



What comes around, goes around



Message from
Leanne Gugenheimer
—Executive Director

“Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day.”

—SALLY KOCH, AUTHOR

Have you ever helped someone in need without expecting something in return? I had this encounter just recently with a man in front of me at a local grocery store checkout, where he emptied his pockets searching for loose change, of which he was 43 cents short.

The second week of February (February 12-18) is Random Acts of Kindness week. As defined by Wikipedia, “a ‘Random Act of Kindness’ is a selfless act performed by kind people either to help or cheer up a stranger for no reason other than to make people happier.” This can be a fun and favorite week for many people. Most of us like the idea of doing good deeds for one another. Some like to be on the receiving end as well. It makes both giver and receiver feel good, and it’s a good thing to do. In fact, it has been proven by numerous scientific studies that helping others contributes to maintenance of good health, both physical and mental.

I encourage all people from all walks of life to join together to spread kindness. Collectively, we are creating a powerful, synergistic action that can spread throughout our local and global communities. Caution: random acts of kindness may be contagious.

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Follow your heart

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

In today’s world there is a good understanding of the workings and function of the human heart. There is even a live television show that features surgeons doing open heart surgery (let the viewer beware; it is bloody). How is it then that we continue to attribute the heart with being the center of human emotions? In reality, the emotional data center for humans is the prefrontal cortex of the brain. This is where we discern pain from pleasure, friend from foe, gratuitous compliment from genuine praise.

“To understand the heart and mind of a person, look not at what he has already achieved, but at what he aspires to.”

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—Kahlil Gibran

It is an amazing and complex interaction of all of the lobes of the brain that integrates emotion and fact and allows humans to form opinions and make judgments about how to assess an incident or person as to whether there is danger in a given situation. The same automatic analysis can reveal a safe situation and often

provides insight into who we can trust with our emotional well-being.

So, although in the 21st century it is well known that the mainframe of the brain does generate the full range of emotions, our culture continues to use the heart as the universal symbol of the repository for emotions. Sage advice would be to take care of both of these important organs to have “good heart and brain health.” In general, what is good for the heart is good for the brain. That applies to diet, physical activity, balanced work and play time, positive relationships, and good financial choices. It is the total combination of lifestyle choices that allows people to “follow their hearts and create their own future.”

At Touchmark, the Life Enrichment/Wellness program components are designed to support good heart and brain health. For information on the offerings and opportunities available, contact Director of Life Enrichment/Wellness Kathy Brown.

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Design your lifestyle

by Catherine Douglas
—Sales Consultant

It’s a great new year at Touchmark, and we are expecting the busyness to continue!

This year is starting off with many people joining the Touchmark community. Cheryl will be very busy assisting people with their moving. Once again, please welcome your new neighbours. The show home on lot three has been booked, and the new owners will be in their new home in March. By that time, we will have some new homes available. They are almost complete, and they are looking really beautiful. We also will start construction on a couple of other homes shortly. It’s really exciting to see the bungalow development progressing. We’ve also begun to keep a waiting list for specific suite styles.

Many of you have referred friends and relatives to Touchmark. Thanks to you, there’s been an incredible number of inquiries.

Hello! I’m excited to join the Sales team



by Norlyn Bitangcol
—Sales Consultant

An Edmontonian from birth, I have lived in this exciting city for the majority of my life. I grew up right here in the west end and married the “boy next-door,” or rather the “boy just down the street,” who literally took the school bus with me throughout my junior high and high school years. We’ve been married for almost four years now.

Before joining the Sales team at Touchmark, I worked in the media and broadcasting industry for various television stations in Alberta for seven-plus years. I am ecstatic to be working with the fantastic group of people here at Touchmark and am in the midst of getting to know each and every one of you. You are all such a friendly bunch! I look forward to seeing you daily and hope to introduce more people to the great environment we have here.

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Give a Valentine singing telegram

by Kathy Brown
—Life Enrichment/Wellness Director

Let’s have some fun on Valentine’s Day; send someone in the Touchmark community a Valentine Singing Telegram. The cost is \$2, and all proceeds go to the Heart & Stroke Foundation.

We will sing songs, such as *Let me call you Sweetheart*, *By the Light of the Silvery Moon*, or put your own words into a song. Contact me for more details. Please remember to dress in red and white on Valentine’s Day (February 14).

An old-fashioned sleigh ride

We had a wonderful evening for the old-fashioned sleigh ride. The weather cooperated that night, and Jolly Old St. Nick paid us a visit and treated all of us to candy canes. Christmas carols and holiday songs were being sung as we travelled around the Touchmark ring road.

There's an event for you



Touchmark ladies work on their stained-glass projects during a class taught by resident Wendy Rempel. Discover the many events that Touchmark offers—read the upcoming events section or talk to Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Kathy Brown.

