swings behind the old home (IHQ)

Raking leaves at the Sillery home, 1980s (SBH)

The first Saint Patrick's Church, dedicated in 1833 (SBH)

I. A HOME WITH IRISH ROOTS

Before Saint Brigid's

Our trip through time begins with a long boat journey across the Atlantic. In the 19th century, the Irish left their country in droves. From a peak of 8.6 million people in the 1840s, Ireland was reduced to a nation of 4.3 million by the 1920s. Economic difficulties, pressure on the land, discrimination against Catholics, and periodic famines led them to seek better fortunes abroad.[2]

Quebec City was British North America's main port of entry, the gateway for thousands of migrants from Britain and Ireland. The Irish brogue could be heard everywhere during the 19th century. Although most Irish were only passing through, many found work as lower-town longshoremen or upper-town merchants. Even before the 1847 potato famine, the Irish represented 30% of the city's population, two-thirds of them Catholic. Irish Catholics soon had their own church (1833) and patriotic society (1836).[3]

Irish Catholics helped their needy countrymen through organizations that spanned cultural and religious differences. The Saint Patrick's Society brought together prominent Irish Catholics and Protestants to provide "relief and advice to the natives of Ireland and their descendants." Irish and Francophone Catholics worked together within the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul; they also lived together at the Dames Charitables de Québec's orphanage and school.[4]

The influx of thousands of poor Irish Catholic migrants during the 1845-52 potato famine created an unprecedented need. Before the famine, the city only had to deal with an average of ten orphan immigrants per year; in 1847, this rose to nearly 700. Emergency sheds were set up around Saint Patrick's church. Many orphans were eventually placed in families outside the Irish community. Typhus and cholera epidemics accompanied the famine migrations, decimating families in their wake. Immigrant males were especially affected, leaving penniless widows and children behind. Something had to be done.[5]

Irish Catholics stepped up to the task. The priests of Saint Patrick's parish pressed the need to build a home for destitute members of their community. Parishioners collected seed money among the garrison officers. These funds grew and eventually blossomed into a home under the stewardship of Rev. Bernard McGauran.

Rev. Bernard McGauran, c1870 (BAnQ)

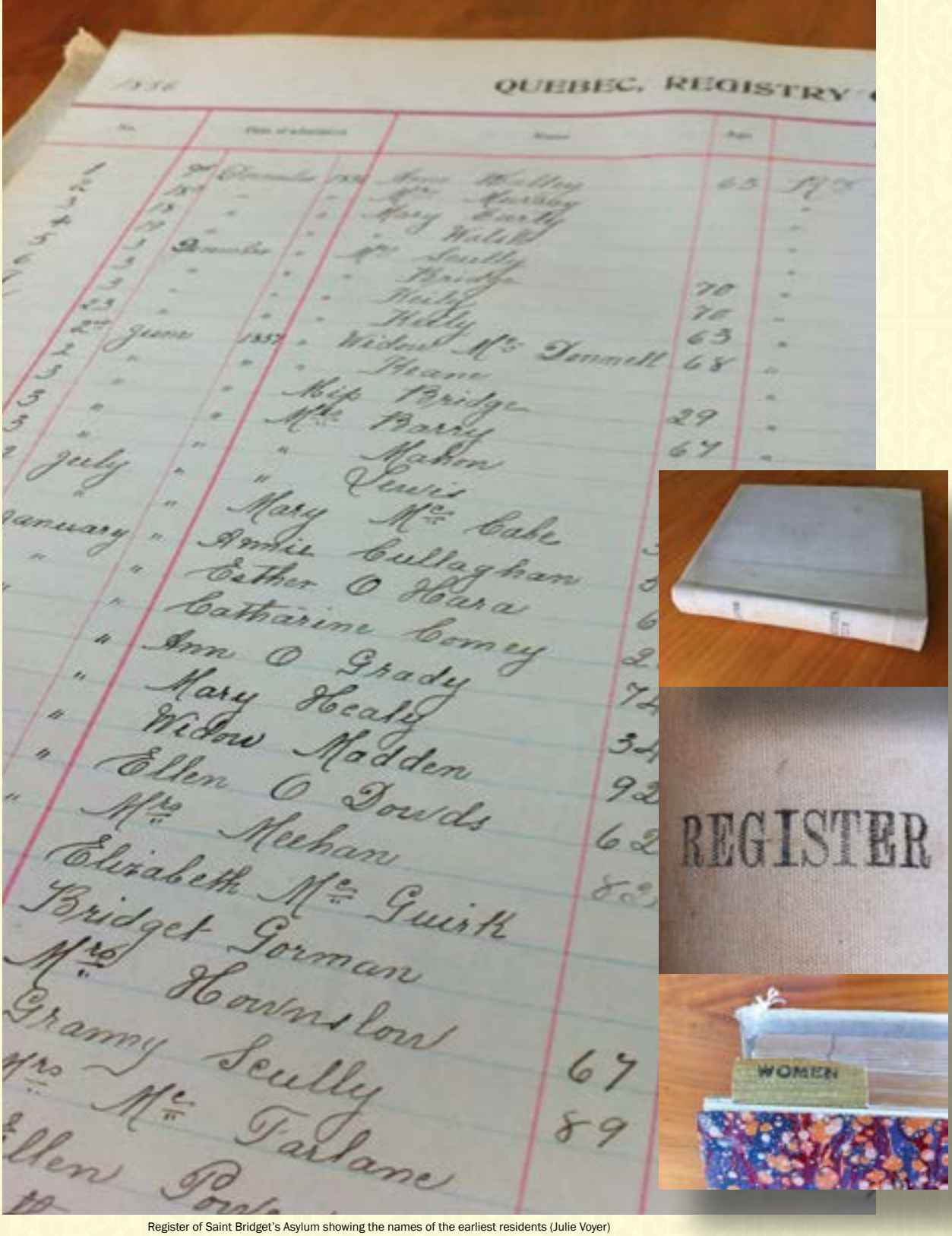
The Early Homes

"Saint Bridget's Asylum," as it was then known, moved from one crowded building to another during its first two years. **It opened in December 1856 on rue Saint Stanislas.** Five months later, another house on the same street was rented out. Both homes comfortably housed 15 to 20 residents, each with their own straw bed, though up to 30 people lived there at times.[6]

