

gem

WINTER 2019-20

NEWSLETTER



Whitehills resident visiting Santa at the Bedford Place Mall

WINTER ISSUE



GEM HOLIDAY PARTY

HEART OF THE VALLEY

MELVILLE LODGE

MELVILLE GARDENS

ADMIRAL

CENTENNIAL VILLA

GABLES LODGE

YARMOUTH HEIGHTS

WHITEHILLS

GROVES PARK LODGE

THE MIRA

MELVILLE HEIGHTS

**RUG HOOKING BY
MARY ANNE MEHAFFEY**

DOWNSVIEW

GEM Holiday Party

40 Years celebrated at GEM's Annual Holiday Party

June 2019 was the 40th Anniversary for GEM Health Care Group. At GEM's Annual Holiday Party, we marked the occasion by presenting Mr. and Mrs. Hussain with a beautiful custom engraved blown crystal ornament from NovaScotian Crystal.

In June 1979, they purchased Lockhart's Nursing Home in Amherst. From that beginning, three Victorian houses, holding about 50 residents has grown to 20 divisions, with approximately 1200 residents, 2500 employees, with operations in Nova Scotia and Ontario.

"Without the continued support, hard work, loyalty, and vision of all of our staff, we would not be where we are today. Thank you for all you do!"
- Gloria Hussain



Heart of the Valley

Middleton, NS

Robert MacDonald, Maintenance Worker at Heart of the Valley, grew a mustache to help raise money for Movember. Movember is an annual event involving the growing of moustaches during the month of November to raise awareness of men's health issues. This year, Heart of the Valley raised \$224.50 to support Robert during Movember! Residents, staff, and CCA students took part by wearing mustaches the day of shaving Robert (left photo) and Cody Spidle (center photo), CCA at the Heart of the Valley, was also shaved that day. A great time was had by all and everyone looks forward to continuing this fundraiser next year!



The residents at the Heart of the Valley nominated Bob Keith for Teacher of the Month on the radio station K-Rock. Bob does a school program at Heart of the Valley every Tuesday morning with a full graduation in June. The nomination letter talks about Bob's ongoing support and dedication to residents at HDTV and seniors in the community. After over a year of nominating Bob, he won and the residents enjoyed a complimentary dinner from Mary Browns! Congratulations Bob and thank you for all you do at Heart of the Valley!



K-Rock announcer Uncle Darren with Bob Keith and the three residents who wrote the nomination letter: Rita Winger, Barbara Fretwell, and Sadie Keusch





On December 1, Heart of the Valley held its annual resident and family Christmas party. There was a craft and bake sale and Santa and his Elf made an appearance with gifts for all the residents! Four bands played Christmas music for the afternoon in each unit. Guests ranged from great grandchildren, children, nieces and nephews, brothers and sisters, friends, volunteers, spouses and pets. The residents would like to thank all the staff for their hard work to set up this special event!

This year, the staff at the Heart of the Valley went all out to spread Christmas cheer throughout the facility by organizing some

holiday fun for the Twelve Days of Christmas! It started with a Christmas decorating pizza party where the residents and staff dressed up the home beautifully. Nine trees were set up inside and three outside for the residents to enjoy at night. There was a door decoration contest, in which the kitchen staff beat recreation by one vote. Their theme was Elf on the Shelf, which changed up daily.

Staff had a Christmas party and dinner put on by the **Airforce Association, 14 Wing Greenwood**. Thanks to the kitchen staff at the wing for a wonderful meal!

Remembrance Day at Melville Lodge Halifax, NS

This year on Remembrance Day the residents at Melville Lodge had the unique experience of stepping back in history with an interactive war memorabilia display.

Dave Crocker, a member of our maintenance team worked with our recreation team, to bring his travelling museum exhibit honouring Nova Scotia's wartime history to Melville Lodge; the display included uniforms, medals, rations, and photos for the residents to enjoy. Dave is a local historian with a passion for war time history.

