



Press Release

For immediate release

Odette Gallant: Dental care with a French smile

SUMMERSIDE, PEI, February 1, 2016 – The purpose of the PEI French Health Network's Étoile Santé campaign is to promote, recruit and make people aware of health professionals who offer French-language health services in Prince Edward Island. The Health Network is continuing with this initiative for a second year, and is pleased to announce that the Étoile Santé for the month of February is dental assistant Odette Gallant.

Odette entertained the thought of becoming a dental assistant at an early age. "I was in grade 9, and my mother happened to mention that it could be a good job for me. The idea lingered in my mind, and when it came time to register for my post-secondary studies, I applied to the dental assistant program at Holland College."

The training was in English however, and Odette had always lived in French. She often hesitated to ask questions because she was afraid of not wording them correctly. "I now understand why people who speak more French than English hesitate to ask questions and say they're not sure they understood. When we receive Francophone clients, I always ask them if they understood everything, and I verify this by asking them a few questions", indicated Odette Gallant.

She completed her one-year training program, and in January 1987 she had a job. "I worked in a private dental clinic in Charlottetown for 15 years, and one in Summerside for 8 years. Then I got a job at a public clinic in Summerside."

"My duties are very diverse. I help dentists and dental hygienists by preparing and sterilizing the instruments, and I make sure we have enough supplies so that we don't run out of anything. I also accompany clients and discuss things with them, especially Francophones", explained Odette Gallant.

The work carried out by Odette and the team with which she works aims to offer treatments and preventative dental care to children 3-17 years of age, allowing them to grow up with healthy teeth. "My team offers these services in our Summerside office, as well as in most schools from Tignish to Kinkora", specified the dental assistant. "When I accompany the hygienist in schools, I help her by showing kids how to brush their teeth and use dental floss."

Odette and her husband Dennis have two sons. Odette Gallant has an engaging personality, and her smile always expresses the same joie de vivre – no matter what language you speak.

Odette Gallant's contact information can be found in the bilingual service provider directory at www.santeipe.ca/repertoire. People are encouraged to nominate health professionals who actively offer French-language health services in Prince Edward Island for a chance to win a \$500 prize. For more information on the Étoile Santé campaign or to nominate someone directly on the PEIFHN's Web site, go to www.santeipe.ca.

The PEI French Health Network is a non-profit organization that collaborates with various partners in order to improve access to quality French-language health services and programs for Prince Edward Island's Acadian and Francophone population. The organization brings together representatives from target community groups, educational facilities, health professionals, health service managers and the provincial government. It is also one of 16 networks that make up the Société Santé en français. The PEI French Health Network is funded by Health Canada within the framework of the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities.

-30-

Photo: Odette Gallant

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