

gem

WINTER 2020-21

NEWSLETTER



Resident Esther Gilkie at Melville Gardens' Holiday Brunch

WINTER ISSUE



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Our Winter Newsletter

Letter from our CEO, Syed Hussain

As we begin a new year with our 2020-21 Winter Newsletter, it is important to take a moment to reflect on the past year.

We thank the staff, residents, and family members who have approached a most difficult year with compassion, kindness, and understanding. We remember those we have lost and offer our deepest sympathies to their loved ones. Our communities will continue to mourn the losses of the past year and remember the light each individual brought to our homes.

We thank our dedicated team members for their tireless efforts in providing the best possible care and for bringing smiles to the faces of our residents, especially over the holidays.

In late December, we took a step closer to overcoming this terrible virus. The COVID-19 vaccine was made available to our residents and team members at Downsview Long Term Care Centre in North York, Ontario.

In January, our residents and team members in Nova Scotia began to receive their vaccinations as well. We are proud that so many of our team members have taken the step to get vaccinated, which will help in protecting our staff, residents, and communities from this virus.

On January 19, we welcomed team members from two long term care homes in Guysborough County to the GEM family of homes. The experienced professionals at Milford Haven Home for Special Care and Canso Seaside Manor provide excellent care to the residents who live there and we are delighted to have them join us.

Please enjoy this year's winter newsletter. It showcases the many smiling faces that make GEM and all of our homes so special.



CEO, GEM Health Care Group



Team member at Downsview LTCC receiving COVID-19 vaccine



Team members at Milford Haven



Team members at Canso Seaside Manor



Melville Lodge

Halifax, NS

For Remembrance Day, Melville Lodge set up a museum of WW2 Memorabilia. The display included uniforms, medals, rations, and photos and was set up all week for residents to enjoy. The museum was provided by Dave Crocker, our maintenance team member at Melville Lodge, who is a local historian specializing in WW2.

Residents had a great time during all of the holiday festivities. They decorated the home, baked gingerbread and sugar cookies, and even had a holiday photoshoot! Resident's enjoyed a special brunch with a visit from Santa.

Christmas Day was certainly different this year and although residents were missing their loved ones they still enjoyed their holiday. The recreation team delivered presents in the morning and residents enjoyed coffee and tea followed by a big turkey dinner and Christmas movies in the evening.

To ring in 2021, there was a New Years social with treats, soda pops, and party hats. Everyone played trivia and counted down to a new year!





Winter Melville Gardens

Halifax, NS

Residents and staff at Melville Gardens had a blast during all of the holiday festivities in December! A door decorating competition, PJ day, ugly Christmas sweaters, and more! Santa found all the residents of Melville Gardens this Christmas. Everyone enjoyed opening gifts in the morning and the festive holiday brunch.



Celeste Raymond, LPN with resident PJ Day winner Karen Ivey



Resident Esther Gilkie with Staff PJ Day winner Kendra Carr, LTCA



Sandra Chase, the winner of the ugly Christmas sweater contest





Groves Park Lodge

Renfrew, ON



The Residents at Groves Park Lodge paid their respects to our Veterans this past Remembrance Day.

Two 100th birthdays were celebrated in December. One celebration had a drive by parade and the other had birthday cake and other treats for all the residents.

Both the celebrations were amazing! Happy birthday Maize and Ruby!

This winter, a team member at Groves Park Lodge and their family came in one weekend and built a bunch of snowmen in front of the windows for the residents! Residents loved looking out at them all!



Memory Box Program at Groves Park Lodge

The families from Groves Park Lodge participated in a memory box program over the holidays. They sent in a decorated box with sentimental memories which included pictures, notes, trinkets, cards or whatever the family deemed dear to their resident.

The residents really lit up when they received these and will be able to look at them whenever they are feeling lonesome.





Admiral Dartmouth, NS

In November, the Admiral and a local elementary school started an Intergenerational Virtual Reading program. Grade six students from Hawthorne Elementary School connect weekly on Tuesday afternoons with residents at Admiral.

The students read to residents and then engaged with themes and topics related to the readings. December's theme of Christmas led to sharing Christmas stories, generations of traditions, and fun for all! Thank you to the community of Dartmouth for your support and to the Grade Six students of Hawthorne Elementary School. Your new friends at Admiral love hearing and sharing with you!

