

# LEADING THE WAY

ANNUAL REPORT 2023





# ABOUT BETHANY

Bethany Care Society (Bethany) is one of Western Canada's largest not-for-profit providers of care, housing, and community services for seniors and persons with disabilities. For 77 years, Bethany has provided high-quality, person-centred care focused on the unique physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of our residents and tenants. We create caring communities to help Albertans age well.

## LEADING THE WAY AT BETHANY

Around the world, an aging population is increasing the demand for housing and continuing care services. As we move beyond the immediate needs of the pandemic, Bethany's work is changing to meet this demand and lead in the development of new approaches to care and support of Albertans on their aging journey.

We have a skilled workforce, specialized programming, Red Seal Chef-led food programs and positive, uplifting environments for residents and tenants. Bethany is leading the way in caring services, clinical and operational excellence, research and innovation, and quality experiences that enhance the lives of the people we serve.

# OUR MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

## MISSION

Creating Caring Communities through:

Inspiring Leadership  
Responsive Services  
Innovative Programs  
Exceptional People  
Life Affirming Relationships

## VISION

Leading the Transformation of Albertans Aging Well

## VALUES

We Care  
We Show Respect  
We are Responsible  
We Embrace Diversity



*Licensed Practical Nurse Cathy Van Tol spends quality time with resident Harold while providing routine care to him and other long term residents at Bethany.*



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# MESSAGES FROM THE BOARD CHAIRS

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## Bethany Care Society Board of Trustees



I'm proud to serve on a volunteer Board of Trustees where my fellow Board members are truly engaged in the mission of Bethany – to create caring communities across Alberta.

We are privileged to guide Bethany's strategic direction during a time that calls on us to be thoughtful stewards of our resources. One of the best ways for us to fulfil our role is by experiencing the mission of Bethany, and we have had many opportunities to do that over the past year.

We have engaged with residents, tenants, family members, employees, and government partners at events like Stampede BBQs and resident menu food tastings. We have glimpsed the future by donning virtual reality goggles that immerse care teams in training environments, and interacted with telepresence robots that connect our residents with the community. These moments have highlighted the dedication and hard work of our leaders, employees, volunteers and service partners.

Emerging from the pandemic, the board has also supported important brand and positioning research that is helping us understand how the community feels about Bethany. This work will inform a refreshed brand that accurately reflects our evolution and growth and resonates with our stakeholders.

The people of Bethany continue to move us forward. You are leading the way to our future and driving Bethany's commitment to creating caring communities.

**Dr. Albert Kryski**

## Bethany Care Foundation Board of Directors



At Bethany, we are deeply grateful for the incredible support we receive from the community each year.

As a registered charity, Bethany Care Foundation engages with donors to facilitate philanthropic funds for enhancements that wouldn't otherwise be possible through core health funding sources. Your donations fuel new and innovative programs, leading-edge technologies, specialized equipment, and capital improvements that add to the quality of life for the people that Bethany serves.

The impact of philanthropy at Bethany is evident in this annual report, from mental health programming pilots in our housing sites to transformative sensory and music therapy programs for long-term care residents. Or through revitalized indoor and outdoor spaces, fostering connection through the pandemic and beyond.

These initiatives are a testament to the power of philanthropy to transform lives and make real change happen. Bethany donors like you are leading the way.

**Leanne Demerais**



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO

Our work is changing. But our core mission remains the same – Creating Caring Communities.



This year brought both opportunities and challenges as we began to steer our way out of the pandemic and back into a world that has been changed by it. Throughout the year, I have been inspired by the residents, tenants, and families we are privileged to serve and the employees and volunteers who make service excellence come to life every day at Bethany. They are why Bethany exists, and their voices shape the work we do and how we do it.

Over the past year, I've seen our government partners, granting agencies, community donors and industry leaders invest in Bethany's ongoing transformation of programming and services. New technologies, evolving models of care to meet the changing needs of the populations we serve, and planning for modernized care environments add to our depth of expertise at Bethany to support Albertans to age well.

We are leading the way with caring services and expanded programming to meet the needs of our communities and the health system. Our Alternate Level of Care and Young Adult Programs are just a few examples. Through these collaborations with Alberta Health Services, we can address health system gaps, provide seamless transitions, and lead in services tailored to the unique needs and preferences of each person under our care.