Many of our residents were affected first hand by WW2, therefore this exhibit was extra meaningful and provided them with the opportunity to reminisce about their own experiences and memories from this prevalent time in Canadian History.

The residents and staff thoroughly enjoyed this event and look forward to future displays making appearances at Melville Lodge.





Melville Gardens

Halifax, NS

In December, the annual resident and family Christmas parties were held. Nursing home residents enjoyed a sit down meal, Santa visits, live entertainment, and holiday games. RCF residents enjoyed a variety of finger foods, entertainment by **Hal Bruce** and holiday games.

Melville Gardens also hosted their second annual door decorating contest throughout the month of December where residents, families, and staff were encouraged to decorate their office or bedroom doors for the holidays. There was a judging panel consisting of six people made up of management, administration, and recreation staff. Prizes were awarded for the following categories: Most Creative, Most Festive, Best Theme, Best Old Fashioned Christmas, and Best Overall.

On Christmas Eve they had a *'Twas The Night before Christmas* Eggnog Social to celebrate

National Eggnog Day and Christmas Eve. Christmas stories were read and holiday treats were enjoyed by all!

The Recreation Department created an angel tree this year for residents with little to no family support. Items were listed on angels and people were encouraged to purchase items that went towards Christmas gifts for the residents. Outside of the angel tree, the Recreation Department received tons of donations for resident's Christmas stockings. Thank you to **Lawtons and Cox and Palmer Lawyer and Legal Services** who were especially generous. Santa found each resident and stockings were handed out early on Christmas morning. Everyone gathered around the tree and opened gifts. Thank you to the volunteers, staff, family and the community that made Christmas at Melville Gardens extra special!



Most Creative



Most Festive



Best Theme



Best Old Fashioned Christmas



Best Overall



Admiral Dartmouth, NS

On Remembrance Day, **Reverend Russell Saulnier** provided a service at Admiral. In attendance, they had community Service Representative Constable Ron Faulkner, Volunteer Musician Ron Arsenault, and church guest Alan Turner in Uniform, Cadet Aron Hutchinson to play the bugle, our residents, and two Veteran Residents – Donald Horne and Lewis Gould. Thank you Russell for providing the service, and everyone at Admiral wishes you a happy retirement! Your commitment and volunteering has never gone unnoticed.

Admiral celebrated the holidays with their annual Christmas morning tradition of presents by the tree. Everyone is a part of the morning gift opening – residents, their family, and the staff!

Each resident received presents from Santa, with much thanks to the many donating hands and community support. Everyone gathered around the tree while enjoying eggnog and cookies with much caroling to be heard. Thank you to the volunteers, staff, family, and community who made Christmas at Admiral so special this year!



With the welcoming of a new year, Admiral Resident Council President, Marie Jones, says “From myself, and all the residents of the Admiral, we wish you each many many New Year Blessings in 2020!”



Meet Moose!

Moose is one of the weekly therapy dogs at Admiral and everyone loves him! Staff and residents included. He's one pawsome dog!



Centennial Villa

Amherst, NS

In November, Centennial Villa recognized two staff members for their years of service with GEM! Staff member Melanie Davis accepted her 10 year certificate and Evelyn McHaffie accepted her 5 year certificate. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and service at Centennial Villa!

On Remembrance Day, a service was held with the veterans at Centennial Villa in attendance: Emilie Melanson (Land Sergeant), Russell Brown (Sergeant), Art Smith (3rd Class Petty Officer and Private in the Reserve Army), Bob Barnes (Ordinary Seaman), and Bob Nixon (1st Lieutenant). The local legion, **Branch #10**, presented our veterans with beautiful hats and D-day pins.

The Annual Family Christmas Party was held in December. There was a musical performance by **The Fellas** and it was a wonderful evening for residents and their family members!

On New Year's Eve, residents enjoyed entertainment provided by **Pic & Grin**. The musical group kept residents entertained with a wonderful afternoon of music and then finished it off with a countdown that had residents blowing their horns and singing at the top of their lungs.

