

# Shalem



Society for Senior Citizens Care

## The Society Newsletter – Spring & Summer Edition



Marion next to a farm scene painted by her husband whom she met at a YMCA dance when he was training in the Air Force during World War 2. He died in 1989.

## WOW! She's Turning 100

Bring on the birthday cake and candles –100 candles that is! Shalem is honored to be home to Marion Kettelson, a resident of the Haven who celebrates her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on June 14. Plans are afoot for a big birthday bash so all the residents can toast the centenarian.

Did Marion ever imagine she would live to be 100? “Good grief no!” is her quick reply. So what’s the secret to her longevity? Does she do exercises? “Not if I can help it.” Does she follow a Mediterranean diet? “Never

heard of it.” Is she vegetarian?? “Good gracious no!” She doesn’t eat yogurt and she doesn’t take vitamins so does she have a

special diet? “Yes, what’s sitting in front of me. That’s it”. And she drinks coffee “all the time”.

Marion, the mother of two and grandmother of four who now uses a walker but no hearing aids, grew up during the Great Depression. She was born in 1922 in rural Alberta when families were just beginning to have radios. Everybody had horses then according to Marion. She recalls her parents discussing if they could afford to buy a tractor for the farm to replace the horse team. She and her brother rode their own horses a few miles to school every day. As a young teen she vividly remembers the family getting their first telephone. One winter night an important message came through for her uncle who did not have a phone. Marion and her brother jumped on their horses and by the light of the moon and stars, they rode overland to their uncle’s farm, short cutting through farmers’ fields to avoid the high snowdrifts on the road. The drifts in the fields were also high but such a hard crust had formed, their horses actually stayed on top of the drifts.

After graduating from high school Marion moved to Calgary and like many other young women, she lived at the YWCA while attending Business College. World War 2 had started. Saturday evenings the YMCA would hold dances and invite the young women from the YWCA. “It was a good time,” she recalls, “but during the war, at any moment you could lose somebody close to you.”

Reflecting back on her life, Marion concludes that it was her parents who influenced her the most in the way they raised her and her brother. “There was never once a harsh word spoken around us. I never once heard them scrap. Discussions yes but quarreling no.”

Cheers to your centennial jubilee Marion. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

## Our Atrium – an Awesome Outcome

Shalem's central meeting room known as the Atrium, recently emerged from a long awaited fix-up looking refreshed and bright and airy. Last year Shalem received the good news that the Atrium Project had been approved for a \$22,000 grant from the New Horizons for Seniors Program, a federal program that provides funding for projects that make a difference in seniors' lives and their communities. The grant, along with other generous donor support, covered renovation costs and items including new furniture, carpet, lighting, fans, a sound system and a large screen TV.

Projects were expected to meet certain objectives and priorities. Shalem demonstrated for example, that the improved Atrium would be equipped so it could be used for guest speakers to present on topics such as mental health and elder abuse but also entertainment such as virtual music programs and virtual travel plus ongoing learning sessions on subjects as, among other things, older adults' health.

Another priority for the Atrium project was to encourage community and connection. During Covid lockdowns, technology helped people feel less isolated but older seniors generally felt more cut off from the world because they didn't know how to use the technology. Now that restrictions are lifted, Shalem residents are learning skills such as how to use FaceTime and access the Internet. It's all happening in the comfortable atmosphere of the Atrium where iPad and laptop learning classes are giving residents a tool to overcome social isolation. Noteworthy is the fact that some of the donated laptops and iPads were contributed through a partnership with students at Calgary Christian School, Shalem's neighbour.



## A Message from Executive Director Dorothy de Vuyst

As I write this at the end of April, we have just confirmed seven new cases of COVID among our residents over the past two days. This 'journey of COVID' is not yet over! As we respond to this latest outbreak and attempt to mitigate further spread among the Shalem community, I am constantly reminded of the many things we can be grateful for.

I am grateful .... That we did not get our first case of COVID until January 2022 when the Omicron variant meant less severe symptoms and outcomes .... For tools such as rapid tests that help us identify cases early .... That we are able to continue to offer activities to our residents safely that still enables us to live in community with each other .... For our staff who sacrificially care and serve our residents, sometimes placing themselves at risk .... For the support of Alberta Health Services who guides and supports us during these outbreaks .... For the faithful support of our membership!

In the midst of navigating COVID there are still many priorities and projects we are moving ahead with. We are committed to growing our programs to provide a caring, supportive and Christian community through the journey of aging, ensuring our staff are well trained and compensated fairly for their service and providing a building that is well maintained and a beautiful environment for our residents to live and thrive in – and of course for the residents to come! Thank you for your volunteer, financial and prayer support that helps make this a reality!



**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.**

# It's All Happening In the Atrium



## Learning Session

Rudy Muller was treated to a gentle Chies Massage when students from CITCM Massage & Acupuncture College visited Shalem. The students of traditional Chinese medicine shared their knowledge and a cup of healthy tea with the residents.

