



5 Resurrection Rd., Toronto, ON M9A 5G1

Labdara residents' news is published quarterly.

Let Us Chat

April 2025



HAPPY EASTER

***Dear Residents, Families, Staff, and Friends of Labdara,
We extend our sincere wishes for a very Happy Easter to you and those close to you. May your days be filled with the warmth brought by the sun of springtime and may your hearts be filled with hope, joy and peace!***

THE LABDARA FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS



From left to right: Dalia Rocca - Secretary, Ramunė Čygas and Algimantas Nakrošius - members, Zita Bersėnas-Cers - Chair, Daina Kalendra - Vice-Chair, Audronė Butrimas - Treasurer.

Absent - Gabrielė Zitikytė.



JOIN US - BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Volunteers Make Waves is the theme for this year's National Volunteer Week from April 27th to May 3rd. The week highlights the impact and importance of individual and collective volunteer efforts across Canada. At Labdara Lithuanian Nursing Home, we are fortunate to have a group of dedicated volunteers who help to enrich the lives of our residents in many ways. We are very grateful to them for generously donating their time.

The rewards of volunteering are immeasurable. Let me share my experience with you. I have been a member of the Labdara Foundation board of directors for almost seven years and am in my third year as Chair of the board. In addition to my responsibilities with the board, approximately two years ago, I began leading a cooking and crafts group at Labdara. We meet for approximately two hours every two weeks. The residents who participate in the group vary, although there are a few who attend regularly. We have baked, cooked, and done crafts together, but more than that, we have spent time together. We have shared experiences, memories, thoughts, and feelings. Sometimes we sat quietly, but not alone. We have broken out in song while doing a craft or laughed out loud about something. Cooking or baking has become the favourite activity for my group and crafts have been put aside for now. While I believe that the residents benefit from the time we spend together, I also find significant personal benefit. I have met some wonderful people who I would otherwise not have met and wish that I had met them earlier in my life. I always learn something from the participants in the group and I look forward the next time we will meet. I would like you to experience that feeling. Please become a Labdara volunteer and give some of your time to our residents. Someone said: "To care for those who once cared for us is one of life's highest honours."

Information about becoming a volunteer can be found under the "Community" tab on our website: labdara.ca. You may also contact Ljiljana Gavrilovic, our Programs Manager. Ljiljana can be reached by phone at: 416-232-2112 ext. 403 or by email at: lifenrichment@labdara.ca.

On behalf of the Labdara Foundation board of directors I would like to wish you and your loved ones a Happy Easter.

Zita Bersenas-Cers



Dear residents, families, staff, friends, and volunteers

Goodbye to winter and hello to spring! With spring come new beginnings and spring cleaning. We had a head start at Labdara and I'd like to share some of the new beginnings.

We have purchased some new beds and mattresses. The oldest were removed and replaced with new wider beds. We also removed side rails from all of the beds at Labdara, as new regulations from the Ministry of Long-Term Care prohibit their use. Instead, we now have assist bars for the residents who need something to help them with repositioning and with ambulation. The remaining beds will be slowly replaced over the next couple of years.

We said goodbye to our old chairs and welcomed our new beautiful and comfortable resident chairs. With the support of the residents, who had requested new chairs, and the support of the board of directors, new chairs were ordered last year and custom made for Labdara. We are happy to say they are Canadian (GTA) made. You may have seen the pile of old chairs in the parking lot. Our maintenance team stacked them so nicely that they even looked like art. We advertised free chairs but sadly, no one came to take them. One of the Lithuanian scouts groups offered to help break them down and to remove them. Thank you very much, scouts!

Over the past couple of years we have been receiving more residents with memory problems or with dementia. To assist them in remembering their rooms we have installed new door decals on the 2nd and 3rd floor. If you have a chance, come and take a look - the doors look amazing! Each resident on the 2nd and 3rd floor has a different door, either by colour or by style. In addition, at the end of the hallways you will see an interactive screen for residents who may wander. Using this screen, residents can drive a car, pet a cat, play music or watch some TV. This is a fun way to decrease the number of residents who may be looking for an exit and gives the residents who wander a purpose and destination to go to at the end of the hall.

