

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 26, 2024

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, St. Lawrence College, Officially Welcome Living Classroom to Maple View Lodge

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, in partnership with St. Lawrence College, officially welcomed the Living Classroom to Maple View Lodge in Athens, Ontario. The ribbon-cutting ceremony, held on Wednesday, September 25th, was a celebration of the innovative educational model that will benefit both students and the long-term care community.

The Living Classroom model integrates hands-on training within long-term care settings, allowing students to acquire practical skills and gain exposure to the day-to-day operations of healthcare environments. This immersive learning approach not only elevates the quality of education but also strengthens ties to rural communities, increasing the likelihood that students will choose to work in local long-term care facilities after graduation.

Funding for this project was made possible through an \$11 million investment from the Ministry of Long-Term Care over three years, with support from the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA) and the Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA).

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes MPP, Steve Clark, shared remarks on behalf of the Province of Ontario, celebrating the launch of the program.

"This initiative provides St. Lawrence College students with real-world, hands-on experience, all under proper supervision," said MPP Clark. "I can't think of a better group of compassionate, outstanding care providers for students to learn from than the incredible team here at Maple View."

MPP Clark expressed his enthusiasm for the program's potential, stating, "Graduates will be able to hit the ground running, embarking on a rewarding career that enhances the quality of life for our seniors."

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United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Warden, Nancy Peckford, also attended the event and was thrilled to see the Living Classroom in action. Warden Peckford said, "This program offers the perfect blend of hands-on learning and academic experience. What better way to achieve that than by immersing students in a high-quality long-term care home with incredible history, incredible people, and a bright future ahead."

St. Lawrence College's Senior Vice President of Academics, Dr. Maher Ghalayini, expressed the college's pride in being part of the Living Classroom at Maple View Lodge. Dr. Ghalayini said, "We are extremely proud that this program will allow our students to apply their learning from day one, providing them with an invaluable head start in their careers."

"Equipping future Personal Support Workers with the skills and knowledge they need to serve our community is critical; the care and compassion they will learn to provide is irreplaceable."

Director of Maple View Lodge, Cathy Fisher, said that the ribbon-cutting ceremony was a momentous occasion. Ms. Fisher said, "The initiative will not only enhance the education of our future Personal Support Workers, but also enrich the lives of our residents."

Ms. Fisher was excited to officially welcome the St. Lawrence College partnership to the home and give students an opportunity to learn from Maple View Lodge's dedicated staff and the residents they serve.

Upon successful completion of the program and meeting the outlined performance criteria, students will have the unique opportunity for guaranteed employment at the new, state-of-the-art George Tackaberry and Family Home, when the redevelopment project is completed in the summer of 2025.

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