

A vision and a need

A History of
Fairview Mennonite Home
1943-1983





A vision and a need

Mennonites have always been sensitive to the needs of their elderly people. Traditionally they were cared for by their families and frequently accommodation was provided by building a "doddy house" attached to the family home. However, as urbanization began, this was not always possible.

Early Studies 1905

As early as 1905 the Mennonite Conference of Ontario appointed David Wismer, Absolom B. Snyder and Noah Stauffer to "frame a plan for establishing and carrying on an Old People's Home, such plan to be referred to the different congregations of the conference for consideration and approval." This committee studied the problems and reported to conference during the course of a number of years. In 1919 a committee of lay people — Joseph S. Shantz, Zenas Snyder, Jacob S. Snyder, Enoch Martin, Noah Shantz, Albert Wideman and John Kratz — were appointed to do further study and to report to conference. In 1925 however, the project was dropped and the committee was disbanded.

Old People's Home Investigation 1937

During the next 12 years various bequests of money and property for the purpose of an "Old People's Home" prompted the Mennonite Mission Board of Ontario to investigate the need for such a facility and in 1937 a study was once again initiated. A questionnaire was sent to various Old Peoples' Homes operating in Mennonite communities in the United States. In 1938 at the annual meeting held May 22 to 24, the decision was made to canvass Mennonite churches and other "Mennonite bodies" and on December 24, the following study committee was appointed: Angus Weber, Chairman; L.D.



In 1938 a study committee comprised of Angus Weber (top left) Leslie D. Witmer (top right) Moses Hunsberger (opposite) was appointed.

Witmer, Secretary; and Moses Hunsberger. After extensive research the results of the study were presented to every congregation in the Conference District.

A committee of seven was appointed on July 7, 1939 at a joint meeting of the Mission Board and Conference. Its purpose was to "investigate the "Old Peoples' Home" proposition, making investigation as to sites, locations, buildings available, financial contributions, and Provincial regulations." The following men were appointed: Angus Weber, Chairman; Oscar Burkholder; Leslie D. Witmer, Secretary; Aylmer Schiedel,

Milton R. Good, Seranus Martin and Ervin B. Shantz. This committee met with representatives from the Amish Mennonite, Old Order Mennonite, and Brethern in Christ Churches to discuss the possibility of a joint venture but these three groups were not interested.

The search for a suitable building began in the Kitchener area since this was the centre of a large community of Mennonites. A number of mansions and properties were considered, but there was always some reason for rejecting each one. However, one day in 1941 L.D. Witmer, who happened to be in Chester Buschert's shop in Preston, noticed a "For Sale" sign on Braeside Lodge, a stately, three-story building nestled among the trees at the corner of King and Eagle Street. After he reported his find to the committee, Abram M. Bowman and Aylmer Schiedel, both qualified

men, were appointed to inspect the building, which had once been the palatial home of Abram Erb, son of Joseph Erb and grandson of John Erb, founder of Preston. In 1919 it was converted to a spa with baths and massages for wealthy guests requiring rest cures. In 1940 it was sold and used for a short time by the Provincial Government as a Domestic Science Training School for underprivileged girls. Following this it was vacant for some time.

In 1942 a report was presented by the committee to Conference. This report stated that the reasons for the growing sentiment in favour of beginning an "Old Peoples' Home" at this time were:

1. It would provide a place where church workers could be cared for when "they could no longer participate in activities of the church."
2. People who were childless and who were able to afford to pay for the service would be able to have a home where they could be cared for.
3. An "Old People's Home" would be "a systematic Christian method of discharging the church's obligation to care for the poor."
4. The church had an obligation to the community at large. The report stated, "If a service of this kind could be extended to those who are not of our faith or to non-Christians as well, what a wonderful principle of love for others, as given by Jesus Himself, such an institution could be."

The Second World War was in progress at this time and since the committee felt that non-resistant people were seriously misunderstood they stated that providing a Christian institution to care for not only elderly Mennonites but others as well would be a "testimony to those to whom they appealed for recogni-



Ontario Mennonite Mission Board members when Braeside Home was purchased were Oscar Burkholder (top) Milton R. Good (middle) Joseph C. Fretz (lower).

tion of conscientious principles."

It was recommended that Braeside Lodge, which had been inspected by S.L. Charlton, Inspector for Houses of Refuge for the Department of Public Welfare in the Province of Ontario, be purchased. It was assumed that if "inmates" were not able to pay their own way that they would be supported by their home church, county, or municipality.



It stated that "unless the Lord directs, our efforts will be of no avail. We do feel the Lord has directed every step." The report then recommended that the time to act is now. It referred to Numbers 13:30. "Let us go up at once and possess it for we are well able to overcome it."

Purchase of Braeside 1942

In 1942 the Mission Board appointed Angus Weber and Joseph Steckly, members of the Board's finance committee, to negotiate the price with the owners. The purchase price of the property was \$12,000. but it was purchased for \$10,000. The deed was transferred on July 15, 1942.

Renovations were required so two committees were formed:

1. Buildings and Grounds Committee: Abraham Bowman, Chairman; Seranus Martin, Aylmer Schiedel, Ervin Shantz, and Abner Cressman.

2. Furnishings Committee: Edward Snyder, Chairman; Mrs. Edward Snyder, Mr. & Mrs. Enoch Martin, Clara Snyder and Ida Brubacher.

