

AUTUMN 2026

**5 Resurrection Rd.,
Toronto, ON M9A 5G1**

**Labdara residents' news is
published quarterly.**

Happy Thanksgiving



Gratitude makes sense of our past,
brings peace for today,
and creates a vision for tomorrow. (Melody Beatty)

When eating fruit, remember the one
Who planted the tree. (Vietnamese Proverb)

When I started counting my blessings,
My whole life turned around. (Willie Nelson)

May your day be filled with laughter,
delicious leftovers,
people you love the most and good friends.

LABDARA RECEIVES AWARD

Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home received the UniversalCare Best Practice Excellence Award at the Best Practice Spotlight Organization symposium in Toronto on September 16th, 2026.

The extraordinarily large cake “Šakotis” was presented to our residents and visitors together with a display of the Best Practices award at Labdara at our Community Engagement Day celebration.



At the presentation of the award, from left to right: Shawn Cadeux (Labdara's Social Service Worker), Maria Cherbel (UniversalCare VP of Quality and Clinical Care), Sara Ryan (UniversalCare Director of Clinical Services), Laura Puteris (Administrator of Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home), Irminda Alva (BPSO PSW, Labdara), Mandy Judah (UniversalCare Director of Clinical Services).

WE THANK YOU

As Thanksgiving approaches and the warm weather lingers, we wish to express gratitude to our community members and families for their generous support of Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home. Because of your contributions, our residents can spend more of these wonderful days outside, enjoying the fresh air and flowers.

We thank the Lithuanian Canadian Foundation for helping fund custom sunshades for the second-floor balcony. Because of your generosity, residents and families can spend these warm days in a sun-protected outdoor space, a space that is both beautiful and safe.

We are also grateful to all the donors who gave so generously to this year's Garden Beautification Project. With the help of volunteers and staff, we were able to spruce up the gardens at the front of the property with plants and flowers. We also installed new planters along the rear of the property. Whether looking out the windows or sitting directly in the gardens, there is truly something beautiful for all our residents to enjoy.

Thank you for helping our Labdara community connect with nature. We are so grateful for your support.

The Labdara Foundation Board



OUR CENTENNARIAN



On August 12th we celebrated our resident Vilma Gaputis' 100th birthday!!! Rev. Raimondas Bukauskas held a special Mass in her honour here at Labdara and after singing a rousing HAPPY BIRTHDAY to her at lunch, everyone enjoyed the delicious birthday cake. Congratulations, Vilma, and best wishes for good health, good friends and many many blessings



OUR CENTENNARIANS ARE HONOURED BY LITHUANIA



Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kęstutis Budrys, through Lithuania's Ambassador to Canada Dr. Meilūnas, accompanied by Consul General Mr. Paul Kuras and Franciscan Father Rev. Šileika, presented certificates of congratulations signed by Minister Budrys and a Lithuanian sash marking their centennary birthdays.

Marija Dambrauskienė (born in February)

Emilija Čepienė (born in March)

Vilma Gaputienė (born in August)

Viktoras Skukauskas (born in September)

LABDARA is pleased and honoured to be their home and sends them sincere congratulations.



DOUGLAS PECK – CONGRATULATIONS ON TURNING 100!!!



On July 26th our beloved long-serving volunteer musician Douglas Peck celebrated his 100th birthday at MOM's DINER in Midland, Ontario. Mr. Peck and his 30 guests attended Holy Mass at Midland's MARTYRS' SHRINE. After Mass everyone enjoyed a great homemade meal at Mom's Diner. LABDARA's representative, Nerijus Augutis brought special greetings and thanks to Mr. Peck from the team at LABDARA. Congratulations and best wishes for many more years of bringing us joy through your lovely piano concerts and sing-a-longs. God bless!!!

Nerijus Augutis, Activation Department.



CONCERT SERIES AT LABDARA

by Laura Gillis, Music Therapist

Throughout the summer, Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home hosted a very special concert series, featuring the residents in the Labdara Bell Choir which I, Laura Gillis the Music Therapist, have the pleasure of leading. We welcomed five composers of new music into the home, premiered a piece that each had written for the group, and also welcomed members of the public into the home to enjoy the concert!