There were photo booth props that residents and even staff got in on! Everyone had lots of fun posing for New Year's Eve photos.



(l to r) Russell Brown, Art Smith, and Bob Barnes



(l to r) Residents Vera Miles and Barbara Ralston getting ready to celebrate New Year's Eve!



Musical group Pic & Grin performing for residents

Christmas at Gables Lodge

Amherst, NS

On December 10th, residents at Gables Lodge took a bus trip to do some Christmas shopping. When they came back to the facility, staff helped residents wrap their gifts and everyone enjoyed hot chocolate!

Later in December, residents also enjoyed a visit from the local **Crossroads Community Church** who came with tea, sweets, and Christmas carols for all.



Trip to the Amherst Skating Club

On December 20th, Jackie Stronge (Recreation Director) took residents from Gables Lodge and Centennial Villa to see *The Nutcracker On Ice* performed by the **Amherst Skating Club**.

Barb Ralston, 92 year old resident at Centennial Villa, was an original member of the Amherst Skating Club! Barb recalls, "I believe it was around 75 years ago when the first Amherst Skating Club opened up in which I was a member of. We always did a big show at the end of each season which reminded me of *The Nutcracker*."

Barb later became a coach for the figuring skating club. "I always coached the little guys!" says Barb. "I absolutely loved skating and I'm so appreciative you were able to take us to *The Nutcracker On Ice*; it brought back so many fond memories for me."



Yarmouth Heights

Yarmouth, NS

For Remembrance Day, Yarmouth Heights had a service for residents with an arrangement of posters, a history book, post cards, book marks, newspapers, kids' history booklet, and newspaper activities.

With veteran residents and a veteran's wife at Yarmouth Heights, we are proud to support our veterans.

For the holidays, our staff at Yarmouth Heights had tons of fun competing in a Christmas decorating competition and other exciting games! Congratulations to the winning team!

On February 1st, Yarmouth Heights celebrated their 2nd Anniversary! Mary Anne Mehaffey, our very first resident at Yarmouth Heights, cut the cake!





Whitehills

Hammonds Plains, NS

Whitehills held a special Remembrance Day service involving clergy, Canadian Forces members, piano and bagpipe musicians, and our resident veterans. They honoured those who have served our country, mingled with representatives from **HMCS Fredericton**, and one resident displayed his service medals.

Residents from Melville Lodge took a trip to Whitehills for an East Coast Kitchen Party. The Music Therapists and Resident Bands from each facility performed while the residents socialized and enjoyed some butter tarts and apple cider. It was a great time getting the two groups together for some good old-fashioned fun.

Residents at Whitehills got to vote on food choices for a specially-themed meal. The Recreation Department worked with the dietitian and cooks to serve up a delicious "East Coast Favourites" lunch of donairs, poutine, lobster rolls, blueberry grunt, and maple mousse. The meal was a hit as residents had the chance to experience some of their old favourites or even try something new. The Whitehills crew is always looking forward to the next adventure!

Local musician, **Hal Bruce**, dropped into Whitehills for a surprise concert. The residents were so impressed that they invited him to come back anytime!



Resident Neil with members of HMCS Fredericton



Preparing the "East Coast Favourites" lunch



Hal Bruce performing at Whitehills



Over the holiday season, a group of Whitehills residents and staff took a trip to the Bedford Place Mall to visit with Santa Claus and do some Christmas shopping. It was so much fun to get into the Christmas spirit together. The CTV news crew caught up with the group for some interviews and featured the outing on Live at 5 that evening. The residents arrived home just in time to watch themselves on television!

Whitehills residents were treated to a special holiday visit from **Shelby Ranch** in December. The trained bunnies, miniature horse, and goats in festive elf costumes

brought huge smiles to the residents' faces.

The annual resident & family Christmas dinner was an evening packed with delicious food, games, laughter, music, and a visit from Santa Claus! Residents and their families look forward to this special event every year.

