

# The SOCIETY Scoop

## Message from our CEO, Debra Cooper Burger

### REFLECTIONS ON 2015

Generosity was the theme of 2015 as the UHS Foundation was able, again, to benefit from the generosity of the community. The Foundation hosted another wonderful and well-attended Dinner Party, the first Main Street Unionville Classic golf tournament was a brilliant success and the donations coming in from the “Closing the Gap” campaign remind us we are located in a caring community. Union Villa celebrated 45 years of dedicated service to our community and we applauded the vision of the leaders that supported excellence in long term care services over these many years.

But, there were tough times in 2015 too. I am referring to the future changes that will affect Heritage Village. There were numerous misunderstandings and miscommunications related to our redevelopment vision that would provide much-needed modern, affordable and accessible housing for seniors in our community; that would provide much-needed capital reserve funds and expansion potential for Union Villa. Words like “eviction”, “homeless” and “heartless” spread quickly without any justification.

But for those of you that know the Unionville Home Society, we continued our course of caring, compassion and tireless commitment to our mission. Supported by the advocacy of the Heritage Village tenants and the goodwill of all of our redevelopment partners, solutions were found to enable our tenants to reside on campus until the York Region housing

development is ready for occupancy.

The redevelopment plan will first focus on York Region’s construction of a new and larger, more modern rental unit complex. Minto is busy moving forward with the City of Markham on the planning and

rezoning processes needed for both the Region and their projects. Minto has taken extra steps to ensure transparency and open communication by establishing a Community Liaison Committee. We are all working to be sure the communication is open, frequent, fact-based and accessible to all who are interested in our plans.

So, as I reflect on 2015 – the good, the bad and the ugly – it is the wonderful accomplishments that are most important. We are a village as much as we are a campus dedicated to seniors’ quality living and lifestyle. Goodwill prevailed. Good people came forward. Good deeds were recalled and new ones undertaken to get everyone refocused on the reasons for and the benefits of the changes ahead. Thank you for continuing to believe in and invest in the kind of life and lifestyle Unionville Home Society is delivering day after day to our seniors.



## MY LIFE: A Resident Profile

### Meet Lenora Barkley

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As a child, I experienced a very simple lifestyle growing up on the family farm. My brother and I would milk cows, pitch hay, and help with other chores. I remember having some very close childhood friends on that farm and in school. Back then, we had grade 13 in high school, but the courses offered weren't as diverse as now. My favourite subjects were definitely English and Music.

At age 20, I moved from the reserved and rural lifestyle on the farm, to loud and boisterous downtown Toronto. My first job was at a hotel. After that, my uncle asked me if I wanted to work with him at his hair salon, and I eagerly agreed. My uncle, the warm-hearted man, loaned me \$1,000 to attend the Marvel Beauty School in Toronto where I became a certified hairdresser. It was quite an experience working for a family member. We were very close, so seeing him every day was a pleasure for me, as he made me feel at home. I worked at the salon for over five years and during that time I met my late husband.



My husband worked as a heavy equipment operator for the City of Toronto. And although I also worked, I only earned a minimum wage of \$3.50 per day. My family began in 1953 with a daughter followed by a son. And even though we were on a fixed income, we managed just fine.

I also have many fond memories of that time, including vacationing with my husband, my sister-in-law, and my mother. My favourite trip was the vacation to Las Vegas with my husband. We had an extraordinary time there, and the highlight was watching Elvis Presley perform live! My late husband and I were married for 55 years.

City life in Toronto was a huge contrast to life on the farm, but I left the farm to better myself and build a good life for my family. Now, as a resident of Union Villa, my advice to those who are new to the home is to not get discouraged or lonely, and talk to those around you. In my case, my granddaughter, Mackenzie, actually works at the Villa, so I usually have her company to look forward to. Also, remember to stay in contact with your loved ones, and try to make the most of your experience here!

## Recreation – 2015 Highlights and New Initiatives



Reflecting on the past year, residents have been introduced to a multitude of unique programs and special events.