This concert series was created to challenge stereotypes and to bring people from inside and outside of long-term care together for a novel concert experience. We don't often think of long-term care as a place for new art creation, but the reality is that we can all benefit from and contribute to art. Art can bring people together at any age and any stage of health. People living in long-term care have unique viewpoints that artists can learn from and can incorporate into new creations.

Composers Adam Scime, Martin van de Ven, Alex Eddington, Lieke van der Voort, Louise Campbell, and myself all wrote music for the group and were so pleased to share the music for the first time at Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home.



Thanks to the Canada Council for the Arts and the Toronto Arts Council for making this concert series possible.



TETRIS TUMBLE GAME

TETRIS TUMBLE GAME is popular with our residents. Here is Konstanty enjoying the game



Just at the beginning



SAVE THE DATE!!!

LABDARA Lithuanian Nursing Home's 25th Anniversary Celebration will take place on June 12, 2027. You won't want to miss it!!! Stay tuned for details.

MEMORIES FROM PUNSK

by Konstanty (Kostas)



Since time immemorial, the people of Punszk have been collecting memorabilia connected to the patriotism of Lithuania. These include books, works of art, national sashes, crosses, and wayside shrines. Punszk is considered the **ethnographic center of Lithuanian identity and culture in Poland**. No Lithuanian national holiday or anniversary goes unnoticed here, in the Sejny region. Various politicians and public figures from Lithuania visit often, bringing "fresh news" about life in the Homeland. They are warmly welcomed with bread and salt. They gladly meet with local compatriots, listen to their joys, troubles, and tales of local life, and participate in presentations by local Lithuanian dancers and craftsmen.

In Punszk, the Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin and the organizations operating around it, including the Punszk Cultural Center, have much to boast about. Every summer, **a "harvest" festival is held here**, during which a fair is held in the large Punszk park. Local farmers and artisans sell their handicrafts along with various foods (smoked sausages, honey, cheese, vegetables, fruits, and sweets). A procession takes place in which the various villages solemnly carry a wreath of grains and flowers woven by its farmers. After the Holy Mass various contests take place, such as selection of the "Best Young Farmer",

SEJNY LITHUANIAN WEDDING CUSTOMS



In the Sejny region, **Lithuanian wedding customs are popular**: the banquet hall is decorated with ribbons, tapestries, wreaths, and bouquets of flowers. Tables are decorated with colorful wreaths, cold meat appetizers decorated with greens, various grains, Lithuanian bread, kvass or beer and bottles of stronger drinks. Upon arrival, the newlyweds and the crowd of guests would first have a snack, refresh themselves, socialize, and gradually "warm their feet" by dancing and join the beginning of this beautiful celebration.

And what kind of rustic wedding would it be without wedding "bromos" (gates), when halfway from the church to the house or the banquet hall, "gates" or other obstacles to free passage were erected. The matchmaker was required to get "permission" to pass through, and in the end, the gates are "opened" in exchange for strong drinks and sweets. According to tradition, the groom had to carry the bride across a bridge. When arriving at the house, the groom and bride would be

SEJNY LITHUANIAN WEDDING CUSTOMS (continued)

tested – he was given firewood to chop, and she had to weave a wreath.

Wedding musicians entertained until dawn, and in the morning, playing a lively march, they would wake up the newlyweds to start the second day of wedding celebrations. Those who needed relief from hangovers were served delicious cabbage soup with potatoes and beer or other stronger drinks. It was a day of the "hanging of the matchmaker" and ancient songs were sung to the matchmaker, the in-laws, and the newlyweds.

According to locals, in the past, newlyweds would travel to church in beautifully decorated horse-drawn carriages, and weddings were held not on weekends but on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.



The matchmaker and the mother-in-law were the main initiators of the wedding, the negotiators, and entertainers, without whom no ceremony took place, such as the matchmaker's "gate ransom" or the weaving of the bride's rue wreath adorning her head.

Hostesses (housewives) competed among themselves to see who could prepare a tastier or more elaborate hot or cold meat dish. In the past, there was no dieting or concepts of healthy or unhealthy food, and anyone who had "gained weight" was said to be doing well and considered to be a wealthy farmer. Speaking of meat dishes, personally, the tastiest to me is the cold lean meat roulade – a traditional Lithuanian cold appetizer.

