

FOCUS

SPRING/SUMMER 2022

Celebrating 170 years of dedicated care

a look at the early history of Belmont House

Augustin-Norbert Morin was serving as the Premier of "Canada East", the Toronto Stock Exchange had just opened, and the first railroads had just finished being built in the city. The 1852 census showed a city that was growing rapidly, and a group of community-minded women identified a large gap in the care of some of the city's most vulnerable.

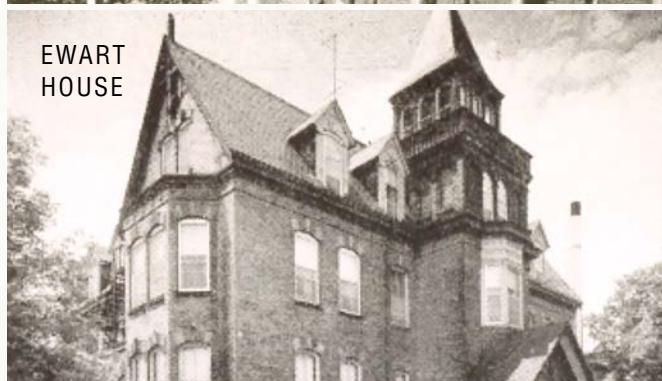
Renting a house on Richmond Street, the women opened a home to meet the needs of women released from prison. Within a few years, more space was required and so a larger home 'in the country beyond the tollgate' was rented on the site where Belmont House now sits. A new home was built and named the Magdalen Asylum and Industrial House of Refuge. The home provided women, often ignored by society, a safe space where they received comfort, care, and practical training for a career.

*"I believe it to be one of the
best managed and more needed
institutions in the city"*

– Dr. J.C Clapp, 1885

To respond to the rise in women experiencing homelessness, a wing of the House of Refuge was set aside for aged women. With the support of the surrounding community and a generous legacy gift, the home grew to provide housing and care to senior women and then men. In the 1880s a second building named The Aged Women's Home was built. The men were cared for within the House of Refuge. In 1908, a third home was built, taking the name we all know today, Belmont House.

As the City of Toronto grew, social service needs grew with it. By 1940, the job training for women released from prison was taken up by government schools and the House of Refuge was closed. Renamed Ewart House, the Board of Directors had the forethought to



continue their service for seniors and Ewart House served as a care home for aged women. Along with the newly renamed Tweedsmuir House (formerly The Aged Women's Home) and Belmont House, the homes together cared for 250 men and women ranging in ages from 65-90+.

The community continued to flourish and earned respect for excellent care and management, which led to Belmont House's reputation of "the Senior's Home of Choice."

In our Fall Focus Newsletter, we will explore the modern age of Belmont House, including the opening of our present day buildings, care models and community.

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Butterfly Update — Our Wings are Growing!

Since announcing the implementation of the Butterfly Project last Fall, we have been encouraged by the excitement and support from our community. While COVID-19 has continued to cause delays for our team, we are back on track!

Through February, residents were busy choosing paint colours, memory boxes and personalized doors! “Choosing door designs was an exciting day for all of us” says Elleni Bouronikos, co-lead of the Butterfly



Robert Lent was thrilled to choose his new door design. We are looking forward to seeing how the hallways of 2West transform.

Project, “It was great seeing the excitement in the residents and how all the staff worked together and began seeing the vision for the floor.”

As we have all been learning, the Butterfly model will create the space for residents to feel more at home and be active participants in more aspects of their lives. Increased feelings of emotional belonging, a decrease in falls, pain and responsive behaviours along with an increased sense of comfort and happiness are all outcomes of this model of care that make the planning and trainings so worthwhile.

“I am really enjoying going through the training process,” shared Filomena Pimentel, one of Belmont’s amazing housekeeping staff, “we do our best for residents but having a better understanding of the personal and emotional sides of dementia will help us be better and care more effectively for our treasured residents.”

