

We are thrilled to connect with our Birches community at this time, to share a glimpse into our work during the 2021-2022 year. The world will recognize this year as the year that the COVID-19 pandemic continued to surprise us, keep us on our toes, and challenge us. Here at The Birches, it has been a challenging and rewarding year, heavily influenced by the pandemic, but also by our desire to continue to do all we can to offer comfort, care and compassion to those we serve.

Offering care to those in long term care spaces this year has presented unique challenges, and our team has stepped up in countless ways to navigate challenges with calm, competency, and determination. When vaccination requirements were announced, staff stepped up to ensure they were in compliance on time to ensure they could continue offering the excellent care our residents deserve. Thanks to our staff, we are thrilled to report that, to-date, no Birches residents have tested positive for COVID-19. It has been a tough journey and we are so proud of their resilience.

We continue to advocate for needed improvements in our sector, through the Joint Advocacy Committee of the Birches and Ocean View Boards of Directors; our membership in various associations; as a team; and as individuals. This year, members of our team participated in a lawn signage campaign to raise awareness about key LTC issues. Successes of advocacy efforts from the entire sector this year included the creation of a Ministerial portfolio for Seniors and Long Term Care, and a commitment to increase wages for CCAs in long term care. Together, our voices continue to create change!

In the background during all of this, our leadership team has also been hard at work moving forward the project that will result in a new facility for The Birches. We know our community is truly invested in this development, so we are thrilled to share an update on the progress and future of the project in this report.

Both challenges and opportunities are inevitable in our long term care world, as in the world at large. We will continue to rise to both with strong values, a dedicated community of folks who believe in our work, and a willingness to embrace change. We thank you for being a member of our Birches community, and invite you to join us in celebrating the inspirational things our team has accomplished throughout this year!



Rick Anderson,
Board Chair



Erin Beaton,
Administrator



Living and Working at The Birches

Camryn has worked at the Birches for almost five years. What started as a job at a place she had fond childhood memories of in her local community has totally changed her outlook on her future and career!

"I started as a housekeeper," says Camryn, "And I really enjoyed it because there was a lot of one-on-one with the residents. I didn't realize I would enjoy that until I started working here!"

With education in a different field, Camryn never imagined herself working in long term care, but her experiences here have inspired her!

"I hope to work here for a long time," she says, "I have a newfound love for helping care for our seniors. Whether it's helping communicate with their families or helping residents one-on-one."

Camryn continues to support our work in a variety of roles. You can read a bit about what she has been doing at The Birches during the pandemic on the next page of this report!

"I like that we're contributing to our community," says Camryn, "I think we all just feel good at the end of the day when we leave here, no matter what department we're working in. Every job is important."

Camryn, Visitation Facilitator



Gerald & Clifford, residents

Brothers **Clifford and Gerald** have lived together at The Birches for more than a year, but many of their early years were spent in a very different atmosphere — on Sable Island!

"Life was wonderful there," says Gerald. "Beautiful," says Clifford. Gerald jokes that as young boys they had great transportation around the island — broomstick horses! But as they grew up, they got their own real ponies!

At times, there were as few as 15 folks living on the island.

The family moved off of Sable Island for a time but moved back during the war, and Clifford and Gerald were just old enough then to help out, especially on days when supplies would arrive by boat.

"I guess that's why we never stopped working," says Gerald. Both men had long careers on the water, including with the Coast Guard. These days, they are enjoying the ease of living together in the same room, and life at The Birches in general.

"The staff I would say are very good," says Gerald, "They go out of our way for us."

Resilience in a Global Pandemic

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to challenge us this year, our team has worked hard to live infection prevention and control practices each and every day, while ensuring our residents still have reasons to smile!



Offering care to those in long term care spaces this year has presented unique challenges, and our team has stepped up in countless ways to navigate challenges with calm, competency, and determination. They have gone above and beyond to provide residents with extra social and emotional support when visitation has been limited. When vaccination requirements were announced, staff stepped up to ensure they were in compliance on time to ensure they could continue offering excellent care to our residents. And we are thrilled to report that, to-date, no Birches residents have tested positive for COVID-19. It has been a tough journey and we are so proud of their resilience.

During the pandemic, folks like Birches staff Camryn have stepped into new roles and new ways of working to help with what was needed! Camryn has helped with visitation and with special infection-prevention related housekeeping duties. She is happy to say she has learned a lot along the way! Before the pandemic, Camryn couldn't imagine being in a role that would require her to stay calm while being the hub of information and the one to enforce rules!

"I think I have grown a lot more confident," she says, "Before the pandemic I could never imagine doing what I'm doing now!"

We are so proud of our team for stepping up, stepping out of their comfort zone, and living our values throughout the pandemic! Our team is one in a million and we hope they understand how important and valued their work is to our management team, our Board, our residents and their families, AND our community!

An even better place to live and work - thanks to the
Twin Oaks / The Birches Health Care Charitable Foundation

This year, thanks to the continued generous support of the *Twin Oaks/The Birches Health Care Charitable Foundation*, we have continued to make improvements to life at The Birches, including upgrading our Board Room (*pictured right*) to offer a comfortable space for families, residents and staff to come together for all kinds of important and meaningful conversations!



The New Birches Project

As you read in last year's report, in 2021 the Government of Nova Scotia announced that our facility would be replaced. Since that time, our team has been hard at work laying the groundwork for that project!

"It sounds good," says Birches resident Gerald, "Because this place here is getting old."

"As a Board of Directors, we are thrilled that the project to build this new facility is moving forward at an impressive pace. Our seniors in long term care are a priority, and deserve the safest space to live that we can provide," says Rick, Chair of our Board of Directors, "We are grateful for a strong team of staff and industry experts who are supporting the project, and we look forward to providing future updates for the community as things unfold."

What are some project highlights so far?:

- The new Birches Nursing Home facility will be a 48 bed home, which means a welcome increase of 6 more nursing home beds on the Eastern Shore!

- The team has been thrilled to select, through RFP process, highly skilled experts to support the project including a Project Manager, Site Selection Consultant, and Architect / Prime Consultant. These folks will help us ensure that the project continues to move forward swiftly, that the project follows the proper processes to ensure success, and that the new building incorporates current best practice in long term care facility design!

- The next phase of the project includes a Site Selection Process. Possible sites will be considered based on a number of key factors. These factors include those required through the funding for the project, and those based on making sure the new facility can best support the local community, recruit the right staff mix, and offer excellent quality care!

- As we move towards the design phase, there will be lots of chances for our stakeholders - including staff, residents and families - to get engaged and help make sure the new Birches looks and feels like home for those who live and work there!

"Infrastructure renewal is one of the key focuses of the strategic plan we developed in consultation with our community in 2018" says Dion, President & CEO, "The next few years are certainly going to be exciting as we work towards this exciting accomplishment that the community has been looking forward to for so long!"



"The new building is going to be extremely exciting," says Birches staff Camryn, "The Birches definitely needs some love. I'm really excited for the building and I know residents are too!"