

40 years with peopleCare

While peopleCare officially began in the village of Tavistock in the year 1968, the real story began in a farmhouse near Pine Hill, Ontario years before. The barns on this farm housed turkeys, but the farmhouse was the focal point of an operation, which gave a particular and distinctive meaning to the term people care. For through the homey doors of this farmhouse flowed dozens, no hundreds of people, to partake of the warmth and generous hospitality of the Schlegels. And some of these people didn't simply "flow through," they stayed. For this farm house was not only a place where there was an incredible array of food and an overnight bed, but a haven for people, who needed love and care, and a home. And of course, this does not include the many displaced persons from Europe that the family simply sponsored after the Second World War.

There is no doubt that the service to their fellow man that came naturally to Ruth and Roy Schlegel at the farmhouse, was a fitting apprenticeship to the vocation that they would dedicate the rest of their lives to.

The nursing home saga for Ruth and Roy began in 1967. Roy, two of his brothers, and two other investors, purchased a property near Lambeth, Ontario. This



Photo above, the official sod turning for the new Don-Ro Nursing Home in Tavistock in 1973. A walking plow was used and officials were given a spot on the rope to pull the plow. About 30 sets of hands manned the rope and included, left to right, Tavistock Councillor Kenneth Lichti, Clerk Walter Schaefer, Robert Schlegel, and founder Roy Schlegel. The new home was estimated to cost \$500,000 and would have 60 beds.

property, a farm of over 150 acres, consisted, not only of the usual farm buildings, but a dormitory like structure, which, with a lot of imagination and hard work, held possibilities. The previous owners had used the premises for various social ser-

vice activities. With the aid of architect Victor Heinrichs, the building was completely renovated and made into a home for 60 nursing home residents. It was called Bethany Lodge, after the Dominican Sisters of Bethany who owned the property previously.

In July of 1967, Ruth had surgery. Because of anticipated further surgery and other considerations, they made a decision to sell their shares to the other shareholders. This happened early in 1968.

But the Schlegels were hooked. In the nursing home business, they had found another way to serve their fellowman, and get paid for it at the same time.

A familiar landmark in the village of Tavistock, was the old continuation and public school. A handsome building, built in the 1890's, it was similar in style to the schoolhouses built in that era. Of brick construction it has 2 storeys, was crowned with an impressive bell tower and was situated on a beautiful lot with many trees. In its capacity as a community school, it served both public and high school students until 1955 when a new area high school was built. It continued as a public school until new facilities were built in 1966. For 2 years, this building, with its hidden memories and sterling character, would stay empty.

Memories and character aside,

people of vision, while they appreciated the past, are able to see the exciting prospects for the future. The minute Roy set his eyes on the building, he knew what he wanted to do with it. Surely Ruth had seen that look in his eyes many times during their marriage. As a matter of fact, Ruth was heard to exclaim after Roy persuaded her to tour the facility: "Don't ever take me into that hole again." Roy, a man of considerable charm and persuasion, was successful in instilling his vision for the old school into his wife.

An offer was made and the deal to purchase the old school was completed on the July 1st weekend in 1968. Don-Ro Nursing Home was born.

The building, including land and equipment was purchased for \$13,000.00. After the proper municipal approvals were given, and with the able assistance of their friend, architect, Victor Heinrichs, renovations began.

Records indicate that the renovations cost in the neighborhood of \$56,000.00 with equipment adding another \$26,000.00. The completed building, with its own creativity and charm, was looked upon favourably by the Ministry of Health. The necessary approvals were given and the Ministry of Health issued a license for 60 beds. The date was December 31st, 1968. The first residents came late in November,

26 of them in one day. While the day was filled with excitement and confusion, the feelings of joy and accomplishment that Ruth and Roy experienced, would be etched on their minds forever.

As many of the entrepreneurs off the past, they started at the bottom. While they had hired a fine staff, they themselves participated in most areas, cooking, cleaning, resident care, maintenance and administration. As a matter of fact they even had a bedroom in the basement, which they used regularly until their home was built in 1970. Ruth recalls that because the money was scarce in those days, they did the cooking on many holidays to cut down on statutory holiday wages.

