

Partnering to Care for Clients in the Community

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In Grade 12, Louise Coleman did a co-op placement at a housing program on Apple Street in Brockville. She started to meet clients coming in to pay their rent. “They were such interesting folks and nice people,” she recalls. “It was very clear to me what I wanted to do. I wanted to help others.” Thirty years later, she is still doing so with Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Addictions and Mental Health (LLGAMH).

After college, Louise joined the LLGAMH team and has been there for more than 32 years. She has worked in many areas including supportive housing, group homes, case work, social recreation, and wellness programs. “We’ve implemented so many wonderful programs and have become a recovery-based agency. But there is always more to do,” she says.

Most recently, Louise has spearheaded a program to support clients with diabetes – helping them to better manage their disease and provide foot care. “We know there is a connection between physical health and mental health,” she explains. “We have many clients with mental health and addictions challenges who have also been diagnosed with diabetes. I knew we had to find a way to help.”

What began as a proposal to the LLGAMH Board of Directors has turned into a full-time role – and a great new partnership with Rideau Community Health Services, as well as Advanced Diabetic Foot Care Nurse Lisa Mason. Together, they are providing diabetic clinics for clients in need.

These are great fits and partnerships,” says Louise. “They have learned so much about mental health and I have learned so much about diabetes. We are focusing on each client’s diabetes management.”

Clinics are being held several times a month. Clients meet by phone, virtually, or in-person with the whole team. Treatment support includes an overall check-in, medication review, insulin training, meal planning, and more. Clients can also be referred to other LLGAMH services if needed. Louise says it’s making a difference: “Once the diabetes is managed everything else gets better. Clients have a place to go if they are struggling or have low-sugar readings. And it’s saving clients a trip to the hospital for care.”

The program has recently been expanded to include a Foot Care Clinic, supported by Advanced Diabetic Foot Care Nurse Lisa Mason. Lisa has a mobile foot clinic company and she wanted to give back to support LLGAMH clients. So she is working with LLGAMH to care for clients in need. Clients come to see Lisa and transportation is arranged if necessary.

“The wonderful thing is that we get to see these people in person. Many people are struggling, and this additional support is needed. It’s a great solution,” notes Louise. “I love my job and I get to work with wonderful people. I love coming to work every day!”

Thank you to the United Way of Leeds and Grenville for providing funding for this program.



Cutline: Louse Coleman organizes foot clinics for LLGAMH clients.



Cutline: Advanced Diabetic Foot Care Nurse Lisa Mason with a foot clinic client.

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