

FEBRUARY  
2026



## Monthly Newsletter

### Message from our Executive Director

**Dear Families,**

As we welcome the month of February, I want to take a moment to thank you for being such an important part of our community. Whether you are a resident who calls Markhaven home or a family member who entrusts us with the care of someone you love, your partnership and support mean more to us than words can express.



February is often a time associated with connection, reflection, and care for one another. These values are at the heart of everything we do. Our team remains deeply committed to creating a safe, engaging, and compassionate environment where residents feel respected, supported, and truly at home.

This month also brings several special events, including our Celebration of Black History Month. Our staff together with our Recreation department have planned a variety of meaningful activities to honor and recognize this rich history and culture. These events will include educational opportunities, fun trivia, and shared cultural food that allow us to learn, reflect, and celebrate together. We look forward to residents participating and enjoying these special moments of connection and learning.

I am continually inspired by our residents, their stories, resilience, and the sense of community they help create every day. I am equally grateful for our dedicated staff, whose professionalism and kindness make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

As we move through the winter season, please know that open communication remains a priority. We encourage residents and family members to reach out with questions, ideas, or feedback at any time. Your voice helps us grow and improve.

Thank you for being part of our community. I wish you a warm, healthy, and happy February, and I look forward to the months ahead. Spring is just around the corner.

God Bless,  
**Janice Pitts**  
Executive Director

## FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

**Feb. 1 | 11:00**

Hymn Sing with Carol

**Feb. 4 | 2:30**

Catholic Mass

**Feb. 6 | 10:30**

Interactive Sing-Along

**Feb. 6 | 2:30**

Movie Matinee: Mulan

**Feb. 8 | 2:30**

Balloon Volleyball &  
Refreshments

**Feb. 9 & 23 | 10:30**

Book Club with Ann Ward

**Feb. 9 | 10:30**

Music with Curtis (1 North)

**Feb. 10 | 2:30**

Birthday Bash

**Feb. 11 | 2:30**

Chinese New Year  
Celebration

**Feb. 12 | 10:30**

Valentine's Zumba

**Feb. 13 | 2:30**

Piano Hymn Sing

**Feb. 14 | 10:30**

Baking Club: Sweet Cups

**Feb. 18 | 10:30**

Entertainment with Emilio

**Feb. 20 | 10:30**

Spiritual Gathering

**Feb. 22 | 2:30**

Parachute Fun & Ice Cream

**Feb. 24 | 10:30**

Resident Council Meeting

**Feb. 24 | 2:30**

Travelogue New Orleans

**Feb. 26 | 10:30**

Woodworking Club

**Feb. 27 | 10:00**

Young at Heart Painting

# Markhaven

## Upcoming Events:

### Chinese New Year Celebration - Year of the Fire Horse

- **Wednesday February 11 at 2:30 PM.**

Join us as we welcome the Year of the Fire Horse with a festive Chinese New Year celebration. Residents will enjoy a vibrant Lion Dance performance along with live musical entertainment.

### Valentine's Day Celebration - Saturday, February 14th

Love will be in the air at LTRCH as we celebrate Valentine's Day with special activities throughout the day:

- **10:30 AM - Baking Club:** Led by our Rec. Aide Carol Dixon, residents will participate in a hands-on cooking activity and prepare No-Bake Valentine's Sweet Cups.
- **2:30 PM - Magic Show:** In the afternoon, residents will be entertained by a delightful magic show, sure to bring smiles and laughter.

### Black History Month - Markhaven Black History Week

In honor of Black History Month, Markhaven will host Black History Week from February 23-27.

- **February 25, Special Celebration Day:** Enjoy interactive entertainment with Negus and his Steel Drums, providing a cultural and musical experience for residents.

**Bake Sale:** Monday, February 2, from 10:30 AM-2:30 PM

**Jamaican Food Sale:** Patties, Coco Bread and Soft Drinks

Fridays February 6, 13 and 20.  
from 11:00 AM-12:00 PM and 1:00 PM-2:00 PM.

**All proceeds will support Black History Month Programming.**

# Spiritual Corner

## Reflection: February, Wrapped in Care and Kindness

As we step into the new month of February, we are reminded that each new beginning brings fresh opportunities for compassion, patience, and renewal. February may be a shorter month, but it holds deep meaning—a time to reflect on love, kindness, and the quiet strength found in caring for one another.

