

BETHANY PIONEER VILLAGE INC.
Annual General Meeting – November 13, 2022

Administrator's Report

Thank you for attending this year's Annual General Meeting. For those who don't know me, I am Lisa Irlbeck, and I am blessed to be the Administrator of Bethany Pioneer Village.

I am thankful that we have gotten through the past year while continuing to deal with COVID and the ever-changing battle of this health care system. I want to thank my team:

- We have all of our 75 employees to thank for the hard work, dedication, commitment, passion and empathy that they bring to their jobs every day. For these 75 employees, it is not just a job – it is ingrained in them to care.
- No matter what is going on, they are here for the residents and, let me tell you, it hasn't been easy. Day in and day out, from the worst of the snowstorms that saw many staff driving snowmobiles to get to work, to working in the oppressive heat while the boilers were being replaced this last year.
- The staff are here. They are here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, striving to make a difference in our resident's lives. Directors, Nurses, LPN's, CCA's, Laundry, Enriched Living Aids, Housekeepers, Dietary, Cooks, Coordinators, Maintenance, Recreation and Activities and summer students – all 75 of these employees are outstanding. Without them, Bethany would not thrive the way it does.
- Thank you to my Administration team. I know I ask a lot of you all the time, and just when I don't think that you can do any more, you still go above and beyond.
- Thank you to the Saskatchewan Health Authority for always being supportive of us and lending a helping hand when we need it.
- Thank you to the Bethany board, which provides the strong hand that guides the ship. They provide insight, knowledge, wisdom and the ever-needed support to make Bethany a great community.

We live in a country where each of the four seasons has its beauty. Winter can be picturesque, yet we often complain of winter's bitter cold while waiting impatiently for spring. In summer, we often wish the heat was over, and we long for the refreshing coolness of autumn. How much happier we would be if we joyfully embrace each season as it comes. How much happier would we be if we always looked for the presence of beauty in each of the changing seasons?

One thing I know for sure is that since the start of COVID and throughout its progression the last two years, the face of health care has continuously changed and we have had to change along with it. Instead of waiting anxiously for what may come, we continuously reflect on how we can do more and be even better. We strive to face the challenges as they are presented, adapt as best we can, have faith that there will be better days and enjoy what we have.

This Year at Bethany

As we moved through the year at Bethany, we saw some exciting events:

- The opening of all Bethany's facilities to visitors.
- Removing the face masks that everyone could not wait to get rid of.
- The promise of better weather.
- The opening of the Three Lakes Daycare – the residents love interacting with the children when they come over to play in the Silver Willow Room and outside in Aspen's back yard.
- The dedication of the Silver Willow Room to the Ladies Auxiliary and the Live Art Auction by local artists, including some Bethany residents.
- The return of Bethany's Summerfest as the first event in three years. With the excess rain and thriving mosquito population we were thankful to be able to move the event indoors to the Silver Willow Room.
- Bethany's Backyard Market was a huge success and provided the Three Lakes Volunteer Firefighters with a place to raise over \$1200.00 for firefighting needs.
- For the first time in three years, Bethany Sunday was held with a Church Service for residents, family and community members; a pancake brunch, and a special music program of Faith, Hope and Love presented by singers from Bethany and community members.
- Events still to come:
 - The return of Bethany's Craft Sale on November 27th in the Silver Willow Room
 - Bethany's Candlelight Service on December 18th in the Silver Willow Room
- Thanks to continued funding from a grant, we are grateful that Shey Lynne Brockman has been able to continue keeping Birch residents happy through her position as Activities Coordinator.
- We welcome Jennifer Haines as the new Birch Manager. She comes to us from Lakeview Pioneer Nursing home with experience as a Food Services Manager and a champion for excellence in maintaining safety. She provides compassion and empathy to Birch residents and staff.
- The old boiler systems at Aspen and Birch have been replaced.
- Thanks to Suer Pollen Mechanical for donating the new air conditioning the Birch Manor residents, staff and visitors are enjoying.

As tired as we all are of life with COVID, there are improvements in the lives of residents, family members and staff at Bethany. Family and visitors are welcomed once again. Babies and children are held by loving grandparents and run around outside in playful enjoyment. Having "coffee" is being enjoyed and, overall, life appears improved for the residents. They have enjoyed the outdoors on warm summer days, gone out on "tours" in the Bethany van, and spent time with other residents in activities outside of their rooms. We no longer have to rely on airing events on "video feed" as residents from Aspen, Birch and the Units now share worship services and other activities with each other in the Silver Willow Room.

