

PIONEER RIDGE LONG TERM CARE AND SENIOR SERVICES NEWSLETTER

October, November, December 2025
January, February, March 2026

FROM THE DESK OF THE ADMINISTRATOR



Dear Friends and Families,

As we embrace Winter 2026 in Thunder Bay, with its crisp air and snowy landscapes, we are reminded of the warmth and community that make Pioneer Ridge so special. While the days are shorter, our hearts are full as we celebrate our accomplishments and look forward to the promise of spring, when the world begins to bloom once again.

The staff and leadership team have been very busy this past year and should be applauded for all their hard work, commitment, and dedication, to the residents of Pioneer Ridge.

Pioneering the Butterfly Approach in Northwestern Ontario

We're so proud to announce that Pioneer Ridge is the first home in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario to achieve accreditation from Meaningful Care Matters for our Butterfly Approach to care on Monarch Manor.

Monarch Manor has transformed from a traditional medical, task-oriented model to an emotion-based model of care – The Butterfly Approach. Residents will now experience a more personalized, meaningful, and emotionally supportive environment with this approach to care.

Our renovations are nearing completion on Monarch Manor. When you visit Monarch Manor, you can expect to see redesigned living spaces for comfort and independence; thoughtfully updated communal areas to encourage social engagement; and an environment tailored to promote emotional well-being and autonomy.

Following Monarch Manor's success, plans are underway to expand the Butterfly Approach to care and staff training to Home Area 4, with a focus on personalized resident experiences to enhance their daily life.

Staff Development and Community Engagement

We have continued our Pioneer Talks, including a session on preventing falls and least restraints, promoting safe and best-practice care. Look out for future offerings of Pioneer Talks.

Recruitment and Hiring Efforts

Throughout the year Pioneer Ridge has hosted hiring events and a virtual info session for anyone interested in a rewarding career at our home. Our nursing team continues their efforts to attract and retain top talent to support quality care.

New Leadership in Clinical Care

We are delighted to welcome our new Clinical Manager, Geetika Handa, whose expertise and dedication will strengthen our resident-centered care initiatives. Additionally, we are actively recruiting an additional Clinical Manager to further support our staff and ensure the highest standard of care across our home.

Helping Hands Auxiliary

We want to recognize and share our sincere gratitude to Helping Hands Auxiliary for their creative fundraising efforts through bake sales and bazaars. Funds raised directly support resident life enrichment programs.

A Year in Review: Key Accomplishments

UKG PRO Workforce – Improved automated employee scheduling and payroll program.

PointClickCare Launch – Our new electronic health record system improves clinical documentation, care planning, and resident safety.

RNAO Clinical Pathways & Admission Protocols Launch – Following Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario guidelines, these pathways ensure evidence-based, best-practice care, and our admission protocol supports smooth, person-centered transitions for new residents.

- **InterRAI LTCF Assessment Tool Launch**– This standardized tool evaluates resident health, function, and psychosocial well-being, guiding individualized care planning and high-quality outcomes.
- **Butterfly Accreditation from Meaningful Care Matters for Monarch Manor**

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As winter continues and we anticipate spring, we are excited for the opportunities ahead: expanding the Butterfly Approach, completing environmental enhancements, continuing staff education, and fostering community involvement. These initiatives ensure Pioneer Ridge remains a place of comfort, dignity, and meaningful experiences.

We are always available if you have any questions or wish to learn more about our programs. Your involvement and support are invaluable to our ongoing success. Please feel free to contact a member of our management team.

Thank you for being part of our community. Together, we look forward to a bright and joyful spring at Pioneer Ridge.

Samantha Moir
Administrator



NEW CLINICAL MANAGER ANNOUNCEMENT



Hello, my name is Geetika Handa, and I am pleased to introduce myself as the Clinical Manager for Monarch Manor and Home Area Two at Pioneer Ridge. I feel fortunate to work alongside such a dedicated team and to support our residents each day.

By way of background, I came from India as an international student in 2016. I completed my Bachelor of Nursing in India and went on to complete my post-graduation in Critical Care Nursing in 2018. From 2019 to 2025, I had the opportunity to work as a nurse with St. Joseph's Care Group, which was a very meaningful and rewarding experience.

