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The Messenger

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God With Us

“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel” – which means, “God with us.” This is perhaps the most hopeful of all Christmas messages for the poor, sick, the not-self-sufficient – which includes all of us.

God is with us at Shalom Manor & Gardens. The psalmist of Psalm 146 writes, “God lifts up those who are bowed down. God sustains the fatherless and the widow.” In the time when these words were written, the fatherless and widow had no power. They did not have a voice. In our society, the old are bent low. They have no power and do not have a voice. The psalmist is saying that God takes up their cause. Most often, God does this through others. When I see a physiotherapist at Shalom Manor help straighten an old person’s back, when I see a nurse patiently listening and then explaining the nature of the meds to an old person showing dignity, when I hear a PSW conversing as she respectfully baths an old body marked by trials, failures and victories, I see God lifting up those who are bent down! I see God sustaining those who do not have a voice or have power! I see “God with us” through the care givers at Shalom Manor & Gardens.

An amazing thing about Christmas is that Immanuel – God with us - identified not with the powerful and connected, but with the marginalized. Jesus walked in solidarity with those who are bent down, who are fatherless and who are without a voice when he was bent down under the weight of the cross, when he was abandoned by his father, crying “My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?”, when he stood silent before Pilate. In Shalom Manor & Gardens, I see Jesus walking shoulder to shoulder, in solidarity with those who are bent down, powerless and without a voice giving them strength and pointing them to a new day!

I see Jesus with those who are dying. Sometimes when I accompany a person through the valley of death, when I sit on the edge of the bed, talking, reading, praying and being with, I look at the person and think the words, “oppressed and afflicted... led like a lamb to the slaughter... as a sheep is silent before her shearers” (Isaiah 53). The person’s death reminds me of Jesus’ death. Sometimes, in the room, at death’s edge, I see family members praying, hear loved ones singing praises to God, see old wounds caused by a loved one heal and I think that maybe a person’s death, like Jesus’ death, is redemptive.

Seeing this, I am reminded that Jesus came to die so that there is forgiveness. It is because there is forgiveness that God sends the Holy Spirit. Every day, I see the Holy Spirit active in Shalom Manor & Gardens; motivating the care givers, walking with and blessing the residents. God with us – this is the blessing of Christmas.

Chaplain, Fred VanderBerg

They will name Him Immanuel!





INTRODUCTION OF

Maria Muffels, Interim CEO

Allow me to introduce myself as the new Interim CEO of Shalom Manor. Many of you may know me as the Environmental Services Manager - a position I had for almost nine years. When the members of the Board asked if I would manage the organization until a permanent CEO could be found, I didn't think twice to accept the challenge.

I didn't hesitate because I knew the people I would be working with. From the Board members to the front line staff and everyone in between, to our supporting community, I knew I would be part of an amazing team of dedicated colleagues. I am reminded of Psalm 118:23 "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." I truly am blessed to be a part of this community.

For as long as I can remember we have had people waiting to move into our home. Through the many years of on-site construction, and even at a time when there was a surplus of long term care beds in the region, we have had a waiting list. That is quite a testimony to the wonderful care we provide. Our residents serve as our motivation. They inspire us with their courage and touch us with their stories. And they rely on the unfailing generosity from our supporting community. Without the support from people such as you, we would not be able to provide the care our elders deserve and have come to expect. Whether it is through time and effort, financial support or prayers, your support has an immediate and direct impact on the quality of life of our residents. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all!

I pray that our Lord may hold you close to His heart during this Blessed Christmas Season and throughout the coming New Year.



Thank you...

It is a pleasure to be able to write a few words of gratitude to the many churches who participated in the annual Shalom Manor Sunday church collection, traditionally scheduled for the third Sunday in September. Questions have been asked why the third Sunday in September is designated as Shalom Manor Sunday. Perhaps it seems such an unsuitable time of year to hold a collection for Shalom Manor, given that specific church programs might need start-up funds to kick off their new season of activities.

