

Seasons

OARC
Ontario
Association
of Residents'
Councils

Celebrating the Seasons of Life | For Residents, By Residents

Spring/Summer 2024



IN THIS ISSUE:

RESIDENTS' COUNCIL ELECTIONS

RESIDENT INFLUENCE ON DIETARY SERVICES

SAILING ADVENTURES AND MORE....

Seasons

Published twice a year, *Seasons* contains news and information of interest to those living and working in Ontario long-term care homes.

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Story Submission

To share your story, please email Melissa McVie at mmcvie@ontarc.com with the following information:

- Your article (250-300 word maximum) including a summary of the event, project or program
- Submission title and authors
- Pictures to bring your story to life for our readers
- Quotes – we love hearing about resident reactions to your programs/initiatives

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Resident Mary sailing the seas (aka Lake Ontario) with Burlington Able Sail volunteer. Read about Billings Court Manor’s sailing adventure on page 4.

Back Page:
Residents Carol B. and Audrey D. posing proudly with their Council’s OARC Membership. This Spring, consider joining the 400+ Residents’ Councils that are active members of OARC!



Contest Find the Copper Tea Kettle



In this issue of *Seasons*, we invite residents to find the image of a copper tea kettle! Send your contest submissions to Melissa at: mmcvie@ontarc.com before June 15. Be sure to include your name and address.

Winners selected by random draw for a gift card prize. Congratulations to the Glen Rouge Community Council for winning our “Making the Most of *Seasons* Magazine Checklist Contest” in our Fall/Winter issue.

Message from the OARC Board Chair

“If you can breathe, you can sail.” These words, which appear in the wonderful sailing story shared by Billings Court Manor in Burlington, and the powerful thoughts behind them, are symbolic of the main theme weaving its way through this edition of Seasons.

When we focus on what residents can do, instead of what they can't, it is then up to each resident to complete the phrase: “If you can breathe, you can...” That is what resident empowerment, resident engagement, resident participation, and resident accomplishment, really mean.

You will be inspired by stories of empowerment and accomplishment when you read about a competitive, energized election campaign for choosing Residents' Council executive members at Berkshire Care Centre, in Windsor. They used OARC's Resource Guide for Residents' Councils to provide guidance and support as the Residents' Council entered campaign mode! A great example of the benefits of accessing these invaluable resources and supports from the OARC Team.

You cannot help but be hopeful and inspired as Devora Greenspon answers a resident's questions about her recent move to another LTC home, in a different city altogether. Devora's decision to move is yet another example of empowerment and accomplishment in action. Dave Stanyon shares his own journey of personal discovery as an illustration of a jumping off point for supporting equity, diversity and inclusion in long-term care. Dave says: “...it was about starting small,” but moving forward with hope, commitment and being empowered to shape the place he calls home.

In order to support fully functioning, effective and empowered Residents' Councils, I take this opportunity to issue a call for engagement and to draw your attention to the message about this year's OARC membership drive. If your Residents' Council is already a member of OARC, and has renewed its membership, we are grateful and offer a sincere *Thank You!*

However, if your Residents' Council is not yet a member of OARC, I trust my message resonates with you. In order to effectively and substantively support its full functioning within your LTC home, we ask your Residents' Council to be a member of OARC! Your membership has so many tangible benefits, not least of which is the ability of the OARC Team to provide increased in-person visits, education and coaching — something we have heard loudly and clearly Residents' Councils want.

My best wishes to all of you for a hopeful Spring and a very pleasant Summer... And, remember to “breathe” and commit to your own journey of participation and engagement!



**Mary Nestor, Chair,
OARC Board of Directors**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Nestor", with a long, sweeping flourish extending from the end.

“If You Can Breathe, You Can Sail!”

Shared by: Kathryn Penaligon, Director of Therapeutic Recreation Services, Billings Court Manor



Last summer, residents from Billings Court Manor in Burlington, Ontario, set sail around Hamilton Harbour in a Martin 16 Sailboat. This outing was made possible by local organization, Burlington Able Sail, who, according to their website, “provides sailing opportunities and instruction for individuals with a physical or cognitive disability to enhance their quality of life...”