Weddings were an occasion for "serious" partying, not to mention consumption of a variety of dishes and drinks; there was plenty of dancing and various games were played, such as the bride throwing her rue wreath backwards into the group of bridesmaids. Whoever caught it would be the next to get married!

At that time, the greatest responsibility fell on the newlywed man. That's why there was a saying: "See who wears pants?" And after all the celebrations ended, the newlyweds slowly began their new stage of life as a new family.

That's all for now about the customs and traditions of the Punske region from me. Until we meet again!



WON'T YOU JOIN US?

Our volunteer program has been designed to recruit, screen, orient, train, support and evaluate willing participants in a variety of fulfilling and engaging duties. Some of these responsibilities would include: friendly visiting, reading to a resident, assisting with meals and feeding, accompanying residents to appointments, taking residents for walks, etc. To learn more visit:

<https://www.labdara.ca/en/how-volunteer>

This volunteer program can assist in obtaining High school volunteer hours.

Volunteers needed No experience required. Just a caring heart.

Opportunities available:

- Companionship
- Event assistance
- Restorative feeding

Get your high school volunteer hours!

If you wish to volunteer, please contact

volunteering@labdara.ca or

recreation manager

lifenrichment@labdara.ca

416-232-2112 ext. 403





Join Us

for Our Annual Bake & Craft Sale on November 15th, 2026

Dear Families,

We are excited to invite you to our Annual Bake & Craft Sale on Sunday, November 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Prisikelimo Parapija (Resurrection Parish), the church across from Labdara. This special fund-raising event supports our residents' programs, activities, outings, and other quality-of-life initiatives.

This special event is an opportunity for our residents, families, staff, volunteers, and community members to come together while supporting resident programs and activities. We warmly encourage families to attend and support this important event.

We would also greatly appreciate donations from families and community members. If you would like to contribute, we welcome:

- Homemade baked goods
- Crafts and handmade items

Donations can be dropped off prior to the event. If you would like to donate, please contact the Recreation Department for arrangements by emailing activities@labdara.ca or reception@labdara.ca.

Your generosity directly benefits our residents and helps us continue providing meaningful recreational and social opportunities throughout the year.



Thank you for your continued support and generosity. We hope you will join us on November 15th, 2026 and help make this event a wonderful success for our residents.

Warm regards,

Gaganpree Kaur

Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home

CELEBRATION OF „ŽOLINĖ“ IN LITHUANIA



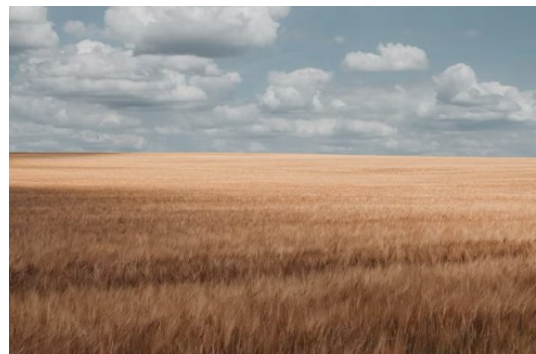
Žolinė refers to the Feast of the Assumption in Lithuania. Over time it has resulted in the combining of the ancient pagan feast celebrating the harvest of flowers and herbs and the Catholic Feast of the Assumption of Mary, the Mother of God into heaven and is celebrated on August 15th.



