

The Kids are All Right



Lori Paillé loves working with kids. So it's not surprising she's spent virtually her entire nursing career at BC Children's Hospital, where she is the clinical coordinator for the nephrology program.

She says it suits her personality. "I'm not a quiet person... I fit in better with kids than I would if I worked full-time as a nurse with adults."

She also appreciates the perspective that children have on their kidney disease.

"When kids leave here, they don't think about their disease, they just want to get on with their lives," says Lori. "Their disease doesn't define them, the way it does for a lot of adults."

Lori began her career as a renal nurse in 1985, working on a medical floor with peritoneal dialysis (PD) patients at Royal Columbian Hospital. Two years later she received training in hemodialysis and in 1990 she joined BC Children's pediatric renal program.

The pediatric program provides renal care for children from the time of birth to the age of 19, when they are transitioned to adult renal programs. Most children who need dialysis are started on PD. In some cases, however, hemodialysis is unavoidable. Lori recalls an incident about ten years ago, when a two-day-old baby weighing less than two kilograms experienced acute kidney failure and required temporary hemodialysis until her kidneys started functioning. She says the earliest incidence of end-stage kidney disease requiring ongoing hemodialysis at the hospital involved a three-week-old baby.

As a break from her hospital routines, every summer for the past six years Lori packs her bags and heads for Camp Zajac where she volunteers as a nurse for kids aged 8-17 with kidney disease. The one-week camp is supported in part by the BC branch of the Kidney Foundation of Canada and gives kids the opportunity to try archery, horseback riding and water sports. Lori says she finds the experience very rewarding, although after six years of camp she is now thinking about handing the reins over to someone else.

When she's not at work or at camp, chances are Lori will be trying to keep warm at a hockey rink somewhere. Her two sons, aged 12 and 15, are both passionate about hockey, which means she is at a rink six days of the week. "Hockey is pretty much my life right now," says Lori.

But she's not complaining. She says through her sons, she's become a big fan of the sport. "If you can't beat them, you might as well join them," she explains.