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Let Your Spirit Soar

Writers, photographers, and poets live and create in Touchmark communities, and Touchmark is featuring some of this talent and creativity in each newsletter. The Let Your Spirit Soar theme for February is a Heart-to-heart/love story.

A grandfather's love

by Aline Bell
—Resident

He was a large man whose bulk spoke of silence. His hard life was written on his body and face. This I did not recognize until long after his death. My most vivid memories of him stem from a period when I was nine or 10 years old; we lived in a small town 10 minutes north of him.

Not only was he a silent man, but he rarely demonstrated affection toward me, my sisters, or my brothers. In fact, I don't remember him ever kissing or hugging in the accustomed French way that my mother did. My grandmother had died while mother was still a young girl, and I wonder if he became silent and undemonstrative after her death. Nonetheless, he allowed himself expressions of joy and aliveness in spurts and on special occasions.

Although he was not agile and was in fact a ponderous man, on Christmas visits he liked to dance the jigs. He also, with an unmelodious and craggy voice, called out the French Canadian answering songs. This he did while playing the spoons. Interspersed in all this activity was an occasional forceful ejection from his mouth, which landed in the spittoon strategically sitting at his feet. The chewing tobacco and spittoon were constant companions.

I see him as an entity unto himself, who made room for people if and when the need arose. An abscessed tooth coinciding with the arrival of a bus service brought me to an overnight stay with Papère.

These many years later I don't remember the visit with the dentist. I remember the walk with a cousin to my grandfather's house. Most of all, I remember his slow heavy footsteps as he came through the enclosed porch to open the door. This somber man seemed to fill the whole doorway. He stood there, his knees bent, and his body tilted forward. He wore a well-worn week-day suit coat, the knotted fingers of his left hand dangled almost to his knees, and the empty right sleeve of his coat lay tucked in its pocket. At that moment, he seemed to have no expression on his white-bearded face. However as the explanation poured forth from my cousin's mouth, I noticed the beginning of his amusement. The wrinkles around the corners of his eyes tightened, and an almost imperceptible upward movement of the mustache, lips, and beard followed.

The house was an extension of this simple but remarkable man. It consisted of a porch and a small kitchen with an adjoining alcove for his bed. The wood- and coal-burning stove kept all warm. Those two nights of my visit, I slept on a paille in a cobwebbed attic. I slept soundly on the mattress, because grandfather told me he had gathered the straw to make it. The kitchen table and chair, the large wooden truck he used for sitting on while lacing his hook-and-eye boots, and the bench that sat in the entry porch were also of his making. The bench was fashioned for easy carrying with a hole the size of his large hand carved at its centre. The second day I was with him, he carried this bench to the west side of the house, and there we sat being warmed by the sun. Above us hung a wooden yoke and a metal pail.

Come suppertime, Pepère got up, moved the right side of his body towards the house, and slid the yoke onto his shoulder. I was allowed to fetch the other pail from the kitchen. We then walked to the well. Two cool pails of

water were drawn from the depths below. An old bent man, shouldering a yoke with a full pail of water at each end, and a small girl walked back to the house for supper.

For March, please submit a humor and laughter poetry feature. Deadline for this issue is February 10. For a list of the guidelines, monthly themes, and deadlines, please contact Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Kathy Brown.

and admissions will begin this month. We will have a tour day when we are moved in, and you will be the first to be invited.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone for your support, encouragement, and help. I have great respect for everyone I have met as well as the great people I work with. Stay healthy—and call me if I can be of any service to you.

Upcoming events

Tuesday, February 6, 11 am—Resident Council Meeting.

Monday, February 12, 10 am—Book Club meeting. Library.

Wednesday, February 14, all day—Send someone in the Touchmark community a Valentine Singing Telegram. The cost is \$2, and all proceeds go to the Heart & Stroke Foundation.

Wednesday, February 14, 5:30 pm—Valentine Dinner and harp music. Grand Hall Dining Room.

Friday, February 23, 2 pm—Birthday and anniversary party with entertainment by Larry. Fireside Grill.

Wednesday, February 28, 2 pm—Presentation on Australia. Marquis Room.

What others are saying

“The people at Touchmark are thoughtful, caring, and respectful”

by Lorna Gwendolyn Smith
—Resident

Ring in the new year



Over 80 residents, families, friends, and staff helped bring in the new year. A nice selection of dining and dancing music was put together by resident Al Rempel.

Health Services Neighbourhood building almost finished



by Marg Spilchen
—Director of Care

I would like to take this opportunity to update everyone on our nursing-related care progress. We started offering assisted living in December.

More people are interested in this service, and we welcome future people to the community.

The Health Services Neighbourhood is really taking shape