I joined Pioneer Ridge in November 2025, and I am truly grateful for the warm welcome I have received. I look forward to working collaboratively with our staff and residents to support high-quality, compassionate care. My office is located on Home Area Two if needed. Thank you for this opportunity—I am grateful to be part of this team.

Geetika Handa
Clinical Nurse Manager



A MESSAGE FROM MORGAN CONNORS, STUDENT PLACEMENT COORDINATOR



Our team has been busy connecting with the next generation of health care professionals! Recently, we attended networking events and career fairs at Lakehead University and Confederation College, where we had the opportunity to meet soon-to-be graduates from a variety of programs, including Personal Support Worker (PSW), Practical Nursing (PN), and Registered Nursing (RN). These events were a great way to share information about careers in long-term care and to highlight the meaningful, rewarding work done in our home every day.

In addition, we were pleased to host an RPN hiring event at Pioneer Ridge, held in collaboration with our Human Resources team (pictured). The event saw steady attendance and provided an opportunity for candidates to learn more about our workplace, meet members of our team, and interview for current opportunities. We currently have open



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postings for roles including RN, RPN, and other positions, and we encourage anyone interested in joining our team to explore our Nursing Spotlight at:
<https://careers.thunderbay.ca/nursing>

Supporting learning and professional growth is an important part of who we are. Alongside our recruitment outreach, we are proud to host a wide range of student placements within our home. So far in 2026, this included Dental Hygiene students, 45 first-year PN students throughout January and February, and several PSW students who are currently paired one-on-one with experienced staff to complete their preceptorships.

Student placements play a vital role in long-term care. They provide students with valuable hands-on experience in a supportive, team-based environment while also strengthening the future workforce. Just as importantly, they bring fresh perspectives, enthusiasm, and learning energy into our home, benefiting residents, families, and staff alike. We are proud to be a place where students can learn, grow, and discover the meaningful impact of a career in long-term care.



Morgan Connors
Student Placement Coordinator

NUTRITION AND FOOD SERVICES

Family Christmas dinner.

We would like to thank all the families that attended our Family Christmas Dinner in December. As in the past, it was a huge success with many residents being able to enjoy a special meal with their families. A lot of work and planning is put into this event, and it is rewarding to hear all the compliments and see the enjoyment out of our residents and their families. Stay tuned for other special occasion dinners coming up throughout the year.



Family caterings.

Pioneer Ridge can accommodate family gatherings, whether it's a small family dinner or a larger celebration.

We can customize menus and have different set-ups to accommodate the number of people attending. Don't hesitate to reach out if you are interested in booking one of our spaces.

Jacqueline Buonocore, Manager Nutrition & Food Services
jacqueline.buonocore@thunderbay.ca
807-684-3945

FUN FACT

- ✚ Pioneer Ridge provides over 6,000 group programs annually through our Therapeutic Recreation department to residents for life enrichment. In addition, they provide over 1,400 individual programs annually for those unable to participate in group programming.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR RESIDENT COUNSELOR

Visiting a loved one can be an opportunity to enjoy and connect with each other, but it can also be stressful for family members who struggle with what to do or say during time together. Below is a list of activities to try during your next visits. Remember! what works one day may not the next. Try to be patient and flexible enough to switch things up when necessary to align with your loved ones needs.

- ✚ Listen to music
- ✚ Talk about favorite memories
- ✚ Read a book out loud
- ✚ Play cards: Go Fish, or Match (numbers, suits)
- ✚ Color pictures together
- ✚ Look through old photo albums
- ✚ Sing old songs
- ✚ Read a newspaper out loud to share current news
- ✚ Put a puzzle together
- ✚ Toss a ball
- ✚ Go for a walk / explore other floors and Home Areas
- ✚ Give a hand massage
- ✚ Sit together and hold hands