Able Sail’s inclusive approach, combined with their slogan, “if you can breathe, you can sail,” resonated with the team at Billings Court Manor. Residents of all sailing levels were encouraged to participate. Some chose to sit back, relax and let their instructor take the reins, while others welcomed a more

active role, holding the rudder to assist with sailing the boat. Residents who had never sailed a boat in their life were given the opportunity to learn how to sail if they were interested, proving that it’s never too late to learn a new skill!

The Able Sail volunteers took care of it all: from using their lift to comfortably assist residents into the boat, reminiscing about sailing, and making it a fun and unforgettable outing.

Reflecting on her sailing experience, Billings Court resident Marilyn shared, “it was a wonderful program that made me feel free. I was able to put all my worries behind me and live and enjoy the moment.”

98-year-old resident, Mary, had equally positive feelings about the outing. “I used to love sailing,” she said. “I used to swim and sail in the St. Lawrence River, so it brought back so many wonderful memories being back on the water.”

This sailing excursion is just one example of Billings Court’s commitment to helping residents make their dreams come true. One team member shared, “we strive to find experiences many thought they would never have again when they moved into long-term care.” Focusing on what residents can do, instead of what they can’t, the sky is the limit when we explore new possibilities.

Thank you to Burlington Able Sail for providing this opportunity for the residents at Billings Court. We look forward to many more days on the water this summer!

Learn more about Burlington Able Sail: <https://burlbay.com/able-sail>

Five and Forward!



Include RCWeek Planning as a standing item on your next few meeting agendas.



Explore ways to make RCWeek a whole home event and start spreading the word!



Brainstorm a list of your Council's efforts and accomplishments - display proudly!



Create a brochure or poster to promote your Council within your home.



Visit OARC's website for printable tools and templates and activity ideas.



Let OARC know how we can help make this RCWeek your best yet!

**Mark your calendars
for the 5th Annual
Residents' Council
Week: September
16th - 22nd, 2024.**

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Supporting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in LTC

By Dave Stanyon, Resident Leader, Kensington Gardens and OARC Resident Advisory group



I was adopted at a very early age, at only 3 weeks old, and never learned the identities of my 'birth parents'. I did try to find them after all these years using one of the various DNA search companies, but to no avail. However, I did find out that my heritage is Northern European and Scandinavian, with a little Scottish thrown in for good measure.

Looking around my long-term care home, there are residents and team members of all backgrounds. I'm proud that my home recognizes and celebrates the diversity among us, and together, we are working towards developing inclusive programs and practices to make our home warm and welcoming for everyone who lives, works and visits here.

Through my work with the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils (OARC), I was able to join a

provincial Advisory Committee facilitated by the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care, called [Supporting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Long-Term Care](#). Members of OARC and team members from my home are also actively involved with this initiative, which has been a great way to hear what other homes are doing in the area of EDI, to learn new ways of thinking and doing, and to co-develop tools and resources to advance this important work.

A few years back, this group developed digital and printable Diversity Calendars to help residents and teams keep track of days that have special meanings, including religious and spiritual days of significance, cultural celebrations, awareness days and health promotion days. You can access them here: <https://clri-ltc.ca/resource/diversitycalendar-print/>

Residents may wonder – what can I do in my own home to support EDI? For me, it was about starting small. Like posting the Diversity Calendar for each month on my bedroom door. The calendars can be a great conversation starter. The CLRI also has a printable planning calendar on their website that can be used to inspire new programs and special events in your home. Get residents, team members and family and friends involved! Your Council can also help to support new ideas. You can learn a lot and have a lot of fun doing it.

Transferring to Another LTC Home: Q&A



In this column, we pose your questions to residents living in long-term care.

This time, we've enlisted the help of OARC's Resident Leader, Devora Greenspon to provide some peer-to-peer guidance to our resident reader:

Question: I'm considering a move to another long-term care (LTC) home in a different city. Do you have any advice?