Site of the second home at 4 Saint Stanislas (now 6), with outline of the original building (Patrick Donovan)

Saint Bridget's welcomed needy people of all ages and circumstances. Most early residents were female. In November 1857, the home housed ten elderly women, three adult women with disabilities, a recent immigrant with her three young children, and an orphan boy. This population was highly transient.[7] The adult women usually found jobs as live-in servants or left town after receiving money from relatives. The parish tried to place the children, but not all of them were orphans; some had been dropped off by a parent who had fallen sick, who could not afford to raise them, or who did seasonal work on the canals or railroads.[8]

It was challenging to keep an orderly house with all this coming and going. Miss King did her best as matron in the first home, and Mrs. William Bridge took over in the second. In early 1858, five young women created "a most disgraceful state of disorder" for poor Mrs. Bridge. The administrators soon recommended that "a code of rules for the internal guidance of the house" be printed and placed in the building.[9]



Register of Saint Bridget's Asylum showing the names of the earliest residents (Julie Voyer)

The parish worked to create a caring atmosphere at the home. At the end of the first year, parishioners donated 2 geese, 6 pounds of pork, 2 cabbages, a dozen eggs, and 2 pounds of suet for pudding. This allowed the 24 residents to have a proper Christmas dinner.[10]

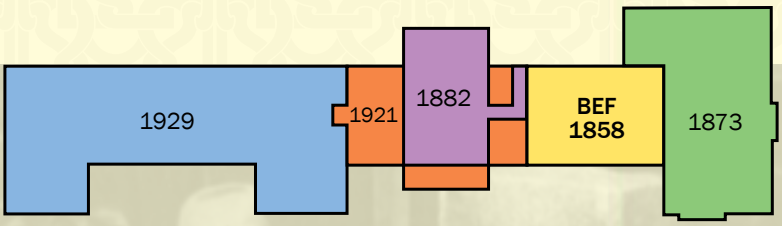
To the Country

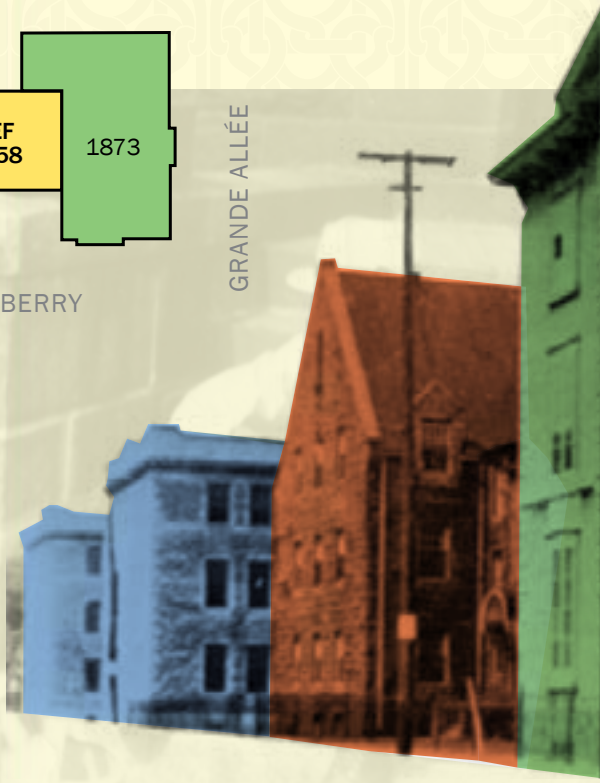
In April 1858, the home moved to a large house on ample land on the corner of Grande Allée and De Salaberry. The managing committee said this would “afford the inmates the salubrity and repose of a country residence.” Although this area is hardly rural today, it stood beyond the edge of the city at the time. The only neighbours were the quaint country estates of the elite, a few distant Martello towers, and a Catholic cemetery.[11]

The ample land allowed for a full-fledged farm. A cow grazed in the yard and provided residents with milk. Pigs were raised, and a butcher was called in to cut them up into meat. By World War I, the city had grown around the home and neighbours started complaining about animal noises.[12]

From Asylum to Home

With plenty of room to grow, the building did just that over the next 115 years. Its 45 beds were full by 1862, and a building fund was set up. Architect Edward Staveley designed the home’s emblematic main building fronting Grande Allée. The cornerstone was laid in 1867 but the building remained incomplete until 1873 due to lack of money.

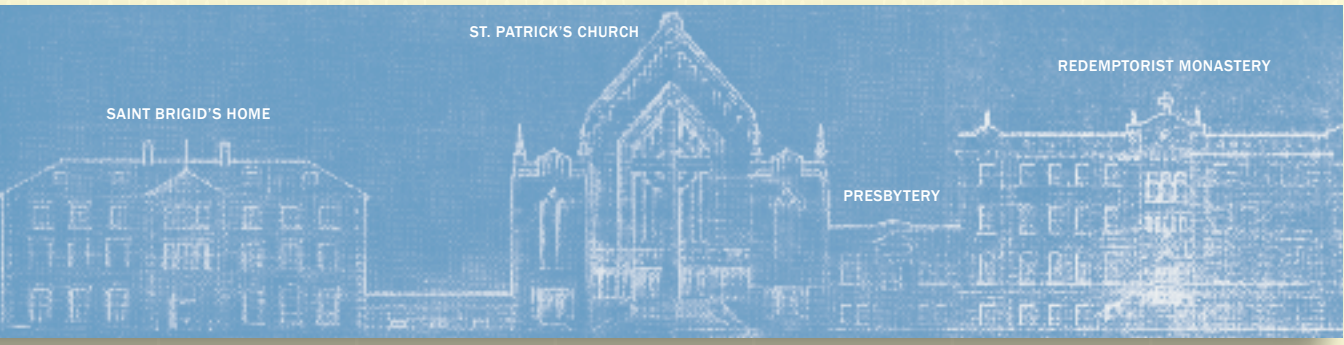




A contemporary observer said one of the wealthy estate owners along Saint Louis road felt pangs of pity when riding by the unfinished building, inspiring him to leave a sizable bequest in his will. The main building was finally completed and occupied in 1873. Other major extensions were completed in 1882, 1921, and 1929. By the 1940s, the home stretched out along De Salaberry and was large enough to house 210 men, women, children, nuns, and a live-in priest.[13]

