

Cummer Lodge – Our Roots Display

Date:	April 30, 2008
To:	Advisory Committee on Homes for the Aged
From:	General Manager, Homes for the Aged
Wards:	Ward 24
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

On Wednesday, April 23rd, residents, families, volunteers and staff gathered in the Parisi Art Gallery for the opening of the Cummer Lodge “Our Roots” photo display.

The Parisi Art Gallery was developed by three (3) Cummer Lodge volunteers four years ago, with one of the volunteers working as the official photographer. Ever since then, the Galley has housed exhibits of artwork for residents, family members and visitors to enjoy, including ‘The Wedding Show’ and ‘The Veterans’ Display’. Recognizing the diversity of our city and the diversity of backgrounds amongst residents who call Cummer Lodge their home, the recent exhibit ‘Our Roots’ featured pictures of residents and their stories about their arrival in Toronto. The theme in these photos and stories is the determination of each person and their faith in Canada and Toronto.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

COMMENTS

The inspiration behind the ‘Our Roots’ display came from a group of volunteers and staff who remarked that the population at Cummer Lodge was a reflection of the ethno-racial and cultural diversity of the community that we live in. Cummer Lodge has residents who were born in countries throughout the world, residents who speak many languages. Residents represent a wide range of faiths and celebrate a variety of cultural traditions. Volunteers and staff wanted to learn more about the many countries residents come from, hear their stories, demonstrate respect for diversity and honour residents’ traditions, values and backgrounds. Cummer Lodge’s volunteers and staff agreed that “it is our differences that unite us – our city, province and our country celebrate our diversity”.

Residents participated in the project by sharing their stories and their pictures. The displays of residents include a map of their country of origin and stories about their youth. Each display also includes information about their country. There were stories about extreme hardship for many residents, who survived the war in Europe. There were stories about the determination of coming to a new country, learning a new language and starting a new life, some with very young children. One resident (Japanese heritage) related her story of living in an internment camp in British Columbia. Several residents provided stories about growing up on farms; others related their experiences in following their children's immigration to Canada.

The theme in all of the stories was the determination of residents and their faith in this country.

Three volunteers worked for many weeks to take the pictures, write the residents' stories and mount the displays. The volunteers explained that the work was a labour of love.

The 'Our Roots' display will remain in the Parisi Gallery for the spring.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Sandra Pitters
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ATTACHMENTS

- (1) Three (3) photos of the 'Our Roots' display