In our daily work, every small act of care matters. A warm smile, a listening ear, or a gentle word can make a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve. As we move forward together into this new month, may we remain mindful of the purpose behind our work and the impact we have on our residents, their families, and each other.

Let February be a time to renew our commitment to dignity, respect, and teamwork, trusting that even in challenges, there is growth and hope.

By: **Andrea Barco**  
Markhaven Home for Seniors

## Prayer: A Prayer for Comfort, Strength, and Togetherness

Dear Lord,

As we welcome the month of February, we thank You for the gift of new beginnings and for the opportunity to serve with compassion and love.

Bless our residents with comfort, peace, and strength.

Bless their families with reassurance and hope.

Bless our staff with patience, wisdom, and renewed energy as they continue their important work.

May this month be filled with moments of kindness, understanding, and healing. Guide our actions, our words, and our hearts, so that all we do reflects care, respect, and unity.

We place the days of February in Your hands, trusting that You walk with us in every moment.

**Amen.**

# Our Promise

Markhaven is dedicated to providing high standards of care in a safe and social environment.

We believe in providing superior care, driven by compassion and empathy, as we continue to develop our practices through our mission, vision, and values for our residents, families, and friends.

We strive to provide excellent service for residents of every culture in a supportive, caring Christian environment, and to maintain a high level of dignity and individuality. With your continued support we plan to be here for you and your families for many years to come.



## -What They Say-

Markhaven truly feels like a home away from home. Over the years, I have learned so much and enjoyed sharing that knowledge with my colleagues, especially on 1 North. Teamwork is at the heart of everything we do, and working closely with families allows us to create positive outcomes every day. After 28 years, despite the challenges, Markhaven remains a wonderful place that I am proud to recommend to both staff and families.

**Jessie Yard**  
Markhaven PSW



## Stories From the Heart: Our Resident's Life

### Meet Yolanda Göncz

Born on May 6, 1943, in Mosonmagyaróvár, Hungary.

She immigrated to Montreal, when she was 11 year old. Her family landed at the safe harbours of Pier I, in Halifax Nova Scotia, after a heroic escape under the cover of night, to an Austrian refuge camp. Canada had offered a safe haven to Hungarians fleeing the brutal communist regime that had invaded Hungary.

She met our dad, Joesph Göncz, at Our Lady of Hungary, Catholic Church, a thriving community which was a hub for Hungarians fleeing the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. They were paired as dance partners in the Hungarian Folk Dance Troup, and the rest is history.

They married, had four children, and moved to a farm in rural Quebec. Her eldest daughter Cathy, died at the age of 11 to Leukemia. Her tragic death was marked by much suffering.

Filled with faith, hope and love, after 17 years of being a stay-at-home mom, she returned to school to learn the new technologies of that time, and became a typesetter of advertisements for The Gazette, Montreal's English newspaper.

She continued her education at McGill University, where she took courses in creative writing. She wrote a series of short stories about her life and children's stories about living on a farm. Her Hungarian memoir, about a mother and daughters walk together through cancer, was her greatest achievement. It is an inspiring story about the power of faith in suffering. It was sold across Hungary and was part of the Jesuit Library of Faith Books on pastoral care. You can see the book in the memory box by her room. It was translated into English as a legacy to her three grandchildren.





She was a Hungarian teacher, catechist, and member of the Altar Society at her parish. She was a founding member of the Hungarian Cursillo movement (a retreat on the Christian life) in Montreal, and part of the team which brought the movement to Toronto, leading many to the gift of Christian faith through her life and witness. When she moved to Toronto, to be closer to her daughters, she continued her volunteerism at St Joseph's Hospital, and with the Missionaries of Charity.

She is an incredible woman, who continues to live with deep faith, determination, humour, and joy, during her own suffering with Alzheimer's.

She is a blessing - a light in the world. My mother is a perpetual helper and a good soul, participating in all the activities as best she can, and living her spirit of volunteerism by advocating and helping other residents.

