



No. 20, Summer 2023

News from Copernicus Lodge and the Copernicus Lodge Foundation

JOSI'S SERENITY GARDEN

Where Happiness Grows

There's nothing quite like a beautiful garden to refresh mind, body and spirit. Whether you're an avid horticulturalist, participate in gardening as a hobby or simply enjoy nature's colourful blooms, visiting a garden is the perfect way to relax and unwind outside either on your own or with company.

Josi's Serenity Garden in Copernicus Lodge is such a place: a well-loved spot where long-term care residents can sit outside, enjoy the fresh air and the garden's peaceful surroundings.



This garden was made possible thanks to the generous support of Phil Stefaniak. Members of Toronto's Polish community, Phil and his wife, Josi, though they were never residents, had a fond attachment to Copernicus Lodge as a place that celebrated Polish culture and brought the Polish seniors together in a home-like setting. They would donate regularly for nearly 40 years. And as a volunteer member of the Auxiliary, Josi led horticultural sessions for seniors at Copernicus who shared her passion for gardening.

Following Josi's passing in 2001, Phil honoured his wife's memory by funding the long-term care garden and in recognition of his generous support, the space was named "Josi's Serenity Garden." "My uncle felt

that it would be a good way to remember Josi," says Michael Chwalka, a nephew of Phil Stefaniak. "Josi loved gardening and was always complaining that their home in Old Mill backed onto a ravine with lots of trees, and the shading made it difficult to have a garden with lots of colour."

After Phil's passing in October 2020, Copernicus Lodge Foundation was informed by Michael, the executor of his uncle's estate, that it was named as a beneficiary in the will and that a bequest of \$75,000 was to be designated to the renewal of Josi's Serenity Garden and its ongoing maintenance. This past May and June, the funds were put to use as the garden was revitalized to help bring it back to its previous glory. A portion of the donation was also dedicated to replenishing the common garden area situated between the apartment building and the long-term care home.



"It's so important for people to go outside and have a garden to enjoy," Michael continues. "It's sad to see some of these facilities that don't have these outdoor spaces. The value is enormous and the draw to land and garden is a huge cultural thing for our Polish seniors."



Helen Hull, left, and Emily Krula, right, at the Roncesvalles Polish Festival in 2017

A TRIBUTE TO Helen Hull

Copernicus Lodge gratefully acknowledges Helen Hull, who passed away on September 7, 2022 and left behind a 40-year legacy of unparalleled generosity to our home.

Helen was born in Toronto in 1929 to Polish immigrants and grew up in the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood of Toronto, where she would meet and then marry Marian “Murphy” Hull in 1948 and together raise three children – Barb, Richard and Cindy.

From humble beginnings as a plasterer, Murphy would become one of the leading real estate developers and condominium builders in the Greater Toronto Area through his company, Hullmark. Upon his

death in 2008, Helen would take over the reins of the company and oversee its transformation into the enterprise that it is today. Never forgetting their Polish roots, Murphy and Helen gave back selflessly to our seniors community.

Murphy was one of the original founders and directors of Copernicus Lodge and was the driving force in the funding and construction of the John Paul II Long-Term Care Centre in 2003. In honour of their lifetime giving to Copernicus, which well exceeds \$1 million, that portion of our facility is now recognized as the Helen & Murphy Hull Wing.

Their generosity benefitted the broader community as well, through a transformational \$10 million donation in 2010 to create the Murphy and Helen Hull Robotics Centre at Humber River Regional Hospital. It houses state-of-the-art technology that allows surgeons to provide minimally-invasive surgery to patients.

Helen championed Copernicus Lodge in her own quiet and unassuming way, including participating on the Celestial Ball fundraising committee from 2003 to 2005. Emily Krula, an executive member of the Copernicus Lodge Auxiliary, warmly recalls Helen’s visits to the home.

“She was a kind individual who made a point of coming down to Copernicus every year.”

Emily also remembers how happy Helen was to attend the Polish Festival on Roncesvalles Avenue. “Her daughter would bring her and they went up and down the street enjoying the event and speaking to our volunteers.”