To reflect the changes in resident needs, we are planning to convert the memory room on the third floor to a sensory room. Residents who need more activities will be able to play and enjoy interactive games. This space can also be used to calm or distract residents who need to unwind and relax. Stay tuned for news about this exciting renovation project.

Updates are also happening behind the scenes. We have updated some computers, laptops, and tablets. This summer we will be installing a computer station to be used by residents who are interested in having access to a computer and internet. And last, but not least, we will be installing two new hot water boilers. We are finalizing contracts now to complete the work. This is a much-needed update, as the building is now almost 23 years old, so some major equipment needs to be repaired or replaced.

Thank you to all the volunteers, staff, and residents for their hard work and dedication that helps make these projects possible. I wish to extend an immense thank you to all the donors who contribute to helping Labdara maintain its beauty and Lithuanian charm. We really appreciate when families consider naming Labdara for memorial donations. If anyone is considering this, please contact me at: execdirector@labdara.ca.

Laura Puteris

ST AGATHA'S BREAD DAY TRADITIONS



On February 5, Lithuanians celebrate the feast of St. Agatha, or bread day. It is the oldest and one of the most important traditional holidays of Lithuanians made up of two parts: the pagan and the Christian.

Bread Day – Pagan Holiday

The pagan part of the holiday is associated with the goddess of fire Gabija. On this day, bread was baked and sacrificed to Gabija. It was believed that this bread protects against fires, disease and other misfortunes.

Bread was baked from products readily available to the family, and was most often made from rye flour. It was formed into various shapes such as animals, people, or plants.

At the pagan feast, sacrificial rites were performed: the bread was fed into the fire in the hopes that the deity Gabija would receive it in good faith and that it would satisfy her.



Christian Holiday Traditions

The Christian part of the holiday is associated with the name day of St. Agatha. St. Agatha was a 3rd century saint martyred by fire. She is considered the patron saint of fire and firefighters.

On the feast day of St. Agatha, bread is brought to churches to be blessed. This bread is believed to offer protection from fire.



Today's Traditional Practices

Today, St. Agatha's Bread Day is an important traditional holiday observed by Lithuanians. On this day, people bake bread, which is then used for various purposes:

- A piece of bread is placed on the stove so that the fire lighting the stove stays inside and does not come out of the house and spread.
- A piece of bread is inserted into the foundation of the house to protect it against fires.
- A piece of bread is thrown into a fire to ensure that the fire is extinguished.
- One carries a piece of bread in the purse or wallet to protect against theft.
- A piece of bread is placed in a car to protect against accidents.

St. Agatha's feast day also reminds us that bread is our main food, and that fire is an essential part of human life.

(from WE LOVE LITHUANIA website on the internet)

FROM OUR NURSE ASHLEY



We have great news! Labdara is on her journey to become a Best Practice SPOTLIGHT organization (BPSO)! This means we are working to further create an evidence-based culture, improve patient experience and health outcomes, lower cost of care by preventing complications, and enrich staff satisfaction.

We launched in August with an exciting Hawaiian themed event, and saw participation from residents, families, staff and UniversalCare our management company.

Education and participation in these types of events are an important part of this journey which requires staff participation in becoming best practice champions, attending best practice symposiums and knowledge exchange events to ensure our success. On that note if any of you (our residents and families) are interested in being active participants, you can do that by becoming a best practice organization champion - of course we will happily assist you in this process!

We are happy to report the following highlights:

Implementation of the "Preventing Falls and Reducing Injuries from falls" best practices guide, and

Implementation of the following:

Fall Risk Screening, Assessment and Management

Post Fall Assessment

Pain Screening, Assessment and Management

Pain Opioid Therapy

Though there are difficulties that come with change we are open to increasing our capacity to serve you and are delighted to bring you with us on this journey towards continuous improvement.

Ashley

OUR CENTENNARIANS



Elena Buksaitis is currently our eldest resident and will reach the age of 104 on May 6th.

