Malignant Hematology honours the past and celebrates the future

On Friday, July 30, staff members from the F3 Hematology/Oncology Unit at Juravinski Hospital and staff from the 3Z Blood Disorders Unit at MUMC took a break from their patient care and moving preparation activities to celebrate the history of their units.

This was one last opportunity for each unit to celebrate everything they’ve accomplished as a team and the relationships they’ve made with each other and patients, before joining together as one large malignant hematology program at the new Juravinski Hospital.

Consolidation of the malignant hematology program at the Juravinski site was recommended by the Health Services Restructuring Commission in 1998 and also by Accreditation Canada in 2005. Access to the Best Care’s priority of enhancing centres of excellence further reinforced the importance of making this change. Benign hematology activity and staff will remain at the MUMC site to continue their excellent work.
“Today is the start of something incredibly exciting,” Murray Martin, President and CEO of HHS, said to staff on F3. “We’re finally going to achieve the original notion of bringing these two groups together. The McMaster team may find the change more traumatic because they’re moving to a new site, but we know you will welcome them with open arms. Combining these two groups will create a phenomenal centre of excellence.”

During the celebrations, staff took time to reflect on some of the major achievements of the two units – for example Canada’s first successful bone marrow transplant from an unrelated donor at the McMaster site, and the incredible research being done at the Juravinski site.

“It’s wonderful to have the architecture of the new building, but it’s more about the people,” said Dr. Bill Evans, President of the Juravinski Cancer Centre and JHCC Executive Site Lead. “There are future firsts to be done by this transplant team and I know their combined skills and intellect will lead us to new frontiers.”

Each team enjoyed cake and watched a slideshow of photos from over the years. They took time to congratulate each other on their accomplishments and thank each other for the work they’ve been doing to prepare for the consolidation of the two teams.

“I’m really looking forward to the change,” said Jeselina Ruska, an RN on F3 who has worked at HHS for more than 30 years. “Change is good – especially this kind of change. The new unit will be an improvement over what we’ve been working with. Everyone has been working really hard and is looking forward to the move.”

“This move brings on mixed emotion,” said Kathy Gilmour, Bone Marrow Transplant Coordinator and RN on Ward 3Z at MUMC. “We’ve been planning for this day for so long, but it really just hit us this week while we were packing our boxes - this weekend we’re really moving. I know it will be great, I’m not worried at all. It’s just such a huge change – I’ve worked here for 25 years, this place is like my home, the people I work with are my family.”

Some MUMC staff even joked about needing to put Post-it notes around their house to remember to drive to the Juravinski site from now on.

“It will be a big change for staff, but it will be a wonderful change,” said Bill. “A huge thank you to all of you for your leadership and hard work.”
Chris Marshall, Manager of Hematology at the Juravinski site, and Carol Rand, Director of Systemic, Supportive and Regional Cancer Programs, cut a cake at the F3 celebration.

Staff enjoy each others’ company at the F3 celebration. From left: Georgia Georgiou, Organizational Development Specialist; Jolanta Jeziorowska, Pharmacist; and Mark Brown, Pharmacist.
From left: Murray Martin, President & CEO, HHS; Dr. Irwin Walker, Chief of Hematology; Carol Rand, Director of Systemic, Supportive and Regional Cancer Programs; Krysta Kolodziejski, 3Z Clinical Manager; and Dr. Bill Evans, JCC President and JHCC Executive Site Lead.