## Computer Classes

Most older people, it's safe to say, struggle with technology but that doesn't mean they don't want to learn how to use it. Take Jack, one of the residents enrolled in Shalem's recently started computer basic training class. When he sat down for his first class, he didn't know where on the keyboard the @ symbol was but he learned quickly in the non-threatening environment that computer expert Sam Pal brings to his class. Jack wants to be able to do his banking online and he knows there's a lot to read online to satisfy his curiosity about the world. Some students have previous computer skills but need some refreshing after health issues like strokes or seizures. Most students express some frustration in grasping the technology but Sam assures that older people can still learn and that technology keeps them interested in doing things. The owner of AID IT Services, Sam learned patience from teaching his father, a constant student. The computer classes are part of the New Horizons for Seniors program, see opposite page.



Instructor Sam Pal checks Jack's Internet connection. In the foreground Marry finds the online weather forecast for Friesland, Holland.

## Chapel

The best-attended regularly scheduled event at Shalem is Chapel. Every Wednesday afternoon the Atrium fills up with residents who come to worship together. There are Pastors from the Christian Reformed, Lutheran and Alliance Churches, all who graciously volunteer their time and are sincerely appreciated by the residents.



### Shalem Society Board of Directors:

Tony VandeKraats, President  
Jim Zeilstra, Vice President  
John Spronk, Treasurer  
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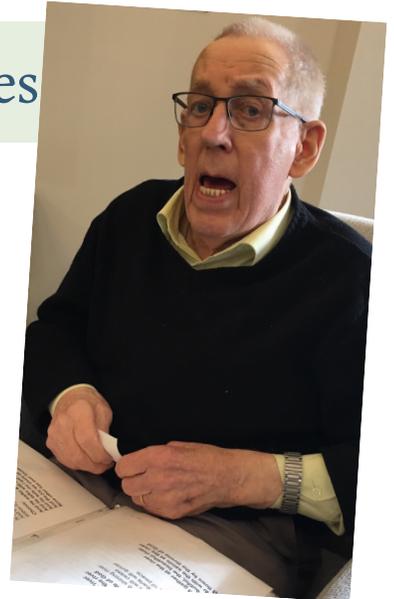
### Shalem Staff:

Dorothy de Vuyst, Executive Director (dorothy@shalem.ca)  
Leslie Gowing, Business Manager  
Susan Pellan, Residential Life Administrator  
Grant Bieker, Building & Grounds Manager  
Michelle Vanderwerff, Recreation & Wellness Coordinator  
Pam Eike, Communications & Marketing Coordinator

## Hymn Sing is Rock of Ages



It's Sunday evening at Shalem and there's a joyful sound coming from the Atrium where people are gathered, raising their voices in song. Doris Reitza (*below*) is at the piano pumping out hymns picked by residents and visitors from Shalem's own songbook. The 90-year-old has been playing piano since she was eight and later played the organ at the church pastored by her Danish husband. Sharon Holland (*left*) is clapping and singing along, mostly from memory. Back in the day, her family would gather in the kitchen for a hymn sing every Saturday night. Ted Bosgra (*right*) is no



stranger to music. He's played the trumpet most of his life and now sits in a comfortable chair singing lustily. Everybody knows, and scientists have proved, that singing is good for your body and mind and Anna Krontje would add, also for your spirit. She started the hymn sing to fill up her Sundays and to satisfy a longing that she and others felt for the meaningful songs they grew up with. Judging by the enthusiastic participation, the weekly event is a positive experience, and one that is wholly organized and run by residents. As Sharon says, "It's an uplifting way to begin a new week." Come and join in, 6:30 Sundays!



## We Need Your Help!

In 2019 the Society undertook a critical \$2.2M rehabilitation project that addressed significant mold and rotting issues impacting the integrity of the Court building. At the time it was determined that the Dining Room roof also needed repair, however given the already large expense, the decision was made to delay repairing the roof. These repairs can no longer be delayed as we face further deterioration and potential safety concerns due to ongoing water leaks. The situation has now become urgent! The roof replacement will cost \$73,695. Financial resources are limited as we work to rebuild our cash reserves. Additional financial support is needed. Any contribution will be helpful for this important project while not compromising other building needs. Your partnership will ensure we can continue to provide meals and other activities in a safe and secure environment for years to come. Donations can be made by visiting [www.shalem.ca](http://www.shalem.ca) or calling 403-240-2800 ext 5.

## Shalem AGM

May 18, 7:00 PM in-person  
at Emmanuel Church.  
3020 – 51 St. SW

No pre-registration necessary

Guest speaker author Cara Milne of M-Powered Planning, will explore the value of community and connection.

## Farewell to Shalem Board President Tony Vandekraats



May 18, 2022 will be Tony Vandekraats' last Annual General Meeting as President of the Board of Directors of Shalem Society. He joined the board seven years ago and has served as president for the last five years. Tony managed to help steer Shalem through some tough times including the Covid pandemic and the big job of restoring the exterior of the Court. Tony, thank you for your dedication to Shalem.