Belmont staff began their training in March and as we learn about the different components and how to implement an emotion-centered model of care for seniors with Dementia, the environment will begin to fill with sensory items. Support from our amazing donors is helping fund this transformation and we cannot thank everyone enough for their generosity! We have raised enough donations so far to purchase the custom door decals, fill our memory and “rummage” boxes, and paint the space with cheerful colours.

COVID-19 Update from the CEO

Written by Maria Elias

As many of you will know, at the beginning of the year Belmont House faced our first resident and tenant cases of COVID-19. As the Omicron variant spread quickly through all our communities, our team strengthened our response. We moved to daily rapid antigen testing for all staff, essential caregivers and visitors. We made N95 masks available for all staff daily and followed strict infection spread prevention measures set out for us by Toronto Public Health.

While January was a difficult month, I am pleased to share that all COVID-19 cases resolved and we are so thankful to not have lost anyone to this terrible virus. I have also been so encouraged by the Belmont House staff’s ability to handle the additional duties and complications in their daily work valiantly. Staff pulled together to ensure residents were not just cared for in the physical sense, but emotionally and spiritually as well.

I also want to thank all Belmont House family

What's Better than a Comfortable & Cozy Bed?

Our Mission of providing support for independence, companionship, choice, dignity and privacy is at the centre of everything we do at Belmont House. Our love and dedication for all residents and tenants is what drives us forward in investing in the best people, programming, and equipment. The Belmont House Foundation was formed in 1992 to ensure that mission will continue well into the future.

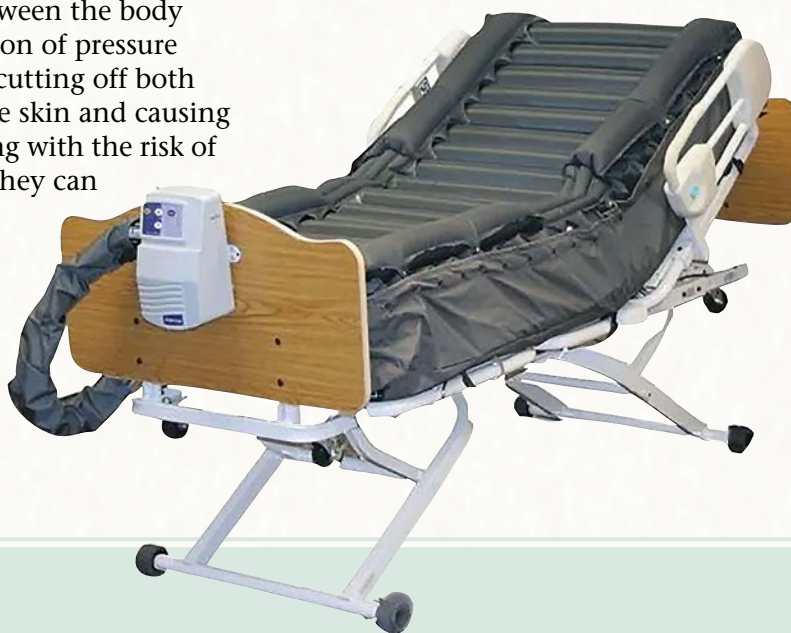
Among the items of care equipment used at Belmont House are Therapeutic Surfaces; specialized mattresses that offer additional support and protection from pressure injuries. A challenging medical condition and declining mobility can lead to extended time spent in bed. Constant contact between the body and the mattress leads to the creation of pressure spots that pinch off blood vessels, cutting off both oxygen and nutrient delivery to the skin and causing pressure ulcers, and discomfort along with the risk of infections. Our care team does all they can to prevent these injuries. The best addition to a great care plan for those at risk of pressure ulcers or bedsores is a Therapeutic Surface.

Therapeutic Surfaces provide those residents who require them additional dignity, support, and comfort. To provide this crucial

support, we are asking for **your support** to help us purchase 10 additional surfaces.

"We purchase new Therapeutic Surfaces every year," shared Donna Locke, Director of Care "as new residents move in with more acute needs, and residents who live here have complex care needs, these mattresses are really on the front line of preventing very uncomfortable injuries. Your donation will make a big difference in the comfort of Belmont House Residents."

