



From the Desk of Lauren Ingalls, CAO

Good News! We have a positive update from the Alberta Government about its 2024 budget. For the first time in 5 years, the Lodge Assistance Grant is increasing to reflect economic pressures associated with inflation, utilities, operating costs and maintenance life safety. The 55% grant increase will ease Westwinds financial pressures, allow some modest capital improvements, and cover outbreak costs. Westwinds affordable housing program will also see some financial assistance, including operational funding for the Tenant Support Coordinator program, as well as additional administration funding for the Rental Assistance Benefit program. Primary capital projects for 2024 include a concrete ramp for Medicine Tree Manor, new furnaces for Glen Mead Park I and a new roof at Sheep River House.

Congratulations to our new board of directors' executive, as Don Herring was elected Chairperson and Kathryn Robson, Vice Chairperson in November. The Westwinds Board has been busy integrating new members and conducting a planning day, to determine key priorities for the 2024-2026 business plan. Operationally, we are preparing for spring, completing both food service and tenant service coordinator's evaluations, in addition to our bi-annual employee survey. Have an enjoyable Spring!

Tenant Support Coordinator

Westwinds Communities and the Town of High River Community Support Services have partnered together to assist retirement living residents and affordable housing tenants/clients in accessing community support services and resources. Westwinds Tenant Support Coordinator, Alena Rose, is available to confidentially support residents, tenants and clients as a navigator and connector to access community support services and resources.

Alena assists residents/tenants/clients with support with government forms and connecting clients to the appropriate available resources. In addition, Alena can give support and assistance to access community support services, general resources and education, assist with accessing appropriate services such as general health care, mental health care, addiction treatment, ID and document replacement services, volunteer opportunities, job placement and training. Alena can also support clients in building skills and knowledge in areas including landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities, budgeting, money management, positive parenting, childcare, and housekeeping.

The Tenant Support Coordinator also provides monthly education sessions at our lodges and seniors independent living common areas (Glen Meads Park properties rotate between Glen Mead Park I and III).

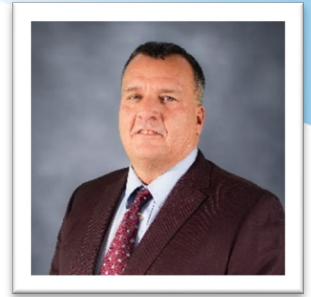
Residents, tenants and current rental assistance benefit clients can contract Alena for a confidential referral at arose@highriver.ca or via telephone at 403.336.6697.

Resident News & Views

New Westwinds Communities Board of Directors

Welcome to two new directors appointed in the fall of 2023.

Gord Lang has lived, worked, and played in Okotoks for over 28 years. Together with his wife Laurie, they have raised three beautiful daughters. Gord attended Lethbridge College and graduated with a diploma in Business Administration. He then decided to pursue his true passion and headed to Olds College where he earned a diploma in Horticulture – Turf Management. Gord’s passion for people and community, led him to serving on the board of the Okotoks Curling Club and eventually



ending up as President. Gord’s professional experience includes oil and gas and project management in the retail sector. In 2021, Gord was elected to the Town of Okotoks council. Gord is passionate about Okotoks and making the community even better and stronger.



Kelly Smit is a first term councillor with the Town of High River, who also works in the non-profit sector as an Opportunities Coordinator at Inclusion Foothills. She is a wife and mother of two boys.

Earning a Political Science degree from the University of Calgary, Kelly and her husband moved to High River, where she joined the

parent council at her sons’ school and the High River Business and Tourism Advisory Committee, while managing multiple volunteer committees for events at Heritage Park.

In 2022, with the lifting of the pandemic restrictions, Kelly noticed that there was a need to reconnect community with the nonprofit agencies and the community at large. With the help of a grant, she brought together the agencies and hosted the first annual “Picnic With a Purpose” where 25 other agencies came together to provide information, games, a BBQ and live entertainment. With over 2,500 people in attendance, it was a huge success! Kelly is excited to join the Board at Westwinds Communities, as she believes that affordable and attainable housing is an important goal for all persons, to realize a safe and productive life, and the foundation of our society depends on this for growth and success for our community as a whole.

Drakes Landing Project

Westwinds Communities is excited to share with you our newest project – Drakes Towns. The project is ten new near market and affordable housing units which is part of a large 70 unit rental complex located in the Okotoks Drakes Landing community on the corner of Milligan Drive and 48th Street.



This fully occupied project represents Westwinds first pet friendly near market project, with monthly rental rates ranging from \$826 - \$1,106 for two bedrooms and \$1,334 to \$1,550 for three bedrooms.

Resident News & Views

Utilities Assistance

Applicable for RAB clients, Family Housing, Glen Mead Park II, Valley Villa and Near Market Housing tenants

If