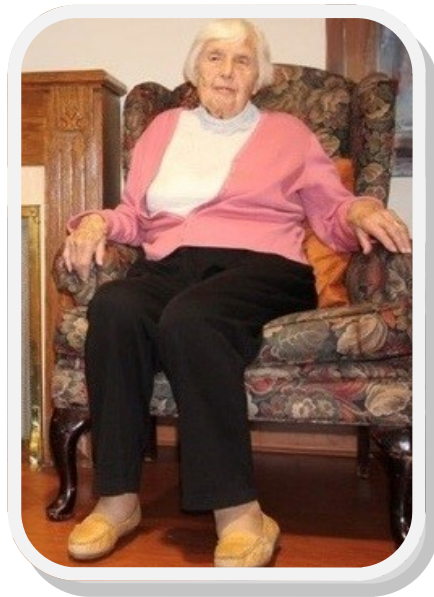


Gene Birute Kasperaviciene will turn 100 on April 30



Gerda Tarvydas turned 100 years of age on March 17th.

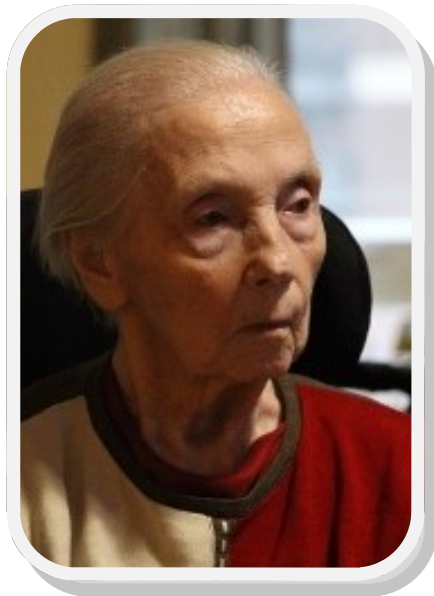
OUR CENTENNARIANS



Ona Rimkuvienė turned 100 on April 2nd.



Our centenarian Ona Yčienei turns 102 on April 17th



Our centenarian Irene Paulauskas turns 100 on May 5th.



Our centenarian Herta Povilaitis celebrated her 101 birthday on March 29th.

TEA TIME: it's nice to get together for a cup of tea and cookies and to see friendly faces.



Thank You

We would like to thank RCU Credit Union for their generous donation of \$1,500 to the Labdara Foundation which will be put towards the installation of sunshades for the second-floor balcony.

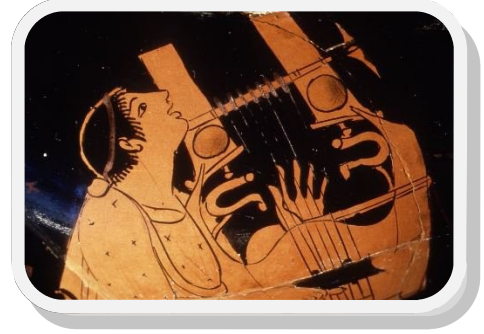
GARDENERS WANTED!

We are looking for people with green thumbs who would like to help us tidy up our outdoor spaces and freshen up the grounds. We would love your help with some light yard work at the end of April. To volunteer for yard work, please email Zita Bersenas-Cers at: labdarabod@gmail.com





Our resident Lazaar B. with music therapist Laura



People all over the world have been playing instruments resembling guitars for a long time. The exact origin of the guitar is a mystery. However, some believe the guitar comes from the Greek word "kithara". Greek mythology states that the kithara was created by the deity Hermes, herald of the Gods of Mount Olympus.



On the left is Manjot Singh Labdara's receptionist enjoying a coffee together with Activation Department staff and Volunteer Co-ordinator Nerijus Augutis.