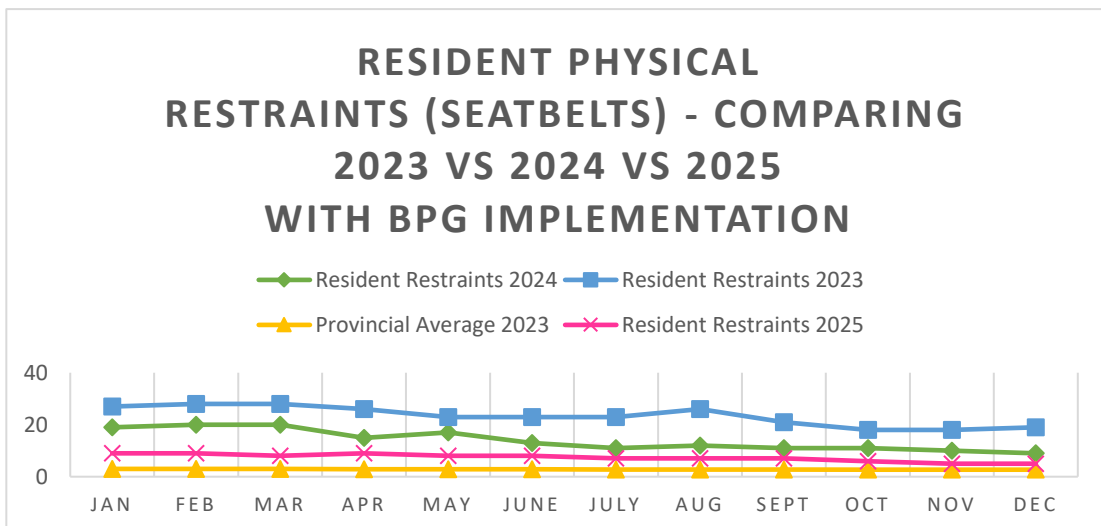
Dennis Morettin, RSSW
Resident Counsellor



A MESSAGE FROM OUR BEST PRACTISE CLINICIAN

Over the last few years our Falls and Restraints Committee set out to make a much-needed change by decreasing our restraint usage, focusing at this time on seatbelts, aka lapbelts (this is a ministry regulation!) Pioneer Ridge has a least restraint policy, and it was our goal, as part of quality improvement to enhance this policy and decrease our use of lapbelts as physical restraints. I am happy to announce that we have made significant improvements. Ultimately our goal is to align with the provincial average, and we are almost there. The graph compares 2023, 2024 and now 2025. In January 2026, the committee completed a “restraint blitz” to ensure that all residents who require a seatbelt have orders in place or can undo on their own. If a resident cannot undo their seatbelt when cued and the seatbelt is being used as a restraint, we will re evaluate the seatbelt and consider alternatives. If you have any questions about seatbelts or restraints, please ask a nurse on the unit or the best practice clinician! Please keep your eyes open on communication that will be coming out soon regarding our initiative with Bed Rails.

Darcie Brown, RN



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR BUSINESS OFFICE

Share Your Voice, Shape Our Care!

We are committed to continuous quality improvement – and we need your input! Tell us what’s working, what could be better, and what matters most to you. Your feedback helps us create care that truly feels like family. Family & Caregiver Satisfaction surveys can be completed anytime – online at <https://getinvolvedthunderbay.ca/pioneer-ridge-resident-feedback> or call 807-684-3914 to request a paper copy.



PIONEER RIDGE FAMILY & FRIENDS COMMITTEE MEMBER NEEDED

The main purpose of Family and Friends (Family Council) is to improve the quality of life of Long-Term Care residents and to give family and friends a forum for sharing their experiences, learning and exchanging information.

While each Family Council is unique, Family Councils in general focus on improving the quality of life and assuring quality of care for all residents and supporting each other. Family Councils facilitate communication and promote partnerships with home staff, council members, families, friends, and residents.

If you are interested in joining, please let Jaime Rizzo, Admin Assistant know at 807 684 3497 or jaime.rizzo@thunderbay.ca.

Our next meeting is June 15, 2026 at 2:00pm in our Auditorium located on the third floor. All are welcome.