This life story was lovingly written by her daughters,

**Susan and Alexandra.**



# How Lollipops Help Calm Dementia Behaviors

By Kimberly West ADC, CDP, MDE, VMC



Individuals living with dementia often experience behavioral changes that can be challenging for both residents and caregivers. As communication abilities decline and the brain has difficulty processing the environment, behaviors such as agitation, restlessness, repetitive movements, anxiety, and even aggression may appear. These behaviors are often expressions of unmet needs—whether physical, emotional, or sensory.

Research has shown that something as simple as a lollipop can help reduce disruptive behaviors and provide meaningful comfort. Sucking on a lollipop offers a soothing sensory experience, satisfies oral fixation, and can help redirect anxious or restless energy.

In both one-on-one and group settings, lollipops have been shown to ease frustration, promote calm, and support more peaceful and connected interactions.

When used intentionally, lollipops can be a practical and therapeutic tool for caregivers. More than just a sweet treat, they can support emotional regulation, engagement, and comfort—demonstrating how small, thoughtful interventions can have a big impact in dementia care.

## Benefits at a Glance:

- Helps redirect agitation, pacing, or restlessness
- Encourages cooperation by focusing attention on taste
- Sweet flavor can improve mood through the brain's natural reward response
- Can spark conversation and reminiscence about childhood treats
- Sucking motions have a naturally calming effect
- Provides a safe outlet for oral fixation behaviors
- Stimulates saliva production, helping relieve dry mouth caused by medications
- May help stimulate appetite for those reluctant to eat

Important Note: Always assess safety before offering lollipops. Hard candy may pose a choking risk, so close supervision is essential.

In dementia care, small gestures often bring the greatest comfort. A lollipop may seem simple, but when offered thoughtfully, it can calm, redirect, and bring moments of joy—adding a touch of sweetness and connection to everyday care.

# February 2026 Birthdays



LET'S WISH A HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY  
TO OUR DEAR RESIDENTS

# Congratulations!

Frances Walsh	Feb. 05	- Parkway
Jaime Paries	Feb. 06	- Parkway
Saundria Brown	Feb. 21	- Toogood
Douglas Thorburn	Feb. 21	- Toogood
Margaret Wilson	Feb. 24	- Springdale

May your special day be filled with joy, laughter, and love.  
You are truly cherished today and always.

## Employee of the Month



Erajarangini Selvanayagam  
January 2026

# Captured Moments

## January 2026



Table Games



Ring Toss



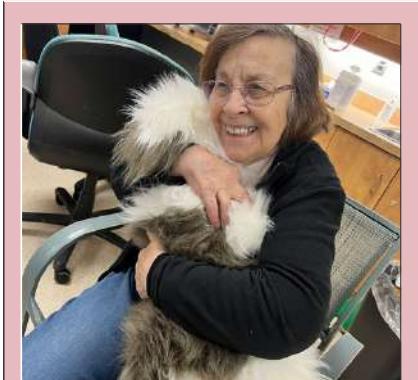
Exercise & Music



Galaxy Corner



Axe Throwing



Sweet Moments



Coloring Fun



Table Games



Bingo Time in the Unit

# Captured Moments

## January 2026



**Cooking with Carol**



**Special Moments**



**Birthday Bash**



**Young at Heart  
Painting**



**Young at Heart  
Painting**



**Young at Heart  
Painting**



**A Taste of Tradition:  
Shortbread Making**



**Game Time**



**The Octaband Fun**

# Seasons & Supper

## Strawberry Chocolate Mousse

This sweet and romantic dessert is perfect for February and Valentine's Day. It's creamy, light, and full of rich chocolate and fresh strawberry flavor.

### INGREDIENTS: (Serves - 4)

- 150 g fresh strawberries
- 100 g dark chocolate
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- A pinch of salt
- Whipped cream and fresh strawberries (for topping)



### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Wash and puree the strawberries until smooth. Set aside.
2. Melt the dark chocolate using a double boiler or microwave. Let it cool slightly.
3. In a bowl, whip the heavy cream with sugar and vanilla extract until stiff peaks form.
4. Gently fold half of the whipped cream into the melted chocolate to create the chocolate mousse.
5. Fold the strawberry puree into the remaining whipped cream to make the strawberry mousse.
6. Layer the chocolate mousse and strawberry mousse in serving glasses.
7. Top with whipped cream, sliced strawberries, and chocolate shavings if desired.
8. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving.

