



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 past President of the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA), and currently serves as a Director of the Durham Christian Homes Society and a Director of Suomi-Koti Toronto.

Greetings

Do you feel as I often do that we are coming out of a dark tunnel as this pandemic runs its course? We certainly are ready!

We have learned new skills and managed new habits: masks, physical distancing, quarantine, lockdown, frequent testing, meals in house, aloneness, and Zoom-ing — all experiences we certainly did not seek, but somehow survived!

As I began to write the list I realized just how pervasive the challenges of the last 16 months have been. I also began to realize just how remarkable, resilient,

creative, and generous the resident family I know and love has been, as have their extended networks of families and friends,

Thank you so much for your cooperation with often changing rules of group living, your kindnesses extended to those around you, and your generosity to the Foundation Staff Care Fund. You have also continued to support the Benevolent Fund, a key mission of our Foundation.

You have proven once again that Christie Gardens is a community you can have faith in!

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Donor Profile: Madeline Cecilia Smillie

Madeline Smillie lived at Christie Gardens for 7 years and was a beloved member of our community.

At the time of her passing Miss Smillie made a bequest to The Christie Gardens Foundation. What follows is a profile provided by Stephen and Susan Smillie.



Madeline, my father's first cousin, was born in the Seaforth, Ontario area and spent her early life on a farm, later moving to a small railroad town in northern Ontario. She acquired a love of the natural world which stayed with her for life. She came from a small family and believed in keeping relatives close. She was great friends with my Grandmother (also a public health nurse) who ensured that we all knew Cousin Madeline. My wife, son and I were able to spend more time with Madeline when we moved closer to Toronto in the late 1980's.

Madeline was an active, independent woman, university educated in a time when not many women were. She forged strong bonds with her classmates at University of Toronto Nursing, especially her roommate to whose daughters she was 'Aunt Madeline'. She established friendships at Toronto Public Health where she worked and at University Women's Club where she was a valued, long-time member.

Madeline loved the outdoors, gardens and flowers. She never missed an opportunity to go to a cottage or enjoy a meal outside. She loved babies, and in her career as a nurse worked to improve the lives of children and young mothers.

Always ready for a cold beer after a game of golf, Madeline relished her time at Toronto Ladies Golf Course, often inviting my son and I to play after 2:00 pm when men were allowed on the course! She was especially interested in the young people in her family and among her close friends, never failing to send a card at birthdays and a gift at Christmas.

Madeline was open-minded, informed and willing to see things in a different light as the world changed around her. She loved the arts, especially music and ballet. Every year she bought two season tickets to the National Ballet and took family and friends with her. She travelled extensively; Africa, India, Europe and elsewhere always returning with interesting stories to share.

At age 90, Madeline hosted her own birthday party at University Women's Club where she set up the order of business ensuring that speeches about her were kept to a minimum, but where she had a chance to recognize her family and friends. She then moved to Christie Gardens, made new friends and lived comfortably, enjoying the sociability found there, especially the competitive bridge playing.

Madeline volunteered extensively in retirement at Sunnybrook Veterans Wing, Toronto General Hospital and the Food Bank. In 2016, in recognition of her contribution and leadership in her profession, she was presented the Dean's Award for Excellence from the Nursing Faculty at the University of Toronto.

To the end of her life Madeline was concerned about others, even in her final days worrying that everyone was helping her and that she was not in a position to help anyone.

Madeline was a long time member of Timothy Eaton United Church, but her love of the natural world came full circle, and rather than a city burial she chose to rest with her family in a beautiful country cemetery, not far from Seaforth.

Country Lane 2005 Mural

In June of 2005, a group of Christie Gardens residents tackled a neighbourhood eyesore — the ugly and heavily graffitied retaining walls on the Christie Street side of our building.

Credit for the idea of the mural goes to Councillor Joe Mihevc in response to our concerns about graffiti along the Christie Street underpass. Having observed our solution to graffiti on our hoarding during the construction phase of our Life Lease project, Mr. Mihevc suggested perhaps we could paint the underpass in an effort to deter tagging, and to beautify the dull grey and cracked walls.

