



Green thumbs and good times



Message from
Leanne Gugenheimer
—Executive Director

With summer coming to a close, it is with thankful hearts we have thoughts of a bountiful harvest during the new season of autumn. We don't have to go far to appreciate all the goodness that fresh vegetables can bring. We can look in our community garden to see that "many hands can make for light work" and enjoy a colorful display of flowers and the garden's supply of tomatoes, potatoes, beets, carrots, and more.

This was Touchmark's first summer to feature a garden, which included 12 individual plots for planting. There has been so much for all of us to enjoy—gardeners and spectators alike! Maybe even a few rabbits, too.

What's more is that the campus is continually changing and growing. The landscaping around the bungalow Estate homes is nearly complete, and the Health Services Neighbourhood's sod and trees are now in, as well. The Health Services Neighbourhood courtyard is waiting for final touches, and it, too, can be enjoyed and used by many.

I encourage residents to take advantage of the continued good weather to go for walks outside, visit the ravine

walkways, or sit on the benches to enjoy the beautiful grounds at Touchmark.

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People can affect onset of progressive memory loss

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

Collaborative research studies are coming out weekly that provide evidence that each one of us can make choices that help compensate for age-related changes in regard to cognitive capacity and staving off the onset of dementia-related illness. In 2005, the first definitive information about the positive effect of exercise on reducing the risk of Alzheimer's disease was published.

“Older adults have more control over their cognitive vitality than they may realize.”

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—*Elizabeth Stine-Morrow,*
Professor of Educational Psychology,
University of Illinois

In 2006, the spotlight of research turned to nutrition. In general, the consensus of all the researchers is “if it's good for the heart it is good for the brain.”

This year, the primary focus is on the quest for interventions and prevention of the onset of all age-related dementia illnesses through continued development of brain cells in the area of intellectual stimulation and new learning.

A large body of work from around the world confirms that specific attention to reading techniques and content, memorization, computer games designed to stimulate the cells of the hippocampus (the brain's region for new learning), difficult crossword puzzles, and challenges like Sudoku are definitively linked to brain cell growth and enhanced mental function.

To this end, the National Institute on Aging has earmarked \$2.8 million to go to Elizabeth Stine-Morrow and her colleagues at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology for a program called Senior Odyssey that is designed to engage older adults in team-based creative problem-solving and other brain-teasing challenges. Morrow's research on reading shows that older readers with good comprehension have learned how to adjust their allocation of effort to compensate for losses in other areas, such as working memory and language-processing speed. Her work, as well as the work of other scientists, shows that we don't need to buy into the cultural stereotypes of diminished cognitive capacity associated with the aging process.

The lifelong learning opportunities at Touchmark are selected to support the abilities and skills of the residents. Embrace intellectual challenges. To find out more about program offerings or to be involved in planning and coordinating new learning activities, contact Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Kathy Brown.

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Move into Touchmark

Touchmark suites and bungalows are rapidly filling with new neighbours. Now is an ideal time to tour this active community. Touchmark currently is featuring these two attractive homes:

The Fairmont

This 1,617-square-foot home now serves as the bungalow Sales Centre. Open the front door to a bright, spacious great room with a vaulted ceiling and large windows. The open floor plan allows for the utmost flexibility in entertaining, enabling you to continue meal preparation while talking with guests.

The large master bedroom can accommodate a good-sized bedroom set, and it has a lovely walk-in closet with room for an extensive wardrobe. The bathroom is complete with double sinks, a double-seated walk-in shower, and a

separate water closet. The second bedroom (or den) and other bathroom are down the hall. A convenient laundry room leads you to the double-car garage.

As in all Touchmark bungalows, the Fairmont has nine-foot ceilings, wide doorways, and rounded corners on the walls and comes with a basement that has nine-foot ceilings and oversized windows.



The Fairmont offers an open floor plan with a great room that has a vaulted ceiling and large windows.

The popular one-bedroom, one-bathroom Grande suite

One of the most popular Grande homes that offers assisted living services is the one-bedroom, one-bathroom suite that is 604 square feet. This floor plan features high ceilings, elegantly rounded corners, and large windows, which make the suite feel open.

The kitchenette includes a microwave, full-sized refrigerator, and cupboards lowered for easier access. All bathrooms include walk-in showers with grab bars, and this particular floor plan features ample closet space and a personal patio.

If you haven't had a chance to visit and tour Touchmark, please come by—and invite a friend!



This popular 604-square-foot Grande suite offers assisted living services.