However, this date has historical significance, namely that Shalom Manor first opened its doors on September 15, 1979, and, in honour of this incredible event, the Sunday following the 15th of September, has been designated as Shalom Manor Sunday. That does not mean that churches must hold an offering for Shalom Manor on the third Sunday of September. Obviously it is up to each individual church to determine its collection schedule. But regularly-scheduled offerings help the churches in maintaining their financial obligations to Shalom Manor, and help Shalom Manor in meeting its budget of approximately \$10M (of which 61% is covered by government funds, 36% by resident fees and 3% which must be raised through church offerings and donations.)

As of August 31, church collections total approximately \$44,000. That's awesome! Thank you very much. At the time of this writing, we do not have the final figure for the Shalom Manor Sunday collections since not all the churches have forwarded the funds. Our facilities are second to none but in order to maintain the level of care we wish to provide, we need the support of our member and non-member churches ever so much more today. Our society frowns on Christian organizations and institutions and our government is meddling more and more in the affairs of Shalom Manor and Gardens. So we need to be vigilant, responsible and conscientious about our commitment to our elderly. We can do it, with the help of our Lord and under His direction. Again, thank you for your generosity both in prayer and financial support. On behalf of the Board of Shalom Manor and our residents, I wish you a Blessed Christmas and New Year.

Hilda E. Roukema
Chairperson, Board of Directors



Some of our dedicated dietary staff.





NEWS FROM THE



Shalom Manor Foundation...

In mid October, the Shalom Manor Foundation Board received the report on the feasibility study which was conducted throughout the spring and summer by Crossroads Consulting. The study involved personally interviewing a good cross section of individuals and companies within the Niagara and Hamilton regions. We are grateful to the participants involved in the study and give thanks for their helpful input.

The Board is pleased to inform you that the report reflects a positive response toward supporting the needs of Shalom Manor, including the need for debt reduction and growing an endowment fund. The report also identified a number of challenges and gives recommendations for both Boards to consider in the coming months as they consider moving forward with the development of a specialized campaign. It also affirms how important, well loved and respected Shalom Manor is to the Reformed Christian community and to the people served in its care.

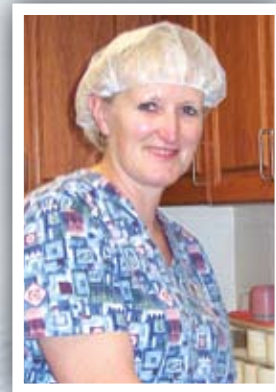
Our next step will be to share the report with the Shalom Manor Board and collectively give direction on the next steps of planning. We ask you to join us in praying for God's guidance as we take these new steps in the development of the Foundation which aims to strengthen the long term sustainability of the Shalom Manor Long Term Care Home.

John Kottelenberg
Development Director



Annette Van Marrum

Dietary Department



Annette Van Marrum has worked in the Dietary Department for 12 1/2 years. She works in the Mapleview Resident Home area where she is responsible for 32 residents, serving them breakfast and lunch. All the food is prepared in the main kitchen by the Cooks and is served from the small servery in each of the five Resident Home Areas. Annette is responsible for portioning out the food to the residents according to their dietary needs. Each resident can choose from two different meals at each sitting. Currently, we have eight different diets and provide four different textures. This means that there are many different foods to be prepared for each meal.

For Annette, it is important that each resident is able to enjoy his/her meals, which include favourites like boerenkool, suurkool, stampot, hutspot and especially "gouda cheese". Keeping our Dutch heritage alive is very important to our residents.

Annette loves her job at Shalom Manor. Shalom Manor has always been part of her family. First, her Beppe was a resident here, then her father-in-law and later both her parents. It is wonderful to be able to care for people you know and love. In our conversations with one another it quickly becomes evident that God's love shows through the dietary staff as they serve the residents in their care. This love is evident from Annette in the work she does. She does whatever she can to ensure that the residents get what they need, even if it's not on the "menu". She has a great team of co-workers, whose motto is "We aim to please!"



Shalom

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