FEBRUARY UPDATES FROM B.S.O EMBEDDED SERVICES TEAM AT PIONEER RIDGE

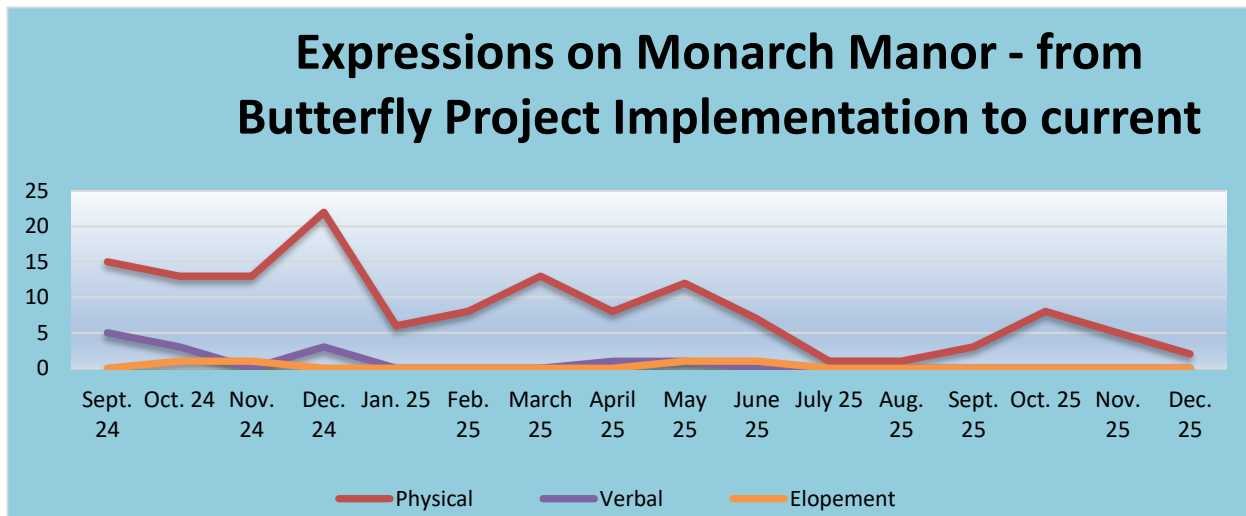


- Our final audit was completed November 17th by the Managing Director of Meaningful Care Matters Peter Bewert. He observed Monarch Manor for 5 hours, completed Qualitative Interactions audits and a desktop audit which resulted in a Level 3 Accreditation. Pioneer Ridge is proud to announce that they are the first accredited “Butterfly” home in Northwestern Ontario. Thank you, Monarch Manor team, for all your dedication and commitment to improve our resident’s quality of life.
- Our accreditation success was celebrated Tuesday December 16th, with residents, team members, families and members of the community.
- What happens next? We have received Local Priorities funding to continue our journey of Butterfly transformation on home area 4. Team members from all home areas will be involved with Butterfly training in 2026 and 2 groups will tour Butterfly homes in Toronto.
- A new group of team members recently completed their Butterfly training. In the pictures below, they are learning what it feels like to have dementia by tracing a star, while only looking into a mirror that their co-worker holds. Currently, 95 staff have participated in the workshops



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- ✚ From the implementation of the Butterfly Project to current, expressions of physical and verbal risk and incidents of elopement have decreased significantly.
- ✚ There have been several members of the community and other health care settings requesting tours of Monarch Manor. Have you experienced the emotion-based model of care yet?
- ✚ Sensory Room has been completed. All are welcome to utilize the new therapeutic space. It is open daily and is located on Monarch Manor, right court, across from the “Abby” interactive panel.



After



Revised dress code policy.

- ✚ Monarch Manor is now uniform free. You will notice staff wearing bright, colourful clothing or Monarch Manor t-shirts. Staff continue to wear their name tags for identification.
- ✚ Staff Life Stories: As we are all family on Monarch Manor, team members have posted life stories, to share with our residents, families, co-team members and other visitors.
- ✚ Coming Soon: Vinyl wall wraps will be installed at the entrance and exit of Monarch Manor. The entrance will resemble a home’s entrance, and the exit will correlate with the outside bistro theme.

Donations wanted.

- ✚ Our residents are always asking for meaningful tasks to fulfill their days. Any woodworking items to sand and paint would be accepted, as well as furniture that requires refurbishing.
- ✚ We are also accepting items for our new Butterfly home area: Pram, crib, items for a women’s and men’s dressing area-hats, ties, purses, coat rack, buffet and china cabinet for dining room...



Other B.S.O updates.

- ✚ The Resident Care Assistant position became vacant in December.

If you have any questions/suggestions, please call or email the BSO Embedded Services Team: (807) 684-3936

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Behavioural Support & Butterfly Lead, Judy Walters (807) 629-7181 or email judy.walters@thunderbay.ca
Resident Wellness Worker, Crystal Wark (807) 632-9108 or email crystal.wark@thunderbay.ca.



