

The Society NEWSLETTER

FALL/ WINTER 2023 EDITION

 **Shalem**
Society for Senior Citizens Care
shalem.ca



Photo Courtesy Norm Ross (far right)

He Shook Hands with the Queen

By Henrietta Koning

Not many people in Calgary can claim to have met Queen Elizabeth and to have shaken her hand, but one Shalem resident can boast that not only did he meet the Queen, he also once dined with her husband Prince Philip and on top of that, on another occasion, he had lunch with Prince Charles, today's King of England.

Long time Shalem Court resident Norm Ross explains that his encounters with royalty all stem back to the fact that he was supervising a mega restoration project at York Minister, one of the largest medieval cathedrals in Northern Europe. *(cont'd on page 4)*

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Cats in the House!



Resident with Foster Cat Geranium

Shalem has offered pet therapy programs over the past years and has seen firsthand how animals have boosted resident well-being. In an effort to expand this program, Shalem reached out to AARCS, an animal rescue agency, with an offer to foster cats. Not only is this helping to alleviate the pressure animal rescue groups are experiencing, it also offers our residents companionship and comfort.

Resident volunteers provide all the care for the cats, including food, exercise, grooming and love as they provide socialization needed to prepare the cats for adoption. And the program is proving to be a success as Shalem's first two foster cats have been adopted. Residents are now caring for two cats who came to us after their owner passed away and are happy to spend time with the new additions!

HEALTHY LIVING



Living with Dementia

By Joanne Bouma, RN MN

Part of having a healthy brain includes having cognitive health: the ability to think, learn, and remember. As a person ages, they may at times find that they have difficulty finding words or might forget where they left objects, but this does not mean that they have dementia.

Medications can also have side effects that impact the brain. Many age-related and physical changes to the brain are consistent with normal aging. This is different than the cognitive decline that happens with dementia.

Dementia is the medical term for a group of brain disorders and a variety of symptoms depending on what stage of the disease someone is currently experiencing.

Mild Cognitive Impairment may become obvious for the first time when there are some deficits in performing complex tasks or a decrease in organization skills. As the disease progresses to Mild Dementia, there may be: a decrease in the ability to do complex skills like meal planning or managing finances; less knowledge about current events, or withdrawal from situations found to be challenging.

When a person needs assistance to manage tasks like planning a meal, handling finances, or they have difficulty remembering the names of familiar people, this stage is called Moderate

Dementia. As a person progresses into the stage of Moderately Severe Dementia, they may experience disorientation, significant loss of short-term memory, increasing anxiety, the inability to dress themselves properly or manage personal hygiene.

Behavioural symptoms related to dementia can also occur during the progression of dementia. These are commonly misunderstood by family, friends, or fellow residents in Senior Living. A person who is seen to be manipulative or attention-seeking this might be the only way that they are able to express their needs.

When a person with dementia is anxious and/or confused, providing reassurance, redirecting their attention or even using music helps to lower the anxiety and prevent unsafe or inappropriate behaviours. It is important to recognize that some strategies to manage behaviour one day might not work the next day, so it requires reassessing on a daily basis.

Caregivers also need a lot of support, access to resources and the opportunity to step away from their loved one – even for a few hours – knowing that they are being cared for.

If you have been diagnosed or are caring for someone with dementia, it's important to remember:

- Those struggling with dementia are still who they are, even if they have problems with memory, concentration, and planning.
- Everyone experiences dementia differently.
- Focus on the things that a person can still do and enjoy helping them stay positive.

With the right help and support, many people can, and do, live well with dementia for several years!

Check out these resources for more information: alzheimercalgary.ca and dementianetwork.ca.

Source: Hirst, S., Lane, A.M., and Miller, C.A. (2016). Miller's Nursing for Wellness in Older Adults: Canadian Edition. (2016). alzheimercalgary.ca



25 Years at Shalem!

Phyllis Bruckshaw has made her home at Shalem for more than 25 years, making her our longest standing resident. Phyll signed her lease on June 15, 1997 and moved into the Manor 10 days later. At the age of 91, Phyll said "I'm so happy to have my independence at Shalem but know I have support if I ever need it. I love Shalem!"

