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**GRACE HOSPITAL'S NEW "WELL WISHES"
PROGRAM TO CONNECT LOVED ONES
WORLDWIDE WITH PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL**

WINNIPEG, MB, December 5, 2005 – The Grace Hospital has launched a new web-based initiative designed to help family and friends share their thoughts and kind wishes with patients at The Grace.

As a component of the Hospitals' Elder Friendly Initiative, the "Well Wishes" program offers an on-line venue for people to create personal messages and send them to their loved one. Open to all patients at Grace Hospital, the process is simple. The new Grace Hospital web site (located at www.gracehospital.ca) has a feature titled "Well Wishes", which includes a special form. People simply fill out the form, including patient name and room number (if known) and then create their message. Each weekday, members of the Grace Hospital Auxiliary print out the messages and hand deliver them to the various patients. If requested, the Auxiliary members will even read the message aloud to the patient.

"We're very excited about the new Well Wishes program," said Major John McFarlane, CEO of Grace Hospital. "The program gives people worldwide the opportunity to correspond with patients at our facility. It's a special way for people to bring a ray of sunshine into the life of someone in hospital."

The Hospital's Elder Friendly Steering Committee was researching ways to provide families with the opportunity to say connected with loved ones in Hospital. This research led the Committee to a similar program available in the Saskatoon Health Region.

The Grace Hospital Auxiliary, which has a membership of 350, will provide the backbone of the new program. Auxiliary members, who are all volunteers, annually log over 53,000 volunteers hours at The Grace, and are involved in all facets of hospital life. Their role in the Well Wishes program is an extension of their hands-on role in support of patient care.

With the holiday season rapidly approaching, it is hoped that word of the Well Wishes program will spread.

"Our hope is to see as many people as possible take advantage of the program and send their special messages to family members," said Major McFarlane. "Especially now, with Christmas so near, a thoughtful message from a loved one can truly make a difference in the life of a patient."