



Summer
2020



From the desk of Brian Swainson, Executive Director

These have certainly been challenging, unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the face of everything we do. Throughout all of the uncertainty that everyone has been living through since February our staff at Sunbeam have remained committed to serving the needs of our community. Everyone has done their part to help safeguard the health and wellness of the individuals we serve, their families, staff, volunteers and community partners.

At the time of this writing the province has commenced its gradual / phased plan for re-opening the province while acknowledging the need for special considerations. The government's approach to carefully progressing different geographic regions through the re-opening phases based on each region's specific performance and outcomes with managing the pandemic demonstrates this special consideration. Local considerations are, and must be, considered when looking at decisions which impact the safety of our communities. Similarly, Ontario continues to state the importance of special considerations for vulnerable populations and the staff supporting them, as most recently referred to in one of its announcements earlier this month:

"As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves in Ontario, the direction on visits at long-term care homes, retirement homes and residential settings will continually be updated keeping the safety and emotional wellbeing of residents and staff at the forefront."

All of our pandemic resources are currently available on our website at www.sunbeamcentre.com.

The recent introduction of "outdoor family visits" with specified terms and conditions as an option for our group home clients and their families was welcome news. We are pleased with this first step in helping to bring our clients and their families together after a very challenging 3 months of pandemic precautions.

We have successfully managed through many challenges together, we have done our absolute best to support, comfort and care for our clients, and have been a key support resource for so many of the families we serve. Very importantly, everyone at Sunbeam has supported each other through the many "ups and downs" and periods of uncertainty that have been our experience for many months now.

This has certainly been a team effort among our staff, clients and their families, volunteers and the community at large, and I sincerely appreciate the cooperation, commitment, patience and feedback we have received along the way. On behalf of the Sunbeam Community please remember the importance of self-care, and caring for others, as we all look forward to better days ahead.

Brian



We would like to thank the following organizations for showing love to our front line workers over the last 12 weeks. Our staff went above and beyond to ensure the safety and well being of our residents. We are part of a fantastic community!

- ♦ *Little Caesars Pizza for delivering several pizzas to each of our 16 residential care homes.*
- ♦ *Rotary Club of Kitchener Westmount for the drive by at the Kingsway location where we have 4 residential homes, and for the care boxes for direct support workers.*
- ♦ *Tapestry Hall for providing a number of \$25 gift vouchers that were awarded to staff via draw.*

Winner of the Ontario Nursing Now's RPN award

Congratulations to our own Kelly Karges, winner of Ontario Nursing Now's inaugural award in the Registered Practical Nurse category! At a virtual ceremony attended by Christine Elliott, Ontario's Minister of Health and Lord Nigel Crisp of the UK, Kelly was recognized for her twelve years of nursing at Sunbeam. In her introductory comments WeRPN CEO Dianne Martin noted that Kelly was extremely committed to providing a strong voice for her clients with compassion, dedication, and unrelenting support.

Kelly shared, "I am so honoured to have received this award of recognition from Nursing Now Ontario. I am completely overwhelmed by the kind words from so many of my colleagues. I would not have received this accolade if it weren't for the generosity of a co-worker who submitted a beautiful nomination on my behalf.

I entered the nursing field nearly 12 years ago and could never have imagined the journey I was about to embark on. Working as an RPN at Sunbeam Centre has provided many amazing and challenging experiences. I have had the profound opportunity to care for some truly incredible individuals and with this, my motivation to do better by them multiplies each day." Congratulations Kelly!



Community Spirit is alive & well in WR!

There are so many wonderful people and organizations in Waterloo Region that have risen to the challenge of helping those in need during this unprecedented time. This was demonstrated early in the pandemic through the collaboration of several local organizations & foundations.

Thank you to Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, the Hickey Family Fund and the Schneider Employee's Association Community Fund for providing the support that helped us ensure we had enough PPE for all of our front line workers in the initial stages of the pandemic. Your gift helped our residents and staff remain healthy and safe.

You are community heroes.



