

# WELLNESS QUARTERLY

well-being news, advice, and opinions from christie gardens staff and residents

Summer 2021



## Dr. James Stewart: Welcome to Summer

Summer has arrived, the sun is shining, and the temperature is warming – some days it felt like spring was never going to arrive, and now it's already summer.

**This seems like an appropriate time to write a brief note.**

As you may be aware, Christie Gardens was fortunate to be one of the homes to be vaccinated early in the roll-out, and we owe much of that success and thanks to our management team, and the Mt. Sinai team who supported Christie Gardens with their Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) resources, and the staff to “blitz” the resident vaccinations. Christie Gardens has over 95% vaccinated.

As we are preparing to emerge from the seemingly endless lockdowns and stay at

home orders, I want to extend a big thank you to all the residents, the management, and the staff of Christie Gardens for getting us all through this unusual past year. Everyone's diligent efforts have brought us out of the pandemic with most of our residents unaffected physically. From my observations, I believe the isolation has certainly had a psychological impact on many, and I doubt that anyone has gone through the pandemic unscathed in one form or another.

### So, what is next?

The improved vaccine supply, and the wide distribution of vaccine, appears to have us on the brink of Ontario re-opening. Like you, we are awaiting changes to the Provincial directives.

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## Alicia Christopher, Health and Wellness Team Leader



**Alicia Christopher, RPN**  
Health and Wellness Team Leader

### Tell us a bit about yourself?

I grew up in Montreal and I'm fluent in French. I moved to Toronto just over 10 years ago and I also have a daughter who is turning 10 years old in July!

Even though I always knew I wanted to be a nurse, it is actually my second career. I worked in telecommunications for many years before returning to school to pursue my true passion – nursing!

I completed the RPN program at Seneca College and am actually currently taking classes towards a bachelor's degree in Health Administration.

Before coming to Christie Gardens I gained a variety of nursing experience through positions at the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and a Walk-In Clinic in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood.

### What brought you to Christie Gardens?

I started at Christie Gardens in November 2019 as a Clinical Support Coordinator. When I originally saw the advertisement for the position it said the need was a mix of clinical nursing skills and administration and I thought to myself, "hey, that's me!"

When I did my interview it was so refreshing to meet the team at Christie Gardens and learn about their philosophy of care, I knew right away it was going to be a great fit!

### What do you like about nursing and/or your role at Christie Gardens?

I've always been into health sciences and I love the hands-on aspect of nursing. I actually worked as a PSW while I was in college as well. I think caring for other people is just in my nature. I also love to see how a little nursing TLC can really improve people's circumstances.

Recently, I was promoted to the position of Health & Wellness Team Leader, and I am enjoying getting to work closely with Mona, our Director of Health and Wellness in supporting the diverse needs of all of Christie Gardens' residents.

### What is your philosophy of care?

To do this kind of care work. Importantly, I value treating others with the same level of attention and respect you would your own family member.

### What do you enjoy most about Christie Gardens?

Honestly, it's the little things like seeing residents connecting and talking to each other in the hallways or at the café. I love the sense of community here and having the opportunity to build relationships with residents and colleagues alike.

### What do you want residents to know?

I have an open door policy and am here to serve. I will do whatever I can to help make your life easier. If I'm not at my desk, feel free to leave a message with the Wellness Centre, or leave me a voicemail at extension 245.

## HOW NOT TO WEAR A MASK



# Mona Babb, Director of Health and Wellness

## Tell us a bit about yourself?

I love the outdoors especially in the summer. I can be found taking a walk outside Christie Gardens at lunchtime or holding my team meetings in the Garden. At home you will also find me in my garden. I also love to bake and cook and am always creating “care packages” for my friends and family. I’m famous for my cinnamon rolls! I often do special treats for the staff but sometimes bite off more than I can chew... for example one Christmas I made 550 cake pops! It’s all worth it as I want my staff to know that they deserve that personal touch.

I am a mother of 3 girls and 2 boys, ranging from 34 to 21 years old. One of my sons actually plays basketball professionally in Spain but he had to return home due to the pandemic!

I have had a diverse range of clinical, administrative, and educational nursing experiences. I’ve worked as a nurse in a burn unit, wound/plastics clinic, community nursing, and in a correctional facility. I’ve trained Registered staff as a Nurse Educator in palliative, rehabilitation, and acute medicine.