We are working with government and educational institutions to grow and sustain a talented, healthy, resilient workforce. And we are investing in research, innovation, and technology integration to find new approaches to care delivery. Initiatives like our unique sensory and palliative and end-of-life training programs are leading the way to enhance the quality of experiences for the residents and tenants who call Bethany their home.

Our work is changing.

But our core mission remains the same – Creating Caring Communities.

Whether we are supporting a family through the complex journey of dementia, finding ways to be 'more than a landlord' to a senior in need in one of our independent housing suites, or helping one of our young adult residents navigate their enrolment in a continuing education course...care is at the heart of everything we do.

As we reflect on the past year, we are grateful for the challenges that have allowed us to grow, evolve, and transform. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of our journey and has helped shape the work we do at Bethany.

Jennifer McCue

# BETHANY CARE SOCIETY BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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Strategic Planning and  
Risk Management,  
Community Relations



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Ethics



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Ethics, Community  
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Committee  
Membership:  
BCS Board Member,  
BCS Governance/  
CEO Oversight and  
Nominations, BCS  
Community Relations

# BETHANY CARE SOCIETY EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



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Executive Officer



**Nancy Hughes**  
Vice-President  
and Chief  
Operating Officer



**Stuart Jaggard**  
Vice-President  
and Chief  
Financial Officer



**Steven Friesen**  
Executive Director  
Research and  
Innovation



**Dana Penner**  
Executive Director  
Clinical Operations

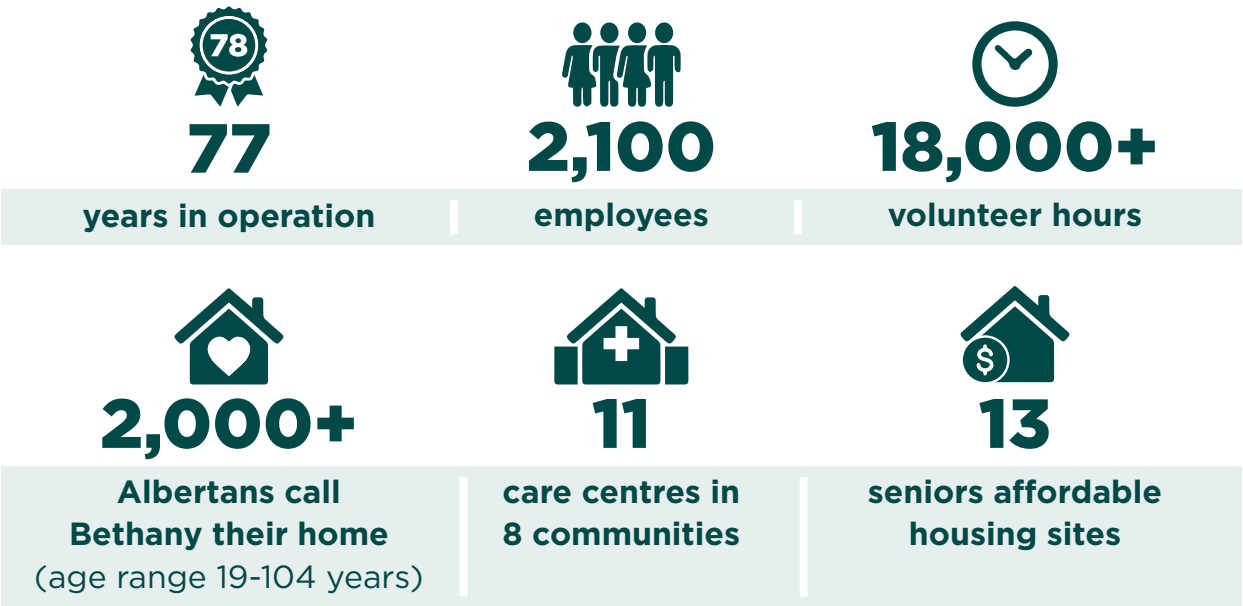


**Leslie Poon**  
Executive  
Director Finance

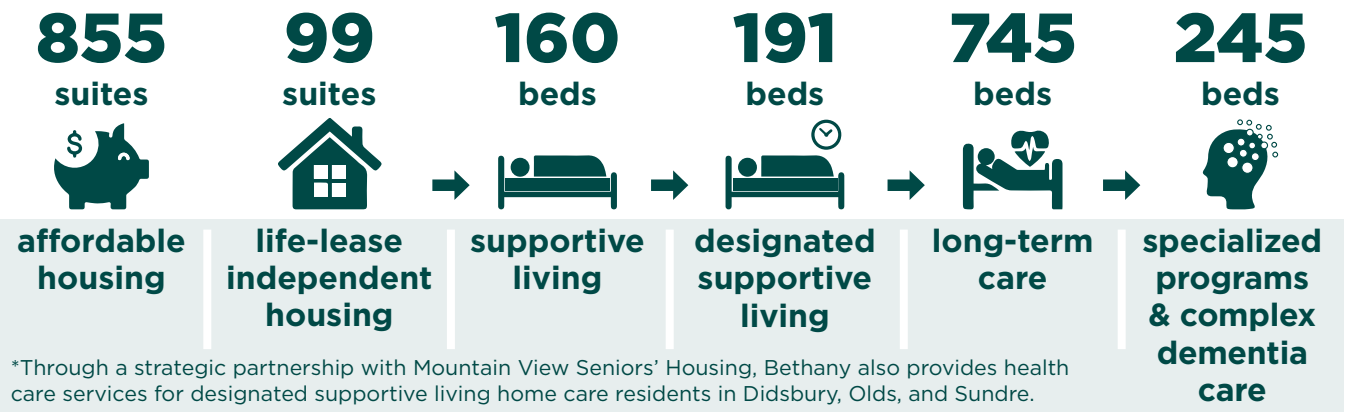


**Gail Urquhart**  
External Relations  
Advisor

# BETHANY BY THE NUMBERS



## BETHANY'S CONTINUUM OF CARE





# LEADING THE WAY

*Recreation Therapy Assistant Michael  
Negash assists Bethany resident Fran  
Chislett to the table for lunch*



# LEADING THE WAY THROUGH CARING SERVICES

The Young Adult Program helps residents “Live Your Life.”



