

# FOCUS

FALL/WINTER 2022



In this issue...

<b>Summer Recreation &amp; a Butterfly Project Update</b>	2
<b>Giving Residents a Lift</b>	3
<b>Celebrating Philanthropy</b>	4

## Exploring our History of Dedicated Care:

the modern years at Belmont House

In the previous newsletter we looked at the first eight decades of our history. Beginning in 1852 when a group of service-hearted women began a home for women released from prison. We will now pick up the story in 1940, which was a pivotal year in our history.

As the municipal and provincial governments began creating organizations to provide social services, the Industrial Home of Refuge on Belmont Street was no longer needed. The Board of Management remained committed to their newer work of building community for elderly men and women, many of whom were struggling to find housing in the city.



Changing the legal name to “The Toronto Aged Men’s and Women’s Homes”, the Industrial Refuge was converted into a second home for senior women named Ewart House in honour of Mrs. Thomas Ewart who was the first woman President of the organization. The renovated home was opened in May of 1940.

In the years following, The Toronto Aged Men’s and Women’s Homes flourished. Days were filled with activities and entertainment. Residents created recreation clubs and held friendly competitions in putting, billiards, and community fundraising. The Board remained focused on the future.

Towards the end of 1966, Toronto newspapers announced a new era for “the three old grey buildings on Belmont Street.” Tweedsmuir House, Ewart House, and Belmont House were demolished, and the current

East building was built. Opened in 1969, the new Belmont House could house up to 250 residents in dormitory-style suites. The building was renovated in the 1990s into the 81 Retirement apartments and 24 Long-Term Care beds we now have. In June of 2003, in celebration of the Queen Mother’s 100th birthday, the Queen’s Jubilee year, and Belmont House’s 150th anniversary, The Earl of Wessex dedicated the East Wing in memory of the Queen Mother, Queen Elizabeth, officially naming it the *Queen Mother Wing*.

The foresight and financial planning of the early Board was again apparent when the West wing was built. The Long-Term Care Home was opened in 1992 and then dedicated by the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson in 2001 when the West Wing was renamed the *Senator David J. Walker Wing*, after a generous gift was made by the Walker family in gratitude for the care Senator Walker received at Belmont House.

In the years since, Belmont House has continued to reach new heights of excellence. An extensive renovation of the care floors in the *Senator David J. Walker Wing* was undertaken in 2006, and of 2East in the Queen Mother Wing in 2014. Recreation and spiritual programs have expanded, new therapeutic models and technologies have been embraced and partnerships with prominent Colleges and Universities have facilitated important research in senior’s care. In 2022, we have also officially changed our legal name from The Toronto Aged Men’s and Women’s Homes to Belmont House.

Through the storied 170 years of Belmont House’s history, the themes of community and philanthropy have remained strong. We hold fast to the vision of our founding mothers, striving to provide the best care possible. We are dedicated to remaining a community that supports one another and builds a strong future for the next 170 years.

We will have more news to share with you on our future in early 2023.

# 170



## Recreation Programming makes Belmont House so Much Fun!

After two years of distanced events that often needed to extend over several days, our treasured community summer events have returned!

In June we welcomed Ontario's strawberry season with the Strawberry Tea. Residents and tenants enjoyed a beautiful afternoon in the North Garden with live music, pleasant company, and shortcake made with fresh Ontario strawberries.



Sam and Martin Wakim having a great time at SummerFest.

Generous donations have funded entertainment put on by the Health Arts Society of Ontario's Concerts in Care. Research has shown that music is particularly beneficial for seniors. Music can reduce stress & anxiety, enhance memory, improve communication, and has even been shown to alleviate some physical pain. We are so glad that live performances have now resumed at Belmont House!

After lots of planning and preparation, the recreation team held the annual SummerFest event on August 10th. Complete with card tables and 3 Elvis impersonators, the Viva Las Vegas themed event was a hit!

"It is a great feeling to have everyone together again," expressed Gail Walker, Director of Retirement and Recreation, "We have always recognized the importance of social & mental well-being and we are thrilled to be able to hold events like this again—and get back some normalcy."

The Belmont House recreation calendar is full of fun and engaging activities. The daily, weekly, and monthly calendars for retirement living and long-term care can be found posted throughout the home and monthly calendars are always updated in the Sagely app and on our website.

## An Update on the Butterfly Program

The metamorphosis of 2West is at the halfway point! Over the past six months staff and management have undergone extensive training on the Butterfly Model of Care and environmental changes have begun to take place.

