



*Grounded in the past. Looking to the future.*

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**Grace Sweatman, President**  
The Christie Gardens Foundation

In 2015, Grace Sweatman retired from her role as CEO of Christie Gardens that she held for 28 years. Grace is a former Director and past President of the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA), and currently serves as a Director of the Durham Christian Homes Society.

## Greetings

It is my privilege to share with you the work of The Foundation during 2020 and to look with you to the future.

We are nearing the end of this most challenging year! The onset of the pandemic changed all of our plans. Little did we know how vital the work of the Foundation would become.

### Staff Care Fund

In response to many kind inquiries from families who wanted to help in some way, we established a fund dedicated to staff care.

Thank you so much to the many residents, families and friends who gave generously to this fund. The staff testimonial inside this newsletter provides

some insight into how vital it became to the faithful staff team facing a difficult unknown for many days.

This fund generated \$65,000 toward the most unexpected need; that of comfortable accommodation options available for those who struggled with the concerns for the safety of their families, while caring for our Elders.

Our care teams stepped up to work many extra hours and used the accommodation for well earned rest each day.

### The Benevolent Fund

We were privileged to provide support for residents facing financial hardship as their care needs changed.

For some, the loss of social interaction

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## Staff Care Fund Testimonial

I remember the first day we had a confirmed case of COVID-19 here at Christie Gardens. I drove home, I stayed in my car, parked in our driveway for over 2 hours figuring out what we should do next.

Just to give you some insight, I have 3 boys aged 6, 4 and at the time, a 5-month-old baby. Luckily, my wife was on maternity leave.

After much discussion, we decided that I would not enter the house and my wife would pass me all of my essentials items. I would use a small room next to our laundry area until we could figure something out.

Thankfully, shortly after we decided this, Christie Gardens provided us with accommodations. My coworkers and I stayed for a week at a nearby hotel, figuring out how to deal with the COVID cases, how to best help the residents of the Courtyard through this, and how to keep ourselves safe at the same time.

After the first week we moved into rental condominiums where we would live for about a month and a half.

I remember seeing so many stories on television about nurses that had tested positive who needed to self-isolate and record their recovery. There were even some stories of nurses having to call paramedics due to their own symptoms, some made it, some did not.

My condominium was in close proximity to hospitals and whenever I heard ambulance sirens, which was hundreds of times, I'd get nervous.

As one of the main nurses in our neighbourhood, I worried ... what if something happens to me? Would I be able to get help in time?

I didn't get to physically visit my family for around two months during this period. I visited through the window on the days that I was off and whenever I had to buy groceries for them.



To this day, I remember the look on my families faces when I came home and surprised them.

I entered our home and my wife was so happy and relieved. On the other hand, my 6-year-old and 4-year-old did not have the same reaction.

I later found out that my wife had given them lots of screen time because she needed to spend time with the little one. They knew those days of extended TV time were over once I returned!

**All this to say, we made it through.**

Those initial days were the hardest and most stressful because we were not prepared mentally, emotionally, or financially but then it got better. Once we were established we felt safer and our morale remained high, which translated into our service to our residents.

Our Cedarvale motto was "don't let fear paralyze you". The staff of Christie Gardens, especially in the Cedarvale neighbourhood came out of this stronger than ever before and it was all because of the support of Christie Gardens leadership and the generous funding of The Christie Gardens Foundation.

This is not only my story but also many of the front line workers that did not let fear paralyze them.

**Thank you from the bottom of my heart.**

## Looking to the Future of Eldercare

The original dream of the founder of Christie Gardens, Mr. David Alexander, was to develop a community where you would continue to live and be served, with respect, regardless of any changing health needs.

This was a vision emerging from the distresses often faced when having to leave the comfort of the familiar and to face “ending up” in a long term care home.

It was a vision challenging the view that you were “lucky” to be served. Rather it was our privilege to serve those who had chosen Christie Gardens as their home.

The concept of a “continuing care community” was unique in its day. Many detractors said it would not work. However Mr. Alexander never wavered in his belief this was the right direction to take in the provision of respectful Eldercare.

Fast forward 37 years and the detractors are no more. Government policy planners and developers have recognized the value of this concept. Recent announcements by the Ministry of Health have identified 29 organizations who will be “awarded bed licenses” to build new or upgrade existing long term care homes. The lengthy list identifies at least 19 “campuses of care”, the latest descriptor of the concept developed and successfully implemented and continuing at Christie Gardens.

In the midst of the recent tragedies in long term care, there is a window of opportunity to establish a new way forward.

The Christie Gardens Foundation is thrilled to promote this vital message that is core to our mission.

The work required involves not just modelling a campus of care but also influencing the “culture of care” provided in a community.

