



## **A NEW MILLENNIUM AND A NEW JEAN!**

Living with Asthma is certainly not easy and Jean Plummer has been doing so for over 50 years. Jean was a nurse for 35 years and during these years she worked in Maternity, Palliative Care and many areas in between; with the longest being ten years in the Intensive Care Unit at Laurentian Hospital.

Jean was raised in Sudbury and as a child suffered from bronchitis and chest colds. Her home environment was a combination of smoke and paint fumes indoors while outside was frequently sulfur polluted. The changing of seasons added to her allergies with pollen, cold damp air, etc. At 12 years of age, Jean was sent to Toronto where she underwent allergy tests, resulting in an ongoing regime of medications to control her asthma

By choosing a career in nursing, Jean found that the nurse often became the patient, as health care was not a healthy environment. Patients were allowed to smoke in their rooms, well meaning visitors brought in flowers, and there were perfumes and after shave worn by both patients

and visitors. Also the many chemical odours from the cleaning agents used to keep the hospital germ free, was often a trigger for Jean's asthma.

For the next five decades Jean was introduced to many different treatments. In the '60s the treatment for Asthma was IV Aminophylline, and an Oxygen tent. In the '70s treatment was Oxygen by mask, injections of Adrenaline and Ventolin by mask. The treatment for the '80s progressed to Benadryl and steroids for the allergic reactions. Oxygen now was by nasal prongs and Ventolin became a puffer. Jean found that by carrying her puffer, trips to the Emergency Room were less frequent.

During the '90s the treatment changed from IV Steroids to Prednisone pills. They allowed her to breathe, but the side effects were awful; these side effects included mood swings, night sweats and weight gain. Jean also started daily prevention medication of Accolate pills and a Symbicort puffer. She also had pulmonary function tests. Jean found that with more frequent use of Prednisone for Asthma attacks or exacerbations, came more weight gain which led to other complications - High Blood Pressure and Diabetes.

Jean retired in 2006 and in order to get her life under control she attended the Asthma Clinic, Pulmonary Rehabilitation Clinic and Diabetic Classes. Pulmonary Rehab taught Jean how to control her breathing, exercise, and use her medications properly; which led to getting her Asthma, Blood Pressure and Diabetes under control, losing 40 pounds, and living a healthier life style.

Today Jean exercises at the YMCA 3 days a week, volunteers at the Cancer Centre, is an active member of the Lung Disease Support Group Inc. (LDSG Inc.) and maintains a Healthy Life Style.

A new Millennium and a New Jean!