



5 Resurrection Rd.,  
Toronto, ON M9A 5G1

Labdara residents' news is  
published quarterly.

## Lets Chat

AUTUMN 2025

# Happy Thanksgiving



**GIVE THANKS FOR EACH NEW MORNING WITH ITS LIGHT  
FOR REST AND SHELTER OF THE NIGHT  
FOR HEALTH AND FOOD  
FOR LOVE AND FRIENDS  
FOR EVERYTHING THY GOODNESS SENDS. (RALPH WALDO EMERSON)**

**The Labdara Foundation Board of Directors extends a special thank you to the dedicated staff and management of Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home who work hard every day to provide a positive, caring home for our residents.**

**Happy Thanksgiving to the residents and staff of Labdara and your families!**

## Administrator's Message



**Dear Residents, Families, Community Members and Staff,**

**Good bye summer and welcome to the beautiful changing colours of fall. Where has the time gone? Does everyone else feel the summer went too quickly? At Labdara we have been having a busy and fun summer. You will see in the newsletter some of the events that took place. Here are some of the projects that we've been working on.**

**Our sensory room on 3rd floor is underway for completion in the fall. We will announce the date of its grand opening and are excited to show it off. We are in the process of arranging mural placement in the room.**

**Thank you to Lindsay for her hard work in starting up the Family Council at Labdara. So far we have had two meetings. All family members or friends of residents can join and participate and support our work at Labdara. Please reach out to [labdarafamilycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:labdarafamilycouncil@gmail.com) if you would like to get information about next meeting. It is a great opportunity to give input about the home, and also allows you to create a community group.**

**We also have a family member and a resident who participate in our Quality Care Council. Thank you to Ahmed and Susan who have been participating. If you would like to participate and contribute ideas for improving quality care at Labdara please let Beata Brun our Director of Care know.**

**One project that we are starting at the beginning of fall is installing a new heating boiler. We still have a working boiler but the back-up system is too old and needs replacement. So, we have been busy all summer trying to repair it and getting quotes for a new heating boiler. This is a large unexpected expense. Thank you to the board of directors and the community who donated to Labdara. We will be using this money to fund this large capital project.**

**Hoping everyone has a safe and cozy fall,**

**All the best**

*Laura Puteris, Administrator*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MESSAGE



**Dear Residents, Families, Staff,  
Volunteers, and Friends of Labdara**

**Thanksgiving is a time to think about things for which we are grateful and to consider ways in which we, in turn, may give to others. In the spirit of this holiday, let us remember with gratitude the generosity of the visionaries and donors who built Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home. We thank everyone who has supported Labdara over the years by donating their time or providing financial support.**

**Now it is our turn to pay it forward. The greatest gift that we can give our elders is our time. I urge members of the Labdara community to enrich the lives of our residents by volunteering at the home. Come spend time with residents by visiting or reading to them; leading or assisting with group programs; taking residents for walks; or helping them with activities of daily living. Labdara would also welcome volunteers who can help improve its surroundings by doing groundskeeping or gardening. If you wish to volunteer, please contact the Activities Team at 416-232-2112 ext. 412, or by email at [volunteering@labdara.ca](mailto:volunteering@labdara.ca).**

**I would like to extend a special thank you to the dedicated staff and management of Labdara who work hard every day to provide a positive, caring home for our residents.**

**Happy Thanksgiving to the residents and staff of Labdara and your families!**

**Zita Bersenas-Cers, Chair, Board of  
Directors  
Labdara Foundation**





## AWARD FOR LABDARA

On September 10, 2025 LABDARA received high recognition for its work. To celebrate LABDARA held a DOORS OPEN event inviting the community to join in celebrating the designation of LABDARA Lithuanian Nursing Home as a best practice organization.

The Universalcare Pillars of Success Award was presented to LABDARA in recognition of the quality of care and safety practiced here.

Homes are designated as **PILLARS OF SUCCESS** by demonstrating commitment to culture and to people.



