

Carp Commons: A large family where everyone cares

Lee Wainwright skips ahead to correct a potted plant tipped over by the wind. The retired volunteer fire chief spruces up a few flowers while his wife, Louise, shuffles across a footbridge leading to a large gazebo behind Carp Commons Retirement Village.

“It’s so pretty here,” she says softly. “It’s so nice, daytime or evening.”

The Constance Bay couple considered a move to Carp Commons when Lee had a major health scare. That passed, but now that Louise needs memory care - a service the retirement facility specializes in - they are convinced the move to downsize was a good one.

“We love it here,” said Lee, a member of the garden club. “The people who work here are dedicated.”

It doesn’t hurt that among the people who work there are two granddaughters, one of whom is a registered practical nurse (RPN). He laughingly insists they don’t get special treatment; their girls are kept busy with those in need.

Well-educated, caring professionals are key to the success of Carp Commons. However, residents are also quick to help one another if they spot a struggle. Faye Steele, considered the first resident on opening day five years ago, is a prime example. The first half of her life was spent teaching kindergarten, the latter half at Carp Commons helping others live independently.

“You become very aware of people who are less

fortunate. It makes me appreciate what I have,” she said. “The atmosphere here is like a big happy family.”

She jokingly says staff must undergo testing to prove “...they love old people.”

Lee agrees, saying even the dining-room servers quickly learn your likes, dislikes and diet restrictions.

“Everybody helps out everybody else,” he said. And just like big happy families, they feast. Lee goes into great detail on meals available, from continental breakfast to lunch - with soup, a main and dessert - to dinner. He fondly recalls a Father’s Day steak, a lobster dinner, umpteen fish options - “if you like shrimp, they have a lot of shrimp!” - and birthday cake complete with balloons on a resident’s special day.

“They’ve figured out how to put on a good roast beef, too, with horseradish,” he said. “The food is good here!”

Louise, smiling at her husband, appears just as care-free. Which means so much when you lose trust in areas of health you once took for



granted. Thankfully, the proud mother of two busy firefighters in Ottawa is never alone. At the touch of a button, the monitor around her neck or another in their washroom will bring on-site health care providers within minutes. Doctors pay weekly visits to the building. Guest speakers sometimes include experts in various health and caregiver spheres.

Health and safety were important factors for Lee and Louise when deciding on Carp Commons. With his mind at ease over that issue, Lee is quick to turn to another top reason.

“We know so many people here,” he said. “We even have friends from 50 years ago moving in.”

The family continues to grow at Carp Commons.



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