Please consider a donation to Belmont House Foundation today. Your gift will make a real difference.



and community members for their constant encouragement and understanding as we navigated a difficult month. I know the fear and frustration you felt. I also have family members living in Long-Term Care. The willingness to support public health measures, waiting for test results every time you visit and rolling up your sleeves to get vaccinated has made this time so much easier to navigate.

We know that the pandemic is not over, there will likely be more bumps on the road before we can

call life "normal" again. I however, also know that by sticking together, supporting one another and continuing to follow the science, ensure a safe and caring home for everyone.

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Mrs. Thomas Ewart,
First President
1891–1895



Belmont House maintains status of “Exemplary”

This past November Belmont House was visited by surveyors from Accreditation Canada, an independent non-governmental organization, to assess the practices and policies in both our Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes. The surveyors met with staff, residents, tenants, family members and board members to help gather insight from all perspectives of our community.

As you know, the opinions and ideas of our community mean a great deal to us. The various councils & open-forum meetings provide the Belmont House management team and Board of Director’s valuable feedback that we implement



wherever we can. After four days of survey and assessment, Belmont was again awarded Accreditation with Exemplary standing.

“We are proud to be able to continue to achieve Exemplary standing,” says Maria Elias, CEO “our team at Belmont is dedicated to excellence at every level and to have that recognized by Accreditation Canada confirms for us that we are not just meeting the needs of our community—but exceeding them.”

Wellness Corner

Through the stress and fear of 2020, two Belmont House staff saw an opportunity to bring some much needed wellness breaks for staff. Paige Fernandes, Planning and Community Engagement Coordinator and Gordana Stankovic, Physiotherapist, have built a wellness program that includes stretching, breathing exercises, lessons in mindful eating, and so much more. Their work has made wellness accessible through the workday and the staff have been benefitting from their knowledge.

“I often take a couple minutes in my shift and do a breathing exercise and one of the stretching circuits they taught us,” RPN Dekyi Kalsang zen-fully shared, “Our days can get hectic and taking some time to center myself and practice some mindfulness brings a sense of calm in my work.”

We were so proud to receive AdvantAge Ontario’s 2021 Workplace Quality award in recognition of the innovative and impactful program Paige and Gordana have designed.

Give it a try!

Wellness Corner

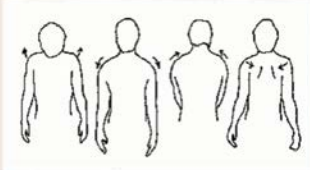
MINDFULNESS IS BEING AWARE OF OR BRINGING ATTENTION TO THIS MOMENT IN TIME, DELIBERATELY AND WITHOUT JUDGING THE EXPERIENCE. MINDFULNESS IS RECOMMENDED BY PROFESSIONALS AND IS A CHEAP, EFFECTIVE AND ‘DOABLE’ INTERVENTION TO STRESS

Dr. Patrizia Collard

WELLNESS FOR YOU TO TRY

MINDFUL SHOULDER SHRUG

1. FORWARD
 - A. BRING THE SHOULDERS UP AND FORWARD
 - B. PULL SHOULDERS DOWN.
 - C. REPEAT 5X
2. BACKWARD
 - A. BRING THE SHOULDERS UP TO THE EARS
 - B. SQUEEZE THE SHOULDER BLADES TOGETHER
 - C. PULL SHOULDERS BACK DOWN
 - D. REPEAT 5X



NOTICE HOW YOUR BODY FEELS AS YOU MOVE YOUR SHOULDERS EACH TIME & TRY TO TAKE DEEP BREATHS, IT’S VERY RELAXING!

FOCUS

A newsletter for
donors and friends
of Belmont House

Writer:
Deanna Codner
dcodner@belmonthouse.com

Design:
JPD Design

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.

Belmont House 55 Belmont Street, Toronto ON M5R 1R1
Phone: (416) 964-9231 Ext. 238 Fax: (416) 964-3617
E-mail: information@belmonthouse.com
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