Staff training has been packed with material that has provided the foundation to completely change the way we approach care for residents with dementia. It is proving to be a very interactive and engaging experience, enabling the trainees to learn about dementia, get in touch with their emotions and understand how best we can use emotion focused care to support the people living at Belmont House. This will help everyone on 2West feel like they have a sense of purpose despite any losses of cognition or memory that they experience.



Elli Seits is thrilled with her new door and how her hallway is coming together.



# An Unwavering Commitment to Provide the Best Care out There

If you have visited Belmont House, you know there is something special here. The serene grounds, jam-packed recreation calendars, and beautiful furnishings all work together to create that special feeling but what really sets Belmont House apart is the people.

We are blessed to have a community that works together, in all aspects of life at Belmont and really makes us who we are.

Throughout our history, there are examples of how people have supported each other, encouraged our work, and made the impossible happen. From our humble beginnings by a group of service-minded church women (who didn't even hold the right to vote or own property) to our modern-day reputation of **the Senior's Home of Choice**, our history has been built by teamwork and community generosity.

"Vital ceiling lift equipment provides more than physical relief for staff, but dignity for residents," shares Director of Care, Donna Locke. "As residents move in with higher care needs, we need to outfit more rooms with ceiling lifts. We also need to replace these lifts after several years of use to ensure safety and smooth transfers."



*If you believe in continuing the tradition of compassionate care offered at Belmont House, would you consider making a warm-hearted donation to help us replace these lifts? A very generous gift of \$2,700 would cover the entire cost of replacing and installing one ceiling lift and will make life better for residents for years to come.*

Of course, a donation of any size will help us install 10 new ceiling lifts this year. You can make a donation by filling out & mailing back the enclosed reply form, or by visiting [belmonthouse.com](http://belmonthouse.com) and making a secure donation that will make a real difference for residents!

PSW Janet Alomesen has worked at Belmont House for 19 years and on 2West for nearly 6 years. She shared that going through the training program has, "made me more aware of how to care for residents by providing them with true person-centered care."

After residents, staff, and families helped choose paint colours, door decals, and items for memory boxes, all the hallways have received a makeover! Check out the photo to see how residents reacted to their new doors. We are thrilled with how the unit is looking!

Training sessions have also begun with family members. It is an opportunity to learn more about the principles the staff are learning – we are pleased to offer this training as it will better ensure more holistic changes on 2West.



Tweedsmuir House men playing checkers circa 1965

# 170

# Walking and Rolling Together!



Marius Setkus, Alice Selian, Doreen Berg, David Bluestein, and St. John's Ambulance Therapy Dog, Dexter, all having a great time walking and rolling for Belmont House Foundation.

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With over 100 participants walking and rolling with us, we took over the sidewalks bordering Belmont House and had a great day celebrating the beautiful weather while raising \$33,047 for the Belmont House Foundation!

We are so grateful to have such a tremendously supportive community and want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who sent encouragement and donations. We especially want to thank our Presenting Sponsor, Home Instead and our Gold Sponsor, Achieva Health, who have both been constant support for our work in the Foundation and at Belmont House. We couldn't do it without all of you!

## Celebrating a milestone in our Community Philanthropy

While Belmont House is celebrating its 170th anniversary—Belmont House Foundation also has an exciting birthday in 2022!

For 30 years, Belmont House Foundation has strived to meet the growing needs of our community by raising the necessary funds in order to provide grants to Belmont House. Belmont House is committed to a standard of care that can't be met by government funding and resident co-payments alone. By channeling the generosity of our community, we are able to reach new heights of care.

"I want to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has directed their philanthropy to the Belmont House Foundation," says Barbara Hyland, Chair of the Belmont House Foundation Board of Directors, "Our community is powerful and has made an enormous impact. I know that together, we can continue to provide the absolute best quality of life for everyone who lives with us."

### Snapshot of philanthropy-driven initiatives at Belmont House:

- Additional nursing staff & training
- Exciting concerts & performances
- Electric beds for every resident
- Renovated tub & shower rooms
- Therapeutic mattresses
- Recreation programs
- Beautiful artwork & antique furniture
- Garden maintenance
- Chaplaincy program
- Improved security, heating & cooling systems
- Physiotherapy & exercise equipment

## FOCUS

A newsletter for donors and friends of Belmont House

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Belmont House is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors licensed by the Ministry of Long Term Care, the Retirement Home Authority, and operates under a service agreement with Ontario Health.

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