- Hickey Family Fund
- Schneider Employees' Association Community Fund

Nursing staff supports the community during COVID

Sunbeam is fortunate to have dedicated nurses as members of our full time staff. During discussions with other organizations our Director of Community Living heard about some of the challenges local Community Living agencies were experiencing around COVID. The solution? Share our staff. In April two members of our nursing staff began to offer specialized training, support & guidance to local developmental service agencies. This helped them to ensure the safety of those they served. Heather Leisegang & Dawn Dubien visited several CL agencies and conducted presentations on N95 mask fit testing for 11 staff members.

They provided reassurance on how and when to safely use N95 masks, and pandemic precautions in general. They participated in conference calls sharing insight around clients with specific medical needs and how to be prepared should a client be suspected of having contracted COVID-19. Staff were educated on considerations about aerosolizing procedures, documents regarding pandemic precautions, isolation procedures, donning and doffing PPE, and guidance around hospital discharges & integration back into the home when dealing with non COVID related illnesses.

They also made themselves available to local agencies for consultation, advice, pandemic precaution training, outbreak protocols and guidance, and related infection prevention and control measures. They offered access to any guidance documents, forms or protocols that had been developed by Sunbeam. They say it takes a village and this pandemic has demonstrated that. Thank you Dawn & Heather for being part of ours.

Isolation is for the birds!

It was a challenge to keep our residents engaged and happy during 12 weeks of isolation. Our fantastic support workers always know how to make them smile. Building these birdhouses did just that & now they have a great garden addition. Fantastic job!



Residents of our homes have been very creative during isolation. They designed birdhouses for their homes but then one staff member at St. Jacobs went a step further. She designed a birdhouse to reflect Tim Hortons, a place that is important to the residents, but due to COVID they have not been able to visit for a while. That gave us an idea—let's have our 16 homes design birdhouses for the online auction that will be a small reflection of that home. You can view them and bid online on July 6th.

A huge thank you to Stew Gingrich of St. Jacobs for donating 16 of his hand crafted birdhouses ...one for each home. Another community hero!



Making people smile through art.

Mirela Askraba wanted to bring a bit of joy to people living in Long Term Care or Supportive Housing given the extreme challenges they have faced over the past few months due to COVID. She created a painting and posted it on Facebook for free. It was snapped up quickly but a staff member at our Kingsdale residential home had asked about it and Mirela graciously offered to paint one specifically for us.

Wanting to learn a bit more about Mirela we asked her to share her story with us. We wanted to share it with you. She lives with her husband and two children (daughter, 16 and son, 13) in Waterloo.

Mirela is Serbian and was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina. She immigrated to Canada with her parents and brother in 1993 at the age of 16 due to the war that broke up the former Yugoslavia. Her family settled in Windsor where she completed high school. She went on to attain her Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Windsor.

She came to KW for her first job out of university and has settled here. She changed her career track from Mechanical Engineering to Project Management and is currently working as a Senior Project Manager for Magnet Forensics in Waterloo.

She has been artistic her entire life and has been involved in dance in the past and is active in her church choir. For the past five years painting has been a passion. We found it so amazing that she is self taught. She paints primarily in acrylics although she hopes soon to try her hand at oils. She sells some of her paintings but has gifted a lot of her work to friends and family. Sunbeam is thankful to have been the recipient of the picture you see to the right.

Over the past few months due to the COVID-19 isolation quarantine Mirela has spent a lot of time painting (while working from home), and has been blessed with opportunities to share her art and as she calls it "heal through art" by donating 4 of her paintings to various Long Term or other care homes.

Community heroes abound in WR.

Mirela has graciously agreed to create a painting to be sold as part of our online auction in July. We encourage you to check it out!



Join us for our online auction July 6th to July 12th. Funds raised will help offset the additional costs that will be realized as we look at re-opening our programs & the modifications necessary to ensure we adhere to the guidelines set out by the Ministry of Health. Register here <https://www.32auctions.com/StrongerTogether>.