Answer: Your question is very timely, because I've just been through the transition that you're contemplating. For me, the process was over a year in the making, and it was something that I thought long and hard about before moving forward. You see, my wonderful family (children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren) live in both Toronto and Ottawa, so my heart has always been split between these two cities. Technology and the telephone are great ways to keep in touch—but there is no replacement for hugs and quality time spent in person!

Prior to my move, I'd been living in my Toronto-based LTC home for nearly 13 years. About a year ago, with the help of my son, I started the process of getting my name 'on the list' for Hillel Lodge, a Jewish home in Ottawa. I'd been yearning to spend more time with my great-grandson (who is growing up too quickly!) as well as my kids. I also liked the idea of living in a faith-based home, where I could reconnect with Jewish traditions.



When thinking about a move, it's always important to do your research. I'd suggest going to see homes for yourself (if you can), have a trusted friend or family member tour on your behalf, or inquire about virtual tours. It's always nice to meet residents at the homes you're considering—they'll tell you like it is, and give you an honest review!

When you are already living in a LTC home in Ontario, you can expect that it might take a little longer for your request to move to another home to come to fruition. It also depends on where you want to move, how many LTC homes are in the area, how many you choose, and how long their waiting lists are. Each area of Ontario has its own LTC placement team that helps the process along, and in my case, with a move to another city, there were extra steps involved. Your current LTC home will be asked to complete some updated assessments to give your prospective new homes a snapshot of your health and care needs to complete your application. And then comes the waiting...

About a year later, I got the call. There was a space for me at Hillel Lodge. I was both excited and nervous for the big change ahead. Lots of packing, and heartfelt goodbyes.

I've probably over-simplified the steps involved, and looking back, it's all a bit of a blur. I would highly recommend that you seek the support of family, a friend or even a Social Worker at your home to help you navigate the process. It's been a few short weeks since my move, but I can tell you, it's worth it!

Understand. Share. Inspire.

Shared By: Stephanie Ventura, Director of Education, OARC

It turns out, we have more in common with celebrated chef Julia Child than just her love for butter and full-fat cream! The American chef, who popularized French cuisine south of the border, was quoted as saying, “The more you know, the more you can create. There’s no end to imagination in the kitchen” and we agree – the more you know, the more you can create. This is why helping residents know and understand their rights is built right into our mission.



"The more you know, the more you can create. There's no end to imagination in the kitchen."

- Julia Child

OARC's mission is to empower long-term care residents in Ontario to:

- understand their rights
- share their lived experience, and
- inspire a better tomorrow.

Our monthly webinars provide an opportunity to carry out our mission in an engaging and accessible way. We work with our Resident Expert Advisors and Leaders (REAL) Group members to identify topics of interest and importance to residents, to develop webinar content, and to deliver the webinars to our primarily resident audience.

During a typical OARC webinar, participants can expect to learn something new, hear resident experiences and insights, and come away with ideas and inspiration to share with their homes and Residents' Councils. Over the years, OARC has welcomed long-term care sector and subject matter experts as guest speakers or as co-presenters at our webinars. Partnering with special guests provides an opportunity for their in-depth knowledge, understanding and experiences to be shared with our audience, and for our audience to have their questions answered by the experts. This past March, we were pleased to welcome back our friends from the Ontario Seniors' Nutrition & Advocacy Committee (OSNAC) for an informative and engaging webinar in recognition of Nutrition Month.

The webinar, "[Empowering Change: Residents' Councils, Menu Planning and Pleasurable Dining in Long-Term Care](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5IY0oVF5OE)," which can be accessed on OARC's YouTube page using this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5IY0oVF5OE>, focused on:

- understanding areas of long-term care legislation that apply to food services, menu planning and related consultation with Residents' Councils

Resident Influence on Dietary Services

- sharing promising practices for involving residents in food and dining-related decision-making, gathering resident feedback, and closing the communication loop
- inspiring participants to continue the conversation within their homes by identifying attainable next steps

“The speakers were so knowledgeable and provided many new ideas on quality improvement in LTC.”

