

# Cambridge seniors' residences' tuck shop a fundraising gold mine

Opinion Apr 23, 2018 by Walter Gowing Cambridge Times



Donna Besson (L to R), Jean Roy, Fern Gingrich, Mary Lee, Sadie VanKoughnet, Yvonne Frosch and Alison Haddaway, Director of Donor Relations and Fund Development at Saint Luke's Place- Walter Gowing photo

The store is open and it is operated by a pleasant, happy group of volunteers. That's the story of an in-house little shop at Saint Luke's Place in Cambridge. The tuck shop is a popular gathering spot in the sprawling complex of this long-term care senior's home and apartment complex in the Hespeler area of this city.

The sign above the opening in the wall where you can get a cup of coffee or snack lets you know that it is "operated by our auxiliary." You might ask, "Who is the auxiliary?"

It is a group of dedicated volunteers, some who have served for more than 40 years to make the lives of residents at the not-for-profit Saint Luke's Place a comfortable and friendly place to reside. The auxiliary has a membership of about 30 women who are willing to help others and make life a great time for seniors. Some of these volunteers have been serving since Saint Luke's Place was founded 41 years ago.

Sadie VanKoughnet, who has been an auxiliary member for more than 40 years, is currently president of the group. Fern Gingrich equals Sadie's record. Other members have served from five to 20 years.

Helen Einwechter will be 101-years-young in July and volunteered in the shop for many years. Helen lives in one of Saint Luke's apartments, and now her daughter and daughter-in-law help out in the shop.

The little shop contains a multitude of items that make it easy for the senior residents to acquire. Things like small gifts and greeting cards are available, as well as hearing aid batteries, bread, eggs, ice cream bars and frozen dinners.

"Sometimes even the men help us out," said Einwechter. "We take all the help we can get."

Last year, the auxiliary donated \$5,000 in support of the Saint Luke's Place Long-Term Care Redevelopment Project. They pledged a total of \$10,000 and they have already met that pledge with another \$5,000 contribution this year. This group of happy, hard-working volunteers has added another gift toward equipment and supplies for the nursing and dietary departments with another donation of \$11,380.

"These women are marvellous," said Alison Haddaway, director of donor relations and fund development.

"Besides running the tuck shop, they hold a Christmas bazaar, bake sales through the year and other fundraisers to make life the best at Saint Luke's Place."

*Walter Gowing is a lifelong Cambridge resident, author and journalist who has been to 131 countries worldwide.*