The Nursing Home Act came into affect in 1972. Because of some new regulations, an old facility, and their own philosophy of quality care, they decided to build a new building with an expanded capacity.

In 1973, the ground breaking occurred for a new 30,000 square foot building. A newspaper headline proclaimed the cost at \$500,000 a far cry from what they had experienced in 1968. The architect was again Victor Heinrichs while the builder was Scheidel Construction. The new building opened in October 1974 with 60 residents. In keeping with these new quarters, the name had also been changed to People Care Centre.

On January 31, 1975, Ruth and Roy purchased the Bonnie Doon Nursing Home on Decew Street. The purchase included the building and lot, equipment and 20 beds. The dream was almost complete. Three of the wings were now full. All that was left was the lower level. This was taken care of when the Pitt Nursing Home in Embro was purchased. The 20 new residents who came on December 31st, 1975 raised the capacity to 100 residents.

Since that time, a number of changes have taken place. Part of the upper level in the old school was renovated to include fitness facilities and showers. The bottom level was ramped for wheelchair use, and kitchen appliances and cupboards were installed along with four apartments. This building is now referred to as the Olde School Community Center. In the new building, renovations have been made to include an infirmary, dietary office and changes to the back entrance way.

(continued on next page)

peopleCare

...a place where peoplecare.

Please join us
as we celebrate
40 years of caring

1968-2008

Sunday, September 28, 2008

Open House 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

peopleCare

28 William Street, Tavistock, Ontario

The Gingerich Family

Congratulations on 40 years of caring ... from your friends at ...

Cephas, Paulette, Andy and Staff

Roth Electric Ltd.
Since  1947

TAVISTOCK, ONTARIO
519-655-2019 • Toll Free 1-877-878-7776

the Management and Staff

 **Scotiabank**™

23 Woodstock Street South, Tavistock, Ont.
Telephone: 519-655-2043



Dueck, Sauer, Jutzi & Noll
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

Thomas P. Jutzi
Lawyer

403 Albert Street, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3V2
Tel: 519-884-2620 • Fax 519-884-0254
e-mail: tomj@dsjnlaw.com
Website: www.dsjnlaw.com

Mike's
valu-mart™

Mike Staffen, Store Owner

70 Hope Street West, Tavistock, ON
Telephone: 519-655-3935

the Management and Staff

 **Home Hardware**

Zehr Home Hardware
24 Woodstock Street South, Tavistock, ON N0B 2R0
Telephone 519-655-2943

Francis OF TAVISTOCK
Furniture Store & Funeral Home
(Since 1936)
519-655-2431



Congratulations from Pete & Avis and Staff



BILL GLADDING / TAVISTOCK GAZETTE

CEO Brent Gingerich (left) with his parents, O'Derald and Mary (Schlegel) Gingerich in front of the peopleCare Tavistock home.

Open House planned for Sunday, Sept. 28

(continued from previous page)

Roy Schlegel, died on December 26, 1983. His love of service to his God and his fellow man is a legacy that has motivated and challenged many people, including his family. The last phrase of the Philosophy and Mission statement of peopleCare Tavistock is a testimony to his legacy - "It's not enough to add years to people's life, we must add life to those years."

The peopleCare today

The vision of the founders continues to this day with the leadership of the third generation, grandson Brent Gingerich and his wife, Heather.

They continue promoting and supporting caring environments with the addition of Stratford peopleCare, (a 60-bed residence); Hilltop Manor, Cambridge (a 90-bed long term care home) and with the recent groundbreaking of peopleCare - Oakcrossing in London (a 160-bed long term care home) to be opened in February of 2010.

peopleCare Stratford is located in the heart of a residential neigh-

bourhood at 198 Mornington Street, near the Stratford Festival. It is one of Stratford's grand mansions, renovated in 1980 to accommodate peopleCare. The distinctive terraced residence overlooks Mornington where it intersects the top of Waterloo Street. The extensive verandah and seasonal flowers is a favourite treat for the residents.