- Webinar Attendee



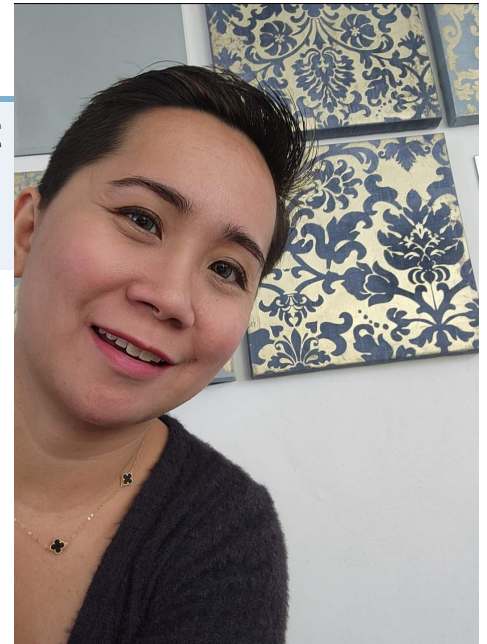
As previously mentioned, residents and team members need to know the requirements, rules and restrictions surrounding food service delivery in long-term care homes so they can participate in robust, informed discussions and contribute to creative problem-solving and solution-generating. During our webinar we heard REAL member Steven share that knowing the legislation encouraged him to work with his home to ensure more than one choice of beverage is available to residents during snack pass. As a result, now the home has a good process in place, an additional measure of accountability, and improved resident satisfaction and intake. **Good things happen when residents are informed.**

“The inclusion of the resident representative (Steven) was a key reminder to include residents in all conversations about the mealtime experience.” - Webinar Attendee

We heard from REAL member Carol who talked about the importance of residents and dietary team members getting to know one another, and how having trusting relationships helps improve communication and mutual understanding. When challenges arise at Carol’s home, the Residents’ Council and dietary team members confidently work through them together, demonstrating that sometimes having too many cooks in the kitchen is a good thing.

If you haven’t already, please visit the Education and Support tab on our website www.ontarc.com to explore the many educational tools and resources available. In addition to the webinar recordings, you’ll find accompanying slides and other materials to support your learning and to give you some food for thought. Bon Appetit!

Team Member Spotlight



Leading with Heart in the Recreation Department

Nominated Team Member: Darlyn Folio
Recreation Manager, Berkshire Care Centre, Windsor, ON

*Similar to residents, the leaders working in long-term care (LTC) homes have their own unique story and a personal journey that led them to work in LTC. **This is Darlyn's story:***

Born in Manila, Philippines, Darlyn came to Canada in the fall of 2018 as an international student, enrolled in the Social Service Worker (SSW)—Gerontology program at St. Clair College in Windsor. Darlyn was proud to add to her previous training and credentials, which included a degree in Psychology and Nursing and Registered Nursing licenses from the Philippines and United States.

Shortly after finishing her SSW course, Darlyn worked as Recreation Manager at Devonshire Retirement Residence during the early years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reflecting on this experience, Darlyn shared that extended periods of outbreak presented new challenges for life enrichment activities which required her and her colleagues to be resourceful and creative, incorporating technology and engaging family care partners to support resident well-being.

Darlyn has carried this collaborative and innovative approach to her work since joining the residents and team at Berkshire Care Centre, a long-term care home in Windsor. "I brought all my experiences, combined with my knowledge and skills in nursing, psychology and gerontology to serve the residents." Recognizing that Berkshire is home to residents of all different ages, interests and abilities, Darlyn embraces a person-centred philosophy.

OARC posed some questions to Darlyn to learn more her work in long-term care:

What do you enjoy most about your work and Recreation Manager role?

My current work is different from other jobs I held before. In nursing, there is more of a focus on physical recovery, and in psychology, it is mostly about understanding mental processes. My work as a Recreation Manager goes beyond a person's behavior and physical status, and strives to bring positivity and understanding. It includes the psychosocial part of a person because wellness should also focus on people's happiness, ways to keep them fighting and keep loving life. I enjoy the part where I make our residents happy.

What do you do to get to know the residents?

As team members working in Recreation, we're responsible for completing a profile assessment for each resident. The best way to get to know residents is to become friends with them. We're working in *their* home. Treat them with utmost respect, the same way you treat your grandparents. Talk *with* them, not to them. The residents have to feel that you care. Relationships are built over time, through ongoing conversations. Take the time to ask questions, and be present.

