

sleep without the lights on. When he is near, or when she sits with me, the nightmarish images fade. She shows me the newspaper photo of her baby son, enveloped by fire, just before they were evacuated to separate hospitals.

Religious Jewish families now commission local scribes to write Torah scrolls in memory of murdered relatives. My patient tells me of a friend whose story is even sadder: a mother of two small children, both murdered in an-

other attack. During the Torah dedication ceremony, she imagined her children leaping and dancing, perched atop the parchment. Where sense failed her, she found comfort in the spiritual.

Springtime in Jerusalem delights the senses: the fields push up masses of scarlet poppies; cyclamen spring effortlessly from cracks in rocky walls. Trees bloom here in unlikely shades of lavender and azure, their fragrances a sweet surprise. The pomegranate flowers,

metamorphosing into bell-shaped fruit, promise a sweet summer. An ad appears in today's newspaper: "Our Day Camp: The camp area is completely walled in, with an armed guard at the entrance." I imagine joyful shouts, peals of laughter, swelling and tumbling over shimmering stone walls.

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Lifeworks

Tools of the trade

For a week in June, the elevator door on the second floor in the Camp Hill Veterans' Memorial Building — the geriatric facility in Halifax's sprawling QEII Health Sciences Centre — opened to reveal a unique scene: an exhibit of new designs for some of the more common implements used by health care practitioners. *Tools for Health* brought together the results of an ongoing collaboration between hospital staff and the faculty and students of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), whose first-ever product design course yielded functional and creative innovations for everything from reflex hammers to staff uniforms and linen carts.

Each of the roughly 25 prototypes aimed to find solutions to specific problems or flaws in the delivery of health care and to make the experience less stressful and more humane for both practitioner and patient.

Graphic design student Alan White created a self-contained handwashing station to replace the random collections of small plastic bottles of antibacterial liquid usually provided in hospitals for this purpose. White was influenced early on by his mother, a former nurse. "In a hospital, hand sanitation is paramount, but there's no direction or system to get people to do it," he explains, adding that once you get someone, whether staff, patient or visitor, to remember to wash their

hands, the next problem is to communicate good technique. White's solution was to make the station prominent without taking up excessive room. He decided to make it bright green, "because people associate that colour with cleanliness. It has a bright rapport with users. It's curved, organic and contemporary." The station provides a clear "how-to" through a combination of clean, colourful illustrations and easily read lettering — particularly helpful for elderly patients. Functional design details include an automated faucet that allows users to avoid touching the tap.

Student Margot Durling designed a belt to be worn by a patient, facilitating the caregiver's ability to lift, steady and walk a patient in smoother, less strained motions. "There were a lot of ergonomic improvements, keeping in mind both the caregiver and the patient," Durling says, adding that she had to keep in mind that some caregivers are elderly and frail themselves. Durling padded the belt with an inner foam lining, inserted rubber mesh to increase traction and added straps to provide support along the pa-

tient's thighs, rather than just around the waist.

NSCAD is planning to create courses under the rubric of Design for Health and to establish a business arm to produce and market the best of the students' work. White and Durling have already been approached about manufacturing their products and are looking into patenting their designs.

Geriatrician Kenneth Rockwood, a staff physician at Camp Hill, attributes the success of the project to the "dialogue between the students, staff, researchers and patients" that resulted from the students spending course time at the Camp

Hill site. Rockwood remarks, "This work is an outward and visible signal, a metaphor, saying that we can do the job better than we did before."

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Alan White's handwashing station: Semmelweis would approve