

# LET'S CHAT

**Easter2023**

**Labdara residents' news is published quarterly.**

**5 Resurrection Rd.,  
Toronto, ON M9A 5G1**



## *Happy Easter*

### ***Our Administrator's Message***

Spring is the time of  
plans and projects

-Leo Tolstoy



The beginning of spring was the perfect time to look at Labdara's plans and projects and to address issues that we are facing in long-term care. Recently we had the pleasure of hosting a meeting with Lisa Levin, the CEO of AdvantAge Ontario. "AdvantAge Ontario is the trusted voice for not-for-profit senior care. We are community-based, not-for-profit organizations dedicated to supporting the best possible aging experience." Labdara is a member of AdvantAge Ontario. It can advocate on our behalf.

While touring Labdara, Lisa commented on the nice appearance of our home, but more importantly, she noted that the atmosphere felt very "homey" and comfortable. Lisa understands the importance of a familiar environment to our residents. They thrive when surrounded by their people, their food, and their culture. The current Resident Council President Birutė and our past Resident Council President Irena expressed concern that under current government policies Lithuanians no longer get priority status for admission to Labdara. They felt strongly that language and culture are very important and that non-Lithuanian residents are missing out on familiar customs, foods, and traditions from their own culture when they are placed at Labdara.

Our dietary manager Tamara Szczepanska voiced concern about the impact of Bill 124 on Labdara's employees. Bill 124 capped wage increases to 1.5% for not-for-profit long-term care homes. This created an even larger discrepancy in wages within the same sector. Private and Municipal LTCH were able to increase wages more during the pandemic. Ljiljana Gavrilovic, our Programs Manager, described the impact of a three-dollar-per-hour wage increase that the province granted to personal support workers, but not to employees in other departments. She noted that everyone at Labdara worked very hard during the pandemic, yet some employees felt less valued.

Lisa Levin agreed that Not-For-Profit Long-term Care Homes were unfairly impacted by both Bill 124 and by the high costs of paying for staff from private agencies due to staffing shortages in health care overall. AdvantAge Ontario continues to lobby the government to address these inequities in long-term care.

Zita Bersénas-Cers, our Labdara Foundation President, addressed some of the financial challenges that long-term care homes are facing. In the fall of 2022, resident accommodations charges were increased by 1.5%, however, services and maintenance costs of our 20-year-old building have gone up by approximately 14%. The difference between income and expenses must be covered. Lisa is aware and agrees that unless changes are made to provincial funding, there could be major financial implications to Not for Profit Long-Term Care Homes.

Beata Malizia, our Director of Care, identified concerns about discrepancies between staff vaccination requirements, the timing of return to work after testing positive for COVID-19, and rapid testing of staff. The requirements are stricter in Long-Term Care than in hospitals. Our staff feel this is a punishment for working in Long-Term Care homes, especially when they must work during outbreaks and can get sick. In addition, not all claims for WSIB are approved, so staff need to use their regular sick time or vacation days in order to have an income.

Lastly, we discussed overall challenges with staffing: use of agency staff, difficulty finding QUALIFIED staff, not being able to compete with wages offered by other organizations, and burnout of current staff. Daliborka Lazic, our Assistant Director of Care and Resident Assessment Instrument Coordinator, explained that reporting and documentation requirements have increased under the new Fixing Long Term Care Act. It is concerning that this can take away from the hands-on care of our residents.

I trust that this information helps community members, staff, residents, family members, and friends understand some of the impacts that new policies and government mandates have had on Labdara. The pandemic will leave a lasting impact on long-term care homes, and the resultant changes are not all positive.

Here are two ways that you could help address some of the issues identified above.

1. Write to your Member of the Provincial Parliament, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Long-Term Care. Let them know this is not going unnoticed.
2. Consider making a financial contribution to Labdara Foundation. Your support allows us to enrich the lives of our residents through bus trips, outings, concerts, and special activities. Funds are also required for our 20-year-old home to be well maintained so that our residents can have the best possible living environment. Please keep us in mind when you are making donations for tax purposes, in memoriam donations, or for fundraising events .