In the early 20th century, Saint Bridget's Asylum changed its name to Saint Brigid's Home. The traditional Irish spelling "Brigid" was favoured over the anglicized "Bridget." In 1935, a journalist for the Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph commented that the change from "asylum" to "home" reflected the true spirit of the place, freeing it "from the atmosphere of bleakness and regimentation that were once characteristic of such institutions."[14]

The evolution of the home over time indicating the date at which extensions were completed (Composite images: IHQ, BAnQ; Background photo: IHQ)



(SBH)

GRANDE ALLÉE

As the city grew around the home, other Irish Catholic institutions from the old city moved nearby. These included Saint Patrick's elementary school for boys (1910), a new Saint Patrick's Church (1915/1958), the Leonard School for girls (1936), and the present-day Saint Patrick's High School (1956). By the 1950s, the area had become the new heart of the Irish Catholic community.[15]

An Irish Administration

In the second half of the nineteenth-century, institutions became more divided along ethno-linguistic lines. The importance of keeping things Irish at Saint Brigid's influenced early staffing changes.

The home was initially run by the Saint Bridget's Asylum Association, a committee chaired by the Saint Patrick's parish priest. In 1906, the association was dissolved and the home fell directly under parish administration. This committee of Irish men managed finances and visited the asylum regularly, but it was women who did most of the day-to-day work onsite.

The Grey Nuns

A succession of nuns and lay parishioners lived and worked in the Grande-Allée home. The Grey Nuns initially took control, but left after a year due to disagreements with the board, who wanted to keep all suppliers and staff Irish.[16] After two decades of lay administration under Mrs. Anna Bradley, a new agreement was worked out with the Grey Nuns in 1877.

The Grey Nuns at Saint Bridget's Asylum, c1900 (BAnQ)

This agreement stipulated that at least four Irish nuns staff the home. Although the Grey Nuns were primarily a Francophone order, they attracted a few English-speaking nuns. However, as Quebec City's Irish-origin population dwindled from 13,627 to 4,762 between 1871 and 1941 (21.7% to 3%), the number of English-speaking nuns also declined. It became necessary to look beyond Quebec City.[17]

The Sisters of Charity-Halifax

In 1944, the Sisters of Charity-Halifax were asked to staff the home. These nuns from the Maritimes had proven themselves at the city's new Leonard School for girls since 1935. They did formidable work at Saint Brigid's, teaching the young residents, providing motherly affection, leading excursions to their cottage on Lac Saint-Joseph, helping to feed the seniors, looking after the sick, and accompanying the dying in their last hours. Although Saint Brigid's eventually became a lay public organization, many nuns from this order remained as staff until 1996 and as volunteers until 2011.[18]

Learning and Leisure at the Home

Educating the children was a priority from the earliest days. Since schools were far away in the old city, a basement classroom was set up in 1861 “where the children under the direction of the lady presiding receive the rudiments of education and sound moral training.” The number of classrooms multiplied and Saint Brigid’s eventually taught up to a grade eight level. This ended in 1948. After this date, three classrooms drew in the spillover from Saint Patrick’s Elementary until the 1960s, which did not have enough room for its grade one and two classes.[19]

The Sisters of Charity created a homelike atmosphere for the young residents. Sister Anita Gagnon grew up at the home and said the nuns “made sure we had a normal life. We went out to the movies, had an allowance. It was a home away from home. ... We had the freedom to go and the security of knowing that we had some place to [come] home to. ... It was a happy atmosphere, happy surroundings. You made bonds with the children that were there.” These childhood experiences shaped her decision to join the Sisters of Charity-Halifax in 1954, and Sister Gagnon volunteered at Saint Brigid’s in later life.[20]

Grade two schoolboys, 1961 (IHQ)

Saint Brigid’s Home hockey team, 1939 (IHQ)

The young residents had access to many facilities at the home. The boys and girls each had their own recreation halls. The nuns organized plays and fashion shows. The boys even had their own hockey team with monogrammed jerseys.

Saint Brigid's girls eating ice cream (IHQ)

The community at large also looked out for the young orphans. From 1912 onward, the Quebec Automobile Club sponsored an annual Orphans' Drive. Young residents from many homes waved small flags from a convoy of Model T's in a drive that culminated at a scenic spot. In 1919, actress Mary Pickford starred in a silent movie about orphans called *Daddy Long Legs* and the managers of Quebec's Empire Theatre provided free entrance to children from the home.[21]

A Christmas dance (IHQ)

Daddy Long Legs movie poster (Wikimedia Commons)

Montmorency Falls picnic, 1940 (IHQ)

A Home for the Elderly

While the children studied and played, the elderly residents went about their daily activities in the same buildings. The men and women had separate quarters, with their own sitting rooms and smoking rooms, “but they smoke everywhere anyway” said one of the sisters in the 1930s. Every floor had a kitchen and verandah, where each lady had her own chair. When sitting around became tiresome, the home had a hair salon, tennis court, swimming pool, and chapel services. At the end of the day, most elderly residents slept in dormitories or in the infirmaries, though some private rooms were added after 1930.[22]

Gathered around the radio in the men’s sitting room (IHQ)

Boy scouts visit an elderly resident at the home, 1950s (IHQ)

At the hair salon in the old home, 1973 (SBH)

In the women’s infirmary (IHQ)

The swimming pool behind the old home (IHQ)

Guild Sale at Saint Michael's Anglican Hall, 1983 (SBH)

From Women Volunteers to the *Creation of Saint Brigid's Guild*

Although the male managing committee took care of the finances, the institution would not have survived without the many women who volunteered and raised money over the years.

For most of the 19th century, a yearly bazaar was organized by the volunteer women of Saint Patrick's parish. This was the most important source of revenue for the home. In the early years, it covered two thirds to three quarters of the annual budget, much more than your average bake sale. In addition to the dolls, candies, clothes, and crafts, there was also a fish pond and other games for kids.[23] The bazaar culminated with a fundraising concert or dinner. Community members and home residents provided the entertainment. This typically included Irish songs and dancing, though in 1891 a group of young Irish girls decided to try something different by dressing up in kimonos and doing a "Japanese fan dance."[24]

The Saint Brigid's Guild followed in the footsteps of these early volunteers. In 1968, a group of women spearheaded by Rita Brown banded together to raise money for repairs to the home. They decided to hold a card party; 90 tables were set up, generating $1,389. Gertrude Edwards suggested the name "Saint Brigid's Guild" for this new group of volunteers. Other events were held, and the Guild was officially inaugurated on February 9, 1970.[25]

IRISH BAZAAR.

