

## ACCA 2019 Awards of Excellence Winners – Learn More About Their Exceptional Dedication to Quality Person-Centred Care!

### Care Provider of the Year: Jali Clarke

The Care Provider of the Year, Jali Clarke, is a wonderful individual who demonstrates a caring and respectful approach when providing care to residents, particularly those with dementia. She has the ability to engage in a way that helps reduce their anxiety and encourages sense of humour and fun. One can often find this individual dancing and singing with residents, that is just her kind and compassionate nature, says her nominator.

A very stylish individual, Jali passes this elegance on to the residents for whom she cares. That is to say,... she will pay close attention to details such as a colourful scarf or flower or hair pin for the resident's hair, to compliment what the resident is wearing. It makes the resident feel fantastic; little details like this truly enrich lives.

Music with Ipods was another of her suggestions; with consultations from family members as to what kind of music each individual resident truly enjoys and remembers by heart!

Jali excels in being a leader and mentor on her unit. For example, she will have a huddle with her teammates at the beginning of the day on what needs to be done, and at the end of the day to see how the day went, always spending extra time to listen to concerns and ensure everyone works together in making the lives of residents better.

Says a family member of a resident "I am grateful every day that my mom resides and receives exceptional care from professional knowledgeable kind and compassionate staff like Jali at St. Michael's! Thank you so so much!"

A very worthy candidate with a commitment to compassion and excellence in enriching the lives of residents for the past 23 years as a Health Care Aide at St. Michael's Long Term Care Centre, we congratulate Jali Clarke!

*Pictured: Robert Cunningham of SGP Purchasing Partner Network, Jali Clarke, Michael Mah of Alberta Health, and Ian Woodcock, ACCA Board Chair*



### **Lifetime Achievement: Dr. Elisa Mori-Torres**

Dr. Mori-Torres was nominated by a fellow nominee, Lyn Krutzfeldt of AdvantAGE Assist Group / Christenson Communities Ltd.

Dr. Mori-Torres has dedicated her career to transforming how we care for seniors with acute and chronic health conditions. With her expertise in academic excellence and effective leadership, she became a valuable member of various organizations such as being the Co-Site Lead of Specialized Geriatric Medicine at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital. She was also appointed as an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Family Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry in the University of Alberta and one of the respected site physicians in Citadel Mews West.

She is extremely hands-on with her patients and treats them as part of her family. She always finds time to have a family conference to talk about the care and treatment for her residents whenever there are changes to their status, patiently and with great care ensuring the family thoroughly understands the situation.

As a mentor to many, she coaches and guides the LPNs on how to improve assessments, with a special focus on palliative residents.

Dr. Mori-Torres dedicates her time in providing health education to the residents by being a guest speaker in discussing dementia and end of life and she involves herself in numerous charitable organizations, advocating for seniors' health and wellness, including in partnering with such organizations as the Alberta Dementia Strategy and Action Plan.

She is recognized in various associations including the College of Licensed Practical Nurses in Alberta, and was recently nominated for the Interprofessional Development Award, and, last year, by ACCA for Care Provider of the Year.

Says her nominator, Lyn Krutzfeldt, "we are nominating one of the finest physicians working in Alberta. Whether you meet Dr. Mori-Torres at work or walking down the street, she will remind you of her life calling to make a difference in the lives of seniors."

### **Innovator of the Year: Jill Burt, AdvantAGE Assist Group / Christenson Communities Ltd.**

The Innovator of the Year Award is awarded to a care provider or one of their employees who can demonstrate an innovation they have developed or introduced within the sector to improve the quality of care delivered.

Jill Burt is described as "innovative, dynamic and enthusiastic and always willing to give her best in uplifting the quality of life of residents and staff." Since having been the Corporate Chaplain at Christenson Communities and Advantage Assist Group since 2014, she has initiated the development of many resident-focused programs, such as Faith Life Talks, Our Daily Bread, Reading Circles and Caregiver Support Groups.

These initiatives create a warm environment in which residents feel their souls and spirits are nourished with love and care of the people that surround them.

She collaborated with the Corporate Clinical Educator in initiating a company training program for clinical staff titled "Join My Journey: Stepping Into Dementia Care".