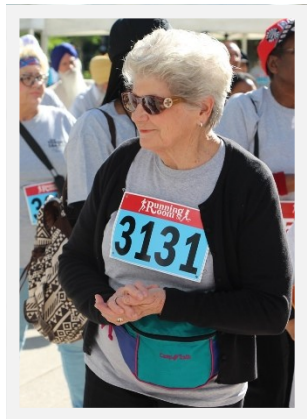
*Ačiū*  
*Laura Puteris, Executive Director*

## THE GIFT OF TIME – VOLUNTEERING AT LABDARA

***"To care for those who once cared for us is one of life's highest honours."***  
***unknown***

Time is the most precious gift we can give to one another. We are grateful to have wonderful "gifters" of their time at Labdara – our volunteers. Some have been with us for several decades and others have just recently begun their new "careers" as volunteers. Each one of them improves the quality of life of our residents - dispels their feelings of loneliness and depression. This is a priceless gift. In return the volunteer is rewarded by the smiles that spread over the faces of our residents and staff upon seeing the volunteer arrive on the premises. The faces of the residents light up as they know that someone has remembered them, will spend some time with them and will be unhurried. Will listen. Will help. BRAVO to all of our volunteers. And now let us meet our long-serving Gajutė and newcomer Daina.

### GAJUTĖ BUDRA:



We are so pleased to have Gajutė as our volunteer. She has been helping us over the past 19 years – almost since the beginning of Labdara. In spite of her 88 years of age, before the pandemic, she would join our volunteer choir on Wednesday mornings and sing at Mass in our home and then join our residents in the afternoon sing-a-longs. Over the past 10 years she walked in the Toronto Challenge 5km. walk for Labdara so that items could be purchased to improve the quality of life of our residents. Prior to the pandemic she was a regular baker and seller of goods at Labdara's annual craft and bake sale. All the proceeds were used to purchase necessary equipment for use by the residents.

And finally this past summer, Gajutė, together with a group of our wonderful volunteers joined in song with our residents in a face-to-face sing-along in Labdara's garden. Everyone was so happy to see each other, to sing and to have a cup of tea or ginger ale, but most importantly of all, to spend time together.

### CITY OF TORONTO AWARDS

Two of our volunteers, Gajutė Budra and Maria DosSantos. were nominated by Labdara and received the City of Toronto Legacy Awards to celebrate National Volunteer Week in the city. The awards recognize the passion, commitment and effort of volunteers to make Toronto a better place.



They both received plaques of appreciation. Gajutė was recognized for her long years of multi-faceted service to our residents and our home. Maria was recognized for her contribution. Maria helps feed the residents who require assistance during mealtimes. She also visits and shares her time with our residents. She happily sits with our residents, talks to them and listens to their stories. Thank you Maria!

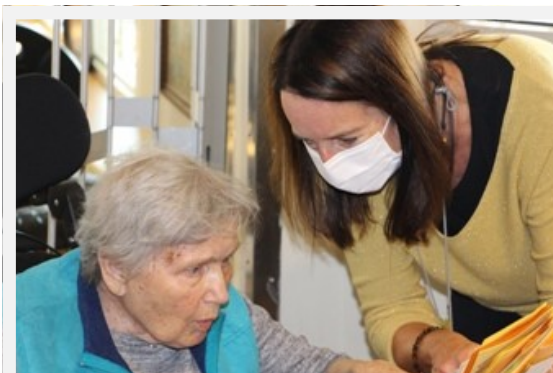


Volunteer  
Toronto

Maria and Gajutė at City of Toronto awards event

### **DAINA KALENDRA:**

Daina joined us as a volunteer one and a half years ago. She has a wonderful natural rapport with our residents, especially on the third floor. She successfully encourages their engagement in organized activities. She calms them when they are agitated. Daina's positive energy spreads not only to the residents, but also to our staff and her contribution of time eases our work too. God grant her good health and perseverance so she can be with us and bring joy to everyone for many more years to come.