A BAZAAR, under the superintendence of the Ladies of the Congregation of St. Patrick's Church, will take place in FEBRUARY next, for the support of the ST. BRIDGET'S ASYLUM. Any donations in money or effects will be thankfully received by the Pastor of St. Patrick's Church.

The St. Bridget's Asylum has been established for the support of the aged, infirm and destitute members of the congregation. Donations of Clothing, Provisions, or Furniture are earnestly solicited for this object, from the charitably disposed, who may either send such donations to the Asylum, St. Stanislaus Street, or may have the same sent for by leaving their names and address at the St. Patrick's Presbytery, or at the Asylum.

Quebec, Dec. 4, 1856.

Ad for the first bazaar, 1856 (Morning Chronicle)

Guild sale in the Saint Charles Garnier Church basement, 2011 (Frank Scardina)

Today, the Guild continues to host annual sales that draw large crowds thanks to generous donations from the Simons family. They also operate a small store at the home, organize bingos and birthday parties, and contribute a significant amount annually to improve residents' quality of life. Even though the Guild has always had a predominantly female membership, it has recently welcomed male members to help in its endeavors.[26]

Social Changes

Over time, Saint Brigid's slowly moved beyond its Irish Catholic roots. In the home's first twenty years, 98% of the residents were Irish-born, conferring an unmistakable Irish identity to the place. By the 20th century, most new admissions were born in Canada. Many had Irish origins, but the brogue was fading fast and a broader "English-speaking Catholic" identity emerged. By the 1950s, over a fifth of all admissions were Francophones.[27]

BIRTHPLACE OF RESIDENTS AT SAINT BRIGID'S HOME[28]

	IRELAND	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	CANADA	USA	OTHER
1856-1875	98.0%	0.4%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%
1876-1895	83.9%	1.1%	1.1%	13.3%	0.3%	0.3%
1896-1915	27.6%	1.3%	0.1%	68.2%	2.1%	0.6%
1916-1935	6.8%	2.8%	0.2%	87.8%	2.1%	0.2%
1936-1955	2.6%	2.1%	0.3%	92.9%	1.3%	0.8%
1956-1969	4.3%	4.3%	1.3%	88.0%	1.7%	0.4%

The number of people admitted for temporary relief also decreased, grinding to a halt in the 1940s. The emergence of a welfare state after the Depression led to employment insurance programs, pensions, and other benefits. Moreover, many of the women who had received temporary help in the 19th century were live-in domestic servants looking for a home between jobs. This type of work declined in the early 20th century. Women no longer lived with their employers and had started working in factories and offices.[29]

Nuns and young residents at the old home (SBH)

The attitude towards orphanages changed between 1930 and 1970, putting an end to young residents in the home. Studies claimed that children fared better in family settings, leading the government to push for foster homes and adoption. Although Saint Brigid's had once cared for more orphans than adults, this population gradually faded. The last orphanages in Quebec City closed during the 1970s.[30]

A rapid secularization of society in the 1960s heralded more changes for Saint Brigid's. The number of nuns in Quebec City declined dramatically after 1964. The Church could no longer meet local needs in the health and education sectors, so the provincial government took over. Since the home became increasingly reliant on subsidies from the state, it needed to adapt to its requirements. Saint Brigid's was at a crossroads.[31]

II. A NEW HOME, A NEW FOUNDATION

The Move to Sillery

The early 1970s saw Saint Brigid's change from a parish-run private organization to a lay public home. This process began in February 1968 when Father Clark McAuley authorized a steering committee to determine how Saint Brigid's would adapt to changing times. Two years later, in 1970, a new lay non-profit organization was incorporated called Saint Brigid's Home, inc. This organization officially took over on January 1, 1973.[32]

Bird's-eye view of the Sillery home, 1973 (SBH)

Something also had to be done about the building. Adapting the existing structure would have been difficult, especially at a time when 19th century buildings were more often considered outmoded than valued as heritage monuments. Modern buildings devoid of ornamentation reflected the Quiet Revolution's spirit of renewal, and Saint Brigid's wanted to adapt to the times. Many sites for a new building were considered, including the present location of Place Samuel Holland, but the parish eventually freed up land by Saint Patrick's Cemetery. The cornerstone was laid on February 1, 1972 and the building was completed just over a year later.[33]

Residents and nurses en route to the new home, 1973 (SBH)

Residents moved to the new home on June 6, 1973. 40 arrived by ambulance on stretchers, but most came by bus. Some felt intimidated by the size and modern feel of the new home: "Change is difficult for the elderly," explained a former staff member, "They like what existed in the past." Thankfully most staff, including the nuns, provided continuity by working in the new home and ensuring that the spirit remained the same. The new home offered many improvements: whereas most residents had slept in large dormitories before the move, they could now decorate their own private spaces.[34]

Opening Up

In the four decades since the move to Sillery, Saint Brigid's has continued to become more diverse.

Although the home always claimed to "extend its aid to the needy of all creeds," the fact that it was run by a Catholic parish and Catholic nuns kept things Catholic. Protestants weren't turned away, but the administrators were baffled when a Protestant father dropped his son off in 1858—they thought the father should either pay for his upkeep or turn him over permanently to the Catholic Church. Protestants did not have to rely on Saint Brigid's since they had their own institutions such as the Finlay Asylum and the Ladies' Protestant Home. When the Finlay Asylum closed in 1970, only one of the elderly residents moved to Saint Brigid's.[35]

Harry Hannon, the Executive Director of Saint Brigid's from 1972 to 1995, was determined to make people from other confessions feel welcome. Remembered for his patience, respect and understanding, Hannon worked with Cardinal Maurice Roy and Anglican Bishop Allen Goodings to introduce Ecumenical and Anglican services in the chapel. The number of Protestants grew slowly. However, it was the closure of the Ladies' Protestant Home

in 1990, with most of its residents moving to Saint Brigid's, that signaled a true shift.[36]

The number of Francophones also grew. This happened gradually but has taken off in the last fifteen years: in 1997, 75% of the residents had English as their main language; today, it is just over 50%. As a result of this change, most services at the home are now fully bilingual. Saint Brigid's prides itself on being a culturally diverse home open to the community at large.[37]

