

**BETHANY PIONEER VILLAGE INC.      2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**Monday, November 29, 2021**

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORT – LISA IRLBECK**

(Lisa included photos with her power point presentation. The photos are referred to, but not included in this printed version.)

Welcome everyone! I'm going to present from the back of the room so that I can flip through our slide show presentation for you. Tonight, I would like to start out with an exercise.

I invite you all to stand up, shake your bodies out and cross your arms in front of your body as you would normally do. Feels good. Feel comfortable. Feels right, doesn't it? Let your arms go back to your sides, relax and shake your body out.

Now cross your arms over your body, but in the exact opposite way you did the first time. Now smile! Is this uncomfortable? Is this strange? Is this the way you normally cross your arms? And, I've asked you to smile while doing it! Are we now uncomfortable? How many of us are still smiling? I have asked you to change how you would normally do something and, to boot, I have asked you to do it with a smile! OK, I'll let you out of your discomfort, and get you to sit back down.

This is what working at Bethany has been like for the past two years – full of changes – partly because of the pandemic and partly because we had to in order to be compliant with new guidelines and directions. We have often had to “cross our arms” in a new way and there are times when it has been uncomfortable and not always easy to keep our smiles! Being taken out of our comfort zone to develop new skills has been difficult but, as of this date, each new challenge has been met and the results that were needed were achieved.

(screen shot of Al Hoeber)

I would like to thank Mr. Alphonse Hoeber for being our Bethany shining star tonight during this presentation. When I asked him if I could use his picture, he said, “Well sure. That would be great. I don't see why not.” Al has been a resident at Bethany for many years, as a daily visitor while his late wife was with us, to when he moved into Birch, and then into Aspen. Al, we could say, has aged in place and it looks like he is doing a fine job.

**OUR MISSION** (screen shot from Bethany's website)

A mission statement is meant to declare what an organization hopes to accomplish. At the non-profit, faith-based community of Bethany Pioneer Village we:

*“Glorify God by providing a welcoming Christian environment and a caring staff to nurture those in need of physical and personal support.”*

We share God's love by enriching lives. We believe that God intends for His children to have life to the full, regardless of circumstances or age. It is our desire to provide an environment and care that improves the lives of those who call Bethany their home.

Our Mission has not changed. We still hold value in this, and, we still uphold these principles.

**OUR VISION** (screen-shot from Bethany's website)

A vision statement is meant to declare what an organization is pursuing and where they want to be. Bethany's vision statement is to:

*"Lead the way in empowering the possibilities for living life to its fullest in all who trust us to care."*

It's the kind of life so empowered that blessings overflow into the lives of others. This kind of living is at the heart of Bethany's community and care. It's not just our residents, however. It is for all who trust us to care. Empowering the possibilities for living life to its fullest is also for our staff, volunteers, donors, board members and all whose heart is connected to Bethany. Bethany is intent on leading the way in charting new territory, exploring exciting possibilities and being on the leading edge of providing exceptional care in new ways to those who trust us to do so.

**OUR IMPACT** (screen-shot from Bethany's website)

To create an environment that is Welcoming.... Christian..... Nurturing....

(screen-shot of a staff member giving a resident a manicure)

Doesn't Ida look like she's having fun – just one of the many services that is provided to the residents from the Bethany care team.

**IMPACTS OF COVID 19**

So how do we provide a Welcoming, Christian and Nurturing environment when we are in the middle of a pandemic?

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 we closed Bethany Pioneer Village down, complete and utter lockdown, our world was shut down. Nobody in and nobody out. Everyone experienced pandemic hardships, from residents and family members to staff. This has been a very difficult time and we are still dealing with the effects of Covid.

As of this date (November 29, 2021), we have been through 4,789 policy changes at Bethany. What was being done in the morning was sometimes completely undone two hours later. The rules were constantly changing, and are still changing. Staff came into work every single day, scared to death of what was going to happen. The residents were forced to steer clear of all activities, meal-time procedures and visiting with other residents that they would normally have done. We went into survival mode; not sure what the future would bring for us. The way we communicated changed and human touch disappeared.