A new resident choir was formed, the Villa Voices, which began in May 2015. Their first official performance was a Christmas Concert in December. Their lovely voices were an absolute treat to listen to and made the audience truly feel festive. While this program is run by the recreation team, its success is due to two dedicated volunteers, the wonderfully talented pianist, Dorothy Reesor and the multi-talented Rita Frietas.

Upcoming cultural events will be sure to make all Villa residents feel very at home. In addition to our regularly celebrated Asian festivals, more cultural programs will be offered; consisting of a variety of heritages that may not have been celebrated yet, such as Polish, Italian, and others.

The Sensory Stimulation program will be going through some changes as well. It is essentially a small array of different programs that are specifically tailored to residents with Alzheimer's or dementia related impairments. The programs focus on the 5 senses – touch, taste, smell, auditory, visual – all with a goal to improve mood, self-esteem and promote relaxation and memory. There are no right or wrong feelings so it is quite ideal for those with developmental disabilities and it is basically “feel good” programming. Hand massages are offered for touch; baking and food sampling for taste; scent canisters are available for smell; iPod/iPad music programs for auditory; and there is also a Snoezelen Multisensory Visual Therapy program for all senses. This program creates a very soothing and stimulating environment with lighting effects, colours, sounds, music, scents, and quite a wide variety of other methods.

# ADULT DAY PROGRAM Meeting the Needs of a Changing Community

The Adult Day Program commemorated Remembrance Day in a Red Balloon Release, connecting with loved ones who have passed. All participating clients wrote a thoughtful message dedicated to a special person(s) in their life and tied it to a balloon. The release was done in the Adult Day Program garden and also enjoyed by the staff and residents of Union Villa.

The program continues to showcase the different cultural backgrounds of clients and the community. Sensory mediums such as art therapy and cultural tastings are provided and in November, Diwali was celebrated with a community member who graciously brought in beautiful saris. Clients and staff members were delighted to sample culturally specific food and music to broaden the experience.

Creating opportunities for leisure, personal growth, fellowship and fitness of the mind, body and soul is what the program does best. Families tell us how much they appreciate the positive changes they see in their loved one since joining the program. Clients are encouraged to fully



participate through the use of therapeutic techniques, on occasion sending "homework" home. This translates to a sense of autonomy and esteem when given ~ Job Well Done!

Sadly, Man-Man Choi, Recreation Therapist has taken her professional skills and passion in another direction. She will be missed, however, Debbie Batzakis, a long serving Activity Programmer in the Villa's long term care area has joined the Adult Day Program team. Debbie is bringing a new energy and creativity to the team and clients. Additionally, the team welcomes Jan, a new volunteer, who is sharing her expertise in Montessori programming for seniors.

The Program continues to grow and meet the changing needs of the community members. Tours available by request. All referrals come through the Community Care Access Centre.

# Golf Fore Union Villa

## INAUGURAL MAIN STREET UNIONVILLE GOLF TOURNAMENT EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS



Long time residents of Unionville and 40+ year business owners, Danny Fantini and Larry Mariani, not only share a passion for the community and historic Unionville Main Street, but they also share a strong friendship which created the perfect opportunity to organize a fundraiser to benefit their beloved Unionville.

Together with a dedicated committee of volunteers including local business owners and Unionville supporters, they hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Main Street Unionville Charity Golf Classic at Angus Glen on August 6th.

The support was outstanding and in less than 4

weeks, the tournament was sold out. The event was supported by a full golfer count, and 79 corporate sponsors and individual supporters who believe that quality seniors care is a priority.

Almost \$70,000 was raised and earmarked to purchase 10 mechanical lifting devices. The devices are used continuously throughout the day to safely transfer residents to and from their bed or wheelchair. Mechanical lifts are essential to the care of residents and help to prevent injury to staff as they assist residents who cannot stand or walk. Each lift is in constant use to assist residents with their personal care needs.