“She was a wonderful person,” adds Edna Schlathau, one of Helen’s bridesmaids and now a resident at Copernicus’ long-term care home. “Helen encouraged me to come to Copernicus because it was so great.”

Copernicus Lodge is blessed to have been recipients of Helen and Murphy’s enduring support. They will forever serve as shining examples of dedication and devotion to making our community better.

COPERNICUS LODGE AUXILIARY Devoted to Copernicus Lodge

Copernicus Lodge would not be the welcoming home it is today if not for the Copernicus Lodge Auxiliary. Dating back to Copernicus Lodge’s earliest days, our founder, Father Michael Smith, encouraged the formation of an Auxiliary to serve the needs of residents and help establish it as Toronto’s premier home for Polish seniors.

Today, the Copernicus Lodge Auxiliary has surpassed Father Smith’s original ambition. The group organizes a series of yearly events such as the Christmas Bazaar and the Spring and Fall Yard Sales, hosts weekly craft sessions and runs Aggie’s Store, a fully stocked grocery store within the Lodge available for the convenience of residents, staff and visitors alike. Through these and many other activities over the past 40 years, the Auxiliary has raised an impressive \$1.5 million for Copernicus Lodge.

“Fundraising is an important part of what we do,” says Emily Krula, who heads the Copernicus Lodge Auxiliary. “We’re here to help

our residents have a better and more comfortable life spiritually, physically and emotionally. Plus, with the government not always in a position to supply some of the Lodge’s needs like mechanical bathtubs and walking aids, we’re very fortunate that we’re able to help out and make Copernicus Lodge a better place to live.”

One of the Auxiliary’s recent contributions was a \$25,000 donation for the purchase of adjustable dining room tables for the long-term care home. These tables can be raised and adjusted as needed to help assist residents in feeding themselves.

The Auxiliary currently has about 55-60 dedicated men and women, but is always looking for new people to join the group, especially to help in the store. It remains committed to the idea of improving life at Copernicus Lodge and maintaining a sense of Polish community spirit. “It’s a wonderful feeling to make a difference and at the same time meeting new, likeminded friends,” says Emily.

DONATIONS ARE BUILDING A BETTER Adult Day Program

Whatever your age, whatever your range of motion, it’s important to stay active for a stronger body, mind and spirit. At Copernicus Lodge, one of the ways we encourage our residents as well as seniors in the local community to keep active is through our Adult Day Program.

This Polish-led community-based program provides a variety of planned recreational therapeutic activities to ensure seniors stay engaged and have fun over arts and crafts, card games, exercises (tai chi, Zumba), bingo, pet therapy, sing-alongs and more.

Program users range from individuals who have some form of dementia to people with developmental disabilities, to those living alone and in need of social outlets. It also offers respite for family caregivers.

“The Adult Day Program space is an important service offered at Copernicus Lodge,” says Moriah Limotta, owner of W.I.N.D. Communications, whose company is redesigning the space.

“After some damage due to flooding, I was brought in to transform the space. My concept was to use the power of colour – especially taupe and green – to create a calming environment that would make program users feel safe and happy.”



Adult Day Program space rendering

The renovation of the 2,800-square foot space is being done in two phases and has been made possible thanks to generous support of Copernicus Lodge Foundation donors. Phase One, which is completed, involved adding those splashes of colour to create a more uplifting environment. Phase Two involves building and installing new cabinetry to improve the space’s usability; renovations will begin early this summer and should be completed early next year.

“This really will be a wonderful and versatile space,” says Moriah.

“There will be an entertainment room, an eat-in kitchen, and an information centre. Flooring, ceiling, lighting, window and wall coverings have been remodelled. All the furniture has been specially selected to be modular and lightweight, yet durable.”

“From hosting birthday parties and special events, there are so many ways residents, family members and the greater community can enjoy this space.”



TRIBUTE GIFTS

We are privileged to recognize thoughtful gifts made “in honour” of someone special or “in memory” of a loved one between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022.

