

# The SOCIETY Scoop

## Season's Greetings from President and CEO, Abby Katz Starr

The end of the year is always a time of celebration, reflection, and connection. At Unionville Home Society, we have much to be grateful for, and even more to look forward to in 2026!

This October, we proudly marked the 55th anniversary of Union Villa's opening in 1970, a meaningful reminder of the legacy of care we continue to advance. We were also honoured to be the beneficiary of a new fundraising event, the Falling Into Fashion Show and Luncheon, where more than 350 guests came together in support of our home. Our annual Dinner Party was another tremendous success, raising significant funds and bringing our community together for an unforgettable evening furthering our commitment to Redefining Aging.

This fall also brought important opportunities for engagement and advocacy. In November, we were privileged to welcome Minister of Long-Term Care, Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, who selected Union Villa as the site for an announcement of new funding for long-term care and wound care—resources that will directly benefit our residents and many others across Ontario. She later returned to shadow our PSWs, spending extended time with our frontline team. Her enthusiasm and willingness to return speak volumes about the exceptional work happening at Union Villa.

I was also pleased to chair the National Housing Forum with AdvantAge Ontario and to join sector leaders in meetings with MPPs at Queen's Park to advocate for seniors' housing. These strengthened relationships open new possibilities for the year ahead.



As we look toward 2026, our focus remains firmly on the future. We continue to advance our strategic plan and its four pillars, as well as our campus master plan and recommendations that will shape the next generation of our campus. We look forward to introducing our Task Force, which will guide this next era of growth and deepen Board engagement in these transformative projects. Partnerships with York University and Seneca Polytechnic also continue to evolve, using VR innovations to connect seniors with loved ones and meaningful memories in ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago.

At the heart of all we do is connection - connection with our ministry and academic partners; with our supporters; with our residents, clients and their families; through innovative programs and technology; and with one another as a community.

As I reflect on the recognition Union Villa has received this year, I'm reminded that it's the people of UHS who make this such a special place. Thank you for being part of our story and for bringing joy, care, and community to everything we share together.

I wish you all a joyful holiday season filled with warmth, peace, and meaningful moments. —Abby Katz Starr

## Holiday message from UHS Board Chair, Philip Enright

As I near the end of my second term as Board Chair at Unionville Home Society, I am deeply grateful for the care and dedication that make our campus such a special place.

This year Union Villa celebrated its 55th Anniversary, we welcomed the Minister of Long-Term Care, and I enjoyed hosting the Union Villa Dinner Party with my wife, Patti. Each one are truly memorable milestones.

The holiday season invites us to reflect on the many ways you support our home, both financially and personally. We recognize the challenges many face yet also embrace the joy of connection and community at the heart of UHS.

Thank you for your generosity and commitment. Your contributions ensure we can continue our important work and bring festive cheer to those who call Union Villa home. I wish you a joyful holiday season and look forward to reconnecting in 2026.

– Philip Enright



## Spotlight on the Recreation Team

### Creating meaningful experiences every day

#### At Union Villa, “Recreation” Means Fun – and So Much More

For Recreation Manager Lindsay Bailey and her team, recreation is about more than activities, it’s about nurturing emotional, physical, cognitive, psychosocial, and spiritual wellbeing. “It’s about creating an environment where people feel supported, connected, and like they belong,” she explains.

The Recreation Team ensures residents always have something to look forward to. From daily programs to special events, each activity offers a reprieve and a chance to connect. This fall, residents enjoyed a Fall Fest complete with a workshop and a petting zoo in the courtyard. Picture the amazement of seeing llamas, goats, rabbits and more!





These events don't just lift spirits; they also bring families together, creating moments of joy and connection even in challenging circumstances. Whether it's a lively musical act or a quiet afternoon in the courtyard, the team meets residents where they are.

Looking ahead, Union Villa is embracing Virtual Reality experiences with CareGivr allowing residents to explore new worlds or revisit places from their past.

The team also partners with Kayla, our music therapist, and Mia, our art therapist, who help residents discover new skills and a sense of pride in a safe, supportive space. To nurture the spiritual side, Pastor Jun provides pastoral care and leads inclusive services for all. And we can't forget the fun and laughter that comes from our Clown Therapy which is a form of therapy that uses humor, play, and performance.

