



Shalem

Society for Senior Citizens Care

The Society Newsletter – Fall & Winter Edition



Dorothy, left, gets acquainted with Shalem's Housekeeping Manager, Gemma Apostle Bragat who has worked at Shalem for seven years. Dorothy's first day of work was August 24th.

Meet Shalem's New Executive Director

We welcome Dorothy de Vuyst, Shalem's new Executive Director. Her appointment follows the retirement of Jerry Borst who provided direction and inspiration to Shalem for the past four years.

Dorothy comes to us after an almost 24-year career with Samaritan's Purse, a Christian aid organization, where her last position was Regional Director for Africa. Her job, while based in Calgary, took her over the years to more than 50 countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. One can't help but wonder if the move from exciting international work to staying put in Calgary will be a difficult transition, but says Dorothy, although it was a tremendous privilege to have seen different cultures, what drew her to Samaritan's Purse in the first place was a desire to help and care for people, to understand their needs and create an environment they can thrive in. That, she emphasizes, extends to our seniors too. "I really do believe in creating an environment where seniors can be affirmed and respected for their contribution to society. I am looking forward to growing Shalem as a place that has that as a culture and focus. We all stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. We need to support them as they go through the various challenges of aging."

Coping with COVID, it's a challenge

Randall Clark moved into Shalem Manor in March, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. A professional chef for 35 years, after retirement he regularly volunteered his cooking skills for church community ministries but that came to a halt with COVID. "I needed something to do," says Randall, so he started a weekly Shalem soup ministry. He delivers homemade soup to any resident who requests it. Extra soup he donates to the church next door for their still ongoing Meal Ministry and Food Pantry, two community services that he has played an active role in for the past eight years.

Walk along the southwest corner of Shalem and you might run into Shurli Vance, pulling weeds in a little corner garden. Despite COVID, the 73-year-old voluntarily cares for not only the Shalem plot but also continues to run her own landscaping service. Her main job as a Disability Support Worker is on hold but Shurli still maintains clients' gardens and runs her rides service.



A Shalem corner garden benefits from Shurli's 52 years of landscaping experience.



Randall's need to remain active inspired him to offer homemade soup to residents

Vern Jordan says the pandemic hasn't upset his routine much. He devotes himself to doing a lot of exercising like pull-ups and push-ups. The Shalem Haven resident does 400 sit-ups every day and is a regular in the Haven Snack and Coffee room which staff disinfect a couple of times a day.

Not all residents at Shalem are finding it easy to adjust their routines now that COVID-19 restrictions are slowly being eased. Getting *into* the routine of lockdown was difficult and now some find it difficult to begin to get *out* of the routine. Leaving the cocoon of safety created during the past months make some people anxious about going outside. According to Shalem staff, there are residents afraid to come out of their suites. Their world has become smaller. In addition to this fear and anxiety, staff has also noticed a degree of decline in some; for example, some residents now use walkers whereas before COVID, they didn't. Perhaps one loses confidence to do things one hasn't had to do in a while. Exercise classes have re-started but attendance is down as is the number of participants in the chaplaincy service.

The big question Shalem staff are asking is 'how do we get back as close to normal as possible? How can we breathe some life back into our community? Perhaps the best answer lies with the residents themselves who hopefully will share ideas with staff. Meanwhile, families and friends can be instrumental to slowly help loved ones increase their comfort level and get back to their former routines.

Our Mission: SHALEM, meaning WHOLENESS, was formed with the mission and the communal desire to provide a Christian setting that enhances the wellbeing of seniors.

The Court Report

The saga of repairing the exterior of the Shalem Court finally came to an end with final cleanup in the spring. The building was damaged by moisture seeping in behind the stucco and walls. The full impact of the damage came to light only once the stucco was removed. The following repairs and improvements have been completed:

- All exterior stucco replaced with durable hardy board siding
- All water-damaged wood was replaced to ensure both safety and strength
- The insulation was replaced with a double layer of spray foam insulation
- Windows were replaced with upgraded triple-pane windows
- All suite interiors that suffered water damage have been repaired
- New balconies were constructed and glass balcony railings installed
- Air conditioners were installed in each suite

Originally we had expected the cost would not exceed \$1.5Million. However, with the excessive hidden damage to the wall interiors along with the upgrades, the final cost of the project came to \$1,975,000.