A Message from the Executive Director

By Dorothy de Vuyst



This past spring the Board and several staff met to develop a strategic plan that would provide direction to the Society for the next several years. Building Shalem into a place where residents could 'age well in place' was identified as a key priority. For most older adults, moving on from Shalem into assisted living or long-term care

facilities is difficult and can result in further decline. Because of that we are working to identify and provide programs and support that better address mobility challenges, cognitive decline, and access to essential health services.

Our desire is to walk alongside residents and families of Shalem and help facilitate needed resources throughout the aging journey. This includes educating residents, staff and our membership on various aspects of aging. Our new 'Healthy Living' column in this newsletter is an example of this. Please join us in prayer as we seek to develop the expertise, capacity, and resources to do this well!

Updated Mission Statement

During our strategic planning sessions this past year, we reflected on Shalem's mission of enhancing the care of seniors. We knew we wanted Shalem to be and to continue to be a community where older adults are celebrated and find joy. As reflected in our updated mission statement we strive...

To be a community where older adults are celebrated and experience wholeness in being, in health and in relationship to God, finding contentment and belonging.

Please visit our website to see our updated vision and values. We are excited to share these with you as we seek to live out our mission well!



Residents Ready for the 50's Dinner & Dance

Shalem Dinner and Dance

Laughter, movement, and music... a great way to live well and age well! And many of our residents agree! Every other month, Shalem staff host a resident dinner and dance complete with great food, live music and themes such as Hawaiian and Country & Western. This past November saw a 50's theme with several residents dressing up in poodle skirts and other 50's outfits reminiscent of their youth. Fun was had by all!

We love to see family and other guests join us so check out our monthly calendars posted on our website under 'Life at Shalem' for our next one!

Become a Member!

Shalem is a not-for-profit Society that seeks to grow its membership base and community engagement.

Your membership will keep you informed on what is happening at Shalem and provides a forum to share your thoughts and ideas on the future of Shalem.

Membership is only an annual contribution of \$25.00 per person, so please encourage others in your family or community to join! Renew or become a new member by calling our Business Office at 403-240-2800 (ext 5) or visiting our website at shalem.ca and clicking on 'Support Us'.

We are so grateful for the support each membership signifies!

He Shook Hands with the Queen

(cont'd from front page)

As the engineer in charge of repairing the foundation of the cathedral, Norm explains that he was invited to join the receiving line to greet Queen Elizabeth. "I felt excited. It was overwhelming to meet the Queen and to shake hands with somebody in that position. I was shaking hands with the most important woman in the world at that time. I was very impressed by her."

Some time later Prince Phillip also visited the restoration project and this time Norm was the guide, personally showing the Prince around the work that was being done. According to Norm, the Prince "really took an interest in the project. It wasn't just a duty for him."

When son Charles arrived on the scene, some years after his mother's visit, Norm was one of about a dozen guests invited to an informal luncheon held in York in honour of Prince Charles. "Charles was quite different than his father," he observes, "because he was the future king." He showed a keen interest in the repairs that were being undertaken.

Norm, who moved his family to Canada in 1975, appears unfazed about meeting the Royals who are not even mentioned in his memoir, *The Life of an Ordinary Man*, published in 2020 and dedicated to his wife who passed in 2017. They had moved into Shalem in 2010. The father of nine children and a proud Scotsman, Norm does not hesitate to express his patriotic feelings for the monarchy and sees it as an asset.

Volunteer at Shalem

Can you spare a few hours? Our volunteers are an integral part of our team and enhance the overall well-being of our residents. We have many lively and fun volunteer opportunities including Espresso Café, music events, birthday parties, friendship partners and more!

Here is what some of our volunteers are saying about their experience:

"Volunteering is giving back to the people that made a difference in my life and so many others. Listening to their stories and sharing a "magic" moment makes my day every time."

"I feel a sense of belonging in the Shalem community as I've gotten to know some of the residents."

"I get to enjoy music, treats, fellowship, and celebrations each time I come. And I make the event a success by serving with my time. It's a win-win!"

Help us make a difference in the lives of our residents! Please contact Michelle at recreation@shalem.ca or 403-240-2800 (ext 4) for more information.



Photography Display in the Dining Room by Shallon Cunningham - Food Found Forgotten

Turning Food Memories into Art

Over the past two years we have been working with Shallon Cunningham, a professional food photographer with Food Found Forgotten, who volunteered her time capturing creative photos of food memories from many of our residents. The project was completed this past November with about 40 artistic photos now gracing our Dining Room. If you have not yet seen the display, please stop by. It is definitely worth the trip!

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