Due to war time restrictions, permits were required for the purchase of many of the materials and furnishings. Correspondence with the Department of Munitions and Supply and Wartime Prices and Trade Board was necessary to secure



Original Board Members who played a significant role were Joseph Steckly (left) Ervin Shantz (right).

permits and releases of materials. Excellent co-operation was received from S.L. Charlton, Inspector of Houses of Refuge who used his influence to assist this cause.

A license for renovations was not granted until October, 1942. The work, which included the removal of the kitchen floor and excavation for a cellar beneath, was completed by the spring of 1943.

John and Dora Cressman of Kitchener were appointed as Superintendent and Matron for the new facility. They moved into Braeside with two of their children. Rhea Shisler, Mrs. Cressman's sister, served as food supervisor.

When Braeside Home was opened on June 1, 1943, it was described by the Preston Reporter as the first of its kind in Canada and only the fourth in North America. The cheerful home-like building was a real contrast to the County House of Refuge which was a stark, dark prison-like facility. S.F. Coffman of Vineland presented the address at the dedication. Others participating in the ceremony were: Oscar Burkholder of Breslau; M.H. Roth of Baden; Joseph Steckly of Preston; C.C. Cressman of New Hamburg; C.F. Derstine of Kitchener and Jonas Snider of Waterloo.

By the time the Home was officially opened on June 1, 1943 there were five people in residence: Nancy Snyder, Mr. & Mrs. Ephraim Cassel, Ellen Hugins and Dorothy Stark. It was soon filled to capacity and more people were waiting to come in



so in 1944 a large sitting room was converted into two guest rooms. In 1945 Ervin Shantz offered to furnish labour and materials to construct two rooms on the fourth floor which had formerly been used for recreational purposes. Further renovations were made later in 1945 so that the entire fourth floor was converted into rooms. This space provided accommodation for staff members who had originally lived on the lower floors. In this way accommodation for the elderly was increased from 19 to 26.

The Board of Management, appointed by the Mission Board Executive, was: Joseph Steckly, Chairman; J.A. Cressman, Secretary; M.R. Good, Abner Cressman, Enoch Martin and Ervin Shantz. The Board was appointed annually and was responsible to the Mennonite Mission Board, the charter owners of the Home.

By 1952 the waiting list had



*Back yard of Braeside Home
John and Dora Cressman.*



Kitchen of Braeside Home Rhea Schisler (left) Viola Snyder (right).



Living room of Braeside Home.

grown to 50 providing an impetus to create more accommodations. Extensive renovations were made. This included a new roof on the entire building and the installation of dormer windows.

Pressure came from the Inspector of Houses of Refuge to provide more adequate fire protection. Because of a lack of finances this became a major problem for the Board.

It was decided to ask the Conference Executive for permission to solicit the congregations to raise approximately \$7,000.00 to carry out the recommendations and to pay back loans to the Mission Board. Unfortunately only about half the amount was raised.

Because of the growing need for more accommodation a meeting was held in April, 1952 with Mr. L.E. Ludlow, the Supervisor of Homes For The Aged of Ontario, to discuss plans for expansion. Thought was given to acquiring a separate home for the Superintendent. Another possibility suggested, was the building of an addition to Braeside Lodge. It was decided that a "further prayerful and extensive study should be made."

Braeside Home Association Organization June 1952

At the annual meeting of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario held in June 1952 the responsibility of the operation of Braeside Home was transferred from the Mennonite Mission Board to the Mennonite Conference of Ontario. This was made possible by a charter which had been granted to the Conference for the purpose of holding properties of the church.

In 1952 a "constitution was drafted" for "The Braeside Home Association." One director was to be appointed by each congregation in the Conference

District. They were to meet annually and elect a President, Vice President and Secretary as well as a six-member Board of Management, two members to be elected each year for a three year term. The first meeting of The Braeside Home Association was held at Braeside Home on April 10, 1954 with 21 directors and 2 proxies in attendance. They elected the officers called for by the constitution. Elected to the Executive of the Association were: C.C. Cressman, President; Oscar Snyder, Vice President; and J.C. Fretz, Secretary. Members of the Board of Management were: (one year) David S. Martin and Harry Kinzie, (two year) L.D. Witmer and Zenas Cressman, (three year) Joseph Steckly and Seranus Martin.

Planning For a New Building 1954

Two events occurred which influenced the Board to think in terms of constructing a new building. Firstly, in the fall of 1953 while the Preston Mennonite Church was being built, the brick layer who was building the chimney looked over the surrounding area and suggested to Eugene Langs, who had donated the land for the church, that the adjoining land would make a fine site for a Home For The Aged. Mr. Langs who had already sold his farm bought back 3 acres at 14 times the cost for which the land had been



Braeside Executive members involved in the building committee of Fairview Mennonite Home included Oscar Snyder (top) Curtis C. Cressman (middle) Enan Hunsperger (bottom).