Then Bethany, along with every health-care facility in the province, began the fight for enough supplies – thermometers, gloves, masks, isolation gowns, hand sanitizer, cleaning products and disinfectant wipes – with every home hoping to be the lucky facility to get their necessary supplies. Bedside tables were brought in for every room, new hot lunch carts were wheeled

down the hallways delivering meals to residents eating by themselves in their rooms. It felt like they were in a classroom and we were not serving them meals, but rather teaching them how to be proper residents.

To reduce the risk of cross-contamination and transmission, staff cohorting had to be designed and put in place and, where possible, people were sent home to work. Face-to-face meetings were replaced with constant Zoom meetings where we felt like we were part of the Muppets in the opening dialogue. We had no choice. We needed to change in order to survive. We were fragmented, but still safe. Everyone was safe.

As outbreaks started to happen around us, Bethany and our surrounding community homes, were asking each other, “How are we going to survive? How do we help one another?” We learned that the average outbreak was costing a home \$150,000. plus.

Wakaw was our first experience when 45 residents and 25 staff members tested positive and the administrator was hospitalized. They needed help and we stepped up – we provided media releases for their board, we allowed our staff with loved ones there to go and help out, we provided numerous hours of staff scheduling to our affiliate partner. We stood united with them. When Watson, another affiliate partner in our south-east SHA area, had a similar experience we provided the same support. More PPE was sent along with isolation gowns and carts. Our kitchen prepared goodies for their staff to have while on break. We were living in an insane time. We were definitely out of our comfort zone and thinking outside the box in order to survive.

Family members were desperate to see their loved ones. There were rules for designated visitors and how many people could be in a room at once, along with constant masking. We created visiting booths and used I-pads and phones in order for residents to see family members. We tried desperately to comfort those who suffered from dementia as we watched them slowly slipping inward when they didn’t see familiar faces everyday.

Family members were jumping over the snow-covered chain-link fence into the back yard to get a glimpse of their loved ones through the windows. What was once an open-door visiting policy of “come one, come all” turned into an hour long visit once a week by a family member with their loved one. Once a time-honored tradition of serving coffee and snacks to our visitors, turned into “you have to bring your own.”

We shared the heart-ache of family-members having loved ones in the final stages of life and did our best to create opportunities for individual family members to say their good-byes. The pain of not being able to celebrate the lives of those we lost in that time period is still being felt by family members and staff.

Pictures of our founding fathers had to be removed, no decorations could be hung because if we were to go into an outbreak, they would all have to be destroyed. No music or entertainment was allowed because that was considered high transmission activity. Every single piece of mail and packages sat in the office for 48 hours and were wiped down before they could be delivered to the residents.

The once well-used visitor/guest suites were closed to visitors and family members and were used by staff when needed. The gym was closed to outside visitors. Many of these rules continue to this day.

One of the heart-breaking sights during the height of pre-vaccine Covid-19 was seeing new residents that were accepted and placed into our home being dropped off at the front entrance with their belongings. Family members were not allowed into the home to settle their loved one in to their new surroundings. They had to place their faith in Bethany staff, that their loved one would be settled in comfortably and be OK.

We lived with all these impacts for a year before we began to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Finally, by April, 2021 the first vaccine had been given to residents and staff and we began to breath easier.

As of this date, November 29, 2021, 95% of all Bethany residents have been fully vaccinated. 95% of Aspen and Birch residents have received a booster shot. 92% of staff are fully vaccinated and the other 8% participate in an on-going testing program. For the first time in two years, I feel safe. I believe that we have done and continue to do everything in our power to keep the residents safe. We have been Covid free, even though we have had a few scares along the way, but we have not had any outbreaks! This is no easy feat, and one that we take seriously. Bethany's staff are resilient and they continue to maintain safe practices that keep our residents as safe as possible.

While Bethany has remained strong as an affiliate organization, we have watched other affiliate homes around us crumbling during this prolonged pandemic as they struggle with finding enough staff to fill vacant lines, have staff working 16-hour days for more than four days straight, many staff on over-time and working short on shifts. Some have had to make the decision to give up their affiliate status and become part of the government owned and operated system. Bethany has amazing staff who have provided exceptional care through these difficult months as policy mandates continue to stretch far and wide in health care at this time. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

## **THE SEARCH FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- What does Bethany need to do in order to offer the best possible services to the changing needs of residents?
- What needs to be done to maintain, strengthen and sustain our Affiliate status with Saskatchewan Health Authority?
- What needs to be done to keep our experienced, qualified staff and to attract the next generation of qualified staff?

