



5 Resurrection Rd., Toronto, ON M9A 5G1

# Lets Chat

Summer 2025

Labdara residents' news is published quarterly.



We all have worked hard on maintaining and improving Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home. This is possible with everyone's help, so, thank you for your support, donation of time, your bequests, and lending a hand when needed. Especially thank you to the Board of Directors and the management company, UniversalCare.

Here are some of the highlights and achievements at Labdara in 2024. Labdara celebrates its 23rd anniversary this June. Over 23 years of use some items are wearing down and need replacement. We urgently needed a new generator and are happy to announce that a new generator was installed with capacity to run all three elevators and simultaneously meet all our other electrical needs.

Thanks to the hard work of our physicians, nurses, PSWs, and behavioural support team (BSO) we have been able over two years to decrease the use of antipsychotic medications to below the provincial average. We are very proud of this achievement. We were also able to decrease the use of restraints by 50% in one year. The largest challenge was removing bedrails, which are categorized as restraints, and replacing them with assist bars. The transition was difficult and a major change in practice. We thank the families, residents and staff for their assistance and understanding.

We have also expanded our team and increased resident care hours. With extra funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care we have added two new staff. **Francine Georgopolous** is our **Quality Care Manager**. Feel free to discuss matters with Francine if I am unavailable. Also, we have added **Shawn Cadieux** our **Social Service Worker Manager**. He assists families and residents – improving quality time and care, as well as focusing on admissions and discharges at Labdara. Resident care was enhanced by removing short shifts for all PSWs and increasing them to full shifts. We have added extra PSWs to improve the previous staffing ratios. Our physiotherapy service hours were increased and our Physiotherapy Assistant now works full-time. Lastly, the recreation team has expanded so we can offer more day and evening programs.

We are happy to announce that we have implemented Best Practice Guidelines in: Falls, Pain, Restraints and Resident Centered Care. In addition, we have recruited and educated 18 Best Practice Champions in the home and are heading to become a Best Practice Spotlight Organization.

Hoping everyone has a safe and fun summer,

*Laura Puteris*  
LABDARA's Executive Director

## MESSAGE FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS' PRESIDENT

Dear Residents, Families, and Friends of Labdara

### Happy 23rd birthday, Labdara!



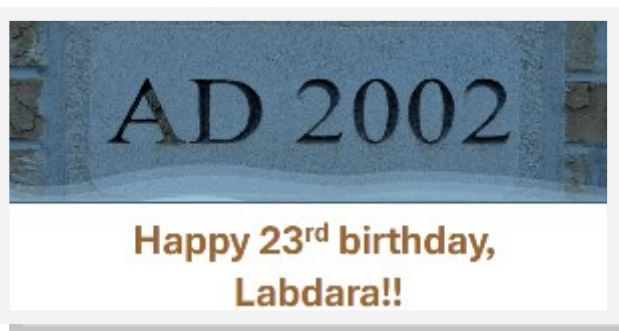
On June 25, 2002, a long-time vision of the Lithuanian Community Association of Toronto (LCAT) became a reality when Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home opened its doors to its first residents. The members and leadership of LCAT foresaw the housing and lifestyle needs of aging Lithuanian Canadians who could no longer live independently and ensured that our elders could be cared for in a familiar living environment in which Lithuanian customs, traditions, and language are preserved and encouraged. I am grateful to those who generously gave their time and financial support to build something of which we can truly be proud.

Twenty-three years later, Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home remains the only Lithuanian nursing home in Canada.

Labdara has been home to many Lithuanians from Toronto and other areas of Ontario. Before the COVID pandemic, about 85 percent of Labdara's residents were of Lithuanian descent. During the pandemic, the admission criteria to long-term care homes in Ontario was changed and the cultural or religious background of applicants was no longer considered. Since that time the percentage of Lithuanians at Labdara decreased to below 50 percent.

The Board of Directors of the Labdara Foundation and the administration of Labdara continue to advocate for having the admission criteria changed to prioritize the placement of Lithuanians to Labdara. Other cultural or religious not-for-profit long-term care homes in Ontario are doing the same for their communities. We strongly believe that all elderly Ontarians should be able to live in the long-term care home that best meets their personal needs in an environment where they are surrounded by familiar language, music, food, and cultural and religious celebrations. The Board plans to initiate a follow-up letter writing campaign to the government should the situation not improve.

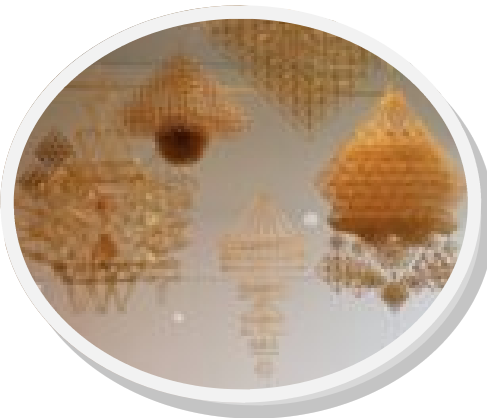
*Zita Bersenas-Cers*



## "SODAI" A LITHUANIAN UNESCO CULTURAL HERITAGE



The tradition of making straw gardens, or "sodai" in Lithuania has been recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. These hanging straw mobiles, symbolic of the universe and associated with well-being, were added to the UNESCO Representative List in 2023.