The movers and shakers leading the charge were the mural designers: Jody Alcock, Barbara Bunting, George Hunter, Peggy Potter, and Joyce Tarasuk.

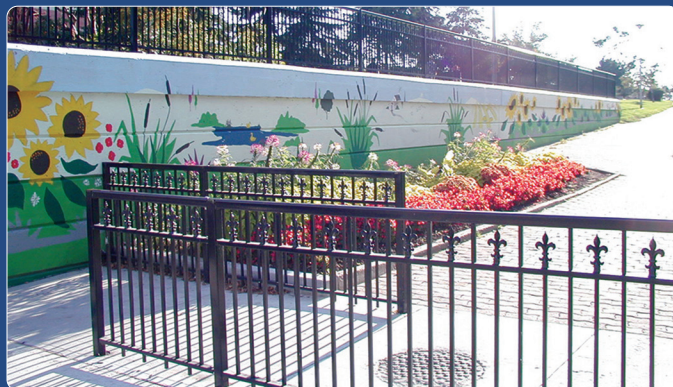
Borrowing from the sunflower theme used in Christie Gardens' branding since its founding, and from the sunflower artwork present on the construction hoarding, they painted what came to be known as the "Country Lane 2005" mural.

In addition to the designers were forty-two volunteers — a group made up of community members, staff, and Councillor Mihevc. Ultimately they were joined by neighbours and members of the wider community as the project proceeded.

Having secured permission to paint the section belonging to CPR, and hearing no objection from City staff, the team worked from June through August to paint the original "sunflower mural" that has become such a distinct feature of our community.

Funding for the mural was provided by the Christie Gardens Special Projects Fund, with a modest contribution from the City of Toronto's Clean & Beautiful City Initiative.

Described as everything from "hopeful", "beautiful", and "cheerful" the mural went on to win an award in 2006, as part of the City of Toronto's Clean & Beautiful City Initiative.



"COUNTRY LANE" 2005

designers:-

Mary Almeida	Jody Alcock	Joe Mihevc
Cassandra Alves	Barbara Bunting	Martha Onodera
Raquel Alves	George Hunter	Velma Orok
Aliya Anderson	Peggy Potter	Helen Ricker
Eva Anderson	Joyce Tarasuk	Helen Saunders
Margaret Beasley		Irene Spurr
Harold Belmore	Dorothy Ennis	Faye Stephenson
Louise Brown	Myrna Forgach	Shirley Stewart
Ruth Budd	Lillian Groves	Alexandra Stokes
Irish Casselman	Ray Harris	Maddy Stokes
Doris Cavanagh	Mary Hecht	Dorothy Swan
Janti Clephant	Joan Lawton	George Tarasuk
Wilma Cooke	Mike Lennox	Ruby Topp
Loral Dean	Mary McCullam	Tereza Vercosa
Darcy Drimmie	Danny McCulloch	Adriana Wenk
Bernie Ennis	John McCulloch	Ken Woodrow

Sunflower Mural 2021

Over the years since the Country Lane mural was painted, Christie Gardens Community Life staff and our Residents' Association have put together teams to touch up the mural, and to combat the inevitable graffiti.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw a major increase in the amount of graffiti all over Toronto, and our mural was not spared. It got so bad that it was nearly half graffiti and whole sections of the art were obscured.

In the summer of 2020, understanding that it would not be possible for our community to tackle the cleanup — the damage was too extensive, and the work was impossible to do while maintaining a safe physical distance — we began to investigate other options.

Early in this process, Councillor Josh Matlow's office introduced us to StreetARToronto (StART), who operate programs designed for streets and public spaces as part of the City's graffiti management plan. Established in 2012, StART has been successful in reducing graffiti vandalism and replacing it with community-engaged street art.

The initial discussions with StART were very encouraging. We agreed that StART would look for artists to propose designs and begin work as soon as it was safe to do so, that they would try to preserve the character of the mural in some way, and that The Christie Gardens Foundation would make a financial contribution to the project.

We felt very fortunate to be introduced to Johl Whiteduck Ringuette, a founder of the Red Urban Nation (RUN) Artist Collective.

