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# Community Page

## Life at Martindale Gardens

# Residents reflect on first year at seniors' facility

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**  
*The Champion*

For the more than 70 residents who call Martindale Gardens home, the past year has involved many changes — some pleasant, some not — as they've adjusted to living in a retirement home.

For many of the men and women living there, the change in lifestyle from 13 months ago to now couldn't be more different.

In most cases, the past year has involved selling their homes and many of their possessions to move into the Martin Street retirement home, and then adapting. Many would agree it's been a bittersweet experience, freeing and difficult at once.

With this month marking the one-year anniversary of Martindale Gardens Retirement Residence, six of the first residents to move in gathered in the library Friday morning to share some of the joys and difficulties of the past 12 months.

Each of their stories is unique, and yet they hold many similarities.

Three years ago, Jeannette Brown found herself living alone in her Trafalgar Road home when her husband passed away. She felt lonely, she said, and the upkeep of the house was too much. So, one cold, clear day last March, she moved into Martindale Gardens.

Although Jim and Jessie Schofield still have each other, the couple said they also found their Bell Street home too difficult to maintain, and decided to move to Martindale Gardens — not an easy decision to make, they said, since they'd lived at their previous home for almost 50 years.

"It was a big adjustment and it wasn't always easy," Ms Schofield said of the first year. "I can't tell you the number of times I cried, 'I want to go home.'"

Ms Schofield — who taught at J.M. Denyes Public School for 28 years — said as spring approaches, she can't help but think of her garden on Bell Street and how this'll be the first year she won't be tinkering around in it.

Despite the raw emotions, the Schofields agree Martindale is a wonderful place to be. The first year "went like that," Mr. Schofield said, snapping his fingers.

There are many activities and programs from which to choose at the retirement and assisted living home, and Mr. Schofield said most of the residents lead very active lives.

"Most people here are busy. They're not sitting around here vegetating."

Euchre and bingo seem to the ladies' favourite activities, he said, and he goes to play pool while his wife is occupied. The day before, Mr.



**Martindale Gardens' first residents (from left) Noreen Purdy, Carroll Baetz, Ron and Kathleen Wilkins, Bill McTrach, Murray Tasker, Jeannette Brown and Jessie and Jim Schofield gather in the sitting room for the facility's first anniversary.**

Photo by **GRAHAM PAINE**

Schofield said, there'd been an opera singer performing.

Before the pair arrived, Ms Schofield said she struggled with health issues including cancer and kidney problems. Since she moved to Martindale, she said she's been much better — and she isn't the only one to feel the comfortable home has contributed to her health.

Mr. Schofield said he's seen numerous residents arrive downcast and lifeless, particularly after losing a spouse. Then, after a time, they begin to perk up and are soon living vibrantly.

Ron and Kathleen Wilkins are another of the 'original' couples who call Martindale Gardens home, after living in Scarborough for decades. Simply living in an apartment-style building was quite a change for them, Mr. Wilkins said.

"I lived in a house in Scarborough for 38 years. I've never lived in an apartment building. It took some getting used to," he said.

But adjust he did, and Mr. Wilkins and his wife said they truly appreciate the friendships they've made and the helpful nature of the staff.

Something else that requires getting used to is being around other people so much when many residents are used to living alone or with one other person.

Resident Bill McTrach said: "When you move here, you inherit everyone's problems."

However, he explained that has an up side since it means the residents are there for each other.

"We comfort one another," Ms Brown added.

Mr. Schofield said he's heard some inaccurate descriptions around town of what Martindale Gardens is, and he wants to set the record straight about what a great place it is.

"I don't think the town realizes how unique this is," he said.

The residents haven't been the only ones dealing with change. General Manager Marlene Williams said Martindale has filled up very quickly, requiring a steady stream of new staff,

programs and even adjustments to the building itself.

Martindale Gardens is now 90 per cent occupied. As a result of a higher-than-anticipated desire for the apartment-style suites, some of the smaller rooms are being enlarged and will be available in the spring.

Ms Williams agreed the majority of residents undergo quite a transformation in their first few months at Martindale. "When people think about retirement living, they're concerned about the adjustments. But it isn't long (before) they say they should've come sooner."

Whether talking with staff or residents, one man's name repeatedly pops up: Karl Reichert, the man behind Martindale Gardens. Everyone agrees it was his vision and persistence that led to its creation. Ever humble, Mr. Reichert will say whenever he gets the chance that he was simply obeying God.

"He worked really hard to get this place (built)," Mr. Schofield said, adding, "He's an extremely devoted man. I don't know what we'd do without Karl Reichert."

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**Programming Schedule — Tuesday, March 8 - Monday, March 14, 2005**

Tuesday, March 8	Wednesday, March 9	Thursday, March 10	Friday, March 11	Saturday, March 12	Sunday, March 13	Monday, March 14
5:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	3:30pm - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	3:30pm - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	3:30pm - 4:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	8:00am - 4:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	10:30am TVCogeco Sports	1:00pm - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA
6:00pm Osler Health Connection	6:00pm Simply Halton	6:00pm Simply Halton	5:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	4:00pm TVCogeco Sports	1:30pm - 5:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	6:00pm Living Healthy: Adult Asthma
8:30pm Optimist TV Bingo	6:30pm Plugged In! EXTRA	6:30pm Osler Health Connection	6:00pm - 7:30pm Plugged In! EXTRA	7:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	5:00pm Living Healthy: Adult Asthma	7:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA
7:30pm Simply Halton	7:30pm Swap Talk (Live)	7:00pm Living Healthy	7:30pm TVCogeco Sports		6:00pm Osler Health Connection	8:00pm SportsZONE Live
8:00pm Halton Hills Council	8:30pm Auto Experts (Live)	8:00pm Halton Region Council	10:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA		6:30pm Plugged In! EXTRA	9:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA
10:30pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	9:00pm Milton Council	9:30pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA			7:30pm Simply Halton	
	11:30pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA				8:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	

TVCogeco Sports: AHL Hockey - Chicago vs. Hamilton