We are happy with the results of the restoration and believe the Society has received good value for the money spent. We wish to acknowledge long time society members Glenn Minnesma and Edwin Kamphuis who volunteered their time and experience weekly.

We are now accelerating our fundraising. It slowed down due to the COVID pandemic. We greatly appreciate all of you who have contributed to the Court Exterior Restoration Project. As of July 2020 we raised \$185,000 of our first goal of **\$500,000**. Please prayerfully consider helping Shalem attain this goal.



Shalem Court, fresh and fixed and better than ever.

How can you help Shalem reach its goal? By giving a:

- **Donation as a lump sum or as a pledge over a period of time**
- **Legacy Gift (in honour of or in memory of a loved one)**
- **Personal loan either interest free or at a low interest rate**
- **Donation upon termination of a Life Lease (for Court Residents)**
- **Annuity – Planned Giving**

For further details visit: www.shalem.ca and click the *Support Us* button

To get more first-hand information or set up a personal appointment, please contact Dorothy de Vuyst, executivedirector@shalem.ca, Phone: 403-240-2800 ext 6 OR Tony VandeKraats, tony@cwlpark.com

Shalem Society Board of Directors:

Tony VandeKraats, President (tony@cwlpark.com)
Bert Hagens, Treasurer
Jean Weening, Vice President
Maarten Buth, Secretary
Henrietta Koning, Director
Hinke Meijers-Weening, Director
Madelene Vanderburg, Director
Monique VanderVeen, Strategic Planning
Willem Sijphee, Director

Shalem Administrative Staff:

Contact us at www.shalem.ca
Dorothy de Vuyst, Executive Director (executivedirector@shalem.ca)
Bill VanStarkenburg, Building Maintenance
Brenda Tarr, Business Administrator
Dorothy Ryzebol, Resident Community Liaison
Gemma Bragat, Housekeeping Manager
Michelle Vanderwerff, Volunteer Coordinator
Nick Nui, Executive Chef
Pam Eike, Recreation Coordinator

'I never thought I would live here'



While there is no problem filling Shalem's suites, Shalem Society's membership is dropping. As we go to press, it stands at 236. Last year our membership was 362. The Board is working to address this significant decline in numbers.

Encouraging people to become members of a society for seniors' care has always been a tough sell. Ask Ann de Klerk (pictured left). The 90-year-old, who moved into Shalem Court in 2015, remembers her time as a Board member of Shalem. She was 50 years old then and represented Maranatha Christian Reformed Church. That meant getting congregants to sign up as Shalem Society members. "I had to do quite some talking," she recalls. She would speak to the women in the Ladies Aid society but she says, "They were all so young, in their 50's, and becoming a senior was far from their minds."

During Ann's time on the board, Shalem's first building was constructed in 1981.

"When we built that I never, never thought that I would one day be living here in Shalem," she laughs. Ann was the first woman to serve on the official Shalem Board. As she walked into the meeting room full of men she remembers she was greeted with, "Oh good. Now we have somebody to pour coffee for us." She felt like walking out but the Pastor present set the men straight.

Shalem Society members, we appeal to you to do 'quite some talking' to friends and family to become part of our Society. Forty years ago, Ann de Klerk was signing up members for \$25 each. Today the cost remains the same. And you can do it all online at: www.shalem.ca or phone Brenda Tarr, our Business Administrator, at 403-240-2800 ext 5.



The Shalem Board at the official opening of Shalem Manor, June 29, 1981. Ann de Klerk, left, seated next to the first Shalem Manager, Tina DeVries

Shalem Volunteer Update Alberta Health Service (AHS) has indicated it may be some time before volunteers will be able to return to Shalem. In the meantime, we continue to encourage volunteers to connect in remote and creative ways. If you would like to get involved, please contact: Volunteer Coordinator Michelle Vanderwerff at: volunteering@shalem.ca or phone her at 403-240-2800 ext 4.

You are invited to attend the Shalem 2020 Annual General Meeting

It will be held live, **September 23 at 7:30 PM** in the Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church, next to Shalem. We will be following AHS protocol. The meeting will also be live streamed to Shalem residents' suites on T.V. Channel 398. A ballot box will be placed at Shalem's front desk in the Haven from Sept. 21 to the 23rd to collect ballots from any society member not able to attend the AGM. You will not need to pre-register but must read the pre-screening form you received in the AGM package. The sanctuary is set up to follow AHS physical distancing requirements. The wearing of masks is mandatory.

"To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:6
Our Mission Statement Bible Text