For Sponsorship Information or Golfer Registration, please contact Maria Dimson at (905) 477- 2839 ext 4270 or at [Golf4UV@uhs.on.ca](mailto:Golf4UV@uhs.on.ca)

# 2015 Union Villa Dinner Party raises \$85,000 to support initiatives that make a difference

Unionville Home Society has hosted a fundraising Gala since 1998 bringing together the community, family members and corporate support. The events were held in hotel ballrooms, banquet halls and even an airport hangar.

In 2011, the Gala became known as the Union Villa Dinner Party & After Lounge, the location was moved to Angus Glen Golf Club and the funding focus was on the comfort needs of the residents. 5 years later, we are thrilled to share that we have raised close to \$600,000 helping

to fund replacement of beds and mattresses, installing security cameras, renewing spaces, adding programs and so much more thanks to our guests and sponsors.

It's no small task to plan and execute a signature fundraiser. This past year, the event Co-Chairs were Tara Clucas and Taylor Whittamore representing a younger generation of philanthropists. We are honoured to have them returning as Chairs along with their group of local volunteers helping us raise awareness of the funding needs in long term care.



## **THANK YOU to our Corporate Sponsors who ensured our financial success:**

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**SAVE THE DATE: 2016 DINNER PARTY – Friday November 4<sup>th</sup>, Angus Glen G.C.**

# Welcome to the Comfort Corner

## PHASE I

The Comfort Corners are one of many initiatives underway here at Union Villa with the focus on distinguishing our building as a home first, and a care facility second. Residents can now sit and relax with family members and friends, and catch up on each other's lives, or current world affairs, or even enjoy a cup of hot chocolate together on a snowy winter's day. Comfort corners provide intimate visiting areas with a home like feel that fosters connections, engagement and social opportunities.

The first four Comfort Corners were unveiled in November 2015, thanks to generous donations from the Braznick Family, The Women's Committee of Markham, Jan van Velzen and Barbara Lowe. Soon, as additional funds are raised, there will be a Comfort Corner at the end of each resident hallway. Each will contain comfortable and stylish furniture and attractive artwork. These new seating areas are to be enjoyed by all residents of our home, so please help us make this so by doing your part to keep the rooms clean and accessible to all!



*The Cedar Grove Comfort Corner, sponsored by the Braznick Family, in memory of Barb Taverner*



*The Union Mills Comfort Corner, sponsored by the Women's Committee of Markham*

## 2016 Campus Events

### UCCS:

- **February 12**  
Valentine's Day Luncheon hosted by Ward 3 Councillor Don Hamilton – 11:30 am
- **March 17**  
St. Patrick's Dinner – 5 pm
- **April 25**  
Canadian Cancer Society Daffodil Tea – 2 pm
- **May 6**  
Mother's Day Fancy Hat Tea – 2 pm

### UNION VILLA:

- **April 12**  
Candlelight Memorial – 7 pm
- **April 13**  
Unionville Home Society Volunteer Appreciation Event
- **May 31**  
Annual Resident Art Expressions Exhibit – 7 pm
- **June 22**  
Annual General Meeting – 6 pm
- **June 29**  
Main Street Unionville Golf Tournament – 7 am
- **September 11**  
Grandparent's Day Celebration – 2 pm

## A Candid Moment with the Residents' Council President

In the spring of 2015, Union Villa resident Mary Martin was elected as President of Residents' Council. In an interview, she shared the importance of having an active group of council members to advocate and provide recommendations to the Administration that will safeguard the rights of residents and promote a quality of life within the Home.

The Residents' Council is made up of and represents all residents in Union Villa.

Mary shares the importance of recreational programs and special events as they make life at the Villa more enjoyable. She encourages all residents to participate as it gives a chance to network with fellow residents and their families.

Mary feels that her role is to engage and include all residents which is why she is often partaking in various programs, welcoming new residents, and encouraging social interaction.

Residents' Council is open to all residents and meets on the first Thursday of each month. The Council looks forward to adding new members in 2016.

"It's an experience that impacts all that live and work at Union Villa", says Mary.

