

MARY CENTRE NEWSLETTER



MARY CENTRE HONOURS ITS VOLUNTEERS!

by Carol Chung

Mary Centre honoured its volunteers at two dinners held in Toronto and Brampton. Both the Toronto and the Peel Volunteer Appreciation Dinners went off with a bang. Everyone who attended said they thoroughly enjoyed the event. What made the evening so special was the camaraderie, the sharing of the meal, the interacting with all the supported individuals, and the volunteers meeting other volunteers, and sharing their experiences.



Camilla Todesco, Board Member and Honey

At the Toronto dinner, Dominic's interaction with the volunteers and the individuals while taking pictures made it special. The presence of Board Members, Camilla Todesco, Peter Wiley, John Amodeo, and the president, Ray Kahnert was one of the highlights of the evening.

Isla, one of Mary Centre's residents, was very helpful with setting up the tables with a big smile on her face. Honey, another resident, in her usual warm and friendly way presented the certificates of appreciation to the recipients; this was very significant, since her volunteers were in attendance. She is loved by all of them. Michael, who lives at Whitecap, couldn't get enough of the attention that Jane and Lora were giving him.

It was especially nice to see a few of our Supported Independent Living residents with their volunteers, Pam and Sheila, Rick and Troy. Ron was happy to have his volunteer, Craig, with him. Jay was unable to bring Cosmo, our volunteer Golden Retriever, due to health regulations. Keith was in his glee with Carmelita, Mamie, Rosita and Philomena's presence, also.

We were so pleased that our Newsletter volunteers, Arlene, Mary, Tu Lang and Alexandria, attended accompanied by Janis Edwards; they were thrilled with the entire event. The meal catered by the ladies from the Lawson Kitchens was really good. Thanks to Tracey Berman for all her help.

The Peel dinner was much smaller in number. Dominic, with his charismatic interacting and picture taking entertained everyone. It was another great evening. It was evident that the volunteers enjoyed themselves all who attended. Anne and Mary fussed over John, and Jennie was so thrilled to see Jane. Everyone was really happy to see Frank Mason who has recently come on board as a much needed Mr. Fix It for our Brampton homes; he is well-liked by all the residents and staff, and we really appreciate great job he's done at both homes. It was also evident that Angelo, Carol Jean, Brenda and Karen also really enjoyed the evening. The meal was super, and in abundance,

Wow! Thanks especially to Tracy Sabean for her help.

Joy to the World!

...The Lord has come..

**CHRISTMAS
CELEBRATION**

With those opening few words to this traditional Christmas carol, I wish everyone the very best in this holiday season.

As has been my tradition, I'd like to share with you my thoughts on this year passed – what a joyful year it has been! Mary Centre continues to be blessed with a caring staff, dedicated volunteers and a network of supporters who see the value in our mission: that we are dedicated to supporting adults with a developmental disability to improve their quality of life.

And at this special time of year, it is important to affirm that all life, and every person, is worthy of dignity and respect.

The support we receive is something that we never take for granted, nor assume will sustain us forever.

To that end, I'm pleased to say that the Board of Mary Centre has undertaken a renewed and vigorous strategic planning program. With input from our key stakeholders, this ongoing effort will examine our strengths and opportunities for improvement – and fundamentally, how we can perhaps bring more joy to the people we serve.

And yet, I am humbly reminded that our mission is not a one-sided affair. For we can learn everyday from the people we serve -- our residents. At our past AGM, I shared an

experience of a memorable moment for me at a service commemorating the life of one of our residents who had died. I'd like to complete the story.

Speaker after speaker (both past and present staff/volunteers) spoke lovingly (and emotionally) of the impact this man had had on their lives. Clearly, this man's mission in life was simple and profound – to make a difference, and to have an influence on everyone he met. Oh, how he succeeded.

One person was particularly overcome and began to cry. Immediately, and with a calm reserve, a resident who was standing nearby put her arm around the weeping staff member. It was a moment that said: "it's OK. I understand. I'm here for you..." What a wonderful way to bring joy into the world!

That perhaps should be a personal mission for all of us in the coming New Year: to look for ways to bring a little **joy** into our part of the world. With a smile, a reassuring gesture, or a kind word. Then we might feel prepared to sing confidently and boldly the balance of that carol....

Let earth receive her King!

A festive and energetic group of about 20 – 30 young people who are part of the '*Singles for Christ*' movement in the GTA, bring joyous sound both by music and laughter at Christmas for our folks who live at Whitecap, Redcastle and Leyton, along with refreshments.

These young men and women, sing Christmas Carols and other spiritual songs for the residents; they bring their instruments (keyboard, guitars, drums and tambourines) and invite them to dance with them to the music.

This group has been doing their carol singing for our residents for about 5 or 6 years now, and the folks really look forward to this festive occasion. It's a real party, and everyone has a great time, even the staff get into the action. What great food and drinks they bring along, and the staff, add some cookies or other goodies to the banquet.

Our huge thanks go out to Delfina Laranang, one of our volunteers, who is a part of the group, who organizes this event each year. ***God Bless Del*** and the rest of the group for their cheerful and generous hearts!

Mark Your Calendar!