"Sodai" gardens are geometric designs of varying sizes made from rye straw and stalks of grains, believed to reflect the pattern of the universe and are associated with well-being and spirituality as well as fertility and prosperity. They are hung over the cradles of babies and over a wedding or family table to wish happiness to newborns, fertility to newlyweds or harmony to the family.



When weaving the straws you must be completely calm and focused. A perfectly made straw mobile must spin easily. As the world turns, so does the mobile. If the creation gets stuck or remains stagnant, it means that someone came to make it with a bad idea or wicked intentions.

Sodai have much symbolism. Home gardens were orderly – there was no chaos there. Often the mobile garden consists of two pyramids: one looking up, the other looking down. It symbolizes the skies and the Garden of Eden as well as the underworld. In the middle, there is the tree of life, garden plants and/or inhabitants. Often it contains birds as mediators between heaven and earth, between the living and the dead and carriers of messages.



## **"SODAI" A LITHUANIAN UNESCO CULTURAL HERITAGE (Continued)**

Lithuanian homes are also frequently decorated with "sodai" mobiles for Easter and Christmas. They are spiritual gifts and provide a sense of shared cultural heritage and continuity strengthening intergenerational bonds.

*(from the Internet)*

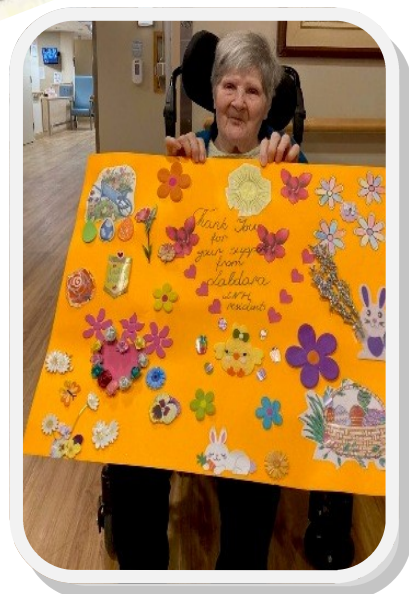
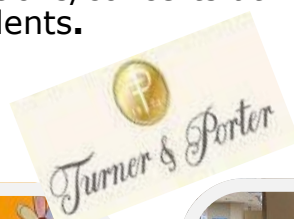


**INDOOR GARDENING:**

Our resident Jennifer loves watering the plants inside our home.



**WITH THANKS** to the Turner and Porter team for their contributions to the Mothers' and Fathers' Days celebrations/concerts at Labdara. The poster of thanks was made by our residents.



## Visit from Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT) Journalist, Augustinas Šemelis

On April 26th, Augustinas Šemelis visited Labdara. He interviewed three of our residents, Gerda Tarvydiene, Vilma Gaputiene, and Kostas Latwis about their life experiences that led to their immigration to Canada. The interviews will be used in a documentary which he will be producing. We eagerly await news about the date on which his documentary will be aired, so that we can see our residents on LRT (Lithuanian National Radio and Television).



FOTO: Resident Vilma Gaputienė, Board Chair Zita Bersėnas-Cers, Executive Director Laura Puteris, LRT journalist Augustinas Semelis, Labdara business services manager Ramunė Ješkutelytė, residents Gerda Tarvydienė and Kostas Latwis.



## Holy Family Angels Concert at Labdara



*Thank you for all your contributions!*



## HOLY FAMILY ANGELS CONCERT AT LABDARA



The Holy Family Angels singers, under the leadership of Mr. Douglas Peck, regularly come to LABDARA to perform for our residents. Their latest concert took place on May 24th. After the concert everyone enjoyed socializing with the singers and sharing tea and cakes. Mr. Peck and singers, please know, you bring us much joy. Thank-you!



**KANADOS LIETUVIŲ FONDAS**  
LITHUANIAN CANADIAN FOUNDATION

Thank You

We would like to thank the Lithuanian Canadian Foundation for their generous donation of \$3,200 to the Labdara Foundation which will be put towards the purchase and installation of sunshades for the second-floor balcony at Labdara.



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS AMBASADA KANADOJE**  
**EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA TO CANADA**  
**AMBASSADE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE LITUANIE AU CANADA**

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The Embassy of Lithuania seeks to honour Lithuanians celebrating their 100th anniversary in Canada. Those wishing to receive a greeting from the Ambassador of Lithuania to Canada on this special occasion are asked to notify their family members, relatives or friends, indicating the name, surname, date of birth and phone number of the applicant. E-mail: [amb.ca@mfa.lt](mailto:amb.ca@mfa.lt).



## A Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

**VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION:** on May 20th, the Labdara nursing home hosted a lunch for our volunteers who contribute their time and talents for the benefit of our residents. Certificates of appreciation were handed out as mementos for their service.



