

Bird Tales Committee Report to the 2020 GN AGM

The Bird Tales program was very active in 2019. Our projects included:

- The development of two large 36" x 36" x 18" Fairy Gardens that contain a variety of succulent plants, ornaments and lights. The ornaments include various animals that are found in the Medicine Hat area. The Medicine Hat College built and donated portable custom stands for both units. The residents were involved in the design of the gardens and showed interest in the various animals that they remembered from their past. Many of the residents are from rural areas and are therefore familiar with the wildlife. The gardens were initially developed in May for the Summer season and were updated in October with Thanksgiving and Halloween scenes and in December for Winter and Christmas displays.
- Sunnyview has a very nice courtyard and we supplied feeders, including window feeders for some residents, seeds and a bird bath. We maintained these during the summer and fall. The feeders and bird bath attracted a wide variety of birds and residents could watch them from their room or in key positions in the courtyard where they could sit quietly as the birds flew and fed close by. All of this was very special for bird-loving residents.
- Since the residents like to do crafts, we did different activity sessions including painting bird houses, ceramic birds and paper butterflies all based on pictures of local native species. The residents also made pine cones with peanut butter and seeds to be hung as suet in trees.
- We took some residents to visit the Windmill Garden Center Butterfly House. After the tour, they enjoyed the variety of ice cream flavours that Windmill offers.

The above work was made possible due to funding from GN and the Medicine Hat Realtors Charitable Foundation and the donation of carpentry work by Andy Cullen from the Department of Carpentry at the Medicine Hat College. We had excellent support from the South Country Village Sunnyside/Sunnyview/Havenview recreation staff and were fortunate to have two great volunteers, Eventhia Moen and Colleen Pennington. Eventhia's artistic skills and creativity along with Colleen's extensive Fairy Garden expertise were extremely useful for these projects. Sadly, all three of our team's loved ones at South Country Village passed away in early 2020. Nevertheless, it is our desire to continue this project, hopefully with additional volunteers.

Based on our experience with Bird Tales, we have found that we need to be continually creative and think outside the box to keep residents with dementia interested. Every resident has different needs, interests and attention spans based on their background and level of dementia. For some, just a brief smile when looking at a bird at a feeder is an event to celebrate and pursue further.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Armstrong and Paul Thibault, Committee Chairpersons