November 11 & 12, 2004 7th Annual Gala
 Famous People Players Dinner Theatre
 June 8, 2004 5th Annual Golf Tournament
 Silver Lakes Golf & Country Club

A Letter of Thanks to the Editor

This letter was sent to Mary Centre about our beloved resident, Honey, and the letter has been reproduced in its entirety;

Dear... I feel compelled to write to you, after reading an article about Elsie (Honey) Graham. Honey's Mum and Dad, Mary and Alex were lovely people and my best friend(s) in Toronto. When I was a teenager, I babysat Alister and Honey. Mary (their mother) taught me to knit, she was a beautiful knitter and baker. We lived on the same street.



Honey and John Amodeo, Board Member at the Volunteer

When I married and had my first daughter Marilyn. Mary was her godmother at her Christening. Marilyn is now 60 years old. At one time Honey and Marilyn were mentally the same age Honey loved Marilyn. Honey was a beautiful child with a loving disposition. She called Marilyn, ***(Mar Mar)*** and I was ***(Do Do)***. Honey was always well dressed. I used to worry about what would become of Honey when Mary died. Ironically Mary and my Mother died on the same day, seven years ago. I am so happy that Honey is happy in her surroundings. She is so loving. I read about your volunteer, Celia and how she has taken Honey under her wing. You are very fortunate to have someone like Celia, and I would just like to thank her for her devotion to Honey. ***I love her dearly, as do my family.*** I enjoy hearing about Honey. I am now 82 years old and have been a widow for 25 years.

I am enclosing a small cheque with my grateful thanks for looking after Honey. ***Sincerely, Dorothy Wetherell***

GERARD'S STORY

My name is Gerard. I live at Our Lady of Victory Place in Toronto. I have lived many years in Toronto and also have lived in the United States. For 18 years, I lived with my brother and his family, first in Rochester, New York and then for 17 years in Hartford, Connecticut. I have been at Our Lady of Victory Place for over two years. I work at Corbrook and have attended two of their Christmas parties and picnic.

At Our Lady of Victory Place, I have attended the annual Christmas dinner and a number of fish dinners, barbecues as well as the building's 10th anniversary in November of 2002. I wrote a song for this party called "To Our Lady of Victory Place", which I played but did not sing. I also attend an exercise class at York West Senior Citizens Centre. I also walk at least once a week with the building resident, Bill. Also, I have attended two fundraising dinners and a special birthday party for actor Leslie Nielsen at Famous People Players Theatre here in Toronto.

Grocery shopping, apartment cleaning and laundry are things I can now do on my own. I can also do cooking, both on my own and with my support worker, Shawn Michael. I've been paired with a friendly visitor, Mihn and we go out to visit downtown from time to time. I also practice on an electronic keyboard which I bought on my own. I hope to play for people occasionally. Overall, my life here at our Lady of victory Place has been good. Life here in Toronto has been very good for

In Loving Memory of Frances Aileen Knoll

Fran Knoll was a supporter and founder of Mary Centre and we will miss her dearly. When we started the Famous People Players Event 6 years ago she was there and always brought her friends. Fran was born on July 9, 1934 and she left us on July 17, 2003. Born in Vermilion, Alberta, Frances graduated from the University of Alberta at age 19, with a degree in Psychology, after which she became a caseworker with the Catholic Children's Aid Society. This work led her to pursue a Masters in Social Work at the University of Ottawa, which she obtained in 1961. After working for another ten years in the family service field, Frances accepted the position of Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto, a position she held for eight years. Frances then attended Osgoode Hall Law School, from which she graduated in 1982 at the age of 48, and was called to the Bar in Ontario two years later. From that point on, Frances used her varied background to work extensively with not-for-profit organizations in a wide variety of ways, reviewing operations and complaints frequently acting as Interim Director, and becoming a Family Court Judge, until her retirement in 2001. She was always a much sought-after dinner companion, cherished the arts, travelled extensively, and truly loved life. Her friends and family remember Frances as someone who would always tell it like it was, while somehow managing to put a light-hearted spin on even the most serious of matters. Frances will be missed and fondly remembered by her family and friends.

Mary Centre Newsletter

Published by
Newsletter Committee

Julie Antal
Carol Chung
Lorna Fryer
Olive Gyebi
Karen Kirk

Shawn Michael Kernaghan

Marion Patterson

Manu Verma

Desktop Publisher

Marion Patterson

Printing

Paragon Reproductions

Volunteers

Mary Fotia
Susan Hann
Arline Middup
TuLang Hua
Alexandria Ashbourne
Ted Swinton
Sandra Churcher
Honey Graham
Carolyn Kemmis
Stephen May
Linda Terry



Mary Centre of the Archdiocese of Toronto
530 Wilson Avenue, Suite 210, Toronto, ON M3H 5Y9
Phone (416) 630-5533, Fax (416) 630-5702
www.marycentre.com

If you would like more information about Mary Centre and/or you would like to make a donation, please clip out this section and return to our office.

- I would like more information about the agency
- I would like information on becoming a volunteer
- I enclose a cheque in the amount of: _____ or charge to my Visa/American Express/MasterCard
Card # _____ Expiry ____/____
Signature: _____
- I would like to donate a gift in kind.
Please specify: _____
- I wish to remain an anonymous donor

Name: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Charitable Registration #12892 3737 RR0001