

Valentine gift for veterans

Hundreds of children's cards boost morale at Ste. Anne de Bellevue hospital

Each year a flurry of Valentine cards descend upon the Ste. Anne's hospital for veterans and this year was no exception.

"We're getting more than ever before — everyone had tears in their eyes," Marcel Otis, a World War II veteran and chairperson of the hospital's patient committee, said Friday after receiving delivery of hundreds of valentine cards from children from six day-care centres.

"Words can't express how

much these mean to us," Otis added. "We are very spoiled; it's nice to know the children remember us, it's good for our morale."

Louise Côté, a spokesperson for the hospital, said many of the cards are sent from individuals, but many more are sent from students across the country and even from the United States. The Ste. Anne de Bellevue hospital houses more than 500 veterans from the Korean and Second World Wars.

One of the younger groups to send cards this year were children at K.I.D.S. day-care centres.

"With the approach of Valentine's Day, we have been discussing, caring, sharing, love, respect and appreciation," said Evelyn Wajcer, director of K.I.D.S., which has six locations across the Island of Montreal.

"So we thought it would be nice if the children, mostly those aged between 3 and 5 years old, made cards for the veterans," Wajcer said.

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MARCOS TOWNSEND THE GAZETTE
Anthony Lalonde (left) and Marcel Otis look over valentines from children before they are distributed among patients at the Ste. Anne hospital for veterans.

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Five-year-olds at the K.I.D.S. daycare in T.M.R. want veterans to know they are not alone. They will be dropping off Valentine cards to veterans in hospitals Feb. 14. "A lot of people forget about the vets — especially if they are in hospitals and don't have families or relatives to think about them," said daycare co-ordinator Sham Tabbakh. "The cards have little poems on them and they are also putting some messages like 'I love you', 'You are my Valentine' and 'We are not going to forget about you'." ■