

September 2022

A Note from Pat Morden – Interim CEO, Shalom Village

Many of you would have noticed the Mezuzahs on our doors at Shalom. For some of you their meaning may not be known. Within them are a tiny scroll with words from Deuteronomy, the same words are in the Bible and the Torah. These mezuzahs are meant to be a reminder to each of us, to live our life on purpose, strongly connected to values with loving kindness. The Torah wisely suggests placing the mezuzah on doorposts, to talk about its message regularly, to teach it to our children, to live it. This well-honed practice is one we can return to, to recover, when we as humans, from time to time, lose our way.

Not surprisingly, given the enduring nature of this idea, organizations who hold fiercely to their shared purpose, standards, and values with respect and compassion are found to be more successful. Additionally, when they struggle, they recover faster. Our good fortune at Shalom Village is that on each doorpost we have the reminder of the mezuzah. In addition to bringing clarity to our shared purpose of “honouring our fathers and our mothers” we have made our steps and values clear in our A.T.H.O.M.E mission.

These long-ago crafted words, “Acknowledge, Together, Home, Organization, Memories, Enablement” were created with care to represent how we can be: on purpose, with loving kindness, creating a home trusted by our community, closer to care, but not further from family, values or the uniqueness of each and every life.

Historically, Shalom Village embodied these words, and was celebrated as a model for innovative, effective, and compassionate approaches to living, for those who called us home. These practices are deeply ingrained in our staff, and their impact is still felt today. Guided by these values, our staff, since the beginning of the pandemic, have consistently walked through the fires of COVID and change, putting their lives on the line for our fathers and mothers; loving them, healing them, and when they cannot do that, they hold them with compassionate hands.

The significant impact and strains of COVID have shown us there is a need for Shalom Village to rebuild our capacity to realize and live these A.T.H.O.M.E, values and the board of directors is committed to do so.

Through thoughtful reflection and feedback from both our Shalom and the broader community, the board of directors has asked me to work with our staff, our families, community partners, and other external expertise to undertake significant, informed steps to bring forward ideas and actions that are carefully designed to renew and strengthen our A.T. H.O.M.E mission and values.

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Improvement takes courage and support. It takes faith and love. It takes patience and time.

We are, as the mezuzah encourages, “Talking about them when we sit at home and when we walk along the road, when we lie down and when we get up.” This is where we must begin and what the team at Shalom Village has already begun implementing. Like you, everyone at Shalom Village, is excited and committed to stepping more resolutely into practices that honour our fathers and our mothers.

Facing the known and unknown with courage, Shalom Village is taking ownership of things needing to change. Together, we walk through the hard grounds of renewing and trusting our A.T.H.O.M.E. values. The future is reflected in the comments spoken to me recently by a daughter, mourning the death of her dad from COVID, who stepped forward to help us be better. She shared with me, that although sad, she also appreciates the staff for changing in the last year of his life, her dad’s lived experience. When he moved to Shalom, he moved from wanting to die, to looking forward to each day. To me this said: a lot to learn, and so much to be proud of. **Loving kindness and leadership that embraces the A.T.H.O.M.E standards is the way forward.**

Many of you through volunteering, words and generous deeds are sustaining, encouraging and nudging forward your committed Shalom Village team. **We need you. We thank you.**

Together, we embark on numerous initiatives that will help Shalom Village move forward, in positive and meaningful ways. Leadership and teams are reengaging with our A.T.H.O.M.E. vision and values in all they do. Walls and spaces are being renewed with paint, décor and purpose. A focused plan is evolving to ensure that our practices align with directives from our regulating bodies and the Fixing Long Term Care Act. We have leaders who are knowledgeable and engaged and are recruiting more people with the skills, knowledge and values to fulfill our mandate using effective, safe, and quality practices.

It is a privilege to be back at Shalom Village supporting the team during this time of renewal. Together, we will fiercely embrace A.T.H.O.M.E., and will make Shalom’s possibilities, possible. I look forward to reconnecting with old friends and to meeting new ones who can help encourage, support and celebrate all that happens within and without our doorposts. We are greeting the sweetness of the new year with hard work, clarity, and excitement. ~ Pat Morden

***Pat Morden was a leader at Shalom Village from 1990-2011, serving as CEO from 1996. Recently Pat re-joined Shalom Village as Interim CEO. Since her move to a more rural setting, Pat’s business, Growing Leadership has coached both individuals and organizations to dig deep and find new and more effective ways to flourish.*

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