She is responsible for the development and implementation of the Life Transition Program for Christenson which involves the establishment of Memorial Walls at each community as well as memorial services honouring residents and staff who pass away while calling a Christenson Community their home.

Finally, with encouragement of Christenson's CEO, Jill innovated and implemented a program called "Dream a Little Dream" which was designed to honor and respect seniors' wishes and dreams by helping make their once in a lifetime wish come true. Once a year, all seniors have the opportunity to apply to have their wish chosen as a finalist in the program.

The submissions range from wanting to attend a hockey game again, seeing a live opera to being reunited with family they haven't seen in years.

Recently a Bedford Village community celebrated the wish of one of their Dream a Little Dream recipients. A resident who is an amateur pianist wrote a song for his wife years ago and always dreamed of performing it with a larger accompaniment. For their 60th wedding anniversary, he was able to perform it with the members of a local string ensemble. The community all joined to celebrate. Amazing!

Christenson Communities' residents are overwhelmed with gratitude and happiness when they find out that they have been selected; a truly incredible initiative created by our truly incredible Award Winner, Jill Burt.

*Pictured: Christine Lambert of TELUS Business, Jill Burt, Michael Mah, Ian Woodcock*



### **Volunteer of the Year: Lydia Kartasheff**

Lydia is described as extremely reliable, dedicated and committed. With over 1000 hours contributed since having become a volunteer in 2015, she is often with the residents on a daily basis, 7 days a week!

Lydia Kartasheff became a volunteer when her husband resided with Bethany Harvest Hills. She expressed a desire to help out and so started as a mealtime companion and visitor, socializing and

getting to know residents. Although Lydia's husband passed away in December 2015, she continued to be a devoted volunteer, increasing her level of involvement. She has been instrumental in improving and enhancing property grounds for residents, staff, and all to enjoy, even contributing plants from her own garden.

Described as a tiny yet extremely determined lady, she has spent countless hours doing very labour-intensive work...often involving residents by taking them to be alongside her to assist... where they can. Her attention to detail is such that she will plant flowers outside of a specific resident's window knowing that it is the resident's favourite.

Bethany Harvest Hills now has walkways, small garden areas, a rock garden, a gazebo area with a ceramic fire pit, and a new landscaped sitting area in memory of past residents, all owing to Lydia who visits the site daily. They also have a volunteer who shares her joy with the residents, staff, families and other volunteers...a joy that is truly contagious.

Congratulations Lydia!

*Pictured: Anna Kownacki of Safeway Pharmacy, Lydia Kartasheff, Michael Mah, Ian Woodcock*



### **Volunteer of the Year: Gordon Duckering**

Our second volunteer of the year, Gordon Duckering, has been described as a faithful and gentle presence amongst residents and it all began with a friendly game of cribbage when, a few years ago, he would visit a friend who lived at Canterbury. The resident was reluctant to come to social gatherings but enjoyed playing crib, so that's what they did and it built a strong connection.

After his friend moved on to another facility, Gordon felt called to do more at the place he had grown to love. So, as he came to know some staff and residents, he began offering his time as a volunteer. Says Mbalia Kamara, a recreation supervisor at Canterbury Foundation, "when you see him walk by, there is that feeling of calm, that in the moment you are with him "I feel safe". That is a vital emotion for seniors to have."

He now leads a weekly bible study group, helps with worship services in the chapel and spends time helping with activities in the Memory Care Unit. His gift of time and love to residents helps to enrich their home so much.

In fact, Gordon drives in two or three times a week all the way from Stony Plain to see his Canterbury friends.

The nominator included a few quotes from residents that I thought were quite sweet. Says one long time resident of Canterbury "Oh, he is the most interesting person. You know, He's religious... but he doesn't push it on anyone." "And he's always smiling".

He is a valued volunteer who makes Canterbury's residents feel special, safe and at home. His impact is tremendous on the residents and his quiet spirit shines through and all that he does, and that is a lot. Thank you Gordon!

*Pictured: Anna Kownacki, Gordon Duckering, Michael Mah, and Ian Woodcock*



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