



# LEISURE WORLD

## 2nd Annual Art of Living Exhibit was a Resounding Success!

Leisureworld's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Art of Living Exhibit was held last week from June 24-26 and by all accounts it was a great success. The launch of the exhibit took place on Thursday evening with the Opening Night Reception. It was a wonderful evening that was attended by approx 90 people, with the highlight of the evening being the opportunity to meet with 12 of the residents who were featured in the exhibit.

The theme of this year's event was **The Timeless Inner Beauty of Age**, and the items displayed fell into two categories. Each of the residents who were featured for their inner beauty were photographed in their homes by accomplished photographer, Kevin Viner. Rather than resorting to props to assist in telling the story of each person, Kevin chose to spend time with them individually, and in doing so, captured their wonderful personalities, which were beautifully illustrated in their portraits. The resulting photographs affirm the time-honoured statement, "A picture is worth a thousand words".

The second category consisted of artwork created by the featured residents. The profiled group consisted of several accomplished, life-long artists, whose inner beauty is revealed through their artwork. Their paintings, drawings and needlework reflected their personalities and the beauty within. Other residents discovered art as an outlet only after moving into the long-term care community.

As the Opening Night Reception began, a special atmosphere settled over the gallery with the arrival of the first residents, and continued until the departure of the final guest. Dorothy Bennett from Leisureworld Mississauga was the first to arrive. Her program manager, Mariam Mehreban, likened her entering a room to that of a ray of sunshine. Her beautiful smile, along with her twinkling eyes, certainly did remind one of sunshine.

Maria Martin from Leisureworld Altamont was accompanied by her good friend Lucille from the home along with Altamont staff – all people whom she considers to be family. She spotted her photograph immediately upon entering the gallery and was overcome with the attention that she was receiving. One reason Maria was selected to be featured was because of her uncompromising determination to create for herself a future of good health following a stroke. Her recovery to date has been remarkable.

Other guests began arriving such as Julius Somlyai from Leisureworld Norfinch who was featured for his decision to focus on the positive aspects of life and to do as much good as possible, in spite of a life filled with more than its fair share of hardships. He was perhaps the best dressed guest in attendance, looking every bit the gentleman in an elegant dark suit, crisp white shirt and dark red tie.

From Leisureworld Etobicoke, Claudia Johnson's smile was as radiant as the bright fuchsia of her dress as she celebrated the evening with her entourage of seven family members, friends and staff. Sally Sluman from Leisureworld Muskoka enjoyed the evening with her care-free, happy approach to life, thanks to the determination of her son and daughter-in-law who, between the two of them, took time off from work and made several trips between Muskoka and their home in Newmarket to ensure Sally could attend.

Midland Gardens independent senior living resident, Anne Gross, was accompanied by her daughter and son-in-law. The gentle, peaceful spirit that characterizes her paintings was equally evident in this artist throughout the evening. Iren Fodor from Leisureworld St. George was escorted to the exhibit by her husband, Vehegeze. The two of them sat near her portrait, watching the evening unfold, and when approached by guests wishing to congratulate her, Iren shared her beautiful ear-to-ear grin and philosophy that one must participate as actively as possible in one's life.

Aboriginal artist, David Vickers from Scarborough, arrived with a favourite volunteer. He appeared to be in his element as he cheerily chatted with well-wishers. Marion Carter from Vaughan made an appearance with her daughter and grandson. She was sporting a pair of her one-of-a-kind embellished shoes (shoes being her favourite medium for expressing her artistic talent). Kathleen Fardoe and Winnifred Smith, featured residents from Lawrence, arrived together with staff. Both women, known for their helpful spirits and generous nature, were beautifully dressed for the evening. Kathleen wore a floral turquoise dress with a strand of pearls, and Winnifred's snow-white hair was beautifully coiffed. A few minutes later Donna Marrin and Alexandra Sacks arrived from Richmond Hill, each along with family and staff. Alexandra and her tireless efforts as president of the residents' council was recently recognized for her contributions as the home's garden was re-named the Alexandra Sacks Garden. Donna shared with us later in the evening that if her needle work and painting lighten people's spirits, she is happy to share her creations with them.

The final resident to make an appearance was Maria Marcelin from O'Connor Court. She was accompanied by her granddaughter. While she may be a long-term care resident, Maria spent the evening on her feet (no chair needed thank you very much), working the floor with as much ease and enthusiasm as the younger guests.

To summarize, the company was inspirational, the food delicious, the drinks nourishing, the speech given by chief operating officer, Paul Rushforth, was heartfelt, and the exhibit was equal parts beautiful and uplifting,

More residents, including several featured in the exhibit, visited the exhibit on Friday June 25 and Saturday June 26. Groups of residents from Cheltenham, Ellesmere and Norfinch attended the exhibit on Friday, including featured residents Mary Long and Anthony Fitzgerald. On Saturday, Anna Galan from Leisureworld Brantford, together with family and friends made their way to Toronto to enjoy the exhibition.

It was a great pleasure to highlight 27 wonderful people this year. We thank them for sharing their positive outlook on life, their creative gifts, and their inner beauty with us. They are all truly Inspirational!