When asked about standout moments, Lindsay recalls a trip to a local Bingo Hall where Union Villa residents outplayed the regulars much to everyone's delight! These experiences remind us that recreation is about joy, pride, and sometimes a little friendly competition.

Ultimately, recreation at Union Villa is about supporting every aspect of life. From celebrating seasonal celebrations, to cultural programs, the recreation team is always challenging themselves to engage residents in unique and meaningful ways.

It takes dedication, creativity, and a lot of heart but the result is clear: fun at Union Villa is serious business, and it makes a lasting impact every day.



**Pictured above are members of the Recreation Team**

**L-R:** Debbie Batzakis, Komalpreet Kaur, Lovish Anmol, Imneet Sidhu, Lindsay Bailey, Teashia Persaud, and Jun Gao. **Not pictured:** Sarah Rose, Erica Chao, Preeti Manaktola, Lenard Tundayag, Sharbiga Gunaselvan, Manvir Kaur, Lenet Babu George

## Resident Profile

### Meet Vladimir Galinsky

**You'd be hard pressed to find someone more travelled than Vladimir Galinsky.**

Born in the city of Stalingrad, now Volgograd, on May 26, 1955, he grew up in a Jewish family in Russia before he was drafted at eighteen years old into military service from 1973 to 1975. For two years, he drove a bus to transport pilots to their naval planes, part of a covert operation to search for enemy submarines and buoys that would mark the place where bombs were to be dropped. "Don't tell anyone!" Vladimir (mostly) jokes.

Despite the hardships of growing up in Russia and his dislike of the current president, Vladimir recalls the beauty of the country. He describes how the weather is similar to that of Canada, snowy and cold, but says Canada has more beautiful autumn colours.

For the 1980 Olympics held in Moscow, Vladimir trained to be a bartender. "I really liked it," he recalls. With the taste of the world, Vladimir set out on a Russian cruise ship, putting his new bartending skills to use. The cruise ship was part of the Black Sea Shipping Company that ferried Australian and English tourists around the Oceania region. Vladimir lists off the places he visited, including Sochi (Russia), Odesa (Ukraine), Sri Lanka, Sydney and Brisbane (Australia), and Auckland (New Zealand) – but not Japan. One of the highlights was his visit to Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England because it was the birthplace of his favourite singer, Alan Price, the lead musician of the band The Animals. There was "lots of excitement," Vladimir explains, to be in the same city as Alan Price.

Due to cheaper travel prices and competition, the cruise company no longer exists, but Vladimir remembers his work fondly. "I got paid to see the world and eat amazing food!"

In the mid-1980s, Vladimir moved to Israel, and currently has dual citizenship for Israel and Canada. He describes the landscape as a sort of paradise with the Jordan river, and recalls it as a "very



good place" where he could connect with his Jewish religion. He put the paper in the Western Wall at Jerusalem. Vladimir admires the writings of Solomon, whose writing about love "touches the heart like magic." He also enjoys the work of Russian writers Aleksandr I. Kuprin, who wrote about Solomon, and Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*.

About twenty years ago, Vladimir came to Canada where he met his wife in Toronto. She now works at a cardiology clinic as a licensed ECHO sonographer with a combined thirty-eight years experience in her field in Canada and her home country, Kazakhstan. Vladimir proudly describes how her work saves lives and how she has received honours and distinctions.

Now living in Ontario, Vladimir describes how he feels much healthier and happy here at Union Villa. He used to be stuck at home, paralyzed after two strokes and a seizure, and he has since recovered after having a brain tumour removed. "People help me here," he says, and he feels supported. Even after all these years, however, his connection to Russia runs deep. "Don't tell anyone!" he jokes once more. We promise full discretion.





**Happy Holidays from Wyndham Gardens!**

## **Festive Greetings from our Campus**



**Greetings from Union Villa!**



**Holiday cheer from UCCS!**



**Well wishes from the ADP group!**



## Falling Into Fashion: A Day of Style and Support

On October 22, 2025, Unionville Home Society was privileged to be the beneficiary of a new fundraiser hosted by the incredible **Ladies Lending a Hand Committee**.

The Falling Into Fashion Show & Luncheon brought together more than 350 guests for a day of fun, fashion, and philanthropy with over \$38,000 raised.

From delicious food to fabulous vendors, raffles, and auctions, the event offered excitement at every turn. A highlight was the stunning fashion show presented by **Bigley Shoes & Clothing**, featuring our very own residents as models. Delia and Dafni stole the spotlight with their chic outfits and confident struts, earning smiles and applause all around.