Leaving a family home can be complicated, and even more so for young adults with disabilities who may face additional concerns around independence, responsibilities of daily living, safety, and connection.

For almost 20 years, Bethany Care Society has partnered with Alberta Health Services (AHS) to support individuals who cannot live independently or at home due to acquired brain injuries, mobility challenges, and other complex medical conditions that require 24-hour care.

Beginning first at Red Deer’s Bethany CollegeSide in 2004 (ages 18-65) and expanding to Bethany Calgary in 2019 (ages 18-60), the Young Adult Program (YAP) provides 24-hour interdisciplinary care from teams consisting of registered nurses, rehabilitation specialists, and recreational therapists.

To participate in the program, individuals are assessed by AHS based on the complexity of their care needs and placed on a waitlist for available openings.

Many individuals spend weeks and sometimes years in the healthcare system before being placed in the YAP, specifically in acute care. The YAP helps to fill a needed gap in care for our province, opening spaces in hospitals and reducing costs to the health system.

While other organizations across the province offer support programs like these, the YAP at Bethany centres around services that foster self-determination and choice. Through Bethany’s unique “Live Your Life” Program, participants set their own personal productivity goals and are active participants in their care — from when





*Crapo "Woody" Delon with Fola Adedokun, a social worker for the Young Adult Program at Bethany Calgary.*

and what they want to eat and which fun events and outings they would like to participate in, to identifying work, education, and volunteer opportunities both in the care setting and community.

At Bethany CollegeSide, the care centre is located on the Red Deer Polytechnic campus, making it the first community in Canada where continuing care and seniors' housing are fully integrated in a college setting.

"The YAP program is flexible and adaptable, and the close connection to Red Deer Polytechnic provides our young adults with opportunities to take courses and immerse themselves in campus life if they choose," says Larina Tremblay, Site Administrator for Bethany CollegeSide.

Says Larina, "The residents also tend to stay with us for many years, which creates a strong relationship between our employees and the residents. They know and trust each other, and our employees really focus on understanding each person's needs."

