

The SOCIETY Scoop

Greetings from our President and CEO, Abby Katz Starr

On behalf of Unionville Home Society, welcome to high summer! We are very fortunate to have a campus with beautiful outdoor spaces for all of our clients and their families to enjoy. With our Annual General Meetings recently concluded on June 21st, 2023, which captured 2022-23 successes, we are delighted to share some of the highlights since our last Society Scoop:



- We received our 3 year-accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for both Union Villa and also our Adult Day Program. We were evaluated on over 1700 standards and scored highly over the entire CARF program. We are very proud of our staff and this is but one of our many achievements that proves our dedication and commitment to improving the quality of life of all the persons we serve. To all of the residents, staff and family members who assisted with the survey, we extend a sincere thank you for your support.

- This past year, we took a step back and examined where we have been and where we want to go for the next two years. We are pleased to announce that our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan has been refreshed: our goals are stronger, refined, and targeted, and built upon a foundation of feedback from our entire community. As a team, we are positioning UHS as a leader in seniors care in our region.
- The Heritage Village land sale was finalized in mid-June and we supported the residents as they settled into their new homes. We look forward to the positive impact this investment will have on future services for our residents and clients.
- The UHS Foundation raised almost \$80,000 net with the recent 5th annual Garden by the Greens Luncheon in April and the 7th annual Unionville Charity Golf Tournament in late June. These funds support resident programs, nursing equipment and much needed technology to advance the long-term care experience.

With all the amazing things we have achieved together over the past year, it is heartwarming to realize that we have come so far as a vibrant campus and a unified community of care. With so many exciting plans to look forward to in the 2024 fiscal year, we know in our hearts that *the best is yet to come!*



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Sharing our Highlights from Seniors Month

At Union Villa:

“The residents kicked off Seniors Month 2023 with a Piano Bar afternoon complete with wine and cheese to accompany the music. We also started a new tradition in June with the first annual Union Villa Seniors Prom. There was live entertainment by the Sparklettes who were dressed in white gowns, and of course lots of dancing, and singing to the old classics. More fun and challenge came with a Spelling Bee which brought back fond memories of this beloved activity. The competition was fierce as we’ve got some amazing spelling masters in our home. Congratulations to the winner Anne T.! The finale of Seniors Month was the Exotic Pet Therapy program where residents were able to learn about and touch unique animals from Hands on Exotics. Active programs like these spark joy and memories and encourage family participation.”

– Lyndsay Bailey, Recreation Manager, Union Villa

At the Unionville Community Centre for Seniors:

“In honour of Seniors Month this year, UCCS hosted several special programs for our clients. We kicked off our formal celebrations on June 14 with a special High Tea, attended by 24 members and three very special guests – our local MPP, Billy Pang; Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, the Honourable Raymond Cho; and our President & CEO, Abby Katz Starr. Our festivities continued with a BBQ on June 27, attended by 40 seniors. Even the rain couldn't dampen our spirits as we sang and danced the afternoon away with our entertainer, Deidrey Francois. We sent off another great Seniors Month in the sweetest fashion with an Ice Cream Social, which doubled as an early Canada Day fete. We at UCCS look forward to offering more opportunities for community and connection to all our clients throughout the summer.”

– Maha Naqi, Centre Coordinator, UCCS



Exotic Pet Therapy - a visit with a feathered friend



UCCS members kicking off Seniors Month with Minister Cho, MPP Pang and UHS CEO Abby Katz Starr

Sharing our Highlights from Seniors Month

At the Adult Day Program:

“The clients in our Adult Day Program engaged in a special camp out with the residents of the Home, including s’mores, songs, stories and fishing with real rods. There was a unified sense of community as we celebrated our seniors this month. June also brought the much-anticipated green thumb program where clients planted flowers and vegetables in the ADP garden. The beautifully landscaped space fosters a connection to nature and the gazebo becomes a seasonal home to yoga, art classes, games and fitness classes. Now we can’t forget to mention the well received presentations on the benefits of fruit, nutrition and also the importance of being SunSmart. These learnings were captured in the activity of making homemade fruit salad outdoors while wearing sun hats. The Adult Day Program is a place where seniors come to learn, feel a sense of inclusion, purpose and meaning. The clients refer the program as their private Seniors’ Club. We look forward to filling the summer months with the warmth of our clients.”

– Kate Papillo, Manager, ADP



Feeling the warmth of a summer campfire - without the fire

My Life: A Resident Profile

Meet Mitra Pal Seth

Mitra Pal Seth was born in Jalandhar in the state of Punjab, India in 1921. He had three brothers and six sisters.