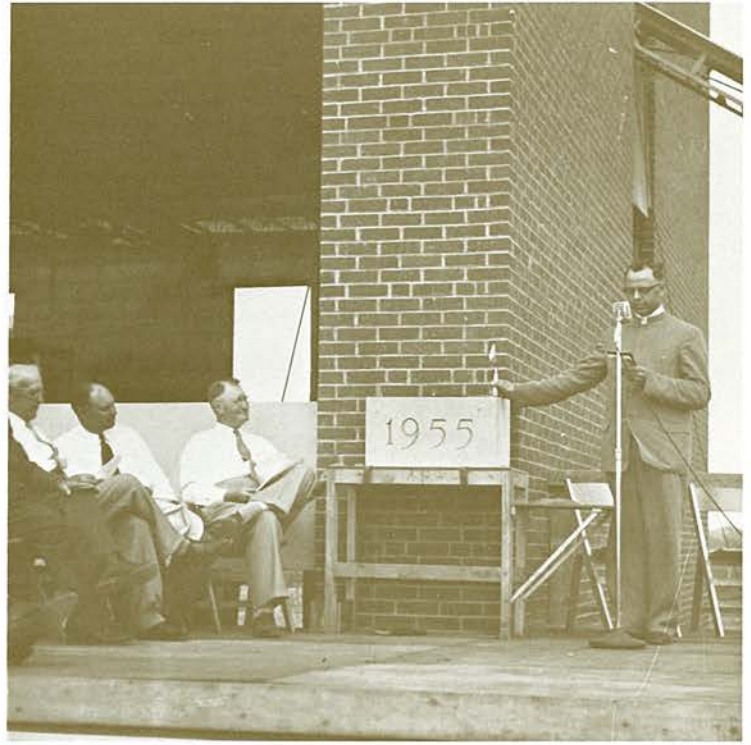
sold, and offered to donate this land to the Board for the purpose of a Home For The Aged.

Secondly, in 1954 the Provincial Government increased the grants available for the erection of New Homes For The Aged, from \$1,000.00 a bed for residents only to \$2,000.00 a bed, for not only residents but staff as well.

A meeting of the Braeside Home Association was held at the Preston Mennonite Church on May 22, 1954. A. MacDonald of the Department of Public Welfare discussed methods of procedures and initial plans for the building. The architect, W.H.E. Schmaltz was instructed to complete the plans so they could be approved by the Department. By January 1955 the architect called for tenders for the proposed 92 bed Home. A Kitchener Contractor, Harold Ball, was awarded the job of constructing the facility. Work began, and on March 19, 1955 a Ground Breaking Ceremony was held. At this event special recognition was given to Abraham Bowman and Ervin Shantz "whose untiring efforts in the renovations of the old Home and its early operation were important factors in its success". Eugene Langs, who donated the site was also recognized. Mr. Angus Weber, who had been chairman of the original "Old People's Study Committee" gave a brief history.

Others involved were: L.D. Witmer, Chairman; Mr. Harold Ball, Contractor; Rev. C.C. Cressman who gave the address; and Rev. Howard Good, Pastor of Preston Mennonite Church who offered the prayer.

Preston Town Council was represented by Reeve, James Sanderson; Deputy Reeve, Ion Snyder; and Alderman Russel McLeod. Executive members



who served with the Board on the building committee were: Oscar Snyder, Curtis Cressman, and Enan Hunsperger.

At the Corner Stone Laying Ceremony, held on July 2, 1955 a silver trowel was presented to Rev. Roy Koch, Assistant Moderator of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario who officially laid the cornerstone. Rev. Moses H. Roth delivered the address, and Oscar Snyder, Chairman, presented a copy of the deed to Thomas W. Langs in the absence of his father Eugene Langs.



Roy S. Koch presided at the Fairview Mennonite Home cornerstone laying ceremony.

Eugene G. Langs donated the Fairview Mennonite Home site

On January 26, 1956, the first resident moved from Braeside into the new Fairview Mennonite Home which had been built for a total cost of \$375,000.00 including necessary furnishings. Government grants were received for \$184,000.00. A first mortgage of \$76,000.00 was obtained from Gore Mutual Insurance Company. Trust agreements of \$40,000.00 and personal loans of \$7,000.00 were also procured.

Fairview Home Opens 1956

The official opening was held on Friday, February 10, 1956 at the Preston Mennonite Church. Welfare Minister, Louis Pierre Cecile was the principle speaker at the ceremony. Others who spoke briefly were Mayor W.C. Woods of Preston, John F. Wintermeyer, M.P.P., Raymond M. Meyers, M.P.P., L.E. Ludlow, Director of Homes For The Aged and Rev. C.C. Cressman, Chairman. The chairman introduced Mr. Harold Ball, General Contractor, who presented scissors to Mr. Joseph Steckly, chairman of the Board and the key to Mr. John Cressman, Superintendent.

The building was designed to provide accommodation for 75 residents. Residential care beds included 35 for ladies, 19 for men and three suites for married couples. It is of significance to note that these were mostly private rooms. A separate wing was built to provide semi-private nursing care for chronically ill residents. Space for 17 "live-in"



staff was provided on the lower level.

The building also included a two bedroom apartment for the superintendent and matron, an assembly room, a well-equipped kitchen, dining room, boiler room and garage. Laundry facilities were only required for the residents' personal belongings since the institutional linens were laundered by Kitchener-Waterloo Hospital.

Dedication April 29, 1956

Rev. J.B. Martin, Moderator of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, delivered the dedication sermon at the dedication held on April 29, 1956.

Others participating were: Rev. C.C. Cressman, Chairman; J.C. Hallman, Chorister; L.D. Witmer, who reflected on the history and the Lord's leading in this venture and Rev. Rufus Jutzi who offered the dedicatory prayer.



Fairview Mennonite Home was officially opened on February 10, 1956.

Rosie Cober enjoys the privacy of her room.

Cottages 1956 - 1970

When Joseph Steckly, Chairman of the Board of Management, returned from a trip to the United States he told the Board about a Home For The Aged that he had visited which had a semi-detached bungalow adjacent to the home and encouraged them to investigate this concept. Eugene Langs offered to build such a bungalow "cottage" and sell it to the Home upon completion. Initially tenants made a down payment of \$3,000.00 each to cover half the building cost and in lieu paid a minimal rental fee of \$35.00 a month. Later tenants were given the option of paying full rent or of using the down payment with minimum monthly rental plan.

