



Calendar project exemplifies Sisters' legacy of improving quality of life for residents

The Grey Nuns began what is now considered the "birthplace of healthcare in Alberta" in November of 1863, when they travelled 40 miles east from a settlement at Lac Ste Anne to St. Albert Hill and established a hospital, orphanage and school. Here, they never faltered from their mission to provide compassion for the most deprived and marginalized people of society.

The Sisters have been providing whatever help was needed since before Alberta was a province. They cared for miners looking for gold along the Saskatchewan River, and even extracted teeth and built dentures. During harvest, they would bring lunch to those working in the fields.

In 1940, the Sisters dedicated two wings of their convent to caring for the elderly, and within four years, had dedicated their entire convent to caring for patients in need.

Today, their legacy of caring for those most vulnerable, and giving a voice to those who have none, carries forward at Youville Home.

Sherry Botti, Program Manager, Administration, Youville Home, is connecting with this legacy by helping create Youville Home's annual resident calendar.

The calendar, made for the first time last year, features photos of residents each month, following a particular theme. Last year it was 'Shining Stars', complete with the residents depicted in scenes from famous films such as 'The Wizard of Oz'. This year, residents voted to do the theme, 'Our Residents, Their Past', where they are showcased in the calendar depicting their past jobs, such as plumbing, teaching, and social work. These photos are contrasted with photos from their past. The residents are treated like models during the calendar creation, and work with a professional photographer and hairdresser who donate their services.

The idea for the calendar came when staff was brainstorming a way to raise money for a four-season greenhouse.

"The greenhouse is really about quality of life. By the time residents get into long-term care, they may have lost their connection to things they've enjoyed in the past, such as gardening. To get their hands in the dirt and see the fruits of their labour is really therapeutic," says Sherry, who explains the greenhouse will cost around \$800,000, and fundraising is ongoing.

The residents are excited to be a part of the fundraising process, and staff are pleased to have a project which brings the residents happiness while working for something that improves their overall well-being.

"The Sisters were always thinking outside the box, looking to meet the needs of the vulnerable or forgotten. These residents built our country, but do not have strong voices, and can be forgotten. We are living forward the Sister's legacy by improving resident's quality of life and upholding their dignity," says Sherry.

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Sisters of Charity
(Grey Nuns) of Montreal