FUN THAT FUELS GREAT CARE



GREETINGS FROM THE THERAPEUTIC RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Christmas is always a busy time of year for us with many school groups and church choirs coming in to sing carols and help bring cheer to our residents. We had over 15 hours of scheduled entertainment this month. Our team did a wonderful job decorating our home and keeping spirits bright.

The Helping Hands Auxiliary want to thank everyone who gave donations and/or supported the Christmas Bazaar and recent Valentines Day Bake Sale.

All proceeds go back into the Therapeutic Recreation department to help support the programs, services and life enrichment of the residents who live in Pioneer Ridge.

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This dedicated group of volunteers have been working hard creating a website and social media page to showcase all the great work they do for us here at Pioneer Ridge. The website and social media pages are live. Please check it out at www.helpinghandsridge.org

The new Helping Hands Auxiliary logo incorporates Pioneer Ridge's colours and the butterfly theme from our newly accredited Monarch Manor Emotional Model of care home area.



Lift Plus update.

Lift Plus has been experiencing an extreme staff shortage for a while now and our department has decided to cancel charter bookings this past summer. They have been working diligently to acquire new staff and programming software that will help streamline the booking process with hopes that they will be able to offer charter services again in spring of 2026.

Looking for donations.

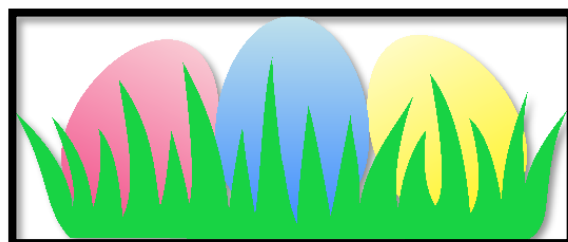
Our residents love stuffed animals – especially a dog or a cat. They would appreciate any donation of stuffed animals that have long arms or legs that can hug back. If you have any of these cute, cuddly creatures to donate to us, we would greatly appreciate it. Large or small we'll love them all!

- ✚ Please be on the lookout for this bee blanket. It belongs to one of our residents and has been missing for some time now. If found, please bring to Therapeutic Recreation.



- ✚ The winners of the Valentine's Day basket raffle were yet again...Don & June Knibbs (they won last one too!) and laundry department staff Angie M.
- ✚ Family & friends please note that because Christmas dinner was such a success we want to offer you more options to have a nice meal with your loved ones.

Shannon Whale
Therapeutic Recreation & Volunteer Services Supervisor

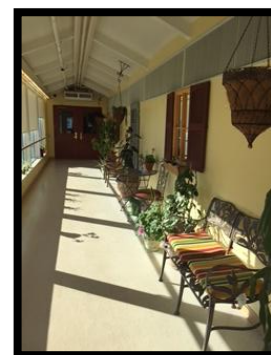


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A MESSAGE FROM OUR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

- With the beginning of each new year comes a renewed capital budget and yearly plans for building improvements. There are some finishing touches coming to Monarch Manor and will be completed by the end of April 2026.
- We will be replacing windows in the link between Jasper Place and Pioneer Ridge that will be designed to reduce the heat load in that area. Also, there will be some additional upgrades to that area once the windows are completed.
- Some behind the scenes projects include replacing refrigeration equipment as the present system is approaching the end of its useful life.
- We received some new funding from Ontario Health that allows us to expedite the replacement schedule for beds and ceiling lifts throughout the home; as well as some additional equipment that we felt would enhance services to the residents. We have completed a one-year cycle of bed replacements already this year and installed 20 new ceiling lifts in resident rooms.
- With Spring coming we are already planning our beautification of the Pioneer Ridge gardens and grounds and are eagerly anticipating the melting of the snow so we can commence the work.



Barry Caland

FRIENDLY REMINDERS FOR FAMILY & FRIENDS

- Please, if loved ones are leaving the Home Area or Pioneer Ridge with a resident let staff know or sign them out. This ensures that all residents are receiving their meals and not being missed.
- Any appointments that are booked by a resident or family member, please make sure the Home Area staff are aware so that it can be added to the calendar. This helps to ensure your loved one will be ready to go.
- For any Taxi's that are booked by our NUSW's for outside appointments, please remember that you will need to call the Taxi company for the return trip after. Our NUSW's will only book the Taxi that is going to the appointment.

OUR TEAM WISHES EVERYONE A HAPPY EASTER