For more information about what volunteers do and how to become one, please visit our website at [labdara.ca](http://labdara.ca) and look under COMMUNITY or contact:

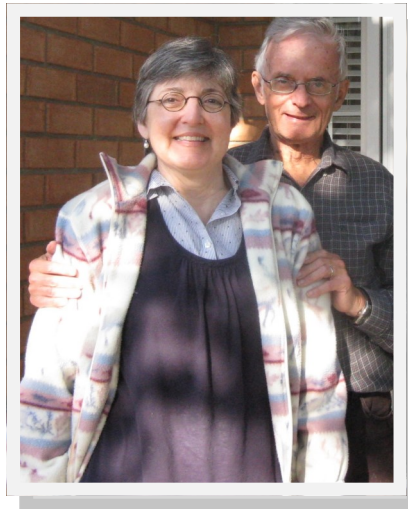
Ljiljana Gavrilovic  
Programs Manager  
416-232-2112 ext 403  
[lifenrichment@labdara.ca](mailto:lifenrichment@labdara.ca)

## **A Volunteer for 20 Years**

### **By Ed Kurak, celebrating 20yrs. as a Volunteer at LABDARA**

Soon after LABDARA opened, I was asked in July of 2003 to assist Tadas Gurevičius with computer projects as a volunteer at Labdara. I did not hesitate and said I would be happy to assist. My Mother was one of the first residents at Labdara (July 2002). We knew that the facilities were well-kept and, above all, that the nursing home had caring staff. Many of them are still working here today. My wife Rose immediately joined the volunteers as well. She managed the reception desk on Mondays, permitting Danguole to undertake her other duties.

We both expanded our volunteering roles and enrolled in the Feeding Course. Our first experience at feeding was memorable. At the end of the meal, the lady who Rose fed reached for Rose's hand and kissed it in gratitude.



The gentleman that I fed, Petras, had had a stroke and could not speak. After the meal he placed his hand on mine and squeezed it lightly. I knew this was his way of saying "Thank-you". When I attended his funeral I learned that he had obtained a PhD in agriculture after immigrating to Canada – that he had led a remarkable life. These memories make volunteering personally satisfying.

An additional incentive to both Rose and I to volunteer, was the fact that both of our mothers lived at Labdara and experienced its excellent services. This July will mark 20 years that I have been volunteering here. We both certainly sport more grey hairs – an indication that new volunteers would be welcomed and I am sure would find the same fulfillment in volunteering that we did.

*For 20 years now Ed has been a volunteer with Labdara – helping out with computer projects: managing our Website, Facebook Page and with publishing Labdara's residents' Newsletter. Together with his wife ROSE they have made an immeasurable contribution to life at our nursing home. Ed and Rose - We send you our congratulations and sincere thanks for being part of Labdara.*

## LIFE AT LABDARA



GREETINGS TO ALL



IN THE SNOEZELEN ROOM



TOGETHER

## The origins of the song: Kumbaya

*(From our music therapist Laura Gilis)*

The song Kumbaya has become a favourite way to close music therapy group sessions Friday mornings at Labdara. But the question always comes up... what does "kumbaya" mean? Where did it come from?

There is lots of confusion about the origin of the song, with some believing it originated from Africa, and others that it originated with hippy movement and folk revival in the 1960s.

The American Folk Life Centre has found the earliest recordings and manuscripts at the Library of Congress dating back to 1926 from the American south. In African-American spirituals, "kumbaya" is a way to say "Come by Here," and is a way to request the Lord to come and to be close.

The song spread through the world, and from the 1950s through the 1990s, it was recorded by dozens of American artists and in many other countries around the world. The popularization of the song also has led to the saying "to join hands and sing Kumbaya" which means to ignore our differences and get along in peace.

Recently, in 2017, to recognize the importance of the song and its origins, Kumbaya was made the State Historical Song of the US State of Georgia.



Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Oh Lord, kumbaya

Someone's singing Lord, kumbaya  
Someone's singing Lord, kumbaya  
Someone's singing Lord, kumbaya  
Oh Lord, kumbayah

Someone's crying Lord, kumbaya  
Someone's crying Lord, kumbaya  
Someone's crying Lord, kumbaya  
Oh Lord, kumbaya

Someone's praying Lord, kumbaya  
Someone's praying Lord, kumbaya  
Someone's praying Lord, kumbaya  
Oh Lord, kumbaya



## LITHUANIAN GARDENS



Lithuanians love their gardens and tend them with great care. Flower gardens in different parts of Lithuania took on different forms. Some were framed in stones, others were surrounded by a low decorative fence made from young sapling branches or curated plantings of moss or low grasses.