Crapo "Woody" Delon has been living at Bethany Calgary since February of 2019. With the Live Your Life program, he has created a monthly newsletter available to residents and

## THANK YOU TO THE NICKLE FAMILY FOUNDATION

Our Bethany communities are grateful for the continued generosity of donors through the Bethany Care Foundation, like the Nickle Family Foundation. Since 1962, this fifth-generation family-run foundation has continued to meet the changing needs of the Calgary community.

Over the years, they have supported several Bethany initiatives, including the Young Adult Program at Bethany Calgary, enhancing indoor and outdoor spaces, and providing sensory and music therapy to our residents. "We recognize the need for care at all stages in life, from children and young adults to seniors," says Jodi Smid, Executive Director, Nickle Family Foundation. "Bethany's Young Adult Program recognizes that need too, and provides space for residents to connect with one another, choose and engage in purposeful activities, and direct their own care pathways."

the community. Says Woody, "My Uncle was a reporter, so I decided to start a newsletter and I really enjoy working on it. Living at Bethany Calgary is life-changing for me."

# LEADING THE WAY THROUGH CLINICAL AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

## Improving quality of life for people with dementia

Dementia is a term used to describe a range of disorders that affect a person's ability to remember, reason, and communicate with others. In addition to cognitive changes, individuals with dementia may experience mood swings, becoming irritable, tearful, anxious, depressed, or agitated. As the disease progresses, physical symptoms such as muscle weakness, weight loss, and changes in appetite and sleep patterns can also significantly impact a person's quality of life.

In Alberta alone, more than 58,000 individuals are living with some form of dementia, and at Bethany, approximately 80% of residents are experiencing cognitive decline. The impact of dementia is felt not only by the person affected but also by their loved ones. Caregivers often describe the heartbreaking experience of watching a loved one slowly slip away, physically present but no longer recognizable.

"In all our care centres, we aim to give our residents the ability to experience life in a safe, comfortable, home-like environment," says Dana Penner, Executive Director of Clinical Operations for Bethany. "Our support is about helping people find moments of joy and connection – even if they are fleeting – through our operational and clinical expertise, and specialized programs designed for people with dementia."

This Philosophy of Care begins with Bethany's interdisciplinary care teams, which include

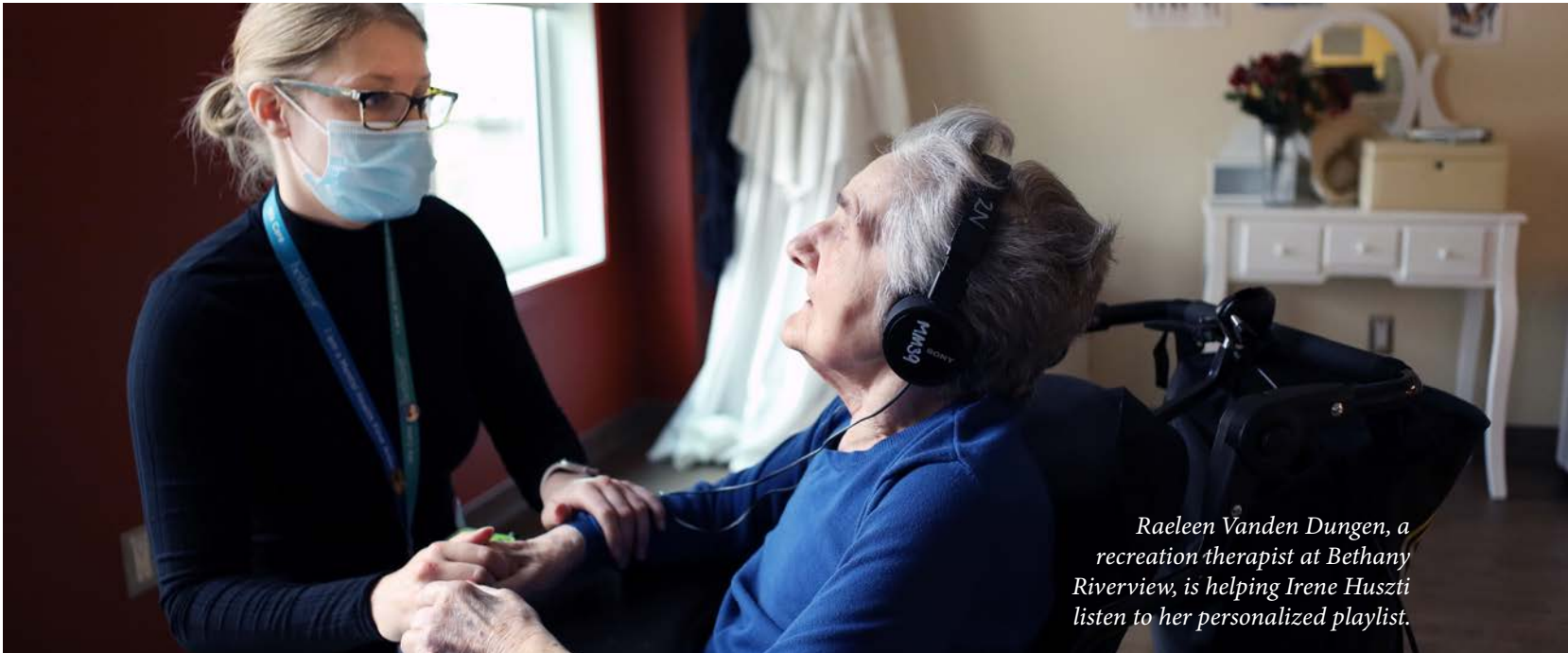
physicians, geriatric psychiatrists, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, healthcare aides, allied health professionals, clinical pharmacist, clinical educators, and spiritual care practitioners. Employees at Bethany also participate in highly specialized training courses for dementia care such as Gentle Persuasive Approach (GPA). Partnerships with external organizations such as the University of Calgary and Alberta Health Services help support continuity of care as each resident's condition progresses and needs change.