He remembers playing in the street with all the other kids at 5 or 6 years old. There was a strong sense of community there, where everyone was an aunt or an uncle. At 18, after completing high school, he enrolled in homeopathy college in Calcutta. He studied there for two years, but the more he studied the more he lost faith in it.

He went back home and when the war started, his brother-in-law said he should come join him in Kenya, where there were more jobs. Due to the War there was great secrecy around sailing times so he barely made it on board the ship in time, but his luggage didn't! Throughout the voyage Mitra Pal relied on the kindness of strangers, a fact that left a deep impression on him to this day. Once in Kenya Mitra Pal landed a job almost immediately as a bank clerk for Barclays Bank in Nairobi. His hard work, studies and impeccable calculations gained him several promotions until he attained the highest rank possible, a bank manager. Barclays' first ever Asian bank manager!

In 1951, he married his beloved wife Swarni (Swarni) and they raised three children together. After retiring from the bank in 1976, he moved to the United Kingdom to settle down, but was offered a Barclays job in Canada. He emigrated to Ontario and worked at the bank for a decade before finally retiring in 1988, after 45 years. He is very proud of his accomplishments at the bank and very proud of his career. When he wasn't working, he spent time with his family, which is everything to him. He loved to play recreational golf and competitive Contract Bridge with Swarni – they became Life Masters in bridge as a result of playing in tournaments across Ontario. In addition they were both very involved in their local Vedic Cultural Centre. Swarni in particular loved to play music and sing at the Centre.

In 2018, Swarni was admitted to Union Villa. Although he could still live independently, he could not bear to be apart from her, and moved into Villa himself just a few



weeks later. They requested to have their rooms very close, which was granted soon after admission. Though Swarni had lost her vision in both eyes, she still played the piano and sang, often requesting Mitra Pal to sing with her. She passed away in March 2021. His daughter Nira, son Rajeev and son-in-law Graham visit him twice daily where they spend time talking about current affairs, playing cards or spending time in the garden whenever weather permits. He has been blessed with 9 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren, with the most recent arriving in early June.

He loves doing activities, and believes in keeping his mind and body active, which is the key to a long life. He joined the Centenarian Club at Union Villa two years ago! When his wife passed, Mitra Pal had the opportunity to move back home, but said he likes being in the Villa, where he is able to walk safely and participate in many activities provided by the Villa. He has always been a warrior who doesn't complain, and life at the Villa allows him to live as independently as possible.

The stigma around long-term care is still alive. Initially, Mitra Pal was devastated when he first came to Union Villa, but now he enjoys being here rather than at home, where he could not live independently anymore. He loves the courtyard, the windows, and especially the staff. Long-term care is a great choice when the conditions are right and the staff sincerely care, it makes all the difference.

Volunteer Spotlight: Loretta Smith

For members of the Unionville Community Centre for Seniors, spotting Loretta with her boombox full of tapes is nothing out of the ordinary.



Loretta (third from the left) with her line dancing participants

As the lead instructor of the line dancing program, she often fills the center with classic country-style hits and guides participants through carefully choreographed movements. The centre is especially active on Tuesdays as dancers mimic her fancy footwork and spectators stay back to enjoy the routines.

Line dancing has always been more than just a hobby to Loretta. Born and raised in Toronto, she graduated from St. Joseph's College right in the heart of the city. She subsequently worked at Shell Canada for many years before deciding to move up to the Markham area. With her three sons off to university, she was looking for a new way to "keep moving." After a few short months of trying line dancing, she was recruited to join a group of ladies known as "The Personalities." As the name suggests, they showcased their diverse and spirited personalities by performing at retirement residences and community events all throughout the city. When word came out that the previous line dancing instructor at Unionville Home Society was leaving, Loretta saw this as a natural transition. She took over the position and continued to come back year after year. Almost two decades later, she remains grateful for the opportunity to meet new people and make close friends through leading the program.

Outside of her volunteer roles, Loretta continues to lead an exceptionally active lifestyle. She plays euchre and takes a line dancing class of her own over at Older Adults in Action. She is also a regular attendee of the Carefirst exercise classes that take place here at the Unionville Community Centre for Seniors. In her spare time, she loves to do yoga and has done so for over 20 years. When asked how she manages it all, she says, "I think you get a lot out of it. It makes you feel good to get out and socialize."

The most important message Loretta wishes to share is about kindness. "Kindness is everything. Sometimes people are going through things that you don't even know about. When you just put yourself out there and do something nice for somebody, just out of the kindness of your heart, you can make a real difference in someone's life. That is why I help out wherever I can. The more you do for people, the more you get back in return. It comes back 100-fold."