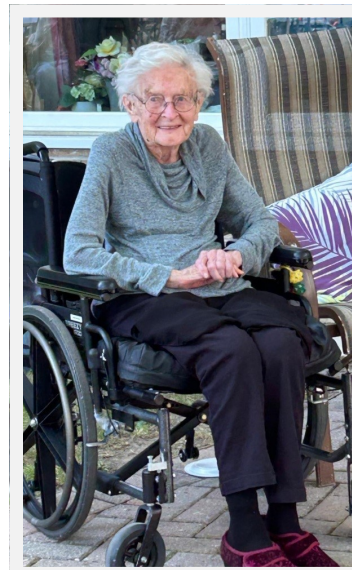
## Long-Term Care Community Engagement Day

LABDARA participated in the Long-Term Care Community Engagement Day by hosting an OPEN DOORS event on September 10th, 2025. The event brought together residents, staff, families and community leaders.

Laura Puteris welcomed everyone to LABDARA: Lee Fairclough, MPP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore brought greetings and Gerda Tarvydien4 spoke about her experiences as a resident of Labdara. Thank-you to everyone who participated.



Lee Fairclough, MPP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore brings greetings.



Gerda Tarvydas speaks about life at LABDARA as a resident.



Resident Kostas Latwis, Ruta Girdauskas, resident Mrs. Žemaitis, Administrator Laura Puteris.



## AMBASSADOR HONOURS OUR CENTENNARIANS:



Lithuania's Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Meilūnas from Ottawa, visited LABDARA for tea with the residents on August 23rd. to honour our centenarians. It was a very special occasion on which he presented to them the Lithuanian flag and certificates of recognition. Unfortunately, due to illness, centenarians Irene Paulauskas, Gerda Tarvydas and Elena Bukšaitis were not able to attend in person.



**Our resident centenarian Genė Birutė Kasparavičius with Lithuania's Ambassador to Canada Mr. Meilūnas.**



**Our guest Zita Linkevičius (103), together with her daughter Irene McKenna with Ambassador Meilūnas.**



**Our resident Herta Povilaitis (101) with Ambassador Meilūnas.**

## WOODEN SHOES IN LITHUANIA

In Lithuania, klumpės (wooden shoes) or clogs were a practical form of footwear for farmers and laborers, particularly popular in the countryside from the 18th century until the mid-20th century, due to their durability and affordability. They provided protection and warmth for outdoor work, especially during colder months.



Additionally, klumpės are still used today in traditional Lithuanian folk dances, such as "klumpakojis", where they create a distinctive percussive sound.



**PRACTICAL USE:** Klumpės or clogs appeared in Lithuania in the 18th century and were made of soft wood that did not split or crack. The inflexibility of wooden shoes means that water and dirt are not flipped up onto the back of the legs.

## WOODEN SHOES IN LITHUANIA (continued)

Klumpės were essential for outdoor work, protecting feet from rough terrain, moisture and the elements. They were especially useful during autumn and winter, providing necessary footwear when going barefoot was no longer feasible.

As a low-cost alternative to leather shoes and boots, they were particularly important for the working class and rural populations. Wooden shoes, if properly cared for, lasted for decades.

**CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:** Klumpės are integral to some Lithuanian folk dances, like “klumpakojis”, where the sound of the wooden shoes hitting the ground is a key element of the performance. Their use was widespread in the countryside, especially in the Žemaitija region (northwestern Lithuania), with some people wearing them up until the mid-20th century.

While not everyday wear for most people today, klumpės remain a significant part of Lithuanian heritage and cultural events. They are primarily encountered now in the context of traditional dance and for tourist-related purposes much like they are in other European countries.

Wooden shoes are worn in the Netherlands, Japan, Sweden and the Nordic and Baltic regions, Venice region in Italy, as well as France and Belgium.



(from the Lithuanian Canadian Museum archives)



(research from the internet)



## 99 WONDERFUL YEARS:

Our volunteer pianist and director of the Holy Family Angels choral group Mr. Douglas Peck celebrated his 99th birthday at his home in the company of good friends. LABDARA is particularly grateful to him for the joy he brought through his music to our residents and staff for many, many years .



Our volunteer musician John Fertado (on the left) celebrating with our dear Mr. Peck.



LABDARA's Volunteer Co-ordinator Nerijus Augutis (on the left) brought greetings to Mr. Peck from our residents and staff.