Health Care Challenges and Framework for Adapting

It is no secret that health care in Saskatchewan is crumbling around us and that the province was not prepared or equipped to withstand a long-lasting pandemic. So, with the knowledge that this virus is not going away anytime soon, we look to the future. What do we need to have in place in order to do better? We need to focus on a framework using four main cornerstones – Accountability, Collaboration, Trust, and Mutual Respect. I speak of these cornerstones from the perspective of focusing on resident care. We are not here today at this AGM to focus on ourselves, but rather on what we can do as an organization to better serve our residents.

This past year has not been without challenges as we experienced yet another year of the COVID pandemic. As with the rest of the world, and especially from what I have observed in sharing with other health care organizations in Saskatchewan, - we are tired. Residents, families, visitors, and staff are tired. Tired of the continuous masking, tired of restrictions, and tired of COVID in general. It's the excuse for not being able to do certain things.

The beginning of this year did not start well for Bethany. We were able to be COVID-free for almost two years throughout the pandemic. But at the end of February, most of Aspen and Birch residents and staff became infected with COVID. It was the first outbreak of any kind in four years. This outbreak affected the staffing team, the residents and family members. It was a high cost to Bethany, physically, mentally and financially.

An average outbreak costs \$32,000.00 extra for staffing, overtime, supplies and all the additional PPE, plus the extra cleaning that is required to be performed. As I prepare this address, an outbreak in September at Birch affected residents and staff and required the postponement of Bethany Sunday into October. Right now, in November, Aspen is currently in outbreak of COVID19 and Influenza A. This is something that is trending across Canada, and it is a strain like no other influenza, causing individuals to become seriously ill.

65 percent of health care workers across the country are leaving health care to seek other employment. They are burnt out and tired from the long hours, overtime, and, in some cases where there is not enough staff, working double shifts and nonstop consecutive days, with no recognition for the price they are paying emotionally and physically for the jobs they are doing. So what is next? How do we motivate staff to stay on the job?

With solid plans in place and a robust framework, we will be able to get through one of the most challenging times health care has ever seen. Moving forward, COVID outbreaks are something that we must learn to live with and manage. How? By providing vaccinations to all our residents and staff against the flu and the biavirulent COVID booster shots. This gives our residents and staff good protection against becoming overly sick with these variants. If you have not received your flu vaccination, I encourage you to do so now!

Bethany Staff Meeting Challenges

Bethany staff have experienced their share of challenges over this past year. There have been challenges with adjusting to a new schedule that needed to be changed to meet staffing needs. When staff are out sick, others work with less staff some days, but still they persevere and manage to find a way to get the work done.

We have been blessed to have new staff join us and have other staff rejoin our BPV family. They tell me they choose to work here because of:

- The availability of 12-hour shifts and the days off that occur in-between
- The atmosphere of care that goes beyond the basics
- The support they receive from management and Bethany board.

They come with new ideas and are willing to share them to aid in improving the care we provide. They suggest different products (i.e. benefits and washes) that will make things more cost-efficient for the residents with their adoption. The hard-working combination of new and long-time staff are the reason Bethany is known as a place of welcome and great care in the community of Middle Lake and many surrounding communities.

Bethany is one of 169 homes in the province of Saskatchewan. Bethany has no empty staff lines; we have recruited enough staff into our facility and we have been fortunate to attract fully trained, qualified staff. This is not the case for many other homes struggling to fill empty staff lines and having to hire untrained staff. This leaves residents vulnerable and staff members hurt because of the lack of training and inexperience.

In our efforts to recruit and retain good quality staff for Bethany residents, we stay focused on the four main cornerstones of accountability, collaboration, trust and respect. This requires thinking outside of the box. We work on partnering with Colleges and Universities and government Immigration Programs to make sure we bring good quality people into our organization.

