



# Shalem

Society for Senior Citizens Care

## The Society Newsletter – Fall & Winter Edition

### Boosting Well-being

Shalem is a happening place. No all-day snoozin' in rocking chairs for these folks. From bus trips, concerts, and guest presentations, to fitness classes, brainteasers and bingo - these are just some of the items on tap for Shalem residents.

Physical and cognitive exercises are good for everybody's physical and mental health, but staying active and engaged in a retirement living centre with 150 residents, hinges on providing a wide variety of activities. Enter Michelle Vanderwerff, Shalem's Recreation and Wellness Coordinator. She's been planning activities and events for the last three years at Shalem, all with an eye to promoting active minds, active bodies *and* active community for all residents.

A cheerful and sociable person, Michelle's first job at Shalem was to build up the Volunteer Program. She soon found herself filling other roles too under the banner of recreation and lately she has been working on establishing links with health professionals beyond the links with counselling and chaplaincy resources that Shalem already has in place. How does Michelle manage to muster up the energy for her multi-faceted job especially with the challenges that Covid brings? It's the residents themselves she says, they are what inspire her. She sees them as her grandmas and her grandpas and great grandmas and great grandpas. "I feel cared for by them as deeply I hope as they feel cared for," she says, noting that one resident texts her a message of encouragement each day. She adds, "I believe we are here to bring God's love and joy and purpose."

Before Shalem, Michelle, a journalism graduate, put in a stint at CBC Calgary following which she set up her own Senior Care business in which for eight years she helped seniors with various tasks such as doctor appointments, shopping, and house cleaning. At the time many of her clients lived at Shalem. Today she works for all Shalem residents, striving to create a place where they can live life to the fullest.



**Ebonie Allen cuddles a very contented goat. Sheep, bunnies, goats and even a pig milled about in a pop-up barnyard in the Shalem courtyard this fall, just one of the events organized by Shalem's Recreation and Wellness Coordinator.**

## LOVE COFFEE? SENIORS? COMMUNITY?

We are currently looking for friendly people to join our Café Team. We welcome individuals, groups, and youth (12 or older) to share your time and gifts in a variety of roles:

**CAFÉ BARISTAS** will make café drinks, serve baked goods, help to keep the Café running smoothly, and visit with Shalem residents. Training provided, no experience necessary. We will teach you to make a fantastic coffee! Shifts are 1-2 hours, pick to suit your schedule.

**CAFÉ HELPERS** will assist the Barista to take orders, serve residents, help keep the café running smoothly, and assist with clean up. Shifts are 1-2 hours, pick to suit your schedule.

**CAFÉ ENTERTAINERS** If you have music/entertainment geared towards older adults/seniors, **we want you!** Showcase your talents. It's priceless giving seniors a sense of joy!

**CAFÉ HELP FOR SPECIAL EVENTS** such as pub night, holiday themed parties, movie night, and more. Volunteers will assist the Recreation Coordinator set up/take down the event, and ensure the activity runs smoothly.

*Please note: Shalem has formulated enhanced health and safety guidelines that follow and adhere to current health and safety protocols established by Alberta Health Services. All volunteers are required to be fully vaccinated and to provide proof of vaccination.*



**Michelle Vanderwerff, Recreation and Wellness Coordinator, left, with Pam Eike, Communications and Marketing Coordinator**

### Take a peek at a day in the life of Shalem

'Shalem Showcase', the monthly newsletter for residents, is full of photos and information and can be viewed online at [www.shalem.ca](http://www.shalem.ca), *Life at Shalem*. There you'll also find the monthly Calendar, a jam packed schedule of events and activities. The colourful creations are put together by Pam Eike, Shalem's Communications and Marketing Coordinator. Pam, whose career began in film production, collaborates with Michelle and whether it's creating posters for an event or helping with activities, it's all about teamwork. "We're 100% a ton of teamwork," says Michelle. With an eye to design, Pam also coordinates Shalem's Facebook.

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## Give the Gift of Securities

When markets have been performing well, donating stocks, bonds or other securities is a tax-smart way to support Shalem. Donating securities directly to a charity eliminates the payment of capital gains tax. By making such a gift you will receive the benefit of a tax receipt for the fair market value of the stock and not pay tax on any of the capital gain. Call Jill Jones at Christian Stewardship Services at 1-800-267-8890 ext.200 or email her at [admin@csservices.ca](mailto:admin@csservices.ca) and designate your gift to Shalem Society for Senior Citizens Care. To allow enough time to process your donation and receive your tax receipt before the end of the year, gifts should be made before December 7.

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**Our Mission: SHALEM, meaning WHOLENESS, was formed with the mission and the communal desire to provide a Christian setting that enhances the wellbeing of seniors.**

## Masterpieces in Progress

“Art is therapy”, according to Carol Marasco-Hamilton who teaches art all over the city and now has a group class at Shalem. She sees the social interaction amongst the budding artists as even more important than the finished artwork. The students inspire each other, share compliments and connect. Above all says Carol, “The adventure is to get out and be with people”. The class is called Paint & Sip – the teacher has a sample painting and takes the students through creating the scene on their own canvas step by step. Sipping a glass of wine along the way relaxes the artists and helps them ease into creating their masterpiece. After two hours the glass may be empty but the canvas has become a wall-worthy piece of art. Lou claims, “It brings out the artistic side of me and it’s something I can feel good about.”