From L to R: LABDARA's Volunteer Co-ordinator Nerijus Augutis celebrating with our volunteer musician Mr. John Fertado with Birthday celebrant Douglas Peck.





### Grandparents Day

This year our Grandparents party took place on Sunday Sept. 7th in our Community Room. Musician volunteer, John Fertado came to play his guitar and lip harmonica. Volunteer Co-ordinator Nerijus Augutis and new volunteer Daina Rastin led our residents in singing our beautiful Lithuanian folk songs like: „Augo girioj ažuolėlis“, „Su gandrais“, „Žemėj Lietuvos“, „Snaudžia malūnas prie kelio“.

We enjoyed ice cream and ginger ale as refreshments for our residents and family members and juice boxes, ginger ale and chips for the kids. Around 30 residents and family plus 12 kids spent the afternoon visiting. It was lots of fun and brought up many many positive and happy emotions.

Nerijus



## 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!**

**Contact: Nerijus Augutis, Volunteer Coordinator 416-232-2112 ext.412**

The poster features the Labdara logo at the top left, which includes a house icon and the text 'Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home Lietuvių slaugos namai'. To the right is a megaphone icon with the text 'VOLUNTEERS NEEDED'. Below these is an illustration of a diverse group of people, including seniors and volunteers, interacting. A green box on the left states 'No experience required Just a caring heart.' next to a smiling face icon. A yellow box on the right lists 'Opportunities Available: Companionship, Event Assistance, Restorative Feeding'. At the bottom, a yellow banner says 'Get your high school volunteer hours!' above an illustration of a volunteer assisting an elderly person in a wheelchair. A green box at the bottom right provides contact information: 'Contact: Nerijus Augutis, Volunteer Coordinator', 'tel: 416 232- 2122 ext. 412', and 'e-mail: volunteering@labdara.ca'.

**Labdara**  
Lithuanian Nursing Home  
Lietuvių slaugos namai

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

*No experience required*  
Just a caring heart.

**Opportunities Available:**

- Companionship
- Event Assistance
- Restorative Feeding

**Get your high school volunteer hours!**

**Contact: Nerijus Augutis, Volunteer Coordinator**  
tel: 416 232- 2122 ext. 412  
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## BOX CONCERT OUTDOORS:



The Box Concert singers regaled our residents with an outdoor opera concert on August 21st. As you can see from the fotos, it's a popular event and was well attended.



## VINTAGE VOICES ON THE RADIO



Another round of Vintage Voices episodes are about to hit the air! Greg and Mariana are two residents of Labdara who participated in the special project with Laura the Music Therapist. Recording their voices in conversation with Laura, they are radio DJs; introducing their favourite songs and sharing their enjoyment of music. They can be heard on radio on

CIUT 89.5FM, on our host program Steve Fruitman's 33-45-78, just before 1pm on select Mondays.

There's always an eclectic mix of music! Greg shared The Beatles' song "All my Loving" from 1962, as well as Jim Croce's "Time in a Bottle," written in 1972. Mariana shared "Addio Del Passato" from the opera "La Traviata" by Giuseppe Verdi, written in 1852, as sung by the famous Romanian soprano Ileana Contrubas. She also shared an exotic song from Yma Sumac from 1952, a Peruvian singer world renowned for her incredible vocal range; Yma won a Guinness world record for her range of almost 5 octaves (normal trained singers may have more like 3 octaves!).

If you'd like to learn more about the project, discover some new music, and hear some awesome stories, you can read and see pictures here: [newmusicnetwork.ca/projects/vintage-voices](http://newmusicnetwork.ca/projects/vintage-voices), you can connect with our facebook page here: [facebook.com/vintagevoices](https://facebook.com/vintagevoices), or you can listen to the old episodes on Youtube: just look up Vintage Voices channel!

*Laura Gillis, Music Therapist*



## ABOUT LITHUANIAN RYE BREAD



Lithuanians, including the Dzūkai, have loved and respected bread since ancient times and even believed that it had magical powers.

