

## A little treasure in Tudor and Cashel



By Jim Eadie

A little treasure has been uncovered in Tudor and Cashel Township, and it is something the residents of that area obviously hold pretty close to their hearts too.

Established in September 2007 at the township office, the Gilmour Medical Clinic with nurse practitioner Susan Blakely has been meeting local patients needs in their small community since that time, and has become an integral part of not only keeping people in the community and attracting people to the community, but most importantly supporting the health and wellbeing of the residents of the small community that she serves.

"This is phenomenally wonderful," confided one patient. "I am a working parent of two children under 12. It is extraordinarily beneficial to my community."

Reeve Wanda Donaldson is very proud of the municipality's partnership with the Central Hastings Family Health Team (CHFHT), and what it has done for the community.

"Seniors can stay at home and in their community longer," she said. "There is always a crowd there to see her."

In 2007, CHFHT as part of their mandate was looking to expand accessibility of primary medical care to more rural communities, and the partnership with Tudor and Cashel was a perfect fit for everyone.

Nurse practitioners such as Blakely are highly trained medical professionals who can diagnosed injuries and illnesses, do check-ups, order tests, prescribe medication, and provide counseling, education and treatment.

Blakely has been a nurse since 1994 with past experience in the fields of long term care, occupational health, and education as well a serving as a director of nursing.

Presently, she has 600 patients on her roster including those in her practice in Gilmour.

But she doesn't just dispense medical treatment. She see's her role monitoring and treating chronic illness, prevention of illness, promotion of wellness and linking patients to other community resources as pivotal to better health.

"I absolutely love what I do," she said. "I am a local girl, I grew up in Eldorado. I have lived here all my life, and now I can give back to my community."

"As nurse practitioner, she has to be innovative," noted CHFHT manager Mary Stewart. "Providing education with flexibility for her patients. She doesn't just diagnose and treat a patient, she helps the patient in any way she can to become more self reliant, and better able to take care of their own health."

In 2013 a small team within the CHFHT, including Blakely, won a provincial award for their innovative work in the area of improving diabetic patient management through the effective use of electronic data. The Honourable Minister of Health Deb Matthews presented the "Bright Lights Award" to the team on Oct. 22, 2013 in Toronto.

"The work you are doing is nothing short of remarkable," said Matthews at the time of the presentation.

Ontario now has over 2000 nurse practitioners working in diverse community and hospital settings, and Gilmour is clearly very proud of their little community clinic and their nurse practitioner, Susan Blakely.