On Christmas morning, every resident at Whitehills received gifts from Santa Claus. Everyone had lots of fun opening gifts and showing off their presents. They also enjoyed reading *The Christmas Story* together while sipping on candy cane hot chocolate!



Resident Spotlight

Residents at Groves Park Lodge in Renfrew, ON wanted to pass along some of their sage advice to everyone on the success of living!

"Be a kind, nice, loving and true person. Respect yourself." - Dorothie McCormack, 98

"Hang in there" - Joe Quilty, 102

"In a marriage both sides need to be honest, loving and communicative. The grass isn't always greener on the other side." - June Cloutier, 87



Winter at The Mira

Truro, NS

The Mira celebrated the holidays with some fun activities! Residents played Reindeer Ring Toss with lots of laughs – and lots of cheating! The Rudolph Team ended up winning.

There was also gingerbread house making. With hard work and dedication (and a bit of hot glue), the gingerbread houses came out looking great!

The New Year's Eve Party at The Mira was also a hit! Residents enjoyed a very competitive game of balloon volleyball, followed by dancing, celebratory beverages,

and of course a countdown with a balloon drop!

On January 10th, the **Maritime Marionettes** performed *World on a String* at The Mira.

The show is inspired by the four corners of the world and performed with four styles of marionettes embracing an audience of four generations, young and old. Interpretive scenes of Russia, China, USA, Africa, and home are woven into a showcase of enchanting marionette artistry. Residents loved the performance and look forward to having them return!





Melville Heights

Halifax, NS

The fall and winter months have been busy at Melville Heights! They held a Remembrance Day service with Spryfield Memorial Legion Members.

Residents welcomed Shimon Walt (Cello) and Diana Torbet (Piano) from **Concerts in Care**, a program by the Health Arts Societies. Concerts in Care performs nationally, offering transformative musical experiences that give seniors a moment of beauty through high-quality music, and a social experience to share with their friends and family.

Elder Learners sponsored a presentation by **Yvonne Colbert**, CBC's Consumer Watchdog. The presentation, "Scams, Fraud, and Consumer

Rights," informs seniors on how to avoid scams, find product recalls, save money, and more! There was a great turn out!

During the holiday season, residents at Melville Heights participated in the Spryfield Santa Clause Parade and performed *'Twas the Night before Christmas*, a play directed by our own Mrs. Eva Mae Gray. The play was a ton of fun for residents and spectators alike!

On January 24th, Melville Heights hosted a Robbie Burns Celebration! It was an afternoon of Scottish Music by **Nelson Ferguson and Friends** and **Piper, Wendy Johnston**, poetry by **Ron Ross**, and of course haggis to Honour Robbie Burns!