A little about rye: rye bread is made of the genus “Scale cereal” type of rye. It is food and fodder of the annual wintering species of rye (*Secale cereale*). Cultivated rye comes from wild sowing rye, naturally distributed in the Caucasus, Southwest and Central Asia, and Southeastern Europe. Rye is grown in many countries of the Northern Hemisphere, mainly in Europe, for grain and feed. In Europe, cultivation began in the Bronze Age (1800 – 1500 BC). As cultivated plants, rye became most widespread in the Middle Ages. Most of the crops are grown in the European Union countries (Poland, Germany, Austria), Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and much less in Canada and the United States of America. 13-15 million bushels are grown annually in the world. Bread is baked from rye flour; animals are fed with grain, bran, green mass; grain is used for the production of compound feed; it’s made into a spirit drink, starch and syrup (source: Universal Lithuanian Encyclopedia).

As for our dear Lithuania, especially in Dzūkija you can still see undulating fields of rye throughout the region. Rye has always fed Dzūkija – the rye bread they produce is valued all over the world. In the past, rye was sown in Lithuania mainly for production of bread and, for this reason, had an exclusive status amongst other cereals. Without bread, there was threat of starvation.

Products such as bread, meat, butter, cheese, sour cream and other foods, vegetables, potatoes, were grown and produced at home, and rye bread reigned supreme.

Rye, which farmers planted in ploughed fields in September, was harvested the following year in August. After being milled, rye flour was used for baking bread, while wheat flour was used for cakes and other sweets. Rye flour was stored in bags of canvas woven by the farmers themselves.



## ABOUT LITHUANIAN RYE BREAD (Continued)

It should be noted that rye was and is produced (now legally) as a traditional 40%-80% strength alcoholic spirit drink. It has been produced since the 16th century by adding malt to a mixture of grain and water. Distillation occurs twice, and sometimes - three times. The drink has a very strong rye smell. Dzūkija is famous for the best quality of this spirit drink.

Rye cereals are massively popular to this day and in ancient times, a farmer without a field of rye would have been completely incomprehensible.

In ancient Lithuania, rye was sometimes used to cover the roofs of outbuildings. Also, according to ancient Dzūkai customs, the daughter-in-law, in order to prove to her mother-in-law that she was worthy of her son, had to bake a loaf of rye bread for her. She baked it at home and an extra loaf was given as a gift to the neighbour. Amongst rural people, this custom helped to develop friendships and trust in the community.

And now, here's a recipe for baking rye bread.

Rye bread is made from flour and sourdough (natural dough containing bacteria and yeast) or soda with kefir, water, salt and other additives (cumin, various seeds). The sourdough is often aged for up to 5-7 days then a mixture of rye flour, ripened sourdough and water. The dough is mixed well and poured into wooden tubs and covered with a cloth. It is left to rise for 6 hours up to a day and then baked for about an hour or more, depending on the recipe. After baking, the bread is allowed to cool completely and it is cut into slices.

As we can see, Dzūkija became famous not only for its mushrooms and berries, but also for its excellent crops of rye and rye bread.

Of course, this recipe won't fill you up, but I hope that it will whet your appetite for rye bread and the wonderful smells as it bakes! Enjoy, my friends!



By our resident  
Kostas

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT LONELINESS AND GRATITUDE

I live alone now. Some people hear that and rush to pity, as if solitude is a punishment. But let me tell you a secret: being alone does not mean being unloved, and it does not mean being unhappy.

Every morning, I wake up to the sound of birds... and sit at the table with sunlight spilling in. Some days I flip through old photo albums, smiling at the faces dear to me. Other days, I simply close my eyes and listen – to the quiet, to the rhythm of my own breath, to the life around me.

In my younger years, I thought joy came only from big things: weddings, celebrations, family gatherings. But growing older has taught me a softer truth – joy often hides in the small things we forget to notice. The warm taste of soup on a cold night. A neighbour's wave. The laughter of children. The sound of song.

**Loneliness** is what you feel when you focus on what is missing. **Gratitude** is when you focus on what's here. And I have so much here.

I am grateful for my memories, for the strength still in my body, for the kindness of strangers who hold doors open, for the phone calls that come even if not as often as they once did.

So no – I am not lonely. I am full. My heart is loud with gratitude...Do not fear being alone. Learn to sit with yourself. Learn to notice the little gifts life places in your hands every day. Happiness isn't something others give you – it's something you learn to grow inside yourself.

*(from a posting on Facebook)*