The live auction of a luxury shopping spree at Bigley's added even more thrills with spirited bidding!

We extend heartfelt thanks to the Ladies Lending a Hand Committee, a dedicated group of volunteers passionate about improving the lives of vulnerable seniors through inspiring events. And to all who attended, participated, and donated: thank you for celebrating fashion with compassion. Your generosity fuels innovation and care at Union Villa LTC and enriches the lives of our residents.

**2025 Committee:** Elaine Hartley, Lydia Henry, Darlene McClelland, Gerlind Milich, Karen Randazzo, Joanne Serafino, Yildiz Unsal & Janet Whiteley



Committee members with President and CEO Abby Katz Starr for cheque presentation at Union Villa



UV Administrator Kevin McKay with resident Delia walk the runway



Union Villa Resident Dafni having her makeup done by a student from Canadian Beauty College



Congratulations to the Live Auction Winners – A shopping extravaganza at Bigley's

## Unionville Home Society Foundation Signature Fundraiser a Success!

On November 6th, Unionville Home Society Foundation proudly hosted the annual Union Villa Dinner Party at Angus Glen Golf Club.

With the theme **Redefining Aging** woven throughout the evening's remarks and commentary, the event was both a celebration and a call to action.

Our hosts, Philip Enright, UHS Board Chair, and his wife Patti, a longstanding volunteer in our community, welcomed guests with warmth and gratitude. We were honoured to hear remarks from Minister of Seniors and Accessibility Raymond Cho, MPP Billy Pang, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti and virtual greetings from Minister of Long-Term Care Natalia Kusendova-Bashta.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our signature sponsor, Times Group Corporation and to all our cherished

guests, generous sponsors, and dedicated volunteers whose presence reflected the compassion and commitment that define our community.

Together, we raised over \$75,000, funds that will directly enrich the daily lives of our longterm care residents. One of the most urgent priorities is replacing Union Villa's aging HVAC system. While unseen, its impact is profound: clean air, consistent temperatures, and a peaceful environment are essential to the health, dignity, and safety of residents, staff, and visitors alike.

This investment is more than a technical upgrade, it is a promise to redefine aging by ensuring our seniors live in a space that supports both physical and emotional wellbeing.

Thanks to your generosity, Union Villa can continue building a brighter, more dignified future for every resident who calls it home.

**2025 Committee:** Lorraine Chipperfield, Emer Barnes-Chow, Patti Enright, Kimberly Chisholm, Dara Greene, Michelle Probert, Kim Pryor, Jan van Velzen



L:R – Dinner Party Hosts Phil and Patti Enright, Mayor Frank Scarpitti and UHS CEO Abby Katz Starr.



Volunteers at the Giving Zone.

thank you



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## Unionville Home Society Foundation – Holiday Campaign

### Help Us Bring the Joy of Movement This Holiday Season

The holiday season is a time of joy, giving, and togetherness. For 55 years, Union Villa has been a trusted cornerstone in our community, helping seniors age well, live better, and feel deeply supported.

This year, we are inviting you to help bring the **joy of movement** to our residents. Many face mobility challenges, yet activity is one of the most powerful ways to enrich daily life, bringing light, energy, and confidence.

Our holiday campaign is dedicated to funding **adaptive recumbent bikes**, designed for residents of all mobility levels, including those who use wheelchairs. These bikes provide safe, low impact exercise, foster independence and dignity, and support both physical and mental wellbeing.

With your support, residents will have access to equipment that keeps them active, engaged, and healthier. Imagine the joy of someone who,

This specialized equipment will cost approximately \$8,000 each. Our goal is to purchase 2 for our Home.



despite limitations, can once again experience the simple pleasure of pedaling a bike.

This holiday season, we invite you to make a gift to Union Villa. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps us continue the tradition of excellence that has defined our home for generations.

**Making a gift is easy**, just contact our Foundation Office at 905 477-2822 ext 4270 or donate online at **[www.uhs.on.ca/donate](http://www.uhs.on.ca/donate)**.

*From our family to yours, thank you for your generosity and for standing with us to help our residents age well and live better.*

### Our Mission

Engaging our communities through a continuum of services that enhances the experience of aging.

### Our Vision

A progressive community where older adults thrive, age well and live better.



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