



Grounded in the past. Looking to the future.

What's Inside

- Letter from the Editor ...
- Inspire Scholarship
- COVID In the House of Old
- Donor Profile: Jeanne Rowles



*Grace Sweatman, President
The Christie Gardens Foundation*

In 2015, Grace Sweatman retired from her role as CEO of Christie Gardens that she held for 28 years. Grace is a past President of the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA), and currently serves as a Director of the Durham Christian Homes Society and a Director of Suomi-Koti Toronto.

Letter from the Editor ...

Do you feel as I often do that we are coming out of a dark tunnel as this pandemic runs its course? We certainly are ready!

The second printing of my book, *Joyful Journey: An Adventure in Eldercare*, was delivered today.

The first edition had been printed in October 2019. At that time opportunities were emerging for me to speak at conferences and to promote this memoir.

It was a very exhilarating experience. My book launch was very affirming with over 100 books autographed and sold that first afternoon.

I had been driven by a mission to inspire those in my expanding circle of

influence to believe there was a better way to serve this our most vulnerable population our elders.

I also knew from experience the key to quality community life at the time of greatest need rested with those directly empowered to lead and serve.

I was promoting a culture shift from: “Welcome to our home, you are lucky we will be serving you”, followed by an extensive review of the rules and regulations of daily life in the home -to- “Welcome to your new home, we are privileged to serve you.”, followed by seeking an understanding about who you are and what gives meaning to life for you.

(continues inside ...)

Letter from the Editor ... (continued from cover)

I had seen this culture shift successfully emerge and be sustained at Christie Gardens. I was ready to go beyond our doors.

And then, one month later COVID hit and everything ground to a halt. The big conference at which I had been promoted as a featured speaker with my presentation sold out and a waiting list established, was canceled. My moment in the sun evaporated in an international health crisis.

The impact of the pandemic on the folk we had served for so many years, our elders in congregate living, whether long-term care or retirement was devastating. These frail elderly residents were quickly identified as the most vulnerable and just as quickly became the least well-served. It seemed as if the whole sector had collapsed. The distresses of resident families and friends became the recurring subject of scandalous media exposés. Daily death rates were widely broadcast.

Residents were confined to limited spaces, inadequately served with depleting staff resources. Families and friends were denied access. “Window visits” became common. Government agencies flailed in fear, imposing rapidly changing invasive rules, regulations, and restrictions. Leaders endured unrelenting stresses for the pandemic to lift while praying that essential dramatic changes in our approach to care would emerge.

And now most say we are the other side of the pandemic.

For some residents and families there is gratitude and relief. They were protected by dedicated staff who respected their needs. However, hundreds of families and friends experienced the devastating loss of their loved ones in often deplorable conditions. Hostility and anger have been expressed with a demand for change.

And so what has happened?

A new set of bureaucratic layers, new authority figures, blame and shame, and overall uncertainty about the “what if” of a repeat of a large scale health crisis. Government decision-makers regularly announce major investments and trumpet a bright future, built on an unsuccessful model of service. However, there is also a ripple of action throughout our sector. What it needs is a groundswell of positive

solutions which respect our elders, understand what truly matters, and how best to achieve an acceptable quality of life for them.

There is an underlying issue, that of a culture of ageism, which seeks to solve the burden of elders needing care with economically-driven decisions supported by unrelenting demands for compliance with protectionist regulations and knee-jerk responses to media exposure.

What is needed instead is a culture shift for all of us.

Our elders paved the way for the life we experience today. They are worthy of our respect, are valuable members of our society with meaningful contributions still to be made, and must have a key role in determining the future of Eldercare in our society.

And so the second printing of my book has been completed.

I will “keep on keeping on” believing that the devastating pain and loss we have experienced will be eased with a new understanding of what really matters and how best to achieve it. I will also choose to believe that a major culture shift is waiting for our energy and the relentless commitment of organizations like The Christie Gardens Foundation. There is a better way!

Onward!



Donor Profile: Jeanne Rowles



Jeanne Rowles lived at Christie Gardens for 13 years and was a beloved member of our community.