Bethany Riverview, our newest care centre in the community of Dover in SE Calgary, offers the specialized Complex Dementia Care (CDC) program, one of the only programs of its kind in Southern Alberta.

"People with dementia often have other medical conditions and require specialized 24-hour care to address their physical, cognitive, and behavioral needs," says Dana. "CDC creates a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages engagement in everyday community living."

The CDC program at Riverview embraces Bethany's campus of care model, encompassing the integration between the physical environment, social connections, health and wellness services and partnerships with the community. With 210 continuing care beds, 120 are designated for complex dementia care, and purpose-built design strategies are integrated throughout the complex.





*Raeleen Vanden Dungen, a recreation therapist at Bethany Riverview, is helping Irene Huszti listen to her personalized playlist.*

Additionally, each 400-square-foot room has an ensuite bathroom, and colors and textures on doors and walls act as visual and physical cues to help residents navigate spaces more easily. Motion detector lights keep residents safe when they move around at night, and amber-toned lighting in their rooms minimizes impacts on their circadian rhythms.

To enhance a home-like atmosphere, healthcare workers at Bethany Riverview wear street clothes instead of uniforms, and meals are served from a residential-style kitchen with an open dining room, encouraging residents to see and smell food to stimulate their appetites.

“Providing exceptional care is not just a priority, it’s our mission,” says Dana. “Through the integration of our clinical and operational expertise, specialized training and programming, partnerships, and purpose-built physical environments, we are committed to ensuring residents at all our sites experience the highest quality of life.”

## TESTIMONIAL

My mother, Margaret (Marg) Evans, was a strong and independent woman who lived an extraordinary life. Diagnosed with Alzheimer’s/Complex Dementia in 2013, her behaviour gradually changed making it increasingly challenging to safely support her needs at home. Following admissions to multiple care facilities, we were so thankful for her acceptance, in December 2018, to the complex dementia program at the newly opened Bethany Riverview. Bethany Riverview was the only place that could provide the comprehensive care she needed. Her compassionate and dedicated caregivers provided my mother with 24-hour individualized care that enhanced her quality of life. She loved the entertainment in the Atrium, participating in the choir, and singing karaoke in the Sensory Room. After she passed away in August 2020, Bethany organized a touching tribute that was a huge comfort to our family. I am so grateful to Bethany for making my mother’s final years as comfortable and fulfilling as possible. – Lynn Grayston, daughter of Marg Evans, on behalf of the Evans family.

# BETHANY CARE SOCIETY AND ACCREDITATION 2022

In October of 2022, Bethany Care Society participated in an onsite survey by Accreditation Canada to assess Bethany's care centres, including governance, leadership, and care protocols. At the completion of their time with us, the Accreditation Canada team's insights and comments focused on our technical and professional skillsets, strong governance structure, drive for innovation, and our solid commitment to advancing the FOCUS 2025 strategic plan goals.