During the three years that I have been at Bethany, I have worked closely with the board reflecting and researching for answers to these and other questions that helped shape our decision-making process.

### **Finances**

With respect to Bethany's financial business practices we asked, "How do we operate? How do we get business done?" Over the last 20 years our old computer systems and business practices had seen very little change. We had grown comfortable with doing things "as we always have", even though, in some cases, answers could not be found as to why. Information needed for specific kinds of reporting, were difficult to formulate correctly. When looking at Bethany's future needs in handling a multi-million-dollar budget, it became clear that our current business practices needed to be updated and that it was time to call in the experts.

Financial analysis experts were called in to do a detailed examination of our business practices and to show us options for up-to-date technology and services now being used in health care facilities that are time-saving, cost effective and accurate. This resulted in our moving to QuickBooks on-line with an automated DEXT program that allows all bills and receipts to be scanned automatically and entered in to the proper accounts. A massive amount of information had to be moved to the new system and this created some hiccups along the way. We apologize for anyone who may have experienced a hiccup that caused an inconvenience.

What we have now is a system where accounts are accessible to all departments in a timely fashion and we are able to create a high level of reporting that was not possible before. A mountain of work previously done for audit preparation has now been eliminated as our auditor has access to the on-line account with all the paperwork at his fingertips.

### **Policies and Framework**

Bethany receives a 2.4-million-dollar grant from the Provincial Government specifically for our Special Care Home, Aspen Manor. This grant is disbursed through the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) and, in order to receive its disbursements, Bethany has reporting, audits, framework and guidelines that must be followed. It is Bethany's responsibility to be aware of and follow staffing policies and changing resident care frameworks in order to remain in alignment with SHA standards. Bethany works carefully to incorporate a similar standard of policies and frameworks in its other divisions, Birch Manor and the Units, even though they do not receive government funding.

Some of you may have noticed that when Covid-19 hit there were some definite mandated changes in our Special Care Home (Aspen) that had to be complied with in order for us to keep receiving funding. That is why we see some differences in procedures and activities happening at Birch than at Aspen. Birch is Assisted Living where Home Care helps support the residents that live there. Aspen is a Level 4 care home with 24-hour nursing and more specific operating requirements.

### **Staffing**

2021 marked the year for new collective agreements for our SUN(Nurses) and SEIU(Care aids, kitchen, housekeeping, laundry) and Out-of-Scope employees. These agreements saw an increase of 5% over 5 years for these essential workers. They had been working without a contract since 2017 before finally settling with the Provincial Government.

Out-of-Scope positions (office staff and maintenance) are also based on the same gridding and parameters. SAHO, our collective bargaining unit for all health care employees in the province, mandates and sets the salaries for all employees. In past years Bethany has not worked with SAHO to evaluate their Out-of-Scope employees which meant that salaries were not on the proper scale and were not competitive with other homes.

With Board approval, all Out-of-Scope positions were evaluated and salaries were determined on the scale that is defined by the Province of Saskatchewan. Contracts and employment agreements, along with defined job descriptions approved by SAHO are now in place.

Bethany has 76 hardworking, dedicated staff working in full-time, part-time and casual positions. Over the last two years we have been addressing the need for changes based on resident needs and also the need for changes based on staffing needs.

- 1) Change to Resident Care Coordinator at Aspen: Bethany has changed the Director of Care position to a Resident Care Coordinator. This position is based on a model being used successfully in Australia that allows the Coordinator to be the leader in staffing changes, shift routines and to be an advocate between staff and residents along with the resident's care team. The Coordinator offers support and guidance in all areas of Bethany's operations in order to create a harmonized structure within the home.

Our Coordinator is Blayn Nienaber. He has over 20 years of experience in the nursing field and countless hours on the floor in a long-term care home. He is an experienced charge nurse, a clinical nurse lead, and, in a consulting capacity, an expert in behavioral solutions and practices. We are so thankful that he decided to join our Bethany team in February, 2021.