Beginnings of the *Saint Brigid's Home Foundation*

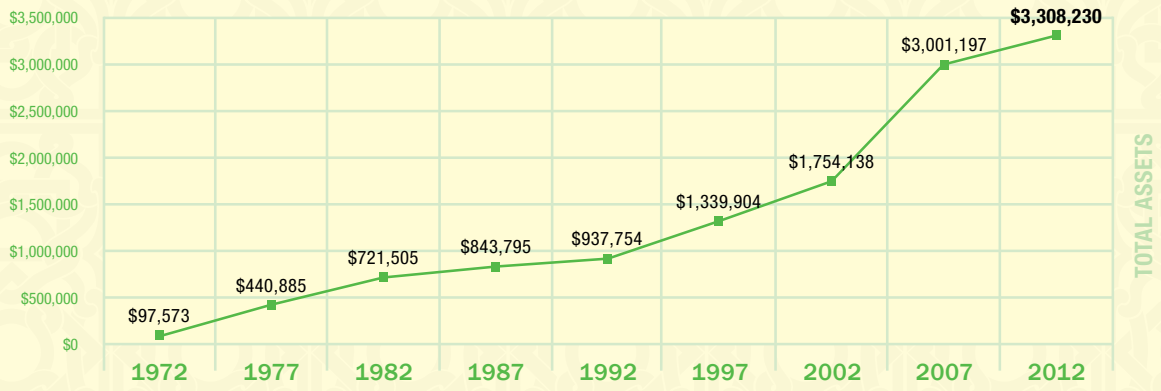
Before 1972, donations to the home had been directed to the rector of Saint Patrick's parish. With the change from religious to secular management, the private lay **Saint Brigid's Home Foundation was incorporated on April 7, 1972**. The parish transferred its Saint Brigid's endowment fund of $41,607, an additional $50,000, and all the furniture and equipment in the home to the Foundation. This formed the nucleus of its current holdings.[38]

The Foundation has always been and remains a volunteer-run and community-based organization. Clerical work is done free of charge by Saint Brigid's staff, and all other tasks are performed by volunteers. The Foundation has always tried to minimize administrative expenses.

To raise funds, the Foundation concentrates on individual approaches to donors rather than public fundraising activities. This approach has paid off. Numerous donations from families and friends have helped it grow over the years. Among the important donation in recent years are a bequest from the estate of the late Hazel Breakey and a life insurance policy transfer from the late Dr. David Guthrie.

The Foundation's investment committee is responsible for investing assets. This volunteer-run committee has always invested in a strong and secure portfolio, ensuring that the Foundation can continue to help Saint Brigid's for years to come.

The chart below indicates how various donations and prudent investment decisions have enabled the Foundation to grow.



It would be impossible to list all the volunteers who have donated their time to the Foundation over the years; however, the late John McGreevy's tireless commitment should not be forgotten. He volunteered as treasurer from the Foundation's first days until his death in 2004. He was a conservative and secure investor, which allowed the Foundation and all the community organizations he was involved in to flourish. John McGreevy was awarded the Order of Canada in 1988 for this commitment to community organizations.[39]

John McGreevy (Quebec Garrison Club Collection)

The Foundation Inside the Home

The Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life of residents at Saint Brigid's Home. It does this by funding initiatives not covered in the normal operating budget to provide a caring environment where the person's uniqueness, values and dignity are respected and maintained. These initiatives include both

recurring and non-recurring projects that fund furnishings, equipment, and activities for residents.

Over the years, the Foundation has funded attractive furnishings that have contributed to the warm atmosphere in the home. While the government has also funded renovations, such as the $2.3 million provided to bring the home up to new security standards in 1996, public funding does not cover everything. A tour of the home reveals mahogany cabinets, ambient lighting fixtures, warm carpeting, special linen, private kitchens, and a renovated cafeteria that have all been paid for thanks to donations by the Foundation. These added touches make Saint Brigid's different from most public institutions by giving it a homey feel.

The Foundation also regularly funds specialized equipment. This has included equipment for residents with special needs such as patient lifts, adapted chairs, and therapeutic mattresses. Equipment to improve the operations of the home, such as new food distribution systems and security cameras, have also received funding.

Weekly exercise programs at the home, 2011 (Frank Scardina)

Resident activities funded by the Foundation range from weekly exercise programs to zootherapy workshops. The presence of animals at Saint Brigid's is a longstanding tradition that has been kept up thanks to the Foundation's help. In the 1970s, rabbits were set up in an old trunk in the yard; a farmer even loaned two

sheep to the home, their bleating often interrupting phone calls made by office staff. Bernadette Boudreau pioneered this type of treatment: “People who had suffered strokes or were withdrawn seemed to take comfort from the presence of the animals,” she said. Since the late 1990s, zootherapists financed by the Foundation come in once a week with a range of animals. Residents interact with dogs, cats, ferrets, rabbits, and birds. Many activities at the home have also benefited from recurrent funding for summer internships by the Citadel Foundation.[40]

In addition to helping residents, the Foundation also funds staff recognition events throughout the year. This is to thank staff for the compassion, understanding and skill shown towards residents. For a long time, a turkey was given to every staff member at Christmas, but this has recently been replaced by various gifts.[41]

The Foundation in the Community

Saint Brigid’s Foundation is also involved in the community at large, funding initiatives that contribute to the health and well-being of the region’s English-speakers. This is why it provides yearly donations to Jeffery Hale Community Partners (formerly Holland Resources Development Corporation), which has played an important community advocacy role with every reconfiguration of the health sector over the years.

III. SAINT BRIGID’S TODAY

Changing Orientations

In the past two decades, Saint Brigid’s has once again embarked on important changes in its clinical mission and its administrative structure. The early nineties brought necessary changes to the organization of health and social services for seniors, because their needs and expectations had shifted considerably. The government invested in a variety of services aimed at supporting seniors in their own homes longer, leading to a consolidation of English-language services in the region.

The push to develop more home support initiatives for seniors led to the opening of the Saint Brigid's Day Centre in 1991. This outreach service is given to seniors who require assistance in maintaining their autonomy. The Day Centre brings seniors in every week for a special day of therapeutic activities and nursing services aimed at helping them to remain in their homes as long as possible. Close to twenty years later, our Day Centre still serves around 120 English-speaking seniors every year in the Quebec City, Valcartier, and Portneuf regions.