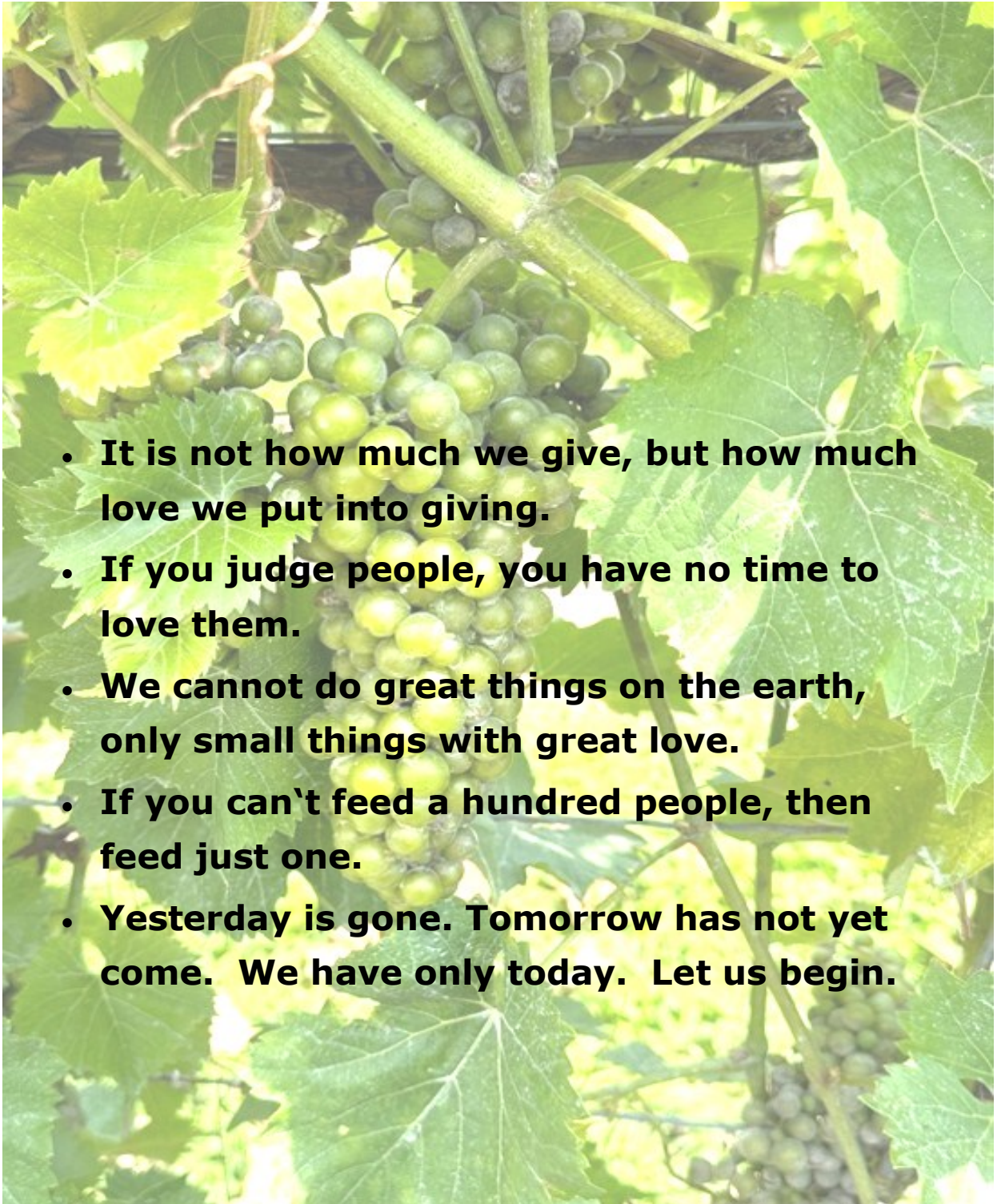
Long before Christianity arrived in Baltic lands, the festival served as a crucial agrarian milestone marking the transition from summer to autumn. It celebrated the successful reaping of the year's crops and the abundance of nature. The festival was closely tied to the cult of Žemyna the Baltic goddess of the Earth. It was a time to thank her for nurturing the people and giving life to the harvest. It was traditionally forbidden to eat the new year's harvest before this festival. On Žolinė bread baked from the very first harvested grain was consumed and beer made from this new yield was shared among the community. Women braided crowns and bouquets from wild flora, meadow grasses to keep throughout the year to protect homes from thunderstorms or to brew medicinal teas.

Catholic integration – Feast of the Assumption: Lithuania was the last state in Europe to officially convert to Christianity. Rather than erasing deeply ingrained rituals, the Catholic Church synchronized the local harvest feast with the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Bouquets of herbs, grains, flowers and vegetables were taken to the church to be blessed by a priest. Today Žolinė stands as a prime example of Lithuania's „folk Christianity“ – a national public holiday where citizens, whether religious or secular, come together to honor their deep historical relationship with nature.

(information from the Internet)



QUOTES BY MOTHER TERESA



- **It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.**
- **If you judge people, you have no time to love them.**
- **We cannot do great things on the earth, only small things with great love.**
- **If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.**
- **Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.**