The first cottage was purchased on February 23, 1956, and by 1961 five more were purchased from Mr. Langs. Two others were donated to Fairview. One was built by Mrs. Orville I. Groh

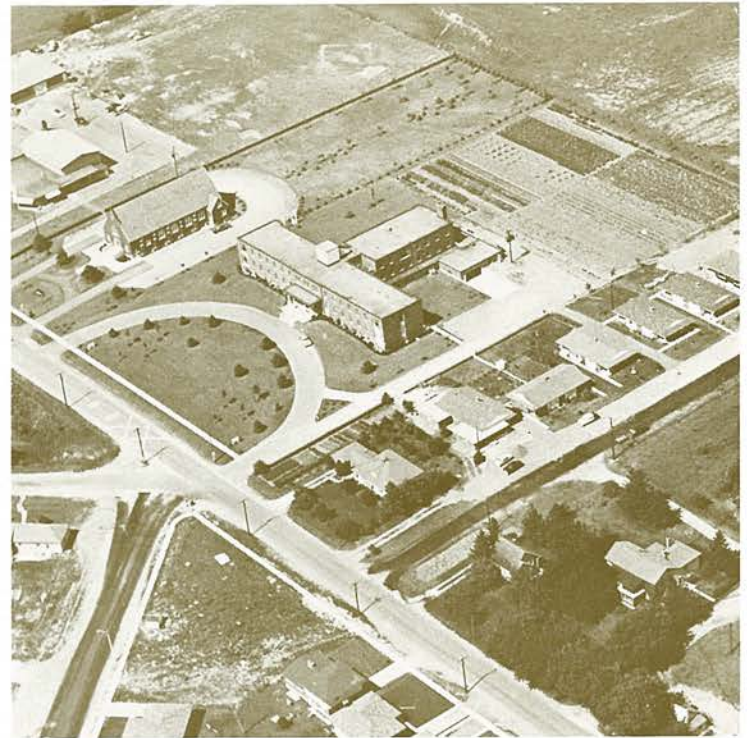


for her own use and deeded to the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, with the Home taking possession at the time of her death in November 1970. The dwelling of Eugene Langs, a duplex, also became the property of Fairview after he died in January, 1970.

There were 13 one bedroom units with a kitchen, living room and bath, plus a full basement. Three units had two bedrooms and attached garages. Cottage residents were free to participate in all activities of the Home.



Semi-detached "cottages" provide independent living accommodation (top left) Aerial view of Fairview Mennonite Home site adjacent to Preston Mennonite Church (top right) Auxiliary functions included arranging birthday parties for residents (lower).



Auxiliary Formed 1957

The Women's Missionary and Service Auxiliary of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario was asked to set up an Auxiliary to the Home. In May, 1957 Mrs. Vera Hunsberger was appointed President, and convenors were assigned to be responsible for providing an activity each Tuesday of the month. Slides, children's programs, birthday parties and social evenings were held monthly. When there was a fifth Tuesday a musical event was planned. A craft class and a special "shopping service" were also conducted on a monthly basis. During the summer months "car rides" (monthly trips to places of interest) were planned and each resident was provided with a "secret niece" from the community. This was later changed to an "adopted nieces" program.

Addition to Fairview Home 1958

Soon after Fairview Mennonite Home was opened problems were encountered which necessitated changes. It was found that it was too hazardous to operate the facility without an auxiliary heating unit, so in 1958 an enlarged boiler room was added and two boilers were installed, replacing the one previously in use. An auxiliary electric generating plant was also installed to operate during power failure.

New Management Personnel 1961

In January, 1961, David and Norma Rudy were appointed to succeed John and Dora Cressman as Superintendent and Matron, moving into the Superintendent's quarters with their six week old son. David was, at that time, the youngest Superintendent in Ontario. John Cressman was retained as Secretary until his retirement in 1964. In 1968 the name of Superintendent was changed to Administrator by the Department of Social and Family Services.

Organizational changes were made which included appointing supervisors of various departments and the title of Matron was changed to that of Director of Home Life since Norma's role had changed to that of developing program, crafts and activities.

1961 Fairview News Initiated

It was during this first year that Norma Rudy began the Fairview News, interviewing each resident and publishing his/her life story, as well as other news about people and activities in the Home. Mr. Adam MacDonald, Provincial Inspector of Homes For The Aged, took copies of this newsletter to other homes throughout the province to encourage them to do the same.

In September, 1962, the Rudys moved back into their own home in Kitchener so the Superintendent's apartment could be used as added facilities for the Home. The kitchen, dining area, and living room were retained to provide additional activity space and the two bedrooms of the apartment unit were converted to resident's accommodation.



1964

David Rudy Appointed to O.A.H.A. Executive

In 1964 David Rudy was appointed to the Executive of the Ontario Association of Homes For The Aged becoming President of that organization in 1971.

Addition to Building 1967

The expanding craft and activity program with its positive effect demonstrated a need for additional activity space. An infirmary was also required where residents from residential care could stay on a short term basis if they became ill. Recognizing these concerns, plans were made in 1967 for additional space and in June 1968 the new addition was completed. This provided a men's sitting room, games room, craft room, two infirmary rooms plus accommodation for 4 residential care beds. It was constructed for a cost of approximately \$60,000.00 and a grant

David and Norma Rudy were appointed as Superintendent and Matron in 1961.

was received for \$35,000.00 from the Province of Ontario.

