

MAKING IT MATTER

Hello! And thank you for reading the Tri-County Mennonite Homes Fall 2021 Newsletter.

The leaves are turning. The days are getting shorter. There's a crispness in the air... Fall is here. People everywhere are shift-ing from outdoor to indoor activities and looking ahead to the holiday season. Here at TCMH, we have been busy planning for the months ahead. From Oktoberfest and fall celebrations, to getting ready for Christmas and winter, to completing capital projects, there is lots going on in our Homes and Communities.

TCMH COVID-19 UPDATE

On the surface, things are improving with respect to COVID-19 in our Homes. All eligible seniors have been fully vaccinated and many have also received their booster shots in September. Our staff vaccination rate is over 85% vaccinated across TCMH. On November 15, the Provincial Vaccination Mandate will come into effect requiring vaccination to work in long-term care, so we anticipate the number of vaccinated staff will increase. Despite the high rate of staff vaccination, we will of course be maintaining the other elements of protection: the use of personal protective equipment, proper hygiene practices, maintaining appropriate distancing, and testing (both rapid and PCR testing). The combination of all five infection control practices will give TCMH the best chance for not having outbreaks in our Homes.

Across TCMH we are seeing recreational programming, spiritual care, and other programming resume, focused on indoor activities for the Fall and Winter months ahead. In our Seniors Homes, we are working with our resident and family councils to determine how we can best support these activities in the seniors care communities. At Aldaview, we are supporting our supported individuals back into their work and personal community engagements. Everyone at TCMH is required to follow public health directives, including vaccination passports. We know these requirements can change frequently, without much notice, and can impact families and community members visiting our Homes. We ask for your continued patience. If you would like more updates, you can check out our website www.tcmhomes.com or call/email us and we'll provide you with a current update of COVID requirements.



LIFE IN CARE AT NITHVIEW HOME

Meet Stew.

Stew arrived at Nithview Community as Covid was taking a hold in the world. He had lost the ability to use his legs and was told by doctor's that he would never walk again, but Stew is a very determined man and he wanted to prove otherwise! With strength of determination, Stew attended physio 3-4 times per week and practiced a variety of exercises to strengthen his legs, including the daily use of Neuro Gym in the Restorative Office at Nithview. Today, Stew continues to walk with the physio team, completing the 2nd floor neighborhood each time he goes for a walk. There are many times that he doesn't even need a rest, not even one time! Stew went from being totally dependent to only needing a one person assist.

Because Stew made such great improvements, it gave him and his wife, Miriam, the opportunity to purchase a wheelchair accessible van. Stew also had his wheelchair customized so it could be fitted for the new van. The pair purchased their van in November



but, because of Covid lockdowns, they were not able to use it until spring. Today, with decreased restrictions in long-term care, Stew and Miriam enjoy the freedom and independence the van affords them and they take short trips whenever they can.

Stew's favorite trip was to Goderich. He really enjoyed just being able to take in nature on the country drive. They have even gone out for a drive with no destination in mind, simply watching for highway signs to guide them on their drive.

Despite Stew continuing to exercise his legs and becoming stronger, he still uses his wheelchair for daily life. Recently, Stew received his lap tray that was delayed after ordering. He had been patiently waiting for the tray to use on his chair. The lap tray allows Stew to enjoy mealtime at restaurants and at his wife's apartment. His wheelchair does not fit under tables, and it prevented him from being able to dine out. Now, with his new tray, Stew has even fewer barriers preventing him from enjoying life and he is looking for his next adventure – the tractor club breakfast!



SERVICE OPPORTUNITY: TCMH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tri-County Mennonite Homes (TCMH) is comprised of Nithview Community and Greenwood Court, two seniors' continuum of care homes, and Aldaview Services, a program supporting adults with developmental disabilities. Founded in 1968, TCMH is a Mennonite organization dedicated to the highest standards of care. Our mission is simple: *Making Every Day Matter*.

We invite you to consider being a member of our Board of Directors.

TCMH is seeking new members to serve on our volunteer Board of Directors. The Board provides governance to ensure the organization fulfills its Mission, Vision, and Values.

An effective board member will:

- Support TCMH's Mission, Vision and Values
- Desire to improve the lives of seniors and individuals with developmental disabilities
- Communicate effectively and maintain confidentiality
- Commit to attend board meetings, committee meetings, and education sessions
- Be willing to work between meetings as required
- Respect others and a diversity of views

We encourage interested individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and faiths (Mennonite and non-Mennonite) to apply, especially individuals with legal, health care, finance, human resource, or capital project experience.

To request an information package for yourself—or to nominate someone else to serve—please contact Stephen Yantzi, Chair of the Nomination and Governance Committee: syantzi@tcmhomes.com

TCMH OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Construction and other projects started in the summer continue into the Fall. Materials shortages, labour shortages, and supply chain disruptions have pushed back some of our completion dates, but as materials arrive we will continue our work.