IN HONOUR

Janina Banaszak
Mary Byra
Pawel & Maria Dubicki
Boleslaw Fajarczuk
Helen Getler
Maxine Houghton
Krystyna Klemensowicz
Waleria Loniewska
Dr. Ayesha Malik
Helen Myhal
Regina Sadowski
Frances Sawicki
Andrew Wyszowski

IN MEMORY

Dr. Roman Bladek
Aleksander Bogdan
Krystyna Burski
Kay Bury
Anna Charenza
Helena Chuchra
Wanda Chudoba
Tom Czudec
Weronika Dobranowski
Alicja Fischer
Michalina Gadzala
Jan Gasztold
Helen Hull
Daniela Jarema
Jacek Jaxa-Debicki
Mikolaj & Violetta Kalmykow
Antonina Karbowniczek
Dr. Stefan Kopytek
Cecelia Krzyzanowski
Genowefa Kukiel
Wanda Makarewicz
Henry Malec
Victoria Malec
Edward Matusiak
Walter & Stella Mistak
Norm & Jeanne Narozenski
Marek Nowakowski
Wanda Oko
Maria Orzechowski
Ted & Chester Ozimek
Helena Pawelek
Adolph & Helen Pawlowski
Jan Petko
Wanda Poprawa
Wanda Psenicka
Jean Pucyk
Matt Radz
Janina Rejman
Walentyna Scholl
Dr. Jack Simpson
Father Michael J. Smith
Stanislaw Stempak
Olga Wawrow
Maria Wiczorek
Helena Wojtarowicz
Pelagia Wysocki
Jan & Teresa Zajac



JULIAN TRASIEWICZ
– RESIDENT PROFILE
If the Walls
Could Talk

Did you know that one of our very own residents was directly responsible for some of Copernicus Lodge’s building design and layout? Say “hello” to Julian Trasiewicz, who has been at the long-term care home for the past couple of years – and the architect who led the development of Phase Two.

While the Lodge’s original building was still under construction, the Board of Directors began planning the second phase of construction. Julian was asked to draw up plans to complete the dream of our founder, Father Michael Smith. The goal was to expand the first building to provide 133 additional units, incorporate a cafeteria/dining room, kitchen facilities, convenience store, lounge, medical office, storage area, library, laundry room, an outdoor terrace and, most importantly, a chapel for the residents. This addition would bring the total Copernicus Lodge occupancy to 246 residents.

“When I was first introduced to Copernicus Lodge it was a single building,” says Julian. “I suggested that we add the second building at a 30-degree angle which allowed us to create additional light and also accommodate the chapel and common area with a greater ceiling height. We also had a middle staircase in the original building which was a fire safety issue; I suggested that we eliminate it as it would not be necessary and put one elevator there instead. This saved the Lodge money. They were delighted by this suggestion which helped me to get the job.”

Beyond Copernicus Lodge, during an architectural career that spanned five decades, Julian designed a variety of single-family homes, subdivisions, high-rise residential, commercial and industrial buildings across the GTA. In the early 1970s, in particular, he gained renown by designing five married student residences and two college dormitories at York University.

Looking back in time, one of the things Julian remembers most about working on Phase Two of Copernicus Lodge was our founder, Father Smith.

*“He was very knowledgeable,” Julian remembers.
 “He negotiated a favourable contract with Orlando Corporation
 and the project was built within budget. He knew how to
 talk to people and just get things done.”*

SPECIAL EVENTS



Copernicus Lodge Foundation presents the
45th Anniversary GALAXY BALL
 on Saturday, May 4, 2024
 at La Primavera Event Space
 Call Henry Zajac at 416-536-7122,
 ext. 392 for more info.



Roncesvalles Village Polish Festival
 Saturday, September 16th &
 Sunday, September 17th
 To volunteer at the Copernicus Lodge
 Beverage Garden, please contact
 Yuri Hernandez at 416-536-7122, ext. 269

The current Board of Directors are:

- Ted Opitz, Chair
- Danusia Figiel, Vice-Chair & Treasurer,
Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee
- Andrew Kwiatkowski, Chair of the Copernicus
Lodge Foundation
- Marc Buklis, Chair of Property Management
Committee
- Lucian Ezman, Secretary of the Board
- Natalie Farshait, Chair of the Governance
& Human Resources Committee
- Jan Faryaszewski, Director
- Małgorzata Martin, Director
- Dr. Fiona Menzies, Director