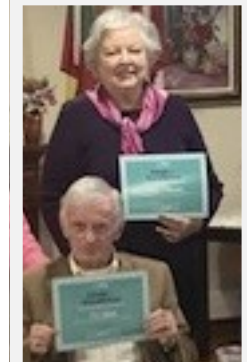
Our musical performers from Right to Left - Ivony with her children, David, Douglas Peck and his daughter Natalie.



Mr. Douglas Peck entertains us once again on the piano.



7 of our 10 best and long-serving volunteers with their "diplomas" of appreciation.



Your Newsletter Editors  
Gabija Petrauskas  
Ed Kurak



Standing second from the left is Board Director Ramunė Čygas.

Standing first from the right is Resident Programs Manager Ljiljana Gavrilovic.

## Kostas' Reflections on Canada



Recently, we have experienced the global Covid-19 pandemic, for which we have had to pay a high economic price. And now there are complaints that the cost of living is becoming more and more expensive. What will happen next? Ask the elderly, veterans, pensioners. The current financial situation of the country is quite complicated. Some pensioners live on only one pension, are poor and have no other options available to better their lot. It is also difficult for young people after graduation to find first jobs in their area of specialty and for students to earn money through summer jobs. We hope that after the economic recovery, the supply of jobs will return, but we first have to wait for the economy to recover.

This uncertain financial situation and slump in our economy cause great concern. A significant part of capital is in private hands and its use is not regulated or controlled, including cash, stocks and investments. It is not surprising that many citizens are concerned about the economic difficulties Canada is facing, and, more generally, about the future of Canada itself.

Massive immigration to Canada, high real estate prices, aging infrastructure, and rising unemployment only contribute to this problem. This gives an excuse for our neighbours to express a desire to make Canada the 51st American state, which is unacceptable to the absolute majority of Canadians.

### **But where is the way out?**

One way to "fix" the economy is to borrow money from the Central Bank. This was done during the pandemic, when multi-million-dollar benefits were paid to companies and the unemployed. This has had a negative impact on both the global economy and our country's economy. After all, it is clear that massive borrowing of money from the bank and stopping manufacturing will have a negative impact on the economy.

### **And now?**

Again, we need to borrow from the Central Bank and according to the current government's plans - to revive and grow the economy through major economic projects, such as the mining of rare minerals, oil extraction, and mining of diamonds in the vast northern regions of Canada, as well as the construction of a gas pipeline through Western Canada, massive construction and development of housing and infrastructure projects, etc. Of course, first nations will need to be consulted if the projects are to be developed on their lands. Environmental protection and the preservation of the landscape from damage and pollution will also need to be taken into account.

On the one hand these projects require billions of dollars, but on the other, they provide a great opportunity to revitalize the Canadian economy, to create hundreds of thousands of jobs and to make the Canadian economy more independent of America and other countries.

We live here and now, in this huge, rich and beautiful country. Our goal and first concern must be "Canada ☐ ☐ first!"

We need to believe in our country and work together to the best of our ability for the welfare of Canada.

*Kostas*

*Our resident Kostas*

## CANADIAN FOOD INVENTIONS:



1. Butter Tarts – Barrie 1900
2. Nanaimo Bars – Nanaimo 1952
3. Poutine – Montreal late 1950's
4. Hawkins Cheezies – Belleville 1949
5. Ginger Ale – Toronto 1907
6. Canola Oil – Saskatchewan/Manitoba 1960's
7. Pabulum – Toronto 1930
8. Instant Mashed Potatoes – Ottawa 1962
9. Yukon Gold Potatoes – Guelph 1960's
10. Peanut Butter – Montreal 1884
11. California Rolls – Vancouver 1971
12. Cuban Lunch – Winnipeg 1948
13. The Caesar Drink – Calgary 1969
14. Beaver Tails – Ottawa 1978
15. Maple Syrup – Quebec Pre 1700-1800's
16. Hawaiian Pizza – Chatham 1962
17. Ginger Beef – Calgary 1975
18. Chewing Gum – Toronto 1860's





## Word Puzzle

1. You carry it, but you can't count it. What is it?
2. It's always cut with knives, but it never draws blood. What is it?
3. It has no beginning, and is without end, but is not God. What is it?
4. When I lived in the forest, I swayed, but after dying I kiss the soles of your feet. What am I?
5. Whatever I see, I turn into it. What am I? (
6. Four ladies stand under one roof. What am I?
7. A tiny lady dresses everyone. What am i?
8. One is running ahead, the other always chases it. What am I?
9. I burn all day, but I never burn up. What am I?
10. It runs day and night and never stops. What is it?

|              |    |
|--------------|----|
| A River      | 10 |
| The Sun      | 9  |
| A Bicycle    | 8  |
| A Needle     | 7  |
| A Table      | 6  |
| A Mirror     | 5  |
| A Floorboard | 4  |
| A Wheel      | 3  |
| Bread        | 2  |
| Hair         | 1  |



## SUCCESS

**To laugh often and much;  
To win the respect of intelligent people and the  
affection of children;  
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and  
endure the betrayal of false friends,  
To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others;  
To leave the world a bit better, whether by a  
healthy child,  
a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;  
To know even one life has breathed easier because  
you have lived.  
This is to have succeeded.**

***(Ralph Waldo Emerson)***