At the time of her passing Ms. Rowles made a bequest to The Christie Gardens Foundation. What follows is a profile provided by her friend, Lynne Stott.

Note from Lynne Stott, October 2022:

Jeanne's legacy lives on in many ways. The team who supported Jeanne over her last couple of months worked with me to find new homes for her possessions. The most important one was Jeanne's electric wheelchair. Jeanne was always fiercely independent and wanted to still be able to take part in the activities that mattered the most to her.

After much searching for an organization that would take the wheelchair, I found Purinapaq – Mobility Without Borders.

purinapaq



MOBILITY
WITHOUT BORDERS

from www.purinapaq.org:

“Purinapaq has been providing access to assistive devices for underprivileged and economically distressed individuals with special needs or disabilities, locally in Canada and around the world since 2007.”

Marguerite Jean (“Jeanne”) Rowles was born in Empress, Alberta, grew up in Saskatoon, and graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 1947.

In 1948, following a year-long recovery period from polio, Jeanne took a two-year position with the Kingston Ontario YWCA, leaving to earn a Masters' Degree from the Toronto School of Social Work.

Jeanne had an outstanding leadership career with the YWCA – in Toronto for ten years, Pakistan for three years, Sudbury for an interim term, and Tanzania for four years. In later years, she was a YWCA volunteer, championing affordable housing for women, women's leadership development, and a commitment to justice for women the world over.

Jeanne's career also included seven years as Director of Toronto Central Neighbourhood House, fourteen years with the national Anglican Church of Canada, first as its Director of Women's Concerns, then as Director of Social Justice Ministries (Aboriginal Relations, Prisons, Housing, and Poverty). After her departure, she had numerous contracts with the national United Church of Canada.

There was no “retirement” for Jeanne, as she served in many leadership capacities in Trinity St. Paul's United Church as its Board Chair, Chair of its Homelessness Action Group, and as a member of its Climate Justice Group, among many other activities.

In her broader city work Jeanne was one of three Co-Chairs of the Older Women's Network of Toronto, which planned, constructed, and opened a 140-unit affordable housing co-op for women and children on the Esplanade in 1997. Since 2008 until her death in October 2021, she lived in Christie Gardens and made numerous contributions to its community, including co-chairing the Environment Group. She deeply valued the Christie Gardens community.

Jeanne always had her eye on the future, championing women's right to education, training, and affordable housing. Through these, her life goes on!

Ways to Give

We accept donations by cheque made payable to The Christie Gardens Foundation, delivered by hand to the Christie Gardens main Reception Desk, or by mail to:

ATTN: The Christie Gardens Foundation
600 Melita Crescent
Toronto, ON M6G 3Z4

One-time or regular monthly donations can be set up through the Canada Helps online service. A "Donate Now" button can be found on our website.



You can arrange to donate shares through your financial institution, usually with no fee nor impact on your taxes. Consult your tax advisor or financial institution for more information.

For Christie Gardens residents: regular monthly donations can be made through pre-authorized payments on resident accounts. Contact the Finance Office to arrange.

For more information on ways to give, visit our website at www.christiegardensfoundation.org



COVID^{IN THE}
HOUSE OF OLD



We recently finished listening to a podcast called COVID in the House of Old, a 6-episode podcast series created and hosted by Megan J. Davies, a historian of health and Professor Emerita at York University.

Dr. Davies has a keen interest in honouring and informing listeners about the tragic realities that so many elders and staff faced in Canadian Nursing Homes, particularly during the first 20 months of the pandemic.

As part of our mission to influence peers and policymakers, the Foundation will be partnering with COVID in the House of Old to bring their travelling exhibit to Toronto in 2023.

For more information about the podcast, go to www.covidinthehouseofold.ca.

About The Christie Gardens Foundation

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*for more information about
The Christie Gardens Foundation
including how to make a donation
please visit our website at
www.christiegardensfoundation.org*

inspire
The Christie Gardens Foundation Scholarship

In September 2022 we launched our scholarship programme: inspire.

Initially available exclusively to staff and service providers who serve the community at Christie Gardens, the inspire scholarship has been created to promote and encourage continuing education in the field of elder care.

**For more information, visit:
www.christiegardens.org/inspire**