We have staff who are willing to take on roles as teachers, mentors and experts for all of our staff. We will be training five teams to be TLR (Transfer, Lift and Repositioning) trainers next month. Staff volunteers have come forward to be Hand Hygiene auditors to ensure all staff follow good hand-washing techniques. With this staff assistance, we will be able to better put into practice transfers, lifts and repositioning to benefit the residents and all staff. Another team is willing to take on the GPA (Gentle Persuasion Approach) instructor role. All three of these programs are part of what is required by the Ministry of Health in Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Health Authority for homes that provide care to Long-Term-Care residents.

An Up-date on Long Term Care Issues

The Pandemic brought attention to, tested, and exasperated the on-going issues that have been plaguing Long Term Care. Not that long ago many new Bethany residents walked through the door when they arrived, but now we see more and more coming in wheelchairs. It's not just that they are elderly, but they also present complex health issues and need complex care. We are seeing new residents that are younger and coming to Bethany with issues that were not brought to Long Term Care in the past. The budget that goes with the needed care has not changed, but the cost of that care certainly has.

We are now seeing loved ones being placed in homes that are up to 150K away from home, some with no family to visit because it is too far. They are ripped out of their community because there are no beds for them closer to home. Residents and family members have no choice and there is no collaboration in place to change this process.

New Government Audit Initiative

Twelve minutes! Can you get ready in the morning in twelve minutes? Can you wash up, go to the bathroom, brush your teeth, fix your hair and be dressed for the day in twelve minutes? Now add mobility issues to that number. This is the government-regulated expectation for staff when getting a resident with mobility issues ready for the day.

The current government has set out an initiative that all 169 Special Care Homes in the province of Saskatchewan be audited every three years to ensure that homes meet the standards outlined in the Special Care Home Guidelines. The government amended the guidelines in July 2021 and gave homes a chance to become compliant within six months. The new guidelines are placing more restrictions and more care duties for the residents in these homes with the intention of making all homes safer and providing a higher quality of care. Accreditation work was also being done during this time.

Visitors to Bethany have frequently told us what a beautiful place we have here, how clean it is, and how well the staff take care of the residents. Our ability to provide home-cooked meals in an atmosphere of warmth and good company while providing care and activities of enjoyment for the residents is well known by many and seen as an attraction for admission of others to our home. The credit for this goes to our staff and they are often congratulated (as they should be) for what they do to make this a home for all.

Bethany was the first affiliate Special Care Home to be audited. Two auditors from the Ministry of Health spent two days here in October, 2022. The audit team described Bethany as:

- Picturesque and immaculate inside and out with fantastic food
- An impressive group of individuals working in the home
- Residents are well taken care of and happy to be living at Bethany

The audit team shared with us this statement from one of the residents they interviewed: *“Bethany saved my life; it answered my prayers. I was not well when I came here, and, I was not going to be here long, but I will never leave now. This is my home, and the people that care for me are my family.”*

The other piece the auditors commented on is Bethany's sense of community that they observed and the importance of that community support. They commented, *“It feels like a great place to be, and Bethany's beautiful initiatives include not just the residents, but those that live in the surrounding area.”* The auditors felt that no other home they had visited had the community inclusiveness that Bethany strives to do.

Unfortunately, the expectations of all the work involved in meeting new government guidelines does not come with more budget dollars. Long Term Care is plagued with a lot of issues and the only solutions being offered require more dollars to be spent and those dollars are not forthcoming. Bethany Board, along with the help of staff, families, and residents, can help by advocating for better government collaboration and the building of inclusive relationships within our health care system.

With the changing seasons in our lives comes new opportunities and challenges. There may be relationships to mend and new friendships to begin. There may be further opportunities for service in our communities. There is also the opportunity and privilege of being a listening ear and guide for family members, friends and coworkers.

Charles Spurgeon once said, *“The seasons change, and you change, but the Lord abides evermore the same. And the streams of His love are as deep, broad and full as ever”*. As we continue on our life's journey, we know that God goes with us to help us face our challenges and to share our delight in our joyful experiences and new opportunities. We keep our hearts open to God, knowing he will supply our every need.

This year I received a wall plaque and hung it on my bedroom wall. I see it every night before I fall asleep and read it every morning when I wake up before I start my day. It says, *“Pray with me, pray for Bethany, and pray for all those blessed to be part of Bethany.”* With prayer and faith, we will continue to strive on our Bethany journey to collaborate and advocate for a better health care system.

Stay safe. Thank you.
Lisa Irlbeck
Administrator