Many of Bethany's programs were identified as leading edge and unique, including our Alternative Level of Care and Young Adult Programs, sensory initiatives and technology use, and our leadership in palliative and end-of-life care.

There was an overwhelmingly positive view of how Bethany employees live into our organization's mission, vision, and values in so many ways. Survey results highlighted Bethany homes being "immaculate", people having "incredible pride in their jobs", families speaking about how Bethany staff are "like family", and how they were confident that their loved ones felt "welcome and safe". The seamless partnership between Bethany and Aramark employees was also highlighted by the Accreditation Canada team.

The positive feedback from the Accreditation Canada team reinforces Bethany's unwavering dedication to providing exceptional care for its residents and serves as a testament to our ongoing commitment to excellence.

## FOCUS 2025 STRATEGIC GOALS



### Care

Our Reason  
for Being



### Campuses of Care

Our Model  
for Creating  
Caring  
Communities



### Our People

Living into  
The Bethany  
Way



### Community

Partnerships  
that Power Us



### Innovation

Reimagining  
and Delivering  
the Future of  
Care



# QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE AWARD



*Photo credit: Government of Alberta*

Jennifer McCue, President and CEO of Bethany Care Society, was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal by the Honourable Jason Copping, Minister of Health, in a special ceremony on January 23, 2023, at McDougall Centre in Calgary.

The Government of Alberta created the medals to recognize 7,000 Albertans for their extraordinary contributions to the province as part of the commemoration of the 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II. In addition to her exemplary leadership in the continuing care sector, Jennifer was recognized for her passionate advocacy for the residents, tenants, and families Bethany serves.

# LEADING THE WAY THROUGH RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

New technology research pilot could help older adults age in place.

Bethany Care Society is one of Alberta's largest not-for-profit providers of seniors' care and housing. But Bethany is more than just a landlord. Through an exciting research partnership with a large international organization, Bethany is piloting a technology that aims to help individuals navigate the complexities of our health system and live independently as long as possible.

Seniors at Home is a virtual health service supported by easy-to-use tablet devices that connects people directly to primary care teams and their loved ones from the comfort of their homes. For Seniors at Home pilot program participants, sensors have been installed in their homes to monitor and track everything from airflow and temperature to sleep regulation and movement. They also receive regular phone check-ins with a team of health professionals focused on well-being, changing physical and mental status, and coordination support for access to primary care to enhance healthy aging.

Over the next 20 years, the older adult population in Canada is expected to grow by 68%. People are living longer, and the complexity of their care needs is also increasing. A recent study found that 90% of people over 65 want to age in place, meaning they want to stay in their homes for as long as possible.

Technology like Seniors at Home could help them do that while removing some of the burdens from the health system at the same time. Although publicly funded resources are available (e.g., home care, primary care, caregiver respite), navigating the system can still be complicated.

"Many seniors have no one that sees the whole picture of their health needs, for physical or mental assistance, safety and security, and emotional and social support," says Steven Friesen, Executive Director, Research and Innovation, Bethany Care Society. "Using predictive analytics, Seniors at Home can anticipate any health changes before they become emergencies, from fall prevention and social isolation to medication management—potentially decreasing ER visits, admissions, and other avoidable events."





*Seniors at Home participant  
Ann Craig talking to a care  
team member, registered nurse  
Amanda Mossing.*



“It has been exciting to participate in this study, with access to care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,” says Ann Craig, a resident in independent housing at Bethany. “It makes me feel good to know that this research could help others feel more safe and secure in their homes and improve quality of life.”

The Seniors at Home initiative began in July 2023 and will end in July 2024. Findings may help guide future virtual health and home care resources for Albertans who wish to age in place.

*Funding for this initiative was provided by Maximus Canada.*



# ALBERTA CONTINUING CARE ASSOCIATION (ACCA) INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Bethany Care Society was recognized with the Innovator of the Year Award at the Alberta Continuing Care Association's Inspiring Quality Conference held in Red Deer, September 14-15, 2022, for making innovative advancements that improve quality of life and care for residents and tenants across our Bethany communities.