VOLUNTEER CHRISTMAS PARTY

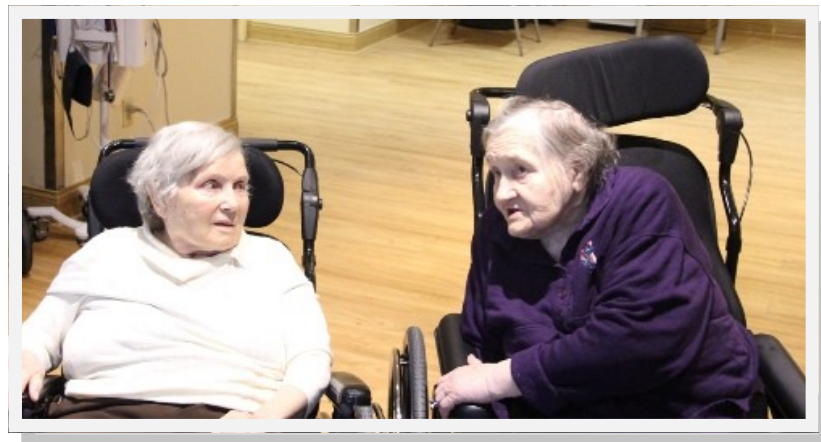


On January 8th, 2025, our volunteers Christmas party was held at Labdara. Despite the unfavorable winter weather conditions, 15 volunteers took part. We were entertained by volunteer John Fertado who played his guitar and lip harmonica. Our beloved **Douglas Peck** played the piano. Douglas is a long-time 98-year-old pianist volunteer who has been giving concerts at Labdara for 10 years, since 2015. April 26th will be his last gig with us as Douglas retires. With deep gratitude for the joy he has gifted to us for all of these years, we sincerely wish him a happy retirement!!



CONCERTS CONTINUE AT LABDARA:

On Saturday, March 1st. David and Douglas performed a concert for our residents. They were joined by our volunteer pianist Douglas Peck, his daughter Natalie and son Neil as well as our two volunteers Ona Jurėnas and Maria Dos Santos. Although the first floor was under lockdown due to a respiratory illness outbreak over twenty residents from our second and third floors attended and enjoyed the singing. Even our staff member Nerijus sang some solos: „You raise me up” and „Santa Lucia” with the help of karaoke.



Holy Easter (Konstanty's Memoirs)



We recently celebrated Christmas and did not even notice that the feast of the Resurrection of Christ - Easter is upon us. In preparing for Easter we usually attend lectures which provide us with "food" for meditation during the period of Lent that precedes Easter.

I remember that often priests from other parishes would come to our church and conduct services during Holy Week, culminating in the services of Good Friday - the day marking Christ's death.

Lent is the time period of six weeks before Easter that allow us to focus on our spiritual renewal, dedicated to contemplation of the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. As already noted, spiritual retreats and various religious gatherings are organized for this purpose. In this way, we renew our Catholic faith in anticipation of the most solemn days – from Good Friday to services on the second day of Easter. Also, one of the ways to let Christ into your heart is to have the priest hear your Easter confession and to receive the most sacred sacrament – Holy Communion.

As for the Easter traditions of my family, my parents, like most of the inhabitants of the villages of Dzūkija, solemnly celebrated this religious holiday. They adhered to the traditions inherited from their parents. One of them is to tidy up the house, garden and yard before the holidays, on Good Friday. Dad would prepare feed for the animals. He made a larger amount of "aksal". This is an animal feed prepared from a mix of crushed and chopped short hay.

Cleaning the house and yard did not allow us children to be bored. A beautifully cleaned out yard and a garden with fruit trees, the smells of Easter cooking, made it clear that Easter is here and will be celebrated very soon. Our yard also came to life with the sounds of various birds returning home from faraway lands. Using neither the G.P.S. navigation systems, nor stopping anywhere to rest, without any visas or travel tickets, they would announce in the early spring morning with their songs that they had returned and were 'back for business'.

And what wonderful Easter memories. We followed the traditions of egg-painting in various colours. The easiest natural way to colour an egg is to wrap it in yellowish onion skins, tie it up and boil it in water for a few minutes with the addition of a little vinegar. The result is an egg coloured in various hues of brown.

Before Easter breakfast, we used to play a game – we'd roll the coloured eggs down from a slanted platform or runway. The person whose egg touched the most eggs of the other players, won.

We would also tap or gently hit each other's eggs with either the blunt or the pointed end of our egg. The person holding an egg that remained whole (not smashed) after hitting everyone else's eggs, won.