At Aldaview, work on our group home upgrades are nearing completion. Roof trusses and steel beams arrived after some delay and the house extension is now closed up for interior work. Once these renovations are completed, we will be able to bring six new clients into Aldaview care. This is a tremendous opportunity for Aldaview Services and the community – new capacity in Developmental Services is hard to come by. You can find progress pictures and information on this project and others across TCMH on our website at www.tcmhomes.com.

At Greenwood Court and Nithview Community, we continue to create new indoor and complete outdoor projects for our residents to enjoy. Refocusing the use of the space we have for the colder months ahead indoors, and completing projects outdoors are our priorities. As we complete these projects it provides opportunities for expanded services and allows some of the recreational activities that we enjoyed prior to the Pandemic to resume.

GETTING BACK TO NORMAL AT ALDAVIEW SERVICES

As we turn to the fall and notice the changes in nature, we also can reflect on the changes we have seen at Aldaview during the past weeks and months. It has been wonderful to see and hear of the events and community recreation that those we support have started to return to with the lessening of COVID-19 directives provincially and within Congregate Care settings.

People are starting to find their feet again and return to favourite activities whether that is going for coffee, seeing family, or simply being able to safely socialize over a coffee or meal with an old friend.

For Robert, he will tell you that the pandemic has been difficult for him because most of all he missed spending time with his friends and going to work at the job he loves. Robert has worked as a TCMH maintenance staff for many years and took leave from his employment when the Pandemic was declared.

During his leave from work, Robert shared that he tried new things, bought an IPAD, learned how to meet people over zoom, joined various virtual recreation groups, and switched to virtual church attendance like many others. Robert also enjoyed walking in his local neighbourhood. He moved at the beginning of the Pandemic so it gave him time to explore his new home and surroundings.

Today you will find Robert walking throughout Nithview Community on any given afternoon, going about his work completing his maintenance job. He worked hard to learn about Infection Control and how to wear PPE safely to prepare himself to return to his job. Robert is at his happiest when he is working, helping, and enjoying the company of others.

We are proud of Robert and the way he has become resilient to change. When I asked him about writing this story he beamed and said, “yes you may” and when I asked what he would share with others about his experience he told me “It was hard, but I am safe and well.”



GREENWOOD COURT MOMENTS

As we evolve into what is referred to as the '4th wave' we move our eyes and ears to the gentle fall sound of wind and crackling leaves beneath our feet. This is a time to keep our faith alive as we celebrate the changing season and beautiful colours to come. Besides, with less than 60 days until Christmas how can we lose momentum of faith and joy, even in a pandemic.

We continue to ensure the safety of residents, staff, and visitors in our home and closely monitor area cases while following public health measures. In collaboration with public health, we hosted successful COVID-19 booster clinics to ensure all eligible residents in the long-term care, retirement, and apartment settings could receive their third dose. We also hosted polling stations for the federal elections where residents who chose to vote could do so safely within their homes.

After many months of not being able to get out to visit, residents were excited to see Angus the mini Therapy Horse again. He was greeted with smiles and enthusiasm by all!

Recently Greenwood Court hosted a fall fair where residents were given opportunities to play games of chance and show off their skills. A fan favourite was to see who could knock over the two-foot paper cup tower first. Our most seasoned resident at age 101 was the winner of this game! Our residents enjoyed encouraging each other the most and celebrating with each ball toss regardless of a win or loss. To keep in tradition of a true fair, everyone left with their own stuffed animal prize. Smiles were on everyone's face as friendships were fostered all in good fall fun. Laughs were shared, treats were savoured, and creativity soared in our Cake Decorating Contest at Greenwood Court. Some of the décor candy even made it to the cupcakes! I am certain our staff enjoyed the smiles and laughter as much as our amazing residents who continue to inspire us everyday.



“No one knows for certain how much impact they have on the lives of other people. Oftentimes, we have no clue. Yet we push it just the same.”



CEO CLOSING THOUGHTS

I want to commend everyone weathering the pandemic thus far. We are hearing that the pandemic is *once in a century, unprecedented, and historic*, but we don't hear much anymore about the people living and working through the pandemic. While these last 20 months have certainly been extraordinary and difficult, our staff and community remain *dedicated, committed, and unwavering*. Despite the everyday challenges, you can find a story of someone impacted by COVID who pushed through and persevered.

We have all experienced our own unique story of triumph and loss during the pandemic. For the people at TCMH, be they our staff, our Board, or our Community, we continue taking every decision and step necessary to protect and support to the individuals in care. We each make our own sacrifices and concessions every day, some large and some small, because we believe in *Making Every Day Matter* for the people we care for. For all the little things and all the support we receive, Thank You. We are not at the end of the pandemic yet, but if we remain dedicated, committed, and unwavering, we can get through this together.

THE AMAZING INDIVIDUALS IN OUR CARE

Here at TCMH, we believe in helping the individuals in our care achieve their fullest potential by meeting their social, physical, and emotional needs.



 **Tri-County
Mennonite Homes**

