



## Embracing a new opportunity



*Message from*  
**Leanne Gugenheimer**  
—Executive Director

Hello! I'm excited to join the Touchmark community as the new executive director this month. My background includes working with older adults in various communities and settings; overseeing and directing building and staff operations; communicating with staff, clients, the public, and board members; and performing administrative duties.

I most recently worked at the Ashbourne, an assisted living community in Edmonton, and I have also worked for the Canterbury Foundation, which encompasses Canterbury Manor, Canterbury Court, and Canterbury Lane as well as Extendicare Canada.

I was born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and graduated from the University of Manitoba. Then I worked with the Lions Organization, coordinating its health and fitness programs at Lions Place. Some of my favorite pastimes include gardening, reading, running, cooking, and spending time with family. Along with my husband and son, we enjoy camping and the outdoors at Seba Beach.

I'm known for my strong work ethic, solid communication, easygoing nature, and high level of energy. Touchmark is a very welcoming family, and I look forward to meeting all of you!

## The lasting effect of gratitude

*by* Marge Coalman, EdD  
—Vice President of Wellness & Programs, Touchmark

We've all experienced it—the unanticipated “thank you,” the smile from a stranger, the compliment from a friend. These seemingly small, thoughtful acts of kindness and acknowledgment leave a positive imprint on our conscious mind and often on our attitude. But there are larger benefits, and historians as well as researchers have proven the value to both the giver and the recipient.

**“To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.”**

—*Thoreau, Walden*

Such diverse authors as Dorothy Davis, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Gandhi, and St. Paul have written in parables, journals, instructive essays, and sacred texts about the lasting impact of unselfish contributions to individuals, societies, and cultures. Stories of the Underground Railroad, the nationalist efforts of compassionate German citizens during the Holocaust, and more recently the efforts of thousands of volunteers in New Orleans and Mississippi are familiar to most readers.

In less well-read literature, the research community has evaluated the power of expressed gratitude. Individuals with personalities that are largely defined as unselfish, caring, and compassionate have a higher quality of life both physically and psychologically. Well-being is measured in personality indexes and psychological profiles as well as verified with testing that measures the significant systems of the body: cardiovascular, neurological, endocrine, and musculoskeletal. Consistently, considerate individuals fare better and live “well” longer than their contemporaries.

An even greater benefit in the aggregate is the influence on our culture of those who care and share. Without the caregivers, charitable organizations, good neighbors, and citizens we rarely read about in the newspapers, the needs of many would go unnoticed and unmet. In Touchmark's Life Enrichment/Wellness program, we strive to provide opportunities to residents, their families, and our staff to make a difference. To be involved in the positive opportunities, contact Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Kathy Brown for information on how to participate.

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## Meet the Rempels

*by* Al Rempel  
—Resident

We were raised on the West Coast. Wendy is from Vancouver, BC, and I'm from Surrey, BC. We never met there.

After high school, I joined the Canadian military as a medic, stationed in Ontario and New Brunswick, and then I moved to Germany, where I spent more than four years. About half of that time was with the British Army.

Wendy's family moved to Dallas, Texas, where she married an American soldier, and off they went to Germany. We didn't meet there either.

After the military stint, I went back to Vancouver with my British wife, studied electronics, and then moved to Edmonton; then to the Northwest Territories, where I worked first in telecommunications. Then I worked for the power company at the Taltson River dam and then

to Cominco at Pine Point, Northwest Territories, where I added instrumentation to my qualifications. By now we had three children. This is also where my marriage ended. Then it was off to Didsbury, Alberta, for Shell and Calgary, Alberta, for Hudson's Bay Oil and Gas. If you think jobs are easy now, you should have been around then.

Meanwhile, Wendy returned with her American husband to Edmonton, where he was also sent on his way. She worked first in Fort McMurray, Alberta, and then in Edmonton, while raising three children.

Then Wendy and I met! I had this great job where I worked for a week at Alberta's first digitized gas plant and then got a week off. Well, after we met, the week on was too long and the week off was too short. So off I went to Sherwood Park for Alberta Energy in the Pipelines Division. Lots of travel, but I was home a lot more frequently.

The coincidences didn't stop. On the bad side, both of us lost a daughter. On the good side, our kids differed in age by only one year, so we molded them into our family and are very proud of the way they developed and matured.

Wendy worked with the Alberta government in various departments before becoming a system filing consultant. This career ended abruptly in 1990, when our car was rear-ended by another car that was doing over 160 kilometers per hour on a city street as we were on our way home from a safety banquet! We fought a long battle back to a better life, during which she had to fully learn everything all over again. Any memories from before that date are gone forever, but we had a strong family and spent countless hours looking over pictures and recalling stories from the past to fill in some of the blanks. It was only her sheer will power and resolve that got her back to where she is, despite the advice of countless "experts." She proved how wrong they could be!

In 2001, I retired when Alberta Energy became Encana and sold all of their pipeline assets. I love it. We lead a quieter life, but we both enjoy computers. Wendy is also a very active tole painter, scrapbooker, and card maker. She has never lost her contagiously friendly personality. But don't step over the line, or you will find out the true meaning of trouble!

I dabble in electronics, do some woodwork, collect car nostalgia stuff, and play with computers. We spend our summers here and travel in winter. I can't imagine leaving our beautiful house to get away to a small trailer for six



Touchmark residents Al and Wendy Rempel

months, so we just bus tour whenever we want. We plan on four trips this winter: Branson, Oregon and California, Vegas, and Deadwood.

Good times, which are only made better with our move to Touchmark!

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## Director of Care joins Touchmark



**Marg Spilchen**

*by Marg Spilchen*  
—Director of Care

My name is Margueriette; however, I shortened it to Marg. I come from a varied nursing background. My first love in nursing was intensive care; next I fell in love with obstetrics; after that it was parish nursing; then long-term care. My last love is Touchmark.

I'm excited to be here. Please make any suggestions or comments in writing and drop them off at my office or the front desk. I'm planning to post or send notices pertaining to community health initiatives, such as flu shot clinics.

Please feel free to call or set up a time to meet with me. My phone number is 577-5004 or 1-5004.

### Upcoming events

**Wednesday, November 15, 2 pm**—Physical Activity, Diabetes, and You workshop.

**Saturday, November 18, 10 am**—Tai chi.

**Monday, November 20, 2 pm**—Birthday party celebration with entertainment by Wendy Duke.

**Friday, November 24, 10 am**—Belly dancing.

**Wednesday, November 29, 2 pm**—Open House and Newcomers Tea.

## Touchmark beauty salon named



Resident June Clarkson (right) accepts a basket of hair products from Touchmark hairdresser Heather Flewwelling, who donated the prize. June submitted the winning name—Touch Cuts—for the hair salon.