Parcel of Land Purchased 1969

In 1967 an event occurred which made the future expansion of Fairview possible. The Langs Farm property, which had been sold to a developer was being quickly developed. The developer and an interested party who gave a generous donation made it possible for Fairview to acquire land for future expansion. In the spring of 1968 the Board purchased $2\frac{2}{3}$ acres adjoining the Fairview property for a cost of \$39,000.00.

Philosophy of Fairview Defined — 1971

In 1971 the Board began to examine its philosophy to see what approach should be taken in providing care to seniors. The philosophy was defined as follows:

“Our purpose is to meet the total needs — physical, mental, emotional and spiritual — of the older person, to offer a secure environment, a sense of dignity, and to help him retain his life style.”

Physical

The older person needs the opportunity to be as independent and active as possible. Independent living units need to be available if an older person can use such facilities. At the same time, the institution must be ready to provide necessary supportive or assisting services. This may be in the form of providing meal services, Housekeeping services, nursing services or as time goes on, nursing care. Living units need to be designed considering the elderly persons special physical needs.’

Mental

Our main goal is to help the individual to retire "to" something rather than "from" something and to make more of life than mere survival. This includes security, recognition, opportunity for participation and involvement, in an environment which provides opportunities for interaction with various age groups.

Spiritual

Our concern for the older person includes a ministry to his spiritual needs. He faces death as a reality. His thoughts turn often to the future life. He needs someone with whom he can counsel and in whom he has confidence. We need to make him aware of the importance of his potential contribution in a prayer ministry. We ourselves need to utilize this by sharing our concern.

Summary

We believe in a ministry *to* the aging for whose personal needs we have a special concern. We believe in a ministry *with* the aging as we seek to involve them as partners in the total program. We believe in a ministry *of* the aging in which their special gift of maturity, understanding, vision, concern and experience is recognized and utilized."

To transform the philosophy into reality was a challenge that required creative thinking and planning for it was evident that although a building is only bricks and mortar it must facilitate the implementation of the principles inherent in the philosophy.

Another consideration which influenced the type of facility constructed was the winter climate. To visit neighbours or participate in activities, cottage residents had to put on boots and coats. Frequently icy conditions made going outdoors impossible, isolating these residents.



Clayton Cressman, Board Chairman (1976) breaks ground for Fairview Apartments and Activity Centre while representatives of various organizations look on (above). Harold Shantz, Board member, fastens wooden cornerstone.

Apartment Building and Activity Centre 1970 - 1977

In 1970 the firm of Mark, Musselman, McIntyre and Combe was engaged to design a building which would allow the philosophy to be put into practice. The building was constructed under the supervision of D.K. Lansdowne, — Project Managers.

On July 22, 1976 The Ground Breaking Ceremony was held. Those participating in the program were: Clayton Cressman, Chairman of the Board of Directors; Rev. Amos Martin, Home Pastor; Rev. Vernon Leis, Assistant Moderator of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario; Percy Harvey, Acting Mayor, City of Cambridge; Don Cornish, Ministry of Community and Social Services; William H. Swales, Manager, Kitchener Office of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation; David Peters, Ontario Ministry of Housing; David Rudy, Administrator; V. Gerald Musselman, Architect representing Mark/Musselman/McIntyre/Combe; and Rev. Howard Good, Member of the Board of Directors.

Also present at this historic event were residents living at Fairview who were associated with Braeside from its inception. They were: Leslie D. Witmer and Joseph Steckly, two of the original members of the Board of Management; John Cressman, the first Administrator; and Malinda Dettwiler and Selena Hunsberger, two former residents of Braeside.



On September 18, 1977 the Cornerstone Laying Ceremony was held. Instead of a stone, a wooden plaque was "laid". On it was engraved the Fairview symbol, designed by Glenn Fretz, who described it in the following way: "First of all, the circular shape is representative of community or brotherhood, a commonality (in this case age or dependence) and a secure environment. Secondly, the three leaf shapes are indicative of a person's three basic needs — physical, mental and spiritual. Thirdly, the open leaf in the middle can symbolize a flame or the spiritual part of a person. The falling away of one leaf recognizes our mortality and the effects that age has upon our bodies, minds and souls. More importantly perhaps, it acknowledges a hope and belief that in death we experience a transition from the physical to the spiritual."

Contents placed in a box inside the cornerstone were: a copy of the Cambridge Daily Reporter — Saturday, September 17, 1977; pictures of the Ground Breaking Ceremony, July 22, 1976; old and new Fairview brochures; 1977 money — a \$1.00 bill and several coins; a copy of the Fairview News — Volume 17, No. 3, — July 1977; a copy of the Cornerstone Laying Service, the 1976 Financial Statement; the 1976 Delegates Annual Statement; a copy of the 1963 Historical Booklet, and a cassette tape of the ceremony.

Clayton Cressman, Chairman of the Board; Joe Snyder, Moderator of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario; Glenn Fretz, designer; and Rev. Howard Good participated in the ceremony.

Fairview Centre and Apartments under construction, 1977.