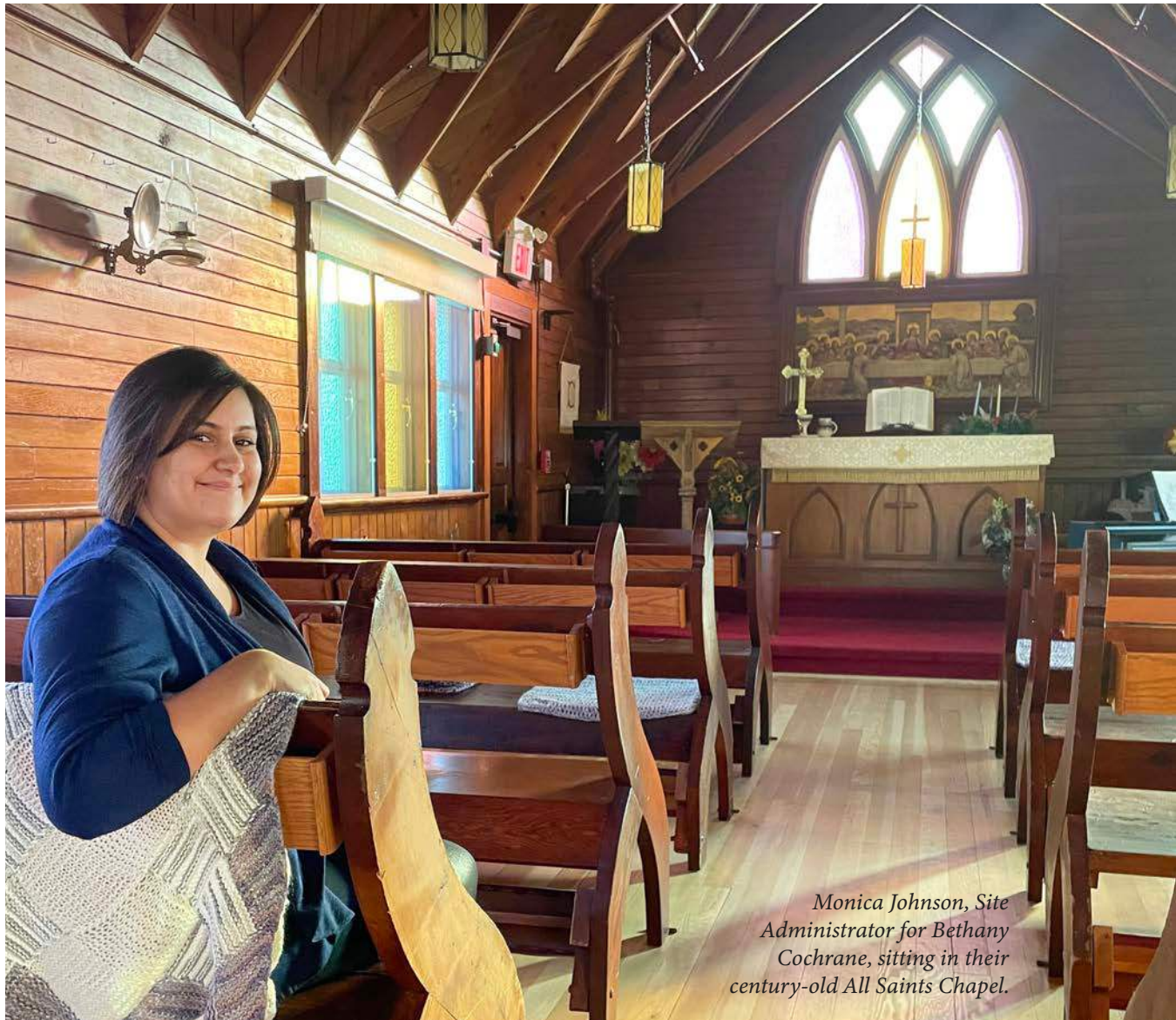
From harnessing the power of iN2L touch screens to providing specially curated recreational and therapeutic content for our dementia residents, or seeing children in our daycare at Bethany Riverview sing, dance and play safely with our seniors thanks to telepresence robots — technology made a significant difference at Bethany during the pandemic. These initiatives were made possible by donations and grants to Bethany Care Foundation.