New assistant controller joins Touchmark



Welcome team member Elaine Hawrelak.

by Elaine Hawrelak
—Assistant Controller

As a new member of the management team, I look forward to each and every day and spending my time learning and working at Touchmark. My background includes working in the banking industry, a brief time with Alberta Agriculture, and owning and managing a consulting firm.

I grew up on a farm, although I have resided in Edmonton for many years with my husband and two sons. My farm background has remained with me, as my favorite hobby is encouraging plants to thrive in my yard. For those of you who remember former Edmonton Mayor Bill Hawrelak and are wondering if I am related, the answer is yes. He's my first cousin. I look forward to getting to know everyone and welcome any visits to my office throughout the day.

Creating fashion from spuds



“These days, the only time you will find the ladies peeling potatoes is when they are making potato necklaces,” shares Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Kathy Brown. When the Touchmark ladies saw Florence Samalack’s trendy potato necklace, they had to make some. So a group set aside a couple of afternoons to create these fun fashion items.

Stiff, sore, or stressed?

It's time to treat yourself to some extra care and attention. Healing from Head to Sole offers opportunities to pamper yourself and feel special through a relaxing massage. From your first experience to your last, registered Massage Therapist Jody Makarus will help you feel welcome, whole, and rejuvenated. Massage relieves chronic tension and pain in the muscles, improves circulation, and reduces mental and physical fatigue. For more information or to book your massage treatment, call Jody at 780-903-4325.

Upcoming event

Tuesday, September 25, 2 pm—Sock Hop '50s dance.

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 September is a book review of your favorite book.

Book review

by Irma Hjørleifson
—Resident

One of my favorite books is *The Power of One* by Bryce Courtenay. Set in South Africa (if I remember correctly), it is a powerful story of a young man's difficult journey from childhood to manhood. The story perhaps could more aptly be entitled *The Power of Two*, because in every rocky phase of his life, there was always a mentor and a friend of great wisdom to guide him safely to the next step in his journey. Best of all is the grand finale—a little gruesome perhaps, but wonderfully satisfying. A great read!

Another favorite is *The Samurai's Garden* by Gail Tsukiyama. It is a beautiful story written in a lovely, gentle, but powerful style. It tells of the lives of some Chinese women caught in a war against the Japanese invaders, and although there is tragedy, loss, and upheaval, they are never paramount in the telling of the story. An interesting and informative part of the plot involves a leprosy colony, which is interwoven throughout the story in a beautifully compassionate manner. I very much admire Tsukiyama's gentle style of writing

and thoroughly enjoyed her first two books in this series, *Women of the Silk* and *The Language of the Threads*. *The Samarai's Garden* is one of those rare books that I like to read several times over and enjoy it more every time.

For October, please submit a poem about harvest/life wisdom. Deadline for this issue is September 27. For a list of the guidelines, monthly themes, and deadlines, please contact Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Kathy Brown.

Meet a member of the Touchmark team



Renee has found great fulfillment in being a nurse and following the footsteps of her mother.

Registered Nurse Renee DeLeon, who works in Touchmark's Health Services Neighbourhood, shares some of her life journey.

I was born in The Philippines, where families stick like glue. In 1995, my family and I moved to Canada. At age 15, it was devastating to leave my recently established friendships, but I had to go where my family went.

As I embarked on my high school experience in Canada, I met new friends, joined many groups, and tried as hard as any teenager would

to fit in. Soon the settling period was almost done, and my parents decided to make another move—this time to the City of Champions. Once more, my heart ached and built up a new set of anxiety to face new people and different surroundings. But meeting many people and making tons of friends made finding my own self easier. Along with my best friends, I found myself graduating from nursing school.

Now as a registered nurse, I realize I am following the footsteps of my idol, my mom, and that those transitional times as a teenager helped shape me into the energetic person I am today. My philosophy of care is simple: I want to take care of older adults because they created and prepared the world that I am now enjoying. As a mother myself, I want to continue this legacy, and I am confident that my son will grow up and have a happy childhood, like his mom. It is this philosophy that I take with me every

day as I work with the Touchmark team to support and serve residents.

Celebrating Western Days

Everyone was in the cowboy and cowgirl spirit during the city's annual festival, Edmonton's Capital EX. To join the city celebrations, the staff surprised residents during the barbecue in the Health Services Neighbourhood with a line dance to the song *Cadillac Ranch*. In the afternoon, staff and residents gathered for their Western Day Hoedown, which also included line dancing. The Touchmark sheriff and deputy showed up that afternoon, making sure everyone was behaving themselves.



Residents and staff dance during the Western Day Hoedown.



Staff surprised residents with a line dance, which was done to the song *Cadillac Ranch*.



The Touchmark sheriff and deputy.