Yarmouth Heights Rug Hooking

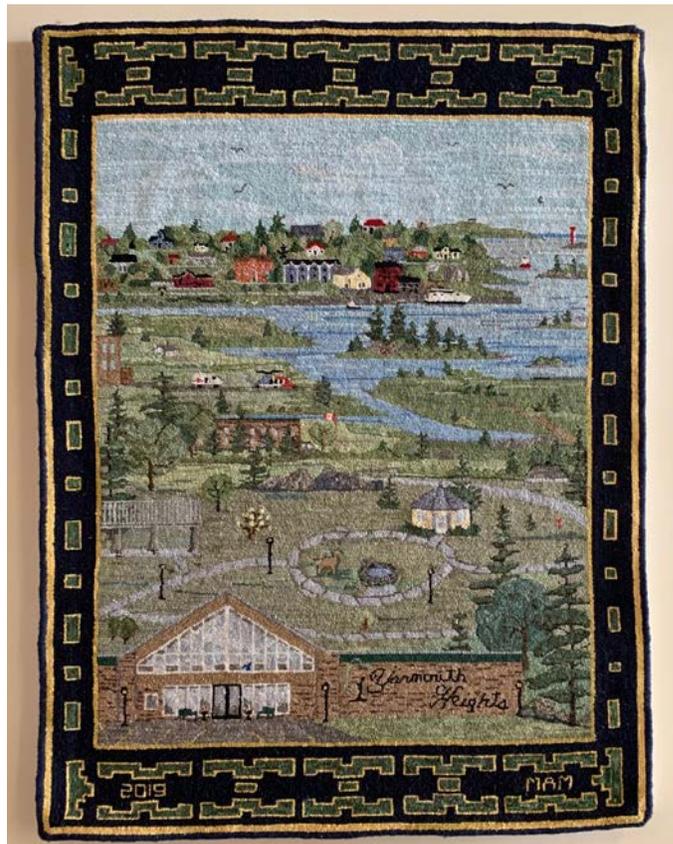


Yarmouth Heights' resident Mary Anne Mehaffey completed a spectacular rug hooking piece over about seven months in 2019. The piece features Yarmouth Heights and many incredible details surrounding the Yarmouth harbor.

Mary Anne explains, "Out of the windows of my apartment I see the very view on the rug. As a matter of fact, I grew up just yards from where I am now, and I played in those meadows by the harbour throughout my childhood. Our building is an ell of Yarmouth Regional Hospital. After I finished hooking our backyard, I created the Veterans' Wing complete with the Canadian flag. A tiny bit of hospital is shown near the helicopter pad and the ambulance is meeting the helicopter.

"Fields and houses hide the water from Lake Milo running into the harbour. On the other side of that water is our town. Telescoped because of lack of space, the town is depicted by Yarmouth North Baptist Church, Tim Horton's, Town Hall, Pier 1, Rudder's restaurant, Murray Manor, and the CAT in port. 'Bug Light' is a bit toward the ocean, and Yarmouth Light at the entrance to the harbour. If you look closely, you will see in a front window a grey haired old lady waving goodbye to departing family members. My children kept saying, 'Mom, you have to be there somewhere!'"

The piece started with the support of Joy Sison, the Administrator at Yarmouth Heights. Mary Anne told her, "Yeah, sure. At 88 I am far too old to start a big project like that!" Her friend Elaine Howatt gave her the final push and drew out Yarmouth Heights on a piece of linen.



"The rest just grew from my own hand," says Mary Anne. "I got all my ideas first hand from my view. As I went along, the island appeared and the town appeared. It's really amazing to have people so excited about it."

Mary Anne has lived across Canada, but started her career in Darmouth, Nova Scotia as a teacher with a shop in her home where she sold supplies for rug hookers. Over the years Mary Anne has made many rugs, some of which were commissions for collectors and even for the Province of Nova Scotia. She recalls that the piece, depicting the Bluenose, was used as an ad in *The New Yorker* alongside the caption, "Get hooked on Nova Scotia."

When asked what advice she had for new rug hookers, Mary Anne suggested getting involved with the Rug Hooking Guild of Nova Scotia. The guild has over 1500 members in Atlantic Canada, 45 of which are in Yarmouth. You can learn more about becoming a member at rhgns.com.

*Favorite
Recipes
from
Gables Lodge*



Staff Spotlight

Each year our awesome staff at Downsview think of creative ways to make our residents smile!

Each unit had a great display and shout out goes to 1East for their creative elf themed board!! The residents had a grin from ear to ear each time they passed their display.

PIZZA

1/2 cup warm water
1 tsp sugar
1 tbsp yeast

Let stand 10 minutes. Mix with:

2 cups flour
1 tsp salt
2 tbsp oil
1/3 cup warm water

Knead well and let rise for 15 minutes. Punch down and divide into two pieces. Roll out into two 12" pizzas. Add tomato sauce, your favourite toppings, and mozzarella cheese. Bake on the bottom rack at 425°F for 12-15 minutes or until crust is nicely browned.

Recipe taken from
Favorite Recipes from Gables Lodge
Courtesy of Joy Rector

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