

The SOCIETY Scoop

Greetings from President and CEO, Abby Katz Starr

As the warmth of spring returns, there is a renewed sense of energy across our campus. This season of change and possibility feels especially fitting as Unionville Home Society (UHS) looks ahead to an ambitious and exciting future.

Over the past months, we have been refining our Strategic Plan and are now moving into the critical phase of operationalizing it across the organization. Our direction for the next five years is grounded in four key pillars: expanding our campus through revenue-generating partnerships, broadening the range of community services we offer, growing our brand and fundraising capacity, and strengthening a leadership team that is both business-minded and politically astute.

This next phase of growth is already taking shape through the addition of exceptional leadership. In March, we welcomed Fadi Dawood as our Chief Strategic Officer, who will play a central role in advancing our long-term growth agenda. We also welcomed Wendy Kadlovski as Director of Strategic Partnerships, a newly created role that reflects our commitment to building strong purposeful collaborations which will be instrumental as we expand our network of partners.

We are equally excited about our continued collaboration with York Region and the next chapter for the Unionville Community Centre for Seniors. This represents a significant milestone in the Centre's 46-year evolution and will enable us to deliver even more dynamic programming for older adults in our community.



Reflecting on our journey, it is remarkable how far we have come since the uncertainty of the pandemic. Thanks to the unwavering support of families, donors, partners, and staff, UHS has emerged stronger, more focused, and ready to grow. We are entering a new era defined by momentum and the potential for expansion, including future builds that will enhance our capacity to serve and create a true hub for seniors' care and community.

At the heart of every step remains our mission: enhancing the experience of aging, one person at a time. Thank you for your continued support and belief in our vision. We look forward to sharing more in the months ahead.



Greetings from UHS Board Chair, Philip Enright



Spring is slowly making its presence known here in Markham. The snow, sleet, and ice that defined our long winter are finally giving way, and with that shift comes the promise of renewed energy for our gardens, lawns, and perennials as the growing season begins once again.

I often think of our campus of care at Unionville Home Society in much the same way. While none of us were dormant during the busy winter months, we are entering a moment in UHS's history when important decisions must be made.

Just as every gardener knows the importance of tending the soil and preparing for new growth, we too must continue to nurture and safeguard the exceptional model of seniors care and services we have cultivated over decades. It is a reputation we can all be proud of. Our care staff, senior leadership team, and volunteer Board of Directors work together to ensure our campus remains the very best it can be — but we cannot stand still.

Our DementiAbility training continues in full measure, and we remain committed to innovative tools and approaches that strengthen our care mandate. We were also pleased to welcome Wendy Kadlovski and Fadi Dawood to the Senior Leadership Team. Their expertise will help position us to meet the economic challenges and expansion opportunities that lie ahead. My Board colleagues and I will continue to offer guidance and support as we move into the start of a fresh fiscal year.

In keeping with the season, let me close by wishing you well with whatever new initiatives are on your own horizon. One highlight I'm looking forward to is attending the soldout 8th Annual Garden by the Greens luncheon on April 30th, with proceeds supporting enhancements to our resident gardens.

— Philip Enright



SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

2025-2026

Unionville Home Society, Unionville Home Society Foundation and Wyndham Gardens Apartments of Unionville will be holding their respective AGMs on:

Wednesday June 10, 2026

Beginning 5:00 pm | Heritage Lounge

Join us before and after the AGMs to experience LTC innovation with interactive exhibits.

Please RSVP to pselvananth@uhs.on.ca or 905-477-2822 ext. 4234 by June 5th.



Resident Profile

Meet Reza Makhooli

Reza Makhooli was born in Abadan, Iran, on October 17, 1961.

Growing up the second oldest of eight siblings, he was surrounded by family – which made it easy to find teammates for soccer. He recalls when he returned for a visit to Iran as an adult and how he was greeted at the airport by a huge welcoming committee: “Some of the cousins I didn’t even know. Three, four hundred people came to greet me. I said who are they?” he laughs.

After high school, Reza served in the navy for eleven years in the Persian Gulf. He then married, and he and his wife welcomed their first daughter in Iran. His family then traveled ahead of him to Toronto, where he joined them in 1989, for better opportunities and freedom. They had another daughter once they were settled in Canada.

Reza worked in Toronto in an Italian restaurant where he learned from his colleague about running a restaurant, and after a year, he was able to open his own place in Barrie called *Sicilian Gourmet*. “What I learned from [my grandmother], I brought it to Canada, and tried to develop it myself, and make the food for everybody,” Reza explains. “My hobby is my cooking, and cooking is my hobby.” His favourite dish is one he saves for special friends and family that is not for sale, though he was kind enough to share the secret ingredients: pizza topped with pesto sauce, garlic, baby spinach, sundried tomatoes, jalapeno peppers, and red onions. His favourite pasta is linguine chicken tetrazzini – “simple but delicious.”