- 2) Change to 24-hour nursing model: Until recently, Bethany was the one long-term care home out of 75 homes across the province that was not using this model. This nursing model allows the residents to receive pain management care at any point of their stay, creates less hospital visits and a more comfortable stay for our residents while they are with us.
- 3) Change to 12-hour shift rotations: This shift rotation change allows staff more time away from their work environment to rest, relax, de-stress and have some much needed down time. We have also included 8 and 6-hour shifts for staff that don't want to work the 12s. We have a long-time employee who had only experienced working 8-hour shifts. Now she is working 12s and says she will never go back to the 8s again! The 12-hour shifts include nursing and kitchen dietary. Staff members are telling me they love these shift rotations.
- 4) Saskatchewan Immigration Nomination Program (SINP): Over the past two years, Bethany has been working with the Provincial Government's Immigration Nomination Program to provide support for workers that want to stay in Saskatchewan and provide essential services to Bethany. We provide housing and program costs and they provide thousands of hours of care to our residents.

Currently we have six staff members that we help and support through this program. They are hardworking and dedicated members of the Bethany team. One staff member in particular, who has been working with Bethany in a full-time capacity since 2020, just received news that he has achieved his Permanent Residency. His family, that he hasn't seen in two-and-a-half years, will be joining him in Canada on December 26<sup>th</sup>. When he came to Canada his youngest son was 6-months old. He told us, "I'm going to bring them all here to meet my Bethany family."

Bethany will continue to work with the Provincial Affiliate group in bringing certified essential workers from the Philippines to Saskatchewan over the next two years.

### **Adapting to Changes and Expectations**

In recent years, especially the last two years in Special-Care Homes, guidelines and expectations of residents and family members have changed dramatically. Where the average age of residents coming into the home was once in the area of 80-90, we now have residents in their 40s, 50s and 60s. As chronic disease and illness make their way through our population, the need for a place for everyone, regardless of age, has become apparent. Gone are the days of one bath a week – showers are in demand. Gone are the days where activities happen only during the day – residents are up later wanting to watch movies and play cards and video games. Gone are the days of reduced staff on the weekends because that's when loved ones come to visit.

Care has to be 24-hours a day, seven days a week and has to be flexible and adapt to the ever-changing needs of those who reside in our home. As guidelines change, Bethany has to be compliant in its operations. Levels of care given by staff are changing and more services are expected. At a time when there is a shortage of health-care workers, finding and keeping qualified staff is a serious concern for Bethany and every organization like us.

### **Changes in Assisted Living (Birch Manor)**

Meeting Covid 19 challenges in an Assisted Living facility falls into a different set of regulations than at Aspen Manor. The question we kept in mind was, "How do we allow residents to have their independence while still keeping them safe?"

With the initial shutdown, no outside visitors were allowed in the building. As soon as we could, we set up a visiting room with a plastic wall between the resident and visitor. After the two vaccinations were completed, we gradually moved from designated family member visits only in resident rooms to any family member visits in rooms. Visitors signing-in for contact tracing is now the norm and the once open environment has disappeared.

During the months before vaccines, meal time moved to the Silver Willow Room to ensure appropriate space between each resident as they ate. Instead of bowls of food on the table shared family-style, meals were plated by the staff and delivered to each resident.

This was a stressful time for residents, family members and staff, but we made it through! During this time, we saw change-overs with retirements from some Birch staff. We thanked them for their long service to Bethany and welcomed new staff to the team.

With the help of a New Horizon's For Seniors grant, we were able to hire Shey-Lynn Brockman to provide a variety of regular activities for our Birch residents. She does an amazing job and the residents adore her!

For the past three years Irene Giesbrecht has had multiple roles as Birch Coordinator and staff scheduler. Before Covid she was also our receptionist in the office. During Covid Irene worked from an office at Birch, but she is now back in the office at Aspen taking on new roles along with continuing with staff scheduling, main receptionist and assisting our new Birch Manager, Challa Stevens.

Challa comes to us with over 12 years experience working in group homes and in Long Term Care settings. She is well versed in care models and we believe she will be able to assist and guide us as we work to improve the services we offer to Birch residents.