The improvement of home care also meant that seniors admitted to long-term care were significantly less autonomous than in the past. Thus, Saint Brigid's changed from a community retirement and nursing home to being recognized as a full-service public CHSLD, or long-term care facility. This change occurred gradually. In 1990, residents required an average of 1.71 hours of care per day; today, they require around 4 hours of care. "Residents used to drive in with their cars," explained a staff member, "Now, most of them are hardly mobile." Whereas less than a tenth of residents had cognitive loss problems in the early 1990s, two thirds of the residents face such problems today. This new clientele has moved Saint Brigid's into the health care sector, requiring more nursing care.[42]

Mergers and Partnerships

Jeffery Hale's Hospital also faced fundamental changes during the same period. Originally founded in the nineteenth century as a hospital for Quebec's Protestant population, it had become more secular with state involvement, especially after the adoption of the Health Act in 1972, but remained a well-respected community hospital. In 1996, the regional health board decided to convert the hospital into a long-term care facility, not unlike Saint Brigid's Home. Responding to significant community pressure, the regional health board agreed to allow the "Jeff" as it is commonly known, to continue to offer some hospital services, notably Emergency services.

Jeffery Hale's Hospital on Chemin Sainte-Foy

The paths of both organizations were set to converge. When the regional health board was legally required to consolidate front-line health services by territory, the English-speaking community proposed a different approach. They wanted to preserve Saint Brigid's and Jeffery Hale's Hospital, two venerable institutions with founders who shared a spirit of foresight and compassion for Quebec's English-speaking population. Instead of consolidating by territory, the community proposed consolidating English-language services into one institution.

As a result of this, Saint Brigid's Home, Jeffery Hale's Hospital and the Holland Centre gradually regrouped under a single banner. Although merger talks took place in the late 1990s, formal integration began in 2002 and was completed on April 1, 2007. The institution is now known as Saint Brigid's – Jeffery Hale Hospital.[43]

This merger also brought the organizations' respective foundations closer together. A profitable partnership developed between the Jeffery Hale Foundation and the Saint Brigid's Home Foundation in the late 1990s. They worked together to adapt the home to its changing clientele. More recently, they have grown closer, sharing a common investment committee and Foundations office.

An Award-winning Special Care Unit

An early result of this partnership between the foundations was Saint Brigid's Special Care Unit (SCU), inaugurated in 1999. Designed for residents suffering from Alzheimer's and related cognitive impairments, it provides an adapted environment with a wonderfully appeasing atmosphere. It was awarded the Prix du Fonds de l'innovation and the Prix de qualité de l'association des CLSC-CHSLD de Québec in 2002. As a recognised leader in its field, the SCU and its staff received visits from nearly 200 groups wishing to learn more about its keys to success.

Saint Brigid's Memory Garden, 2011 (Patrick Donovan)

Huguette Drolet Scardina in the garden, 2008
(Frank Scardina)

Saint Brigid's Memory Garden

2006 marked the 150th anniversary of Saint Brigid's Home, which decided to build a Memory Garden as its major commemorative project. The home's backyard was transformed into a charming innovative garden specially designed with the new clientele in mind. It is laid out as a series of circular paths to ensure that elderly people with cognitive difficulties don't get lost. Moreover, residents in wheelchairs can participate in gardening thanks to the addition of raised flower beds. Generous donations by community members and Saint Brigid's Guild helped the Foundation support this project.[44]

The Foundation was a major contributor to the Memory Garden (Patrick Donovan)

An afternoon walk in the Memory Garden (SBH)

Looking Ahead

As society develops better home care and a greater variety of assisted living options, Saint Brigid's is also adapting to these changes. One such housing alternative is the McGreevy Manor, an independently-managed non-profit community housing facility that opened next door to Saint Brigid's in 2010. This essential project is a community initiative developed in collaboration with Saint Brigid's - Jeffery Hale Hospital. It shares facilities with Saint Brigid's, and is actually physically connected to it by a tunnel.

In order to adapt to recent changes in senior care, the number of beds at Saint Brigid's will be decreased. This will allow the home to increase the level of care to residents while preserving existing public funding.

The home and its foundation have many other plans for the future. If Saint Brigid's - Jeffery Hale Hospital succeeds in developing an intermediate care facility, the full range of living facilities for elderly Anglophones would be centralized at the Saint Brigid's location. They could then share facilities and resources; in fact, a "Main Street" project to reorganize the home's lobby area and make it a hub for these different residences is already in the works.[45]

Through solid community leadership over the years, the home has been able to remain autonomous and to secure its ties with the English-speaking community, despite important funding issues that have been a constant concern over the past decades. In order to continue to offer residents a secure environment where compassionate quality care is offered, community support is essential. The hard work and dedication of staff and volunteers and the support of donors have enabled our Foundation to keep the legacy of Saint Brigid's Home alive.

THANK YOU
FOR BEING PART OF
OUR TRADITION
OF CARING.

MEMORIES and Keepsakes

"Old Saint Brigid's had such a warm feeling, like a hug"

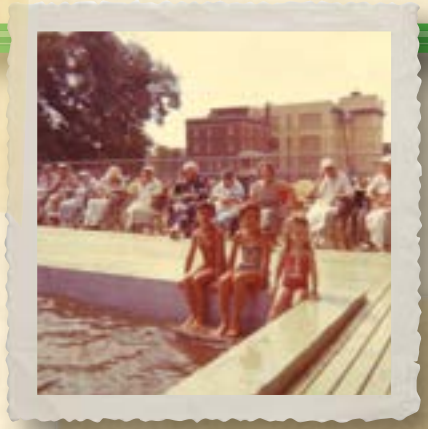
Janet Kozak
Former director of nursing services

The home, c1920 (BAnQ)

The Old Home

Women's sitting room (SBH)

Kitchen, 1973 (IHQ)



Swimming pool, c1960s (IHQ)

"Goodbye St. Brigid's.
I'll never forget your wax wooden floor smells and the clean cloth smells belching continually out of the laundry windows in the back of the building and over the benches of old men chatting and watching us play."