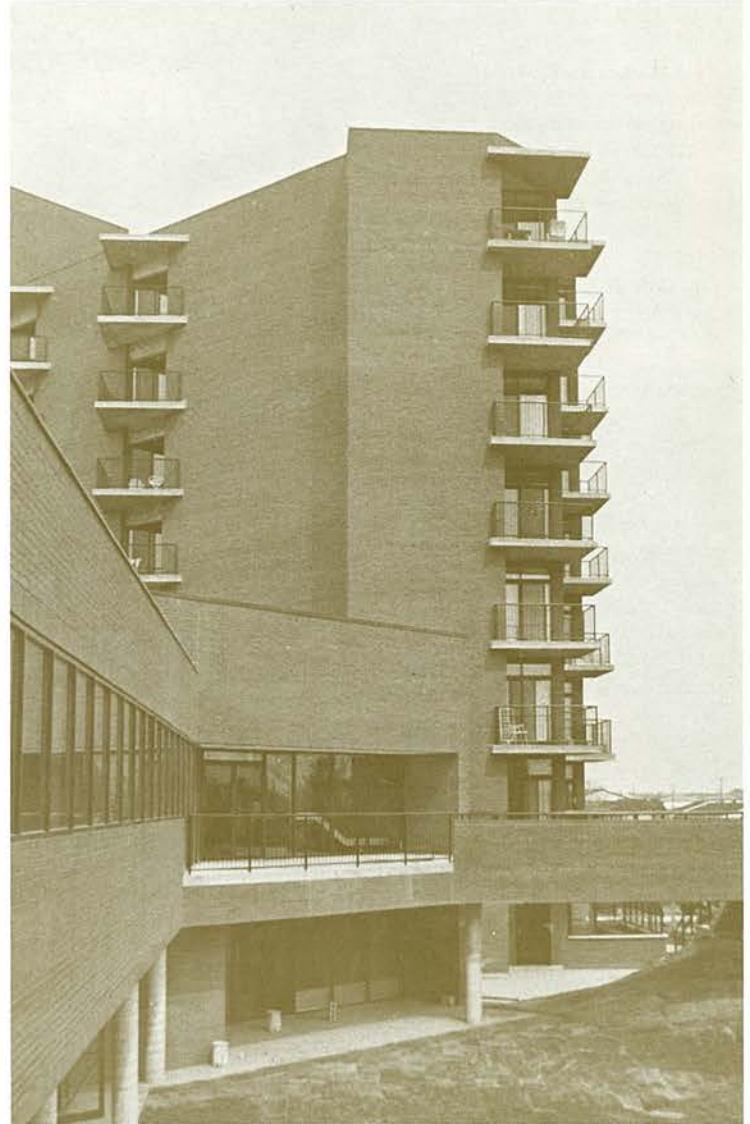


The official opening was held on May 13, 1978. Distinguished guests participating in the program were: The Honourable Richard Stanbury, Q.C. Senator; Max Saltzman, M.P. Waterloo — Cambridge; Lawrence Crawford, Director, Senior Citizens' Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services; Erwin S. Nelson, Mayor, City of Cambridge; L.A. Williams, Manager C.M.H.C., Kitchener Office; Gary Foran, Manager, South Waterloo Housing Authority; Walter Lyons, President, Ontario Association of Homes For The Aged; V. Gerald Musselman, Architect; and Harold Shantz, Chairman of the Board. Mary Vickerman, first resident of the Fairview Apartments cut the ribbon.

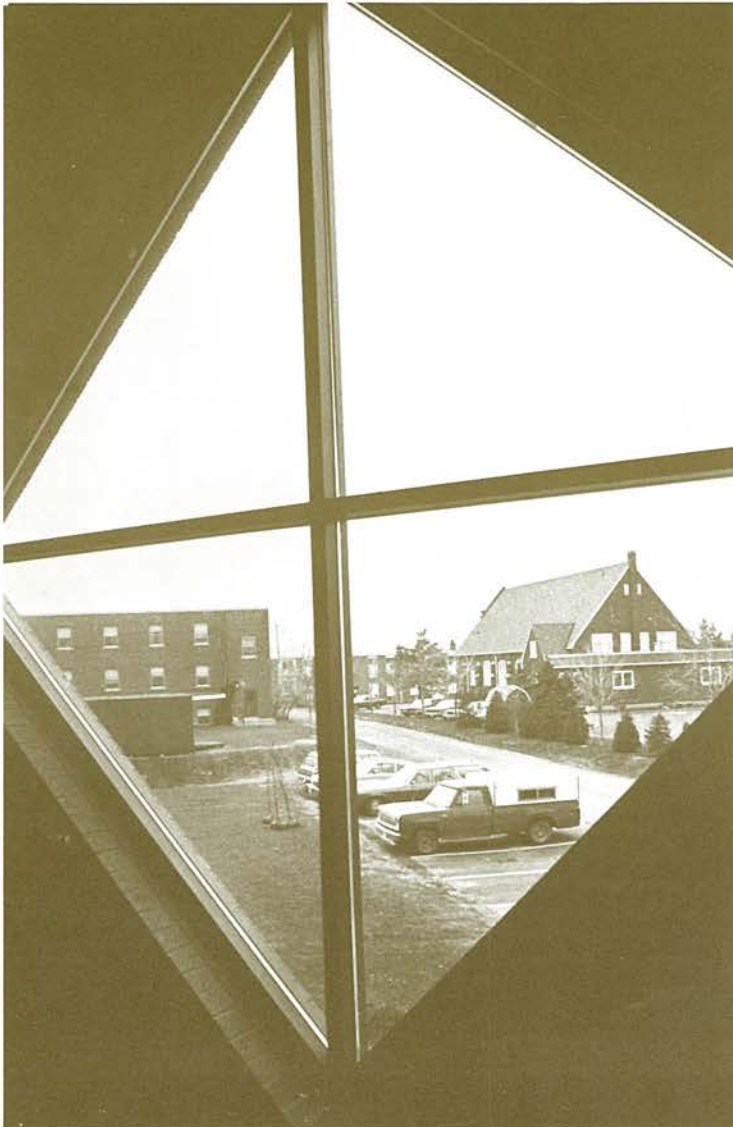
The dedication service was held the following day, on Sunday, May 14. Paul Erb of Scottsdale, Pennsylvania was the guest speaker. Greetings were brought