Now, his brother-in-law runs *Sicilian Gourmet*, and Reza is enjoying his time at Union Villa since he moved in about two months ago. Most of his family is still in Iran, which is especially hard right now, but he loves to see his granddaughters as much as he can. While his one daughter lives in Russia and works as a doctor, the other is a lawyer in Toronto. “They are both my sweethearts. I love them to death!” he beams. His smile grows even



wider when he talks about his granddaughters, Aven (ten) and Alara (six). “I cannot describe how much I love them.”

He recently celebrated the Persian New Year, Nowruz, with his loved ones, where they had a Persian feast with at least thirty different dishes. They also wore new clothes, a tradition that symbolizes the shedding of the old year and welcoming the new.

Across decades and continents, Reza cherishes the special meals, celebrations, and most of all, family. “I was always around Grandma, making food,” he says warmly. Now, he still continues the tradition of sharing food with family in his own way.

Celebrating Active Aging: Joy In Every Activity



Winter Olympics Ceremony with ADP Clients and Staff



Dementiability in Action



UCCS Volunteers at UCCS



Staying Fit with Fellow Seniors



St. Patrick's Day Celebrations at Union Villa



MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy and President & CEO Abby Katz Starr visit with residents following a provincial funding announcement at Union Villa.



Celebrating Lunar New Year Together with Friends



Italian Social & Conversation



Tai chi at UCCS

Where Time Slows Down: My First Experience in Long-Term Care

By Wei, SSWG Student Intern, Seneca College

Entering a long-term care (LTC) home for the first time was a unique experience that challenged my expectations. It wasn't the chaotic hospital scene I had imagined, nor was it a place of complete silence. Instead, I found a world of methodical activity. As an SSWG intern, my first impression at Union Villa LTC was the steady, rhythmic movement of the nurses and Personal Support Workers (PSWs). They weren't rushing, but they were never idle; they moved with a calm, practiced efficiency that kept the entire community running smoothly.

This environment has given me a completely new perspective on the concept of time. In my life as a student in Markham, time is a resource I'm always trying to "beat", it's about deadlines, catching the bus on time, and constant multitasking. But in the LTC, I realized that my "fast-forward" mindset didn't fit the reality of the residents. For them, time isn't something to be "used up"; it is something to be lived, moment by moment. I watched how the staff balanced their busy schedules with the need to never make a resident feel rushed. I had to learn that slowing down my own internal clock was my first real professional task.

What really hit me was the incredible history behind every resident. It's easy to look at a chart and see a "case," but when you sit down at eye level, you see the person. I met residents who had spent decades as leaders in their fields or pillars of their families. One of the biggest shifts for me was talking to residents with dementia. In our world, we expect quick, logical answers. Here, I've learned that time doesn't have to be linear. Even if a resident is confused about the year, they are still very much present in the "now," and they deserve my undivided attention in that moment.

I am also learning about professional boundaries in a way that textbooks can't teach. It's about being deeply empathetic while maintaining the steady, professional presence that the residents rely on. I've realized that in a place where everyone is working so methodically, the most valuable thing I can offer is my time—to listen, to observe, and to simply be there.

My placement at Union Villa showed me that being a good social service worker isn't just about mastering academic theories. It's about patience and a sharp sense of observation. My time here has taught me that protecting the dignity of these seniors starts with respecting the slower, more meaningful pace of their world.



Save the Date - Upcoming Fundraising Event



Tuesday June 23, 2026 • Angus Glen Golf Club

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A FUNDRAISER TO SUPPORT UNION VILLA LONG TERM CARE

Join us in enhancing the experience of aging and helping our residents age well and live better.

**South Course | 6:30 am Registration, Breakfast, Driving Range
8:00 am Shotgun Start**

While a great day of Golf will be on the agenda, your participation will help us raise significant funds to enhance and advance the home environment and resident experience throughout Union Villa LTC.

PLAYER REGISTRATION

Per golfer: \$300 | Foursome: Early bird (until May 31): \$1,100 • Regular (as of June 1): \$1,200
Includes: 18 Holes of golf with cart, Continental breakfast, Lunch, Passport of activities.

For more information, including sponsorships and donating, please contact mdimson@uhs.on.ca or (905)477-2822 ext 4270.

We look forward to seeing you on the green, and let's golf FORE Union Villa!

SIGNATURE SPONSOR



Our Mission

Enhancing the experience of aging, one person at a time.

Our Vision

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



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For more information about the Unionville Home Society Foundation, participating in events, sponsorship, or making a donation, please contact us at (905) 477-2822 ext. 4270 or by email at mdimson@uhs.on.ca.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Charitable Registration #87172 1940 RR0001