Joe Lonergan
Former St. Brigid's school student

Sleeping arrangements at the old home were in shared rooms, 1973 (IHQ)

The back entrance to the old home from rue Aberdeen (IHQ)

Orphans and Students

External students at Saint Brigid's school, 1950s (IHQ)

O'Neill Brothers in front of Saint Brigid's (IHQ)

Premier Assists Santa at Party

More than 700 children were special guests of the Renaissance Christmas party in which Premier Duplessis took part by distributing to each of the children freshly-minted quarters. The tradition is an unbroken one since 1945. ... Children from several institutions and orphanages, including Mont St. Aubert, St. Brigid's, Levis, and St. Sauveur Orphanages had also been invited. ... the children were directed to huge toy displays where gifts specially chosen for either boys and girls were given to them, as well as sweets.

Quebec Chronicle Telegraph, December 21, 1956.

Saint Brigid's school play (IHQ)

St Brigid's School Tots Perform in St. Patrick's Day Celebration

... grade-one pupils of St. Brigid's school remembered good Saint Patrick in a typical Irish celebration. The celebration was a full length show staged by the teaching sisters and performed by 51 talented young men, all under eight years of age. ... [The] boys put bashfulness aside and forgot about being "manly" to don pretty pinafores and play "ladies" in some real Irish polkas. ... "How much is that doggie in the window," a pint-sized baritone asked in a serenade to a real live dog.

Quebec Chronicle Telegraph, March 21, 1955.

Schoolboys singing at the women's infirmary chapel, c1960 (IHQ)

Nuns and young residents, 1949 (SBH)

Enjoying a performance in the old home (IHQ)

"Sister Helen Agnes ran a tight ship. She strung up strings over the different rows of boys with a plastic airplane on each string. This was for competition. A row's good performance would cause her to shove the respective plane closer to the front of the class. Bad behaviour would send the craft careening toward the back of the room. The front plane's row got to leave a half-hour early on Friday."

Joe Lonergan
Former St. Brigid's school student

Priests and Nuns

Sister Eleanor and Sister Joan Carmel in less formal attire (SBH)

Nuns at Christmas wearing paper crowns (IHQ)

The resident priest at the piano (IHQ)

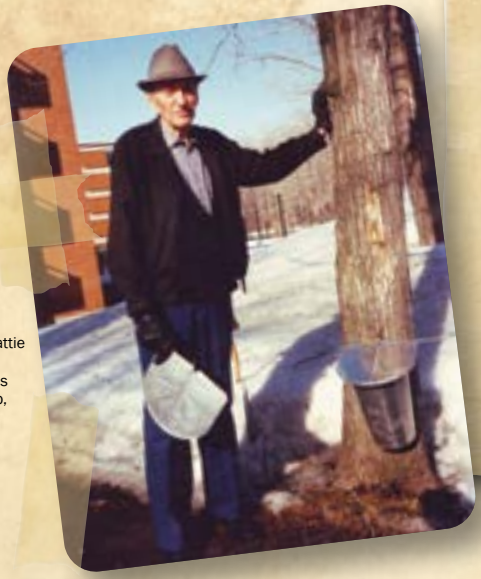
Sisters of Charity outside the home (SBH)

Chapel at the Grande Allée home (IHQ)

Saint Brigid of Kildare statue in the home (Patrick Donovan)

Today's ecumenical chapel hosts Anglican and Catholic services, 2011 (Patrick Donovan)

Life at the Home



Thomas Beattie collecting Saint Brigid's Maple Syrup, 1987 (SBH)

"[One resident] was a farmer and had trouble adjusting to communal living in the city. His daughter told me he used to tap maple trees, so in March we tapped trees under his supervision. They boiled the sap and the residents enjoyed Saint Brigid's Maple Syrup on their pancakes—a thrill for everyone!"

Bernadette Boudreau
Former director of personnel[46]

Sugar Shack lunch at Saint Brigid's, 1996 (SBH)

Christmas at the home, 2011 (SBH)

"Cheena was a particularly clever cat that went on elevator rides in the home. Mr. and Mrs. Melançon, who lived on the 4th floor, took care of her. She would take the elevator from the 4th floor to the ground floor, but only if she liked the people on the elevator. If she didn't she would wait. Cheena knew precisely on what floor her owners lived. We tried to make her get out on other floors but she refused to budge."

Patricia Lemieux
Former director of nursing services

Mrs. Melançon with Cheena the cat (SBH)

Petanque (SBH)

"Somebody once brought in a slew of snakes to a zootherapy session at the home. Surprisingly, most residents enjoyed it. The snakes weren't slimy—they reminded the women of their snakeskin purses or shoes."

Lucie Desmeules
Counsellor, Quality of Life and Residents' Needs

"Pub nights were great for getting everyone singing and dancing. There has always been a tolerance for alcohol in the building, with spontaneous happy hours taking place. This is not as common nowadays since our residents have more medical needs, but many residents used to have a bottle of sherry in their rooms. You'd go up as a staff member and residents would offer you a shot glass of sherry. You'd try to explain that you were on duty but they'd insist, so you'd just pretend to nip it. That's what I did anyway—I can't speak for what the other staff members did."

An anonymous staff member

Trip to the Sisters of Charity-Halifax's residence on Lac Saint Joseph (SBH)

Paddy's Pub night, 1989 (SBH)

Bonhomme Carnaval at the home, 2010 (SBH)

Fashion show, 1989 (SBH)

Styles for all ages featured at St. Brigid's Guild Show

Modes displayed ranged from carefree knockabout casuals to dainty and softly elegant evening dresses. ... A selection of colorful but down to earth costumes demonstrated that clothing for older women can be mature without being matronly. ... During the intermission, students and teachers from St. Patrick's High School gave their own fashion show, this time with a comical twist, and featuring such timeless classic modes as newspaper dresses and army battle fatigues. Their presentations may not head the list of the season's most elegant creations, but they will certainly be among the funniest.

Quebec Chronicle Telegraph, April 17, 1970.

Scottish pipers on Memorial Day, 1987 (SBH)

Making gingerbread houses, 1986 (SBH)

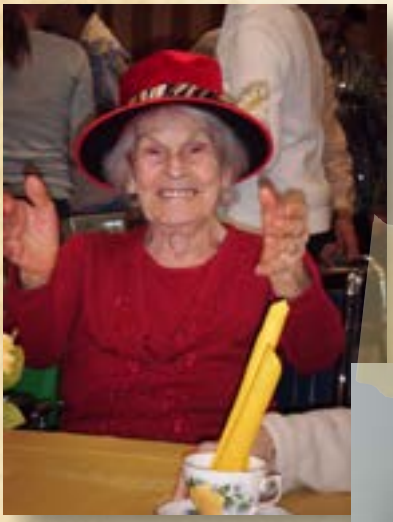
Chinese New Year at the home, 2001 (SBH)

"We always tap into our clientele when it comes to activities. We had a Mrs. Zee who was a Chinese resident, so we hosted a Chinese New Year party and made everyone from the home benefit from the event."