This year, Remembrance Day was celebrated with a virtual Remembrance Day ceremony.

Everyone was given a poppy, and the staff went room to room having residents place their poppy on a wreath in remembrance.

Residents also enjoyed a poppy craft and poem this year, as well as a video created for all residents and their families to see!

For the holidays, Steele Volkswagen of Dartmouth donated two beautiful backdrops to Admiral's Christmas Photo initiative.

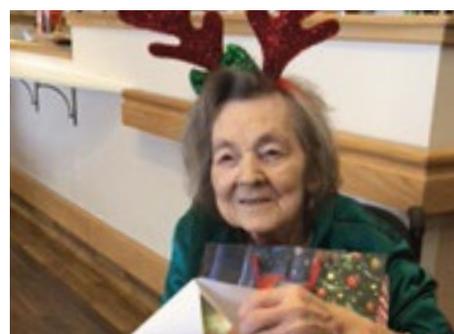
Photos of the residents were sent all over the world connecting residents to their family during a very different Christmas. The Recreation Team went a step further with this initiative and made Christmas ornaments with residents' photos and snow inside! These ornaments were presented to family during their visits.



Jim Swinimer placing his poppy on the wreath



Poppy craft made by resident Gordie Snow



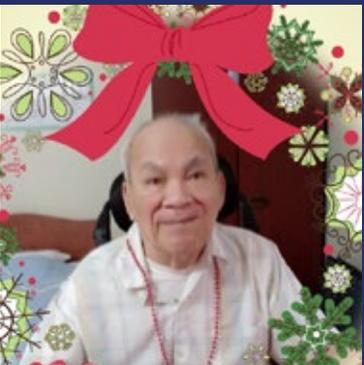
Frances Langille opening presents on Christmas



Downsview North York, ON

In December, the Dietary and Recreation Department organized a special Gala Luncheon in lieu of the annual Christmas Gala Dinners. Residents enjoyed dressing up for the special luncheon!

Downsview had the pleasure of being visited by Ms. Otello's Grade 5 Class from St. Jerome's Secondary School. They stopped outside of the home to sing Christmas Carols and deliver their hand made Christmas cards for the residents. Also, Rose and her team of Girl Guides presented the home with 200 hand made cards! Thank you for the beautiful cards. They brought a smile to everyone's faces over the holidays!



COVID-19 Vaccinations

Residents and staff at our GEM long term care homes in Ontario and Nova Scotia have begun receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations this winter.

In December, one of our team members at Downsview LTCC in North York, ON received the first vaccine from Humber River Hospital (HRH). For our Nova Scotia homes, residents at Melville Lodge were the first to receive the vaccine in January.

We are grateful to have this added layer of protection for our residents and thank all of our team members who have received their vaccine for taking the step towards protecting our loved ones.



Winter at Heart of the Valley

Middleton, NS

This Christmas, Heart of the Valley had a special visit from Santa at each unit's Christmas celebration. One team member came in early for four days to play Santa at each one.

This season, residents enjoyed homemade shortbread cookies and hot chocolate made by recreation, a special gift from The Big Scoop restaurant in Middleton, and lots of fun holiday festivities.

For New Years, residents had a great time dressing up and enjoying cake and apple cider!



GEM Head Office

Halifax, NS



Head Office also had a furry friend join the team over the holidays! Penelope the cat keeps hiding in different places around the office for everyone to find!

GEM's Head Office celebrated the holidays with holiday competitions! The annual window decorating competition was fun for everyone and this year Head Office had a kid's art competition. Special treat bags were put together for all of the kids to enjoy.



First place winner, Becky Sanford, standing next to her window



GEM staff showing off their festive outfits

It's a Boy!

It's a boy! Three boys to be exact. Congratulations to Samantha Winter (Administrator at Melville Lodge), Tehrim Pathan (Quality and Compliance at Head Office), and to John Yuan (CFO) and his wife Lucille!





Melville Heights

Halifax, NS

Melville Heights kicked off the holiday season by decorating three large trees throughout the home and Maintenance team member, Mike Davis, set up the beautiful nativity scene that was donated by a past resident. Each nativity character weighs over 100 pounds!