Loretta is a true testament to goodwill, compassion and generosity. We are incredibly lucky to have her at the Unionville Community Centre for Seniors.

Staff Profile: Meet Maria Tiango

Maria is one of the many dedicated and hardworking Unionville Home Society employees whose work behind the scenes is completely essential to our team.

She has been working at Unionville Home Society for almost 25 years in various roles that have allowed her to be a well-rounded employee. Her journey began when she was a nurse back home in the Philippines. Over time, she developed traits such as compassion, empathy and patience allowing her to maintain and develop interpersonal relationships with both residents and employees of Unionville Home Society. She is proud to say that her skills as a nurse and personal support worker also served her well at home, as she was a caregiver for her mother-in-law at home for 17 Years.

Her time with the Unionville Home Society (Old Building) began in 1998 in Housekeeping. After that, she became a Personal Support Worker at Heritage Village, Wyndham Gardens Apartments, and Union Villa Long-Term Care for another 20 years, before returning to the Housekeeping/Laundry department. One of the reasons she stayed at UHS for so many years is because she "feels that the people around me appreciate and value the work I do."

There are three things she likes about her job: Maria likes applying her meticulous cleaning habits in the workplace which allows her to maintain health, hygiene, and safety standards. She ensures the laundry of residents is of the highest quality. It makes her happy that she can provide fresh laundry to residents on a daily basis. She genuinely enjoys organizing laundry in a neat and tidy manner while listening to her favorite music in the laundry room. The second thing she likes about her job is how Unionville Home Society embraces diversity among employees, residents, visitors, and volunteers. She believes diversity is very important as it creates a welcoming and supportive environment. The third thing she likes about her job is how she had the privilege to work with her daughter. In 2022, her daughter Camille started working at Unionville Home Society in the position of Screener. They enjoyed going to work together and spending time with each

other during their lunch breaks. "I would have never thought I would be able to call my daughter my co-worker! It was a very interesting experience that will have a special place in my heart." Her daughter even expressed that she misses Unionville Home Society.

One fun fact about Maria is that she enjoys event planning. She loves to host birthday celebrations, family and friend gatherings, and backyard barbecues for loved ones to gather and have a great time.

She hopes people understand that doing laundry is not an easy task. In this role, she utilizes good time management skills to complete washing multiple loads, organising it in a neat and tidy manner daily. It takes hard work and determination to learn how to develop efficiency. "It amazes me how my petite stature is capable of doing the laundry for all floors of Union Villa!" (it's true, Maria is 5" tall). Unionville Home Society thanks Maria for her many years of commitment to our campus of care and to our seniors.



UNIONVILLE HOME SOCIETY FOUNDATION



GOLF FORE UNION VILLA

Raising Funds, Engaging our Community and Investing in Resident Care

Since the Unionville Charity Golf Classic initially partnered with local supporters Danny Fantini and Larry Mariani in 2015, this event has raised more than \$400,000 to date to benefit, enhance and advance care for the residents at Union Villa long-term care home.

The annual Golf FORE Union Villa event has provided funding for special adaptive tables for all dining rooms, the replacement of dining chairs for residents and feeding stools for staff and caregivers, lifting devices to assist with bathing and dressing and more. Funds have also been earmarked for future renovations to support the 'pleasurable dining' initiative.

We are grateful to the generous sponsors, the golfers who filled the Angus Glen South Course, and to the volunteer committee who helped plan and organize this year's outstanding fundraiser. Your efforts help seniors age well and live better. See you in June 2024!



The BIG 2023 cheque presentation – \$66,400 raised



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A special thank you to Co-Chairs Danny Fantini & Larry Mariani, and committee members – Don Carvalho, Paul Cousens, Glenn Crosby, Valerie Fantini, Lori Manserra, Adele Mariani, Reid McAlpine - Ward 3 Councillor, City of Markham, Jan van Velzen

SAVE THE DATE

2023 UNION VILLA DINNER PARTY

Our Spirit Never Ages

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 3, 2023



Angus Glen Golf Club • Cocktails...6:00 pm • Dinner...7:00 pm

Tickets: Before Sept 30...\$225 • As of Oct 1...\$250

For more information on tickets, corporate tables or sponsorship, please contact the Foundation at (905) 477-2822 ext 4270.

Proceeds to support resident programs, nursing equipment and technology advancements, all crucial to ensuring the best long-term care experience for those entrusted to our care.

**portion of ticket fees may be eligible for a tax receipt, subject to CRA guidelines*



Our Mission:

Enhancing the experience of aging, one person at a time.

Our Vision:

A progressive community where older adults thrive; age well and live better.

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