by Erle Byer, Chairman of the Board of Parkview Home; Rev. Vernon Zehr, Chairman of the Board of Nithview; and Joe Snyder, Moderator of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario. Selena Hunsberger and Malinda Dettwiler, former residents of Braeside and John Cressman the former administrator were recognized. Others participating were: Clayton Cressman, Past Chairman of the Board, who welcomed the guests; Abner Good, a resident; Howard Good, who conducted the dedication service; and Dr. J. Ray Houser a resident of the new facility who offered the prayer. Musical selections were provided by the Rockway School Choir, Patricia Good Johnston and Vivian Minden.

This new complex included an eight storey apartment building with 123 units and an Activity Centre equipped with a therapy



First apartment tenant, Mary Vickerman cut the ribbon officially opening the new facility. She was assisted by David & Norma Rudy (top left). Completed Apartment and Activity Centre (above).



pool, large recreation area, auditorium, craft rooms, green house, library, store, dining room and other supportive services which would enable seniors to maintain their independent life style for a longer period of time.

The apartment building, built under section 15.1 of the National Housing Act, received a 10% grant from the Federal Government and a 50 year mortgage at 8% from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Additional grants received for the Activity Centre were: City of Cambridge, \$144,000.00; The Ministry of Community and Social Services, \$216,000.00; The Ministry of Culture and Recreation, \$354,856.00; and New Horizons, \$38,324.00. Private donations amounted to approximately \$40,000.00. Through the generosity of the Good Foundation, a two-lane bowling alley was installed.

Activity Centre therapy pool (top left) View from Diamond shaped window in auditorium (left) Tenant utilizes variety store in Activity Centre (top right) Enjoying Christmas dinner in Activity Centre dining room (above).

Staff

According to L.D. Witmer, who wrote a historical booklet in 1963, when Fairview opened, in 1956 additional staff were needed. Administrative, office, domestic, nursing, janitorial and maintenance staff were required to operate the Home efficiently. There was also a pastor appointed to "care for the spiritual needs of the guests." Mr. Witmer describes the staff in the following way: "These staff members translated in word and deed the spirit and love of Christ in the everyday round of duties that came their way. They served as a token of love and kindly interest in the church's program of caring for the aged."

Because of the increase in the demand for nursing care in the Home For The Aged, the expansion of the activity program and the presence of 160 more people when the apartment building was completed, the staff has increased in number over the years. At the time Fairview opened there were about 15 staff members. By 1962 there were 30 and in 1980 this number had grown to almost 80. Other changes occurred. Dietary and housekeeping became separate departments and staffing became more specialized, particularly in the area of social services. However, the same dedication and caring spirit is evident in the staff to-day.



Volunteers 1981

The rich and varied program at Fairview is made possible because of the involvement of many volunteers. The Auxiliary continues the programs initiated in 1957 and has added an exercise program, a weekly tuck cart, bi-weekly teas, visitation services as well as an annual picnic. Other volunteers assist with the swim program, do visitation, give personal assistance, drive for appointments and shopping and assist with special projects. Many residents of Fairview also help with these programs and serve on committees responsible for worship, recreation, education, tours and transportation, green house, reception, and library. A new dimension has been added recently with the involvement of fifty grade 7 and 8 student volunteers from a neighbouring school. Volunteers indeed provide an invaluable service to the Fairview program.



Residents appreciate tuckcart service provided weekly by Auxiliary (above left) Elizabeth Kyle R.N., former Director of Nursing Services exemplifies the dedication and caring attitude of the staff (left). Friendly visitation is a service provided by Auxiliary and volunteers (above).

Fairview Preston School Apartments 1981

Hardly was the new project completed and operating, when the challenge of a unique housing project was presented to the Fairview Board. Central Public School, an architectural landmark historically significant to the Town of Preston, had been slated for demolition, and the proposal posed to the Fairview Board members was to recycle this old stone building into housing for seniors, and thereby preserve it. Fairview agreed, sensing an opportunity to meet the dual community objectives of service to seniors, and preservation of the community's heritage.

The history of the Central Public School dates back to 1852, shortly after Preston was incorporated as a village. That year, a school was built on one acre of land centrally located. The cost of the land was \$190.00; the cost of the school was \$1,580.00.

This fine brick structure actually succeeded the first school in Preston which had been built on Queen Street (now Queenston Road) in 1839. That original school served boys only; girls were educated elsewhere in the village.

The official opening of the new school on the central site took place in May 1853. A series of additions and alterations followed. In 1875 an addition



costing \$2,565.00 was built. In 1884 part of the original structure was replaced with a stone building. In 1889 the remaining brick building was replaced by a two storey \$10,000.00 stone structure which accommodated five classrooms. A fire in 1891, destroyed part of the school, but this was rebuilt in 1892. In 1908 an extensive rebuilding program was undertaken and the entire heating and ventilating systems were replaced. At the same time, the school was wired for electricity. The appraised value of the school at that date was \$45,000.00.

Throughout all these additions and alterations, the pride of the community in its school may be seen by the consistent architectural character and quality of workmanship.