I started my Long Term Care experience as a Nurse Educator and Infection Prevention and Control Coordinator and am proud to say that my home received the award for the highest staff vaccinated rates in Central East for the years I held this position.

## How did you get into nursing?

Before I started nursing I was a receptionist at MacLean’s magazine in downtown Toronto. Around that time I was looking for a career that could support my family and came across nursing in a career catalog. The description sounded like a good fit and the rest is history. I enrolled in the nursing program at Centennial College and graduated in 1995.

## What brought you to Christie Gardens?

Before coming to Christie Gardens, I held previous positions as Director of Care in large for-profit organizations. My biggest challenge in these organizations was always balancing resident’s care needs, financial considerations, and compliance with the Ministry of Long Term Care. I have met a lot of people who shared the same values around elder care, but due to various constraints we could never bring this dream to fruition. It was frustrating and at one point I felt that elder care was not something I would continue with.

I decided to take a break and regroup and travelled to Trinidad for a year where my mother has lived for the past 35 years. I took that time to evaluate my goals and priorities. While I was there I rediscovered my passion for elder care and the importance of community support, family, and values as the key ingredients to helping elders live well.

Christie Gardens caught my attention because it is a non-profit home and I knew that meant all possible resources would be put into resident care, community strength, and values. The Christie Gardens philosophy of care also excited me, and I knew I had to apply. My experience so far has reinforced that I can make a difference in the lives of the elders here.

## What is your philosophy of care?

I want to ensure that each elder receives the best care possible while maintaining their dignity, privacy, and self-determination.

## What are your goals as the new Director of Health & Wellness?

As a nurse, I want to share my knowledge and experience to increase the capacity of the nursing team through new training and

education opportunities. I also want to support the integration and collaboration of staff in the support team and ensure the Wellness Center has the best resources available to meet the needs of all the residents here at Christie Gardens.

## What do you enjoy most about Christie Gardens?

I am so thankful I joined an organization whose values I can walk every day. At Christie Gardens our values aren’t just words on a piece of paper, the staff here walk the talk and it’s truly impressive.

## What do you want residents to know?

I would like to introduce my new team, starting with my right hand Alicia Christopher our Health & Wellness Team Leader, as well as Lesley Stachelbeck our Physiotherapist, Jeff Dubé our Fitness Program Coordinator, the Registered staff, and Advocates.

Any concern you have, no matter how big or small, is my concern. I pride myself on working collaboratively to find solutions and following up to make sure issues are addressed. Please don’t hesitate to reach out.



**Mona Babb, RN**  
Director of Health and Wellness

## Welcome to Summer (continued from cover)

While we wait for our City and Province to re-open, I would like to encourage our residents to become more active and get back to their pre-COVID activity level. The vaccine you have received affords you excellent protection so it is time to get outdoors, and smell the flowers.

Many in our community have become “shut-in” as the pandemic took hold of our fears and worries. When you decide to go for your walk, or for a sit outside, please encourage your friends and neighbours to join you, since some people remain fearful and may require more prompting, encouragement, and assistance to get them re-engaged with activity.

### Basic protective measures should continue...

Masks, diligent hand hygiene, and physical (not social) distancing. As access to services re-open your risk of exposure continues, so please continue to observe the measures for your protection, and that of your neighbours since we still have the ability to carry the virus, although infections in the immunized appear far less severe.

I hope you all have opportunity to reconnect with friends and family, and look forward to seeing you outside.

**Stay safe, and stay well.**



**Dr. James Stewart, MD**  
Medical Director

## Body Mechanics: The Shoulder Press

The shoulder press is an excellent overall upper body exercise. When performed properly and with focus, it will help strengthen the deltoids, upper traps and triceps.

It is important to focus on maintaining a straight back throughout by keeping the shoulder blades pinched together as well as keeping the bellybutton drawn in.

**Jeff Dubé, BSc, PTS, ATC**  
Fitness Program Coordinator



- 1 with the band looped under the upper thigh region begin with the hands at shoulder height, with tension on the band from mild to moderate. Be sure to keep the shoulders rolled back and the lower back in neutral position with the bellybutton drawn in.
- 2 exhale through the mouth as you extend the arms overhead and reach as far as you can.
- 3 as you slowly return to neutral position, focus on maintaining that perfect posture.



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