Special care counsellor team

Ms. Lee Tzung-Zee and daughter on Chinese New Year, 2001 (SBH)

Corn roast, 2011 (Frank Scardina)



Fancy hats, 2010 (Frank Scardina)

Time for a song, 2011 (Diane Kameen)

Saint Patrick's Day

Anne Fitzgerald pins shamrocks on John Percey's lapel (IHQ)

Sister Eleanor singing with a pot of shamrocks (SBH)

Saint Patrick and Saint Brigid, 1989 (SBH)

Music on Saint Patrick's Day (SBH)

The cross of rushes, also called BRIGID'S CROSS, is a traditional Irish symbol.

Legend says it originated when **Saint Brigid of Kildare** visited a dying pagan and tried to talk to him about Christ.

She picked up rushes from the dirt floor and weaved them into a cross to get his attention. The old man converted on his deathbed.

"Every February 1st, the home still celebrates the feast of our patron saint. To many, she was a woman who tirelessly cared for the sick and needy, whose story remains an inspiration for many of her believers."

John Haberlin
Director of administrative services

A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Saint Brigid's Home Foundation is an eloquent testament to the commitment of the community to the welfare of its frailest and most vulnerable members. Over the years, the Foundation, run by a dedicated group of community volunteers, has donated millions to Saint Brigid's in support of the institution's ongoing efforts to offer the highest quality of life to its residents.

The Foundation's particular contribution is to support the myriad of personal touches which are so highly valued by the residents of the home and their families. Home-like furniture, equipment, decoration and linens and especially special activities and events with community participation have become the hallmarks of Saint Brigid's thanks to the support of the Foundation and its partners like Saint Brigid's Home Guild.

Often overlooked is the indirect contribution of the Foundation, which, by investing in creating the warm and caring living environment our residents so richly deserve, help create a supportive atmosphere in which staff, volunteers and family members also benefit. Keeping everybody happy contributes to the success of Saint Brigid's because it is the richness of relations between people that gives rise to the compassionate care that is essential in long term care.

Finally, Saint Brigid's Home Foundation plays a very important role in the community at large, funding essential initiatives that contribute to the health and well-being of the region's English-speaking community such as the Jeffery Hale Community Partners (formerly Holland Resources Development Corporation).

On behalf of the larger Saint Brigid's family, our warmest thanks to the many men and women who, over the years, have and continue to donate precious time and funds to Saint Brigid's Home Foundation. Your gifts work wonders for the thousands of residents it has been and remains our privilege to care for.

Saint Brigid's Home Foundation truly embodies our rich tradition of caring!

Louis Hanrahan

Executive director, Saint Brigid's – Jeffery Hale Hospital, 2012

Past Presidents

SAINT BRIDGET'S ASYLUM ASSOCIATION

1860-1874	Rev. Bernard McGauran
1874-1877	Rev. Michael Burke
1877-1880	Rev. Joseph Henning
1880-1884	Rev. William Lowecamp
1884-1887	Rev. Michael Burke
1887-1890	Rev. John Hayden
1890-1893	Rev. Michael Oates
1894-1898	Rev. Philip Rossbach
1898-1906	Rev. Joseph Henning

CORPORATION OF THE CATHOLICS OF QUEBEC SPEAKING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1906-1907	Rev. Joseph Henning
1907-1912	Rev. John Hanley
1912-1918	Rev. James Woods
1918-1921	Rev. Peter Costello
1921-1927	Rev. Stephen Connolly
1927-1930	Rev. Arthur Coughlan
1930-1936	Rev. Charles Kelz
1936-1942	Rev. Patrick J. Gallery
1942-1947	Rev. Dennis Coll
1947-1953	Rev. Frederick Coghlan
1953-1959	Rev. Robert MacDonald
1959-1964	Rev. Norman Killingsworth
1964-1966	Rev. Raymond Fitzgerald
1966-1972	Rev. L. Clark McAulay

SAINT BRIGID'S HOME, INC.

1970-1977*	Dr. Paul Émile Lachance
1977-1980	Brendan O'Gallagher
1980-1981	J.H.T. Dinan
1981-1985	Archibald H. Cook
1985-1988	Gilbert Kirkwood
1988-1992	Timothy O'Connor
1992-1993	Robert Stewart
1993-1995	Gilbert Kirkwood
1995-2002	Edward J. Murphy
2002-2007	Robert Dinan

SAINT BRIGID'S–JEFFERY HALE'S HOSPITAL

2007-2015	Didier Culat

SAINT BRIGID'S HOME FOUNDATION

1972-1981*	Dr. Paul Émile Lachance
1981-1984	Brendan O'Gallagher
1984-1988	Dr. Paul Émile Lachance
1988-1992	Percy Auger
1992-1995	Gilbert Kirkwood
1995-1996	John McGreevy
1996-1999	Larkin Kerwin
1999-2001	Robert Stewart
2001-2003	Joseph Ward
2003-2007	Martin Edwards
2007-2011	Bryan O'Gallagher
2011-2019	Vincent Edwards
2019-2021	Bryan O'Gallagher

* Since it was impossible to track down administrative sources for the late 1970s, some names may have been omitted.

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Gardeners at work (IHQ)

Easter, 2011 (Frank Scardina)

Behind the scenes, 2011
(Diane Kameen)

A musical afternoon, 2011
(Frank Scardina)

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Our heartfelt thanks go to all of those who devoted their time no matter how great or small to make Saint Brigid's a unique home for our residents.

A special mention to the O'Gallagher family for their involvement and devotion to the home throughout the years.

PHOTO SOURCES

BAnQ: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec

IHQ: Irish Heritage Quebec Collection

SBH: Saint Brigid's Home Collection

Solitary games, 2011 (Frank Scardina)

Keeping the Irish spirit alive, 2010 (Frank Scardina)

Caring for the elderly, 2011 (Diane Kameen)

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