Johl is an artist, chef, teacher, and entrepreneur who has founded a variety of projects in support of Toronto's Indigenous communities. He is perhaps best known as the owner of NishDish Marketeria and Catering, which served Anishnawbe cuisine from 2005 to 2020 in downtown Toronto.

When we discussed the project with Johl, he immediately understood the importance of the mural to our community. He spoke in a very compelling way

about the significance of the sunflower to indigenous people, and his own personal feelings about the mural as he had lived on Melita Crescent for many years, having raised his family right in the neighbourhood.

Johl also understood and appreciated that this work was intended to honour our elders. As he gathered a group of artists together to contribute, the message about honouring elders was the most resonant for all involved.



Sunflower Mural 2021 (continued)



The project was managed by Diana Sweatman of Christie Gardens, Jim Sweatman on behalf of The Christie Gardens Foundation, Catherine Campbell and Jason Campbell of StreetART, and the following artists:

Johl Whiteduck Ringuette, artist and coordinator; Trina Moyan, artist and coordinator; Sierra Morin, artist; Keitha Keeshig-Tobias, artist; Danielle Hyde, artist; Ren Lonechild, artist; Angela Aula, artist helper; Rory Maltese, artist helper; and a small group of volunteers working with RUN.



The mural has been very well received. We have been honoured by visits from MP Carolyn Bennett, MPP Jill Andrew, Councillor Josh Matlow, and countless community members.

Throughout the project each time we were approached by neighbours or members of our own community, they shared what the project meant to them.

It quickly became clear that what began as a project to address an eyesore meant so much more to everyone. Over and over we heard people connect their feelings about the mural to their hopes and fears about emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mostly what we heard about was hope.

Thanks to the generosity and kindness of our donors we were blessed to be in a position to serve the community by contributing to this project.

We hope you have an opportunity soon to visit our mural.

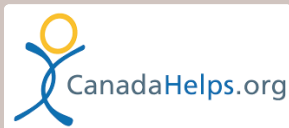


Ways to Give

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

Greetings (continued from cover)

The Foundation has been honoured by the faithful gifts from our donors and recently been the privileged recipients of three generous bequests. We will feature our most recent benefactors in this and upcoming newsletters.

Meanwhile I eagerly await the opportunity to share dinner with you in the Maple Dining room, and meet with many of you in person.

As soon as the newly refurbished Auditorium is ready, I will be honoured to invite you once again to remember the history of Christie Gardens and The Foundation and it's emerging enhanced vision.

Enjoy this newsletter. Enjoy the return to a new normal.

See you soon!

About The Christie Gardens Foundation

JUL 2021



Grounded in the past. Looking to the future.

President:

Grace Sweatman

Advisory Council:

Diana Sweatman, Paula Neves, Holly Sullivan, Yvonne Sweatman, Joanne Bridle

Photo Credits:

Jennifer Wunsch, Diana Sweatman, Jim Sweatman, Phil Sutherland

*for more information about
The Christie Gardens Foundation
including how to make a donation
please visit our website at
www.christiegardensfoundation.org*

Lecture Series

It is my privilege to recognize a donor who has faithfully supported the Foundation since our launch in 2012.

Dr. Daria Haust has consistently reminded me that her donations should be directed to education in the field of care of our Elders.

Dr. Haust will be celebrating her 100th birthday in August of this year. In a recent conversation she challenged me once again. I am so grateful for her support and her challenge to me.

Dr. Haust reminded me that we should never cease learning and to know that there are two sides to every argument. She expressed and then wrote out for me the following Latin phrase; "audiatur et altera pars" or "may the other side also be heard".

With the encouragement of Dr. Haust and others of like mind, and anticipating a beautiful new auditorium, we are exploring presenting a Foundation lecture series. The series will provide opportunity for informed speakers to share their areas of expertise and to challenge and encourage us.

Especially during COVID we are reminded of the old Yiddish proverb, "We plan, God laughs", with that in mind our plans remain tentative however we are working to hold our first event in October 2021.

Stay tuned.