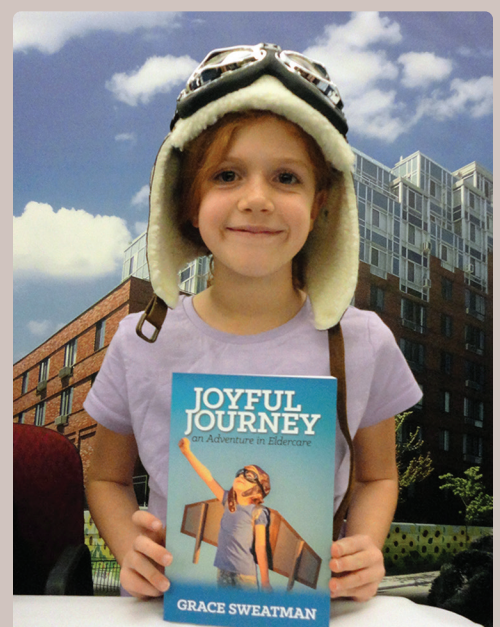
This aspect of the vision requires transitioning from a rigid institutional healthcare model of service where you “ended up”, to receiving respectful flexible Eldercare in the home of your choice.

There is a better way! We are so privileged to represent that better way.

In November 2019 I had the pleasure of releasing my book: “Joyful Journey: an Adventure in Eldercare”. It is both a professional memoir and a roadmap to culture change in Eldercare.

My book is available on Amazon, Kobo, the Apple Bookstore, and various online bookstores. It captures our sometimes painful, always challenging but unrelenting determination to fulfill this vision.

Let this journey inspire you this season.



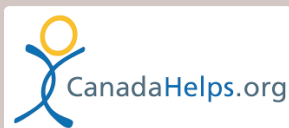


## Ways to Give

We accept donations by cheque made payable to The Christie Gardens Foundation, delivered by hand to the Christie Gardens main Reception Desk, or by mail to:

ATTN: The Christie Gardens Foundation  
600 Melita Crescent  
Toronto, ON M6G 3Z4

One-time or regular monthly donations can be set up through the Canada Helps online service. A "Donate Now" button can be found on our website.



You can arrange to donate shares through your financial institution, usually with no fee nor impact on your taxes. Consult your tax advisor or financial institution for more information.

For Christie Gardens residents: regular monthly donations can be made through pre-authorized payments on resident accounts. Contact the Finance Office to arrange.

For more information on ways to give, visit our website at [www.christiegardensfoundation.org](http://www.christiegardensfoundation.org)

## About The Christie Gardens Foundation

2020



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### President:

Grace Sweatman

### Advisory Council:

Diana Sweatman, Paula Neves, Holly Sullivan, Yvonne Sweatman

### Past Council Members:

Bruce Schaefer, Dr. Ursula Franklin, Heather Janes, Claudia Osmond

*for more information about  
The Christie Gardens Foundation  
including how to make a donation  
please visit our website at  
[www.christiegardensfoundation.org](http://www.christiegardensfoundation.org)*

## Greetings (continued from cover)

was devastating, resulting in physical challenges as they coped with the everyday. The provision of supportive care in The Courtyard became essential. This service was provided without hesitancy.

Your kindness and generosity made it possible for The Foundation to help. We were also privileged to receive a generous gift from the Estate of Miss Gladys Smith, a former resident and friend to many of you. Her bequest was dedicated to this need.

### Commitment to Culture Change

The true test of our culture change efforts of the past eight years occurred and continues. The Foundation was honoured to support this vital initiative, with a special focus on staff selection and ongoing education. The result, in the face of crisis, was very gratifying.

The resilience and commitment of our leadership and front-line staff teams was extraordinary. Residents had the assurance that their safety and well-being was at the forefront as each day presented its own challenges. Our Elders knew that they were worthy of our best efforts, no matter their needs.

Our world faces an uncertain future. The Christie Gardens Foundation will use your contributions to assist wherever needed.

Please consider your gift to The Foundation as you come to the end of the year. We look forward to a return to "normal", which will include ongoing staff support, enhanced education, our Benevolent fund, and our yet to be launched Fitness and Physiotherapy Centre.

Thank you for being a Friend of The Christie Gardens Foundation.



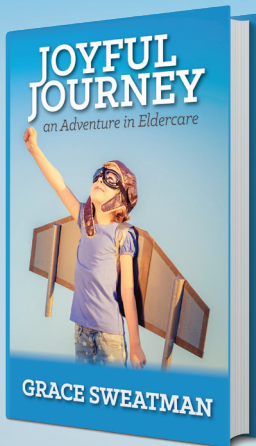
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