

Edmonton's Glenrose gets \$2.5M donation

BY BILL MAH, EDMONTONJOURNAL.COM APRIL 23, 2010



From left, Dr. Ted Purcell, chair of the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation, and Ron Harry, president of the Building Trades of Alberta Charitable Foundation are photographed at the World Trade Centre in Edmonton on April 22, 2010. The Building Trades of Alberta Charitable Foundation and three unions announced a \$2.5 million donation to the Courage Centre at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital. The new centre will be named Building Trades of Alberta Courage Centre and feature robotics and high tech rehab techniques.

Photograph by: Shaughn Butts, edmontonjournal.com

EDMONTON — Trades workers who bought lottery tickets for charity on Alberta construction sites will see their money go toward a new facility that will use robotics, virtual-reality simulations and other high-tech treatments to rehabilitate disabled or injured patients. The Building Trades of Alberta Charitable Foundation announced Thursday that it is donating \$1 million to the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital for its Courage Centre, which is under construction and set to open in the fall. Three affiliated unions -- the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Local 146; the Alberta Regional Council of Carpenters and Allied Workers; and the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 488 -- are also donating \$500,000 each, for a total of \$2.5 million. Ron Harry, president of the Building Trades of Alberta's charity arm, said the Courage Centre was selected for funding because it will serve a broad section of society, from kids to seniors and car-crash and workplace-accident victims to stroke patients. "It gets these folks back into their communities quicker," he said. "We looked at that and said, 'This

helps all Albertans, this helps our members and helps them get rehabilitated in a quick and efficient manner.' " The \$4-million facility, now named the Building Trades of Alberta Courage Centre, will feature over \$2 million of the latest technologies such as robotics to help children and adult patients relearn how to walk and computer simulations that can help stroke victims test their abilities in a safe virtual environment. For cardiac patients, teleconferencing technology will allow them to be assessed from long distances away. Other hubs will assist in orthopedic, brain-injury and geriatric rehabilitation. "Rehabilitation for a patient can be a very arduous process," said Dr. Ted Purcell, chairman of the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation. "With some of the equipment we're bringing in, it makes it more of a positive experience for them and, in turn, will certainly improve patient outcomes. "When you're being rehabilitated, would you rather just do squats or would you rather be standing at the top of a ski-jump hill?" said Purcell, a veterinarian whose children were cared for at the Glenrose. The Courage Centre will also perform research in rehabilitation medicine. Thursday's donation will go toward construction costs and equipping the centre with the state-of-the-art technology, he said. The Building Trades of Alberta represents more than 60,000 members in 16 affiliated unions and 22 locals. Its charitable foundation sets up Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission-approved lotteries at job sites and selects recipient charities, Harry said. Over the past five years, it's contributed more than \$5 million back into the community. Revenue to the foundation is based on the number of volunteer-run lotteries and construction projects that allow the lotteries on-site. "Our contractors and our clients that those contractors work for, they have to embrace this because we have to run this on-site and it's very complicated." The charity revenue stream also depends on the economy and how much construction is going on. Projects such as the Shell upgrader site, where up to 7,000 people are working, and the Capital Power Keephills site, with up to 2,000 workers, along with smaller construction sites have helped bring in lottery revenues for the foundation despite the recession, Harry said. A high-tech rehabilitation centre at Edmonton's Glenrose Hospital received a \$2.5 million donation Thursday from the Building Trades of Alberta Charitable Foundation and three affiliated unions.

The Courage Centre will use new technologies, such as robotics and virtual reality gaming equipment, to help children and adults regain independence and improve their lives.

The \$4 million facility will be known as the Building Trades of Alberta Courage Centre. It's in its final phase of construction with a planned opening of fall 2010.

One section will use robots, computer games and powered walking systems to help children rehabilitate.

Another will help stroke patients test and develop their abilities in a safe, simulated environment. Other hubs will assist in orthopedic, brain injury, cardiac and geriatric rehabilitation.

The Building Trades of Alberta Charitable Foundation donated \$1 million in an event over the noon hour. There were also three donations of \$500,000 each from the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Local 146; the Alberta Regional Council of Carpenters and Allied Workers; and the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 488.

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