Celebrating Recreation Teams in LTC

How do you work with the Residents' Council and help to keep residents informed?

Working with the Residents' Council to maintain a consistent meeting schedule is a must. As their appointed Assistant, I understand that any concern that arises should be addressed right away. Continuing to meet with Council when there aren't any pressing issues is also important, as there are always opportunities for positive sharing and gathering resident input. Our home makes sure that the Council is involved in the home's quality improvement. Last but not least, building a rapport with residents is important. It should be established continuously.

Learn about Darlyn's collaborative work with the Berkshire Residents' Council on pages 12-13.

What continues to give you hope and keep you inspired?

My family keeps me inspired. Part of my continued success in this profession is my supportive husband who understands that sometimes, I need to work on holidays just to make sure the events I prepare for our residents are a total success. I teach my son kindness through my work. I am currently expecting. It matters to me that I maintain kindness and a caring attitude at all times. I want to teach my children that knowledge and skills come second. Kindness and attitude come first. Being part of a long-term care home is human service. The way I serve myself and family should be the same treatment I give our residents. We all deserve some love and care. I am fortunate that my Berkshire family shares the same values I have.

Thank you, Darlyn, for all that you do!



Pictured above are residents and team members from Berkshire Care Centre on National Walking Day 2023

Residents' Council Election Success at Berkshire

Shared by: Darlyn Folio, Recreation Manager, Berkshire Care Centre

Last year, the Residents' Council at Berkshire Care Centre worked together to create their own Bylaws, with a consensus decision to have a formal election on an annual basis to elect their Council's executive members: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

As the assistant to the Resident Council, I was asked by the residents to help re-envision the election process. To get us started, the Ontario Association of Residents' Council's "Supporting Your Home's Residents' Council" Resource Guide was a huge help, providing guidance about how our process could look. With the residents fully on board, a two-week campaign period kicked off, running up until election day, when official votes would be cast.

Nine residents expressed interest in running for a specific position. Each candidate was assisted by a recreation assistant, acting in the capacity of 'Campaign Manager'. They assisted residents to design their own posters, capture their campaign platform and help the candidates present themselves to the voters. Residents were very involved every step of the way, while other Council members campaigned for their friends who were running for positions.

For two weeks, the home was full of colorful signage. There was an atmosphere of absolute freedom and creativity. Posters were largely designed by the candidates themselves, with a range of materials purchased by home management to ensure that residents had everything they needed to create handmade designs. One candidate enlisted the support of a team member to print their posters in colour and use their best 'camera angle' to make it both eye-catching and flattering.





On election day, residents were given the whole day to visit the voting area. A simple ballot was designed with candidates' names in large size font. We were encouraged by the size of our voter turnout, with 64 residents casting a ballot! The residents watched as votes were counted carefully by a team comprised of a resident, team member and our home's Executive Director. The document with the final results was signed and sealed.

The following month, our successful candidates were inaugurated with a formal pinning ceremony, led by Executive Director, Erica. Resident Leaders were given certificates and tokens of appreciation for their willingness to serve our Berkshire Community. It was a day of celebration for the new Leaders. Coffee and tea were served as if it was a real victory party.

This year, the Council Leaders started assisting the home with a goal to maintain quality improvement. The home's vision to *"create communities where people of all ages achieve all they can be"* will continue as our new Council Leaders aid in achieving the home's goals and values. The election event was a laborious one to organize but it was accomplished successfully thanks to the help of a strong and united home!