Over time the types of flowers planted changed. Early flower gardens found by the home were planted with wildflowers found in the surrounding fields. Over time this changed in favour of cultivated flowers. Until the 19th century the source of seeds and cuttings of plants were the estate homes, parsonages and monasteries. They were the ones who brought seeds and plants into Lithuania from other countries. Even the much-loved Lithuanian national plant the Rue (Rūta) was imported from the Mediterranean Sea area and



the estate owner and traveler S. Moravski introduced the now popular dahlia to Lithuanian.





## LITHUANIAN GARDENS continued



It was customary that every home in Lithuania have a flower garden. The quality of garden was an indicator of the type of person that lived in the home. It was said that „a home without a garden is like soup without salt.“ Young maidens who maintained a beautiful and cared-for garden were considered suitable marriage partners. Girls as young as 12 took over the care of the family flower gardens and tended to them in the evenings after completing their other chores.



The more variety of plants the more joy for the eye to see and the more perfume to smell in the air. Many plants also had medicinal purposes. They were used to flavour food, dye cloth, to wash with for personal hygiene and for pest and insect control.

An integral part of the garden were the hedges: lilac bushes, jasmine, viburnum, etc. Rose bushes were adopted later.

It is seldom that you will now see an authentic indigenous Lithuanian garden. Gardens today are dominated by imported plants. Indigenous gardens are now found mostly in cultural heritage parks.

(from Nijolė B. from Kaunas)



## OUR RESIDENTS' THOUGHTS

*From childhood to adulthood  
 From youth to old age  
 From innocence to understanding  
 From ignorance to knowledge  
 From foolishness to wisdom  
 From illness to health  
 From insult to forgiveness  
 From pain to empathy  
 From fear to faith  
 From loneliness to love...*



Looking back you see that triumph comes at the end of the journey – that holy journey that leads to life everlasting.

Man's spirit does not rest if it has not found peace and joy on this earth. It now moans: „I wandered along so many meaningless paths without a friend, without a leader and I wait for the light of joy to envelop me.“

And my poor heart did not find it!

Irena Žemaitis

## GENEROUS DONATION:

Sincere thanks to PARAMA Credit Union for their generous donation of \$20,000 to the Labdara Foundation. It is particularly helpful during these extraordinary and challenging times.

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS:

We are grateful to the families of the late Vytautas KULNYS, Joana ZENKEVIČIUS and Marija GUDELIS for choosing the Labdara Foundation to be a recipient of their memorial donations.

## Word Puzzle

1. The golden plank cracked open and the whole world arose. What am I?
2. A golden sheet draped over the earth. What am I?
3. Without feet and without arms I open gates. What am I?
4. Without feet and without wings I fly into trees. What am I?
5. Without wings I lift things up and without feet I run. What am I?
6. I am here and then I'm gone, but I live forever. What am I?
7. I burn all day, but I never burn up. What am I?
8. I am on the move day and night and never stop. What am I?
9. I went through the field and lost my pearls, the moon found them and the sun gathered them up. What am I?

The Dew	9
A river	8
The Sun	7
The Moon	6
The Wind	5
Snow	4
The Wind	3
The Dawn	2
Sunrise	1





## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**Deacon Dr. Kazys Ambrozaitis**

### **LIVE THE EASTER THAT IS IN US**



During these hope-filled days of Easter, we can manifest the "Easter in us" through a genuine awakening and renewal of our minds and hearts. The "Easter in us" can move us to live the Christian ideal in our homes, in our places of work and in our parish family.

Let us reflect on the fear felt by those who, at this very hour have lost hope and question the purpose and meaning of life itself - the doubting Thomas's of today.

Consider the hope-destroying fear that promotes bombing people back to democracy. Where is our hope today? Our hope is in the Resurrected Christ. In Him we see hope - we have hope because He vanquished death forever.

He is our guide to building a community of love today. The Risen Christ gives us strength to build this "new community". Through His Resurrection, Jesus promised that a new day will dawn in our community. The "new creation" will conquer the evil of the world, as completely as Jesus conquered death.

We must root out the anxieties of fear that paralyze us by using our gifts of time and talents to build a renewed community based on love. We are called to roll back for each other the stone of fear, anxiety and hopelessness and allow the light of hope to dismiss the darkness around us. This will give us hope and let us live the Easter that is in us.