#### Tips:

- Can be made 1 day ahead and refrigerated.
- Reduce sugar or use honey if desired.
- Serve in clear glasses for a beautiful presentation.



# Infection Prevention & Control

## Keeping Our Loved Ones Safe in Long-Term Care

Help protect your loved ones and our community by following these important infection prevention measures.



### Wash Your Hands

Wash hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.



### Wear a Mask

Wear a mask as required to help reduce the spread of germs.



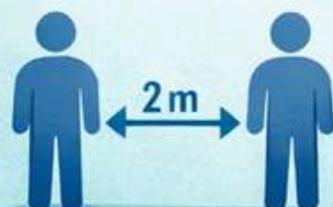
### Screen for Symptoms

Stay home if you are feeling sick or have any symptoms of illness.



### Practice Respiratory Etiquette

Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.



### Maintain Physical Distancing

Keep a safe distance from others.



### Clean & Disinfect

Clean frequently touched surfaces.



### Get Vaccinated

Stay up to date with your vaccinations.



PUBLIC HEALTH  
ONTARIO

# Chinese New Year: February 17, 2026

Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year, will be celebrated on February 17, 2026 across Toronto and Canada. This year marks the Year of the Fire Horse, a symbol of energy, confidence, and determination.

In Toronto, celebrations include cultural festivals, red lanterns, family gatherings, and traditional dragon and lion dances that reflect the city's vibrant Asian communities. Chinese New Year is a time to welcome renewal, good fortune, and fresh beginnings.



# Black History Month: February 1–28, 2026



Black History Month is observed across Canada, including Toronto, from February 1 to February 28, 2026.

The month is dedicated to recognizing the history, achievements, and contributions of Black Canadians and Black communities around the world.

Throughout February, schools and organizations engage in learning, reflection, and dialogue that celebrate leadership, resilience, and cultural impact—past and present.

# Clownin' Around Mullets Cart



Our residents enjoyed a fun and lively activity with Clownin' Around – Mullets Cart, where laughter, connection, and good spirits filled the room.

The Mullets wine (non-alcoholic) added an extra touch of fun, allowing residents to relax, socialize, and share joyful moments together. The experience created a warm and cheerful atmosphere, reminding us how shared laughter and simple pleasures can brighten the day.

# Coloring Page: Devine Love

This month's spiritual coloring page shows two hands reaching toward each other beneath a heart made of intertwined lines. The image represents connection, compassion, and love. As you color, take a moment to reflect on how love is shared through kindness, forgiveness, and understanding, and how we are all connected through giving and receiving love.



# Be My Valentine

The words listed below can be found vertically, horizontally, diagonally, forward, and backward.

## WORD SEARCH

K	O	A	E	P	T	S	S	S	C	F	L	R	X	C
R	L	T	D	D	D	A	W	R	A	S	N	K	A	S
M	U	W	Y	N	A	O	E	E	N	O	T	R	X	K
C	G	H	E	B	P	W	E	W	D	N	D	F	J	K
N	D	I	P	U	C	O	T	O	Y	S	J	V	I	J
E	R	A	N	Y	K	R	H	L	S	R	A	R	H	G
F	Y	H	L	J	T	R	E	F	O	L	T	L	E	T
X	B	R	W	S	T	A	A	P	E	L	O	V	E	D
H	T	N	A	I	F	N	R	N	K	I	S	S	E	S
Z	Y	R	K	U	Q	E	T	A	L	O	C	O	H	C
Q	T	N	E	L	R	I	X	V	K	Z	C	F	S	A
G	I	X	F	A	N	B	T	P	P	D	I	A	Z	J
P	Y	S	T	E	T	U	E	O	D	T	A	K	I	J
A	I	E	C	F	S	S	H	F	N	A	H	V	K	E
P	T	C	S	K	J	E	Y	O	W	J	W	U	I	N



ARROW

CANDY

CARDS

CHOCOLATE

CUPID

FEBRUARY

FLOWERS

FRIENDS

GIFTS

KISSES

LOVE

PINK

RED

SWEETHEART

TREATS

VALENTINE

# Highlights of Upcoming Events