Founded in 1968, Hilltop Manor began as a small retirement home in a house on Elliott Street in Cambridge, Galt. The home moved to a larger space in 1972 following the purchase of Hilltop's present day location on Elliot Street. Situated at the top of the Concession Street hill and surrounded by mature trees, the setting remains ideal. Offering views of the grounds from air-conditioned dining rooms and numerous quiet patios, Hilltop Manor has become the nursing home of choice for several generations of Cambridge residents. Periodic renovations have been made. The last work was done by the original owners prior to their recent retirement.

Chairman of the peopleCare

Board and manager of the Tavistock facility, O'Derald Gingerich began with the family-owned business in the 1970's. His wife, Mary (Schlegel), Roy and Ruth's daughter, also became active in the business over the years as time and opportunity developed.

Mary and O'Derald's son, Brent, knew he was destined to be part of the business someday. He spent much time with his grand-father at the Tavistock home while growing up. Brent would help with maintenance and lawn care, working part-time during his school years. He became an activity aide, and his

father, O'Derald said it was a good sign when the residents wanted Brent to push them in their wheelchairs.

Brent graduated from Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School and attended Fanshawe College for Business Administration and Accounting. He then earned his Certified General Accountant designation at Laurier University in Waterloo in 2000. Brent took over as CEO of peopleCare in 2001.

That same year, he married Heather who is a music teacher in Cambridge. The couple has two girls, Chloe, 4, and Robyn, 2.



An artist's rendering of peopleCare's Oakcrossing in London.

peopleCare presently manages 250 beds at their three locations with another 160 beds set for the London opening. However, it is also with the help of the staff who provide an environment that is filled with love, caring and compassion that ensures the tradition continues. "Without these dedicated and caring individuals our home would only be mortar and bricks," O'Derald says.

So to help them celebrate their past, present and future, you are invited to join them on Sunday September 28th from 2-4 p.m. in the afternoon to celebrate the legacy and join them as they move into the future.

peopleCare
... A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CARE

HWC

**HERB WAGLER
CONSTRUCTION LTD.**

40 years of
working together!

CONGRATULATIONS
on your
40th
ANNIVERSARY!

**Yantzi PRO Hardware &
Earl J. Yantzi Painting**

*Tavistock
Flooring Ltd.*
by the traffic lights

10 Hope Street, West, Tavistock
WAYNE YANTZI
Ph: 519-655-2916 • Fax: 519-655-2901
CARPET - VINYL - CERAMIC
HARDWOOD - CORK
LAMINATE - CUSTOM WINDOW BLINDS
Over 40 years of service

peopleCare is an integral
part of our community.

Congratulations on your
ongoing success.

**Tavistock
Gazette**

Bill and Sheri Gladding

Thanks for your dedication ... from your associates at ...



1427 Gingerich Road, Baden ON N3A 4J3
519-634-5807

Able-One
Systems Inc.

Able-One Systems is extremely proud to be an important part of your on-going information technology solutions.

Congratulations peopleCare!

Doug Williams - Director Marketing & Consulting
www.ableone.com • 519-570-9100 x251

JOSSLIN INSURANCE
BROKERS LIMITED

Professionals serving your community since 1880

**Congratulations to PeopleCare
on providing 40 years of
Caring!**

14 Hope St. W., Tavistock, ON N0B 2R0 519.655.2377
1 • 888 • JOSSLIN (567-7546) www.josslin.com

Congratulations on 40 years!

Suite 401, 305 King St. W.
Kitchener N2G 1D2
519-576-5220

BDO BDO Dawson LLP
Chartered Accountants
and Advisors

Achieving a higher quality of care **ARJOHUNTLEIGH**

Joe Berner C.A.P.N.
Equipment Consultant
REU and JA Ontario

T: 800-865-4801 ext. 502
joe.berner@arjo.ca

www.ArjoHuntleigh.com
www.carethemoments.ca
MEMBER OF THE GETTIGE GROUP

**REIBLING
PLUMBING**

RR #1, Bright, Ont. N0J 1B0

DAYLE REIBLING
Phone 519-454-8530
Fax 519-454-8533
Pager 519-749-4918

Let Ribble
Fix Your Dribble!