Tips for Executing a Successful Council Election:

- Start your discussions and planning early and **prioritize resident ideas**.
- Capture your Council's election process in **Bylaws** to ensure consistency.
- Remember that elections can be as formal or informal as your group decides. A show of hands vs. paper ballot is acceptable if residents prefer this approach.
- Educate residents about the **value of being involved in a leadership role**.
- Find ways to **get all residents excited and involved** in the process (e.g. making posters, attending presentations or volunteering as Campaign Managers!)
- Make your election a **whole home event** and encourage team members and home management participation to support the process.
- Ensure your process is **democratic, inclusive and transparent** (e.g. involve residents in counting votes, offer residents an option to vote by proxy etc.)
- **Celebrate your outcomes!** This demonstrates that Residents' Council is important and something exciting to be a part of.
- **Connect with OARC for ideas and support!**

Enhancing the Palliative and End-of-Life Care Journey at UniversalCare

Shared by: Villa Colombo Vaughan LTC, Tony Stacey Centre for Veterans Care and Mariann Home

Embedding Palliative and End-of-Life (EOL) care principles into our long-term care homes focuses on improving residents' lives. Chronic illnesses and complex health conditions make elevating the overall well-being of residents an important goal. Our homes emphasize removing the stigma associated with palliative and EOL care. Highlighting and celebrating the entire journey of life stems from our goal to care for the whole person.

As part of UniversalCare's implementation of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) designation, our homes have enhanced our approach and the level of care provided in the palliative and EOL stages of residents' lives. As part of our journey, our staff and family members have been educated on the differences in circumstances, the goals of care, plus the palliative care approaches and strategies used in the home. Additionally, our staff are trained in completing palliative care assessments when a new resident moves in and whenever a resident's health condition changes. The outcomes of these assessments help us to determine appropriate comfort measures including pain and symptom management and psycho-social support, in accordance with each resident's personal wishes.

When a resident approaches the end of their lives, their families are notified and encouraged to spend time with their loved one. Each of our homes provides a 'comfort cart' stocked with supportive items, including light refreshments, musical CDs, aromatherapy, and a user-friendly information book with local resources to support grief and bereavement. We strive to create a calming and comforting atmosphere for the resident and their family.

Our homes have also implemented a "Code Butterfly" protocol, which involves a gathering of staff and families to honour residents as they leave the home for the last time. A sympathy card



is also prepared by the team to send to the family after a resident has passed.

Engaging residents in our homes' processes and discussions around death and dying can help support their understanding and their journey through grief and healing. Appreciating the strong connections and friendships that are created between residents, residents are also invited to join the Code Butterfly and include a



Right-hand page photo:
Residents' Council at Villa
Colombo Vaughan

Left-side page photo: A special
care conference is held with
residents, family/Substitute
Decision Makers (SDM) to
discuss palliative care
approaches and needs. During
these meetings, residents and
their SDM have the opportunity
to express their wishes, goals of
care etc. with the
interdisciplinary team.

personal message in the sympathy card. Our palliative and EOL initiatives are also explained in detail to each home's Residents' Council. Open communication and transparency allow residents to be comfortable with difficult conversations associated with the end stages of life.

Villa Colombo Vaughan offers spiritual care by an on-site spiritual coordinator and local priests assist with prayers and last rites. Residents also may join the prayers in support of their friends during the EOL stages. As an additional measure of support, Villa Colombo Vaughan and Mariann Home initiated 'Circle of Friends' – an informal debriefing for family members during and after the resident's last days. We receive feedback that promotes continuous quality improvement of care and services.

We believe that integrating Palliative and End-of-Life (EOL) care in long-term care emphasizes compassionate and resident-centered approach and affirms the significance of life throughout its various phases.

Looking for Resources to Support Conversations with Residents?

OARC is Here to Help!

Access a list of compiled resources here: <https://www.ontarc.com/documents/webinar/20231004SayingGoodbyeResources.pdf> or check out these archived webinars:

Saying Goodbye: What Residents Can Do to Support Residents at End-of-Life and Honour Them After Death: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZHleVEPwpg>

What's a Palliative Approach to Philosophy? Exploring the meaning behind your new Residents' Right: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbc1KDsg8Hs>



Southbridge London Residents Carol B. and Audrey D. posing proudly with their Council's OARC Membership.

Support the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils (OARC) through Annual Membership!

It's that time of the year again when OARC invites Residents' Councils to consider supporting our organization by purchasing or renewing their annual membership. Membership dollars allow us to travel further, engage with more residents and teams, and take on special projects.

**We hope that we can count on your support for the
2024-2025 membership year.**

To learn more, visit: www.ontarc.com/membership.html

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