Breakfast could not be started until father, who had taken our baskets laden with food to the church to be blessed by the priest, returned home. It reminded me of the time before we could sit down for our Christmas Eve dinner. We had to wait for the first star of the night to shine in the sky before sitting down to our meal. So it was before Easter breakfast – we had to wait for father's return. He was our Easter "star".

We started our Easter breakfast with a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the food on our table. Many of the breakfast dishes were laden with fat and so, after many days of fasting, sometimes after eating we had trouble with our digestion.

As noted above, on Easter morning, our father would bring two baskets of home-made food to church for a blessing. One basket was given to the poor who were waiting by the gates to the church grounds for the donation. I have to say that they were not always satisfied with the gift of food and even in those days, many wanted money instead of food.

The other basket of the blessed food was brought home and spread out for the Easter meal at our table.

Before the holidays, the interior of the church was decorated and the holy paintings on the walls were covered up. They were unveiled on Easter morning. In the courtyard of the church, a path representing Christ's suffering was prepared and the people walked along it in a procession remembering the path Christ had taken to bring us to his resurrection on Easter morning.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ after death is honoured and remembered in many ways. One beautiful example is the name of the quiet and beautiful street where I now live – it is called "Resurrection Road". I am proud to live on this street!

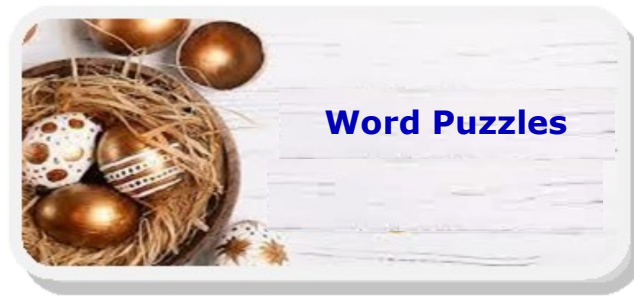
So – congratulations to all of my neighbours and readers of this newsletter. Let us celebrate the awakening nature, the approaching spring and Easter. And I wish that during this Lenten season we can renew our own personal spiritual life and following the old Lithuanian tradition, that we remember to contribute to the baskets of those in need.

As Christ commanded, *"Let us love our neighbour as ourselves."*

A very Happy Easter, dear ones!



Kostas



1. What time is it when an elephant sits on a fence?

1. Time to fix the fence.

2. What gets wet while drying?

2. A towel.

3. What can go up a chimney down, but can't go down a chimney up?

3. An umbrella.

4. What can you hold in your right hand, but never in your left hand?

4. Your left hand.

5. What can you catch, but not throw?

5. A cold.

6. What question can you never say yes to?

6. Are you asleep?

7. What has lots of eyes, but can't see?

7. A potato.

8. What can travel all around the world without leaving its corner?

8. A postage stamp.

9. What has one eye, but can't see?

9. A needle.



HOPE



Four candles burned quietly and slowly melted. It was so quiet that you could hear them talking.

The first said: "I am PEACE, unfortunately people do not know how to cherish me. I think I have no choice but to be extinguished." And the flame of this candle went out.

The second said: "I am a FAITH, unfortunately I am not needed by anyone. People don't want to know anything about me, so there's no point in me continuing to burn." As soon as she said it, a light breeze came and blew it out.

A very saddened third candle said, "I am LOVE. I don't have the strength to burn any longer. People don't appreciate me and don't understand me. They hate those who love them most—their family and loved ones." Without waiting any longer this candle went out.

Suddenly... a child entered the room and saw three extinguished candles. Frightened, he exclaimed, "What are you doing... You have to burn and give us light — I'm afraid of the darkness" and he began to cry.

Full of compassion, the fourth candle said, "Do not be afraid and do not cry. While I am burning, we can always light the other three candles: I am HOPE". The child took the candle of Hope -- and with it lit the other three.

Let hope never be extinguished in our hearts... May each of us, like that child, be a tool that with Hope ignites FAITH, PEACE, and LOVE once again!

(from the internet)

Happy Easter