As part of the new Security and Phone System grant that Bethany received, new doors will be installed at Birch to replace the old wooden doors at the entrances. This will include codes for all the doors that will be activated with new swipe passes. The result will be better security for Birch and we will have the proper fire alarm releases in place if we were ever to have a fire.

Thanks to our donors, we are excited to be able to construct a new tub room for Birch in the new year. This will give Home Care better access to properly meet the needs of our residents with a walk-in tub, a bathroom, heating lamps, heated floor and sound system – all in a spa-like atmosphere!

#### **Additional Health-Care Services Up-date**

Through donations and grant funding, we have been able to purchase a real dentist chair and we look forward to that time when our mobile dentistry, that has been on hold, will be able to resume. During the months and weeks when Covid restrictions are lifted, foot care continues to be offered to our residents. Lab work availability at Bethany is limited by Covid restrictions.

A new initiative by the Saskatchewan Government is now limiting doctor visits to Bethany to once a month. Weekly visits are no longer allowed. During Covid restrictions access to the doctor during his visits is limited, except for Aspen residents.

#### **Changes in Foundation Fundraising**

Shortly before Covid 19 began, Patty Heath was hired as a part-time Volunteer and Fundraising Coordinator. With the on-set of the virus she was forced to work from home and given the task of coming up with ways to proceed with fundraising when volunteers were not allowed to gather or be in the building and hosting in-person events was no longer possible. Patty's ability to think outside the box has helped us reinvent our fundraising wheel by implementing posts on Facebook and our Website to offer on-line 50/50s and putting on-line donation procedures in place with options to donate by e-transfer, Mastercard or Visa.

Bethany now has an on-line gift store for use by residents and family members and we have hosted successful on-line bake sales featuring home-made goodies made by Bethany volunteers and residents. Letter writing campaigns such as the annual Christmas "Tree of Love" donation requests are continuing. Patty and all of us at Bethany are looking forward to that time when we can meet in person with our volunteers and host fundraising events that include community participation.

#### **Recognizing the service of Bethany's Auxiliary**

After fifty years of service to Bethany, the Ladies Auxiliary decided to disband their operations. Covid 19 brought their activities to a halt. With some members experiencing health issues, some recently passing and the current age of the ladies, they made the decision to disband.

One of their last acts as an organization this Fall was to name the new multipurpose room. As an honor to the ladies and their years of service and dedication to Bethany, the room is now called "The Silver Willow Room." Funds remaining in the Auxiliary bank account were donated back to Bethany and \$8,000. were placed into the Foundation account.

Bethany Board approved the creation of metal art pieces by local artist, Kale Dobrohoczki, that will display the new name inside and outside the main entrance to Birch. When Covid restrictions are lifted, a proper celebration and dedication will be held to honor all the ladies who were part of Bethany's Ladies Auxiliary.

### **Changes to Bethany's Administrator House**

Three years ago, when I started working at Bethany, the average age of staff throughout all our facilities was 56. Three years later, our average staff age is 32.

One of the challenges that Bethany faces, along with all organizations and businesses in the province, is the ability for their younger generation employees to find adequate daycare and before and after-school programs for their children.

We are pleased and excited to announce that Bethany Pioneer Village and the Three Lakes Childcare Centre Board are working in partnership to create a Licensed Daycare using Bethany's Administrator House as the daycare facility. The Daycare goal is to be up and running by June, 2022. This is a service that is desperately needed by Three Lakes RM community members and will play an important part in Bethany's ability to attract and keep qualified staff.

We have first hand experience in seeing the positive impact that happens when children and our residents interact – when the school kids come over to decorate resident doors, when we host kids/elder art camps in the summer, when students come over to help plant the gardens and flowers in the spring time – excitement is high and life is good because the generations are interacting!

My favorite story has to be when the Middle Lake school came over for the first time since the pandemic began and went into the back yard with the residents. This was the first time they had been together in 18 months. Together they released butterflies in the back yard. It was a sign of hope, a sign of faith and a sign that we will survive together!

I am honored to be a part of this Bethany organization and proud to lead the dedicated, determined, tenacious and resilient people who welcome and nurture those who come through our doors needing physical, personal and spiritual support. These care givers, and those we care for, inspire me to be a better person every day!