There will be lasting benefits to our clinical practice and care models as we continue to develop these tools and explore other innovations at Bethany, including piloting virtual reality skills training in our palliative and end-of-life care program in the months ahead.

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## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION SPOTLIGHTS

Bethany Care Society continues to lead the way with exciting research initiatives to enhance our mission to create caring communities. This work is possible thanks to the participation of our employees, residents, tenants, and families, who help us drive these projects forward.



*Monica Johnson, Site Administrator for Bethany Cochrane, sitting in their century-old All Saints Chapel.*

## Advancing Spirituality in Palliative Care: Compassion in Action

Spirituality has a tremendous impact on residents' physical, emotional, and mental health in supportive living and long-term care. In collaboration with provincial and national partners and with funding from the community and government, Bethany Care Society aims to develop and implement an interdisciplinary education and training strategy to provide healthcare professionals with the skills and knowledge they need to address, recognize, communicate, and respond to the daily spiritual needs of our residents.

## Social Learning Platform in Virtual Reality for Dementia

Kaleidoscope XR (KXR) and Bethany Care Society partnered to develop and design a social learning platform in virtual reality (VR), to advance training and education for healthcare providers in continuing care. With funding from Alberta Innovates, Bethany is building on this platform by piloting a new experiential and immersive dementia experience to train employees and caregivers in the future.

# LEADING THE WAY THROUGH QUALITY EXPERIENCES

New mental health initiatives aim to reduce isolation and create connections.

Worldwide, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we work, live, and interact with each other. Many felt the impact through multiple stress factors—from social isolation to constraints on people’s ability to work, seek help from loved ones, and engage in their communities.

Thanks to funding through Bethany Care Foundation, Bethany has rolled out several new initiatives to support the mental health needs of the residents and tenants that call Bethany their home, to help our communities through the pandemic and beyond.

According to research released by the World Health Organization in 2022, the pandemic triggered an unprecedented 25% global increase in depression and anxiety worldwide. Even before the pandemic, seniors and adults with disabilities were at higher risk of social isolation and loneliness than younger age groups.

“Our independent and supportive living residents and tenants were particularly vulnerable to the mental health effects of COVID-19,” says Jennifer McCue, President and CEO, Bethany Care Society. “Some of these challenges included underlying health conditions, financial and food insecurity, mental health concerns, and addictions.” Bethany partnered with seniors to develop a new community engagement program to help isolated seniors living in Bethany’s affordable, independent housing sites, and supportive living centres. Together, they designed activities focused on using a diverse mix of recreational programming and technologies to build resilience and mental wellness strategies.

Most solutions focused on enhancing access and connection to resources already available within the Calgary community, including transportation, budgeting and financial advice, and physical health and wellness opportunities. They engaged speakers from Mount Royal University, Calgary Transit, and the Calgary Fire Department for targeted learning sessions. At many sites, residents also led activities like intergenerational audiobook clubs and other structured group events like Halloween parades, BBQs, yoga, arts, crafts, and music brought to life in person and remotely with support from service clubs, churches, and high school student programs.

*Bethany Recreation Therapist Assistant and musician Rocky Matamorosa (guitar) and tenant Abe Peters (spoons) play together at monthly birthday celebrations.*







“What we noticed most was how much our tenants enjoyed being out of their suites, re-engaging in relationship-building with their neighbours, participating in physical movement, and having a voice in creating their own events and activities,” says Randy Bourassa, Director of Housing at Bethany. “Access to a dedicated recreation therapist to support their self-determined areas of interest and need, coupled with the investment in equipment, materials, and technology supports, were truly game changers.”

“During the pandemic, we wanted to help our residents and tenants stay healthy and safe,” says Jennifer. “In the long-term, our goal is to continue to lead the way to reduce isolation and allow people to feel supported, cared for, and connected, and to see them thrive as they age well in their communities.”

**This initiative was made possible through the Bethany Care Foundation with funding from the Government of Alberta’s Mental Health and Addiction COVID-19 Community Funding Grant.**



Learn more about supporting Bethany's mission of creating caring communities. Contact the Bethany Care Foundation at [bcf@bethanyseniors.com](mailto:bcf@bethanyseniors.com)

[BethanySeniors.com](http://BethanySeniors.com)

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