



## CENTRAL ZONE

2015 APRIL

# ZONE NEWS

YOUR HEALTH CARE IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Dear  
Emmalee,  
Thank you for writing,  
Though I feel I must say that  
I am NOT a Star. I am not an inspiration  
or a hero. I am simply me. A man  
temporarily dealing with a bad  
situation. You will find that the  
true Stars in your life are  
your friend, teachers, and your  
family. These are the people  
you must never forget to  
be grateful for. Always strive  
to reach the stars.  
But don't let  
The Earth  
Push you.

Chris Repp, a patient at the Vermilion Hospital and Care Centre, wrote a return note, above, to the child who sent him a paper star with a message of support.



# DINERS GET STAR SERVICE

**When Chris Repp, a patient at the Vermilion Hospital and Care Centre, received a special delivery with his meal, he had to return the favour to the caring youngster who penned a note of encouragement**

*Story by Heather Marcoux | Photos by Heather MacMillan*

**W**hen Chris Repp received his meal one afternoon at the Vermilion Hospital and Care Centre, he wasn't expecting to also receive a note of encouragement from a local elementary school student.

"It definitely brightened my day when I saw it," Repp recalls.

The 30-year-old Vermilion man has seen many hospital meal trays since suffering a traumatic injury in his early twenties.

"Seven and a half years ago, I fell in the shower and ended up paralyzed," explains Repp, whose latest hospital stay was prompted by a pressure sore infection.

He's had more than 20 surgeries and eaten countless hospital suppers in the years since his fall, but he had never received anything but food on his dinner tray until a note of encouragement arrived on a piece of yellow construction paper.

The little, star-shaped letter was written by Emmalee, a Grade 2 student at a Vermilion-area elementary school, as part of an initiative by Nutrition and Food Services and Volunteer Resources to increase patient satisfaction by making an appealing meal service display.

"I contacted the elementary schools in Vermilion, and proposed that they make a weekly craft," says volunteer co-ordinator Heather MacMillan, who advised teachers to make hand hygiene a priority during the crafting session. One of the teachers came up with the design of the

star-shaped notes, one of which ended up on Repp's meal tray.

Repp was touched by the token, but felt the need to respond to the student who wrote, "You are a star" on the paper. He turned over the star and wrote back to the child.

"I just wanted to say I'm not really a star," says Repp. "I'm just a guy who's going through some tough times and I'm sick right now."

In his response to the youngster, Repp suggested children should consider their teachers, friends and families as the real stars in their lives. He hopes his message can be part of the wider lesson the kids are learning by creating crafts for patients.

"Most of these kids have probably known people who've been in the hospital, but they might not know how tough it is," Repp says. "I think it's a good idea to make the kids aware, and help them understand what people are going through."

According to MacMillan, more children will have the opportunity to learn these lessons while making crafts that bring a smile to hospital patients.

The program has been expanded zone-wide, with participating schools and auxiliary groups creating crafts to decorate meal trays.

Meanwhile, Repp says he is looking forward to his release from hospital, and is already making plans to volunteer at an area school. ■