Art teacher Carol with resident Lou Damhouse. “As I’m hard of hearing and unable to stand long, this is something I can do sitting down, and it helps pass the time”, says Lou.

## A Message from Executive Director Dorothy de Vuyst

As we near the end of 2021 I am overwhelmed with gratitude. All of us here at Shalem have been grateful for your prayers that have sustained us through this past year, and it is with thankfulness to God that we have continued to remain COVID free. These have not been easy times as we have navigated through sensitive issues such as vaccinations and more than ever require your prayers as we seek for wisdom and discernment in these areas.

Almost all our Residents are now fully vaccinated with many also receiving the booster shot through a clinic held on site earlier this fall. Most things have returned to normal as we increased our activities for our Residents once again. And although we continue to take precautions through masking and vaccination protocols, we also welcome visitors and guests into our facilities to connect with our Residents.



We value the connection that we have to each one of you through your membership and donations and are hopeful that we can once again host some fundraising events next year. Our desire is to keep Shalem as affordable as possible for our Residents and your financial gifts help make this possible. Thank you for being part of our calling to create a faith, grace, and love-filled place for seniors to call home!

### Shalem Society Board of Directors:

Tony VandeKraats, President  
Jim Zeilstra, Vice President  
John Spronk, Treasurer  
Maarten Buth, Secretary  
Ria Clayton, Director  
Henrietta Koning, Director  
David Konynenbelt, Director

### Shalem Staff:

Dorothy de Vuyst, Executive Director ([dorothy@shalem.ca](mailto:dorothy@shalem.ca))  
Susan Pellan, Residential Life Administrator  
Gemma Bragat, Housekeeping Manager  
Grant Bieker, Building & Grounds Manager  
Michelle Vanderwerff, Recreation & Wellness Coordinator  
Nick Nui, Executive Chef /Dining Services Manager  
Pam Eike, Communications & Marketing Coordinator  
Sharon Froese, Business Manager

## A search for solace 39 years ago is a sermon theme today



**Shalem long timers Len and Dicky Joad tell a story of overcoming trauma. The Joads were amongst the first members of the Shalem Society for Seniors Care to move into the Shalem Court when it opened in 2001 and are the longest-term residents today. “I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else,” declares Len.**

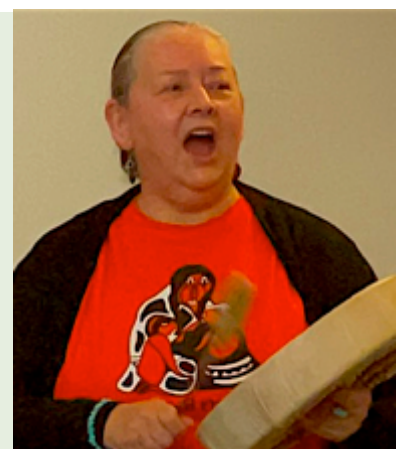
Losing a child brings an unimaginable grief to parents, but if that is followed by the death of yet another child, a deep suffering can settle in. That was the case with Shalem residents Len and Dicky Joad. In 1973 their ten-year-old son died of leukemia. Nine years later, their 24-year-old son died of a brain tumour just three months before his wedding date. When a couple faces a tragedy like this explains Dicky, both grieve differently. The second loss drove a wedge into their relationship and confesses Len, “If it hadn’t been for our pastors and the church, we wouldn’t ...” His voice trails off unwilling to finish the

sentence. Len became mired in his grief over time and although their pastors encouraged the couple to call them anytime night or day, it was in his darkest moment when he was feeling “really really depressed”, that he cried out to God for help, then he opened the Bible, pointed his finger, and the passage it landed on was Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God”. The words grabbed Len, he held onto them and from then on things started getting better he says and have been good ever since, but he continues to keep the passage close to him. Dicky too has a favourite verse that gives her comfort she says, Psalm 121:1, “Unto the hills will I lift my eyes from whence cometh my help”. This summer the couple celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Len offered to share his story about his significant Bible passage via a pre-recorded video shown to the members of Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church, next door to Shalem, in a recent series of sermons titled, “The Psalms Echoing Amongst Us”. More seniors at Shalem also volunteered their personal stories for the series which can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/8KxxpbP5gM0> It was heartening for the seniors to hear the feedback from all generations in the church who were touched by the simplicity but beauty of their faith.

## The first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - Shalem residents take time to reflect

*Kokum* means grandmother in Cree. To celebrate Canada’s first ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Shalem invited Kokum Cheryle Chagnon-Greyeyes as a guest speaker. Cheryle, whose mother is a survivor of a residential school, shared stories and songs to honour the lost children and survivors of residential schools, their families and communities and thereby helped Shalem residents understand and learn about this dark part of Canada’s history - a first step towards reconciliation. Her presentation was a moving experience. “It all comes down to taking time to listen to other people,” is how one resident summed up what she learned. Cheryle told her audience we are all Treaty Seven members. We are all brothers and sisters. She has been an Indigenous activist for the last decade and is a member of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Sask., Treaty Six.



**“Sharing Truth and living Reconciliation in love and not fear.”**