Over the holidays, everyone enjoyed plenty of holiday treats, gingerbread decorating, and a special outdoor ice carving by Alec Cramsie.

In December, Jo Fort celebrated her 103rd birthday with a window visit from her sons, granddaughter, 8 week old Lab named buster, and her tennis friends from the Waegwoltic Club where Jo played tennis regularly until she was 99!

Robbie Burns Day was celebrated on January 25 with traditional Scottish haggis, fun games, and other special treats!



Winter at The Mira

Truro, NS

Residents and staff at The Mira had lots of fun during all their Christmas festivities! They had an ugly Christmas sweater contest, gingerbread sleigh decorating, and fun holiday crafts.

In December, residents received a special outdoor window visit from a couple of dancing dinosaurs from Truro Buzz! There were lots of laughs and these entertaining dinos put a smile on everyone's face.





Centennial Villa and Gables Lodge

Amherst, NS

This winter, residents at Centennial Villa and Gables Lodge had lots of fun with Christmas decorating, holiday crafts, and lots of entertainment. Residents at both homes also enjoyed a festive photoshoot! Everyone had lots of fun striking a pose and dressing up for the photos.

In December, equestrian riders made a special

visit to residents at Centennial Villa and Gables Lodge. The riders and horses were both dressed up for the season.

Centennial Villa celebrated two milestone birthdays in December and January. A special happy birthday to Elsie "Aretta" Pyke who celebrated her 102nd Birthday and Eva Reid, who turned 103 in January!





Gables Lodge and Centennial Villa staff came up with creative ways to entertain residents over the holidays. Each department came up with a fun idea. The management team, physio aide, and maintenance team performed the skit "T'was the Night Before Christmas". Residents had a blast watching the fabulous performance!

The Gables Lodge Nursing Department did an afternoon of "Gables Lodge Christmas Shop,"

where residents could shop for Christmas gifts for their families, and maybe a few treats for themselves too! The Grinch even stopped by the shop for some Christmas fun.

Residents also had a blast at the "tattoo and fake booze parlour," where they could pick out their favourite (washable) tattoo and sip on a "drink" while getting it put on.

Yarmouth Heights

Yarmouth, NS

In November, residents and staff at Yarmouth Heights honoured and remembered the men and women who served and sacrificed for our country. We are proud to have veterans living at our GEM homes.

Residents also enjoyed a fabulous tea party and an outdoor therapy dog visit. Thank you Mr. Gordie Thompson Handler and Lola the Newfoundland/Bernese Mountain dog, as well as Ms. Martha Cassidy and Walker the Poodle for visiting Yarmouth Heights!



Yarmouth Heights veterans, Mr. Harold Robert Garron and Mrs. Shirley Sullivan



Winter at Whitehills

Hammonds Plains, NS

Bagpiper Gillian Blaney honoured Whitehills' Veterans on Remembrance Day with a special outdoor visit. The residents were able to enjoy the bagpipe music from indoors.

Residents and staff decorated the building for Christmas, including the garden gazebos! Everyone enjoyed the many holiday activities including Christmas carols, gingerbread man decorating (and eating), visits with Santa, and opening presents of course!

Whitehills started 2021 off with a bang! They put on an impressive fireworks display on New Year's Eve to bid farewell to 2020 and welcome 2021.

This winter, residents got the royal treatment at a special tea party! They wore beautiful homemade fascinators and enjoyed sipping tea from fancy china!



Bagpiper Gillian Blaney



Frank posing for a photo next to the Christmas tree



Brittany with Santa



Tiny posing for a fun Christmas photo



Betty with her gingerbread man



Residents and staff having fun at the tea party

*Favorite
Recipes
from
Gables Lodge*



Heart of the Valley Celebrates 10 Years

On February 15, Heart of the Valley celebrated their 10 year anniversary. They celebrated the day with a beautiful cake and remarks from Mr. and Mrs. Hussain, as well as Rita, one of the first residents to move into Heart of the Valley!

PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup shortening
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp vanilla

Mix ingredients together. Roll mixture into balls that are about the size of walnuts. Mark with a fork and bake at 375°F for 10 minutes.

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

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