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Community Garden dedicated in memory of Sheldon Miller

MEDICINE HAT – Since he was 14 and maybe even before that, the outdoors and horticulture were something of a passion for Sheldon Miller. Sheldon was head groundskeeper at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital (MHRH) when a workplace accident claimed his life last November 18.

He has left a legacy through his commitment to a local community garden that leaves his family proud and grateful.

“I didn’t realize how much he did there,” said Sheldon’s mom Judy. A private re-dedication ceremony for the Sheldon Miller Community Friendship Garden was held July 13. “We’re very proud.”

The Sheldon Miller Community Friendship Garden is located at the Community Health Services site on Dunmore Road.

In fact, no one knew how much he contributed to this and two other community garden projects in the Medicine Hat area. But as the story of his contributions unfolded, it didn’t take long for the community to embrace the idea of recognizing Sheldon’s key role in its success.

Sheldon spent his workdays landscaping and carefully maintaining the hospital property. When he was approached about the new Community Garden project at the Community Health Services site, he signed on without hesitation.

“It was a fairly large project,” says Marcia Stodalka, a member of the Community Garden Committee and a nutritionist with Alberta Health Services, adding it went beyond the scope of Sheldon’s day-to-day work.

Rita Aman, also a committee member, says it’s fitting the community garden be re-dedicated in Sheldon’s name because he truly embodied the spirit of the project.

“The committee wanted the garden to have a warm atmosphere for visiting and Sheldon was as much a part of that as anyone who planted a garden.”

A stone, donated by Medicine Hat Monumental, expresses the gratitude all involved feel for Sheldon’s contribution – plainly stating “Thanks Sheldon.” A wooden shelter shades the stone and bears the name of the garden as well as information for gardeners involved in the project.

Community members can register for a garden plot at an annual cost of \$25.

At the time of Sheldon Miller’s death, AHS President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Stephen Duckett, communicated a zero-tolerance policy for workplace injuries.

“We need to make sure that our workplaces are safe,” said Dr. Duckett. “Our target is that we should not have any occupational injuries. Sheldon Miller’s death should be the last one in Alberta Health Services.”

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.7 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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