Similarly, the school illustrates the sense of values and innovative attitudes of personalities associated with it. In 1846, Otto



*Photo: Waterloo Historical Society
Fifth Annual Report 1917*

Former Preston Central Public School is now a historical landmark, its history dating back to 1852 (above). Otto Klotz was an influential School Commissioner (left).

Klotz, a school commissioner, convinced his fellow ratepayers that "the school should be free to all" ... and thus was established what was believed to be the first free school, not only in the district, but in Upper Canada. The principle of free schooling was not established in the rest of the province until 1871. Nor were the gifts of Mr. Klotz limited to his crusade for free education. Records show that in June 1872, provincial awards were granted to Otto Klotz for the plan of the Central School building and its site plan. In addition, he is reported to have written a reader in German which was used so successfully at the Preston Central School that it was subsequently translated into English and became the basis for the first English reader in the province.

In 1891 a kindergarten department was opened. In 1919 free text books were provided to students. And in 1926 music was added to the school curriculum.



When the Waterloo County Board of Education publicly announced in April 1974 its decision to demolish the old stone building to make room for an extended playground, a community outcry resulted and a number of individuals and organizations rallied to preserve it from the wrecker's hammer. The story of these preservation efforts cannot be recounted here, other than to note that cooperation between public and private

Former schoolhouse now home for seniors (above).

groups led ultimately in 1979 to a model whereby the building was preserved for posterity. In this model Rhombus Facilities Ltd., a construction management firm owned by the partners of Mark/Musselman/McIntyre/Combe/Architects undertook to acquire the property and convert it to living accommodation for seniors. Fairview agreed then to purchase the complete project and operate it as an off-site facility to serve its lengthy

waiting list for apartments and to make available the extensive facilities provided by its existing Activity Centre to more intensive use. As a charitable non-profit organization, Fairview qualified for the interest reduction grant provisions of the National Housing Act, and was thereby able to serve even more effectively the seniors of the community.

Within its century-old stone walls, 49 living units of various sizes have been created, together with appropriate amenity spaces. An elevator serves all three levels. Building standards, comfort, safety, convenience and finish standards in every respect meet or exceed requirements for new construction. But in addition, the residents enjoy spacious hallways, high windows, generous ceiling heights, and a character of building and living environment which is not available in new facilities.

Both Architect, V. Gerald Musselman and Fairview Homes, received awards of merit from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation in recognition of their involvement in preserving the school.

The building was officially opened and dedicated on June 7, 1981 on the same day that the 25th Anniversary of the opening of Fairview Home was celebrated. In the Centre Auditorium where the Anniversary celebration was held Howard Gimbel, Past Chairman of the Board, welcomed the guests and chaired the service which gave recognition to people who were involved in Fairview's early history. Special recognition was given to Milton R. Good, Oscar Burkholder and Joseph C. Fretz, as well as to the Board of Directors that held office in 1956 when Fairview Home opened namely: Joseph Steckly, Leslie D. Witmer, Zenas Cressman, David Martin, Seranus Martin and Harry Kinzie. Responses were given by Milton

Good who was on the Mission Board when planning was done for Braeside; Enan Hunsperger, who had been a former secretary of Braeside Home Association, and Earl Ludlow, who was at that time the Director of Homes For The Aged in the Province of Ontario. Recognition was given to John A. Cressman, former Superintendent, and Malinda Dettwiler, a resident who moved from Braeside to Fairview. Rev. Howard Good presented the address, "The Stones Cry Out." Rev. Simon Martin, the most senior minister in the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, conducted a devotional, and Rev. Lorne Schmitt, a resident of the Fairview Apartments, led in the benediction.

Following the 25th Anniversary Celebration buses transported participants to Central Park just across from the Preston School Apartments where over one thousand people had gathered to attend the opening ceremony. Among them was Helen Hilborn Bridel, who had the courage and who had taken the initiative to stop the demolition process which had already begun, thus making the preservation of the school possible.

Aubrey Wilkinson, Chairman of the Board, was chairman for the occasion, and Rev. Alan Beaton, of Knox Presbyterian Church, brought the invocation. Lawrence Crawford, Senior Consultant, Gerontology, with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, spoke on Perspectives. Greetings

were brought by Dr. Peter Lang, M.P., Kitchener; Her Worship Claudette Millar, Mayor of Cambridge; Patricia Rosebrugh, Chairman, Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation and Charter President, Heritage Cambridge; Joanne Smart, Director, Ontario Heritage Foundation; Harold Doan, Chairman, Ontario Council, and Heritage Canada Foundation.

The dedication litany and prayer were conducted by Rev. Willis Breckbill of Preston Mennonite Church. The keys to the building were presented to David Rudy, Administrator of Fairview, by Gerry Musselman, and the ribbon was cut by John MacPhail, a former student at Preston School and one of the first residents to move into the building, along with his wife Evelyn.

Two other former students moved into the apartments. They were 84 year old Mr. Ken Zieman and Mr. Harold Snider who, along with his wife Ruth, moved into an apartment which was located in the area where his former classroom was situated. As he said, he could now sleep in school without being scolded!

Open House followed and a steady stream of people flowed through the building to view the transformation of this historic school which, although it had seen a century of service to its community, was still sound and its preservation promises a century more. Its existence is testimony to the persistence and the values of citizens of the community in which Fairview was privileged to play a part.

From this point on

The history of Fairview continues. Attempting to be sensitive to the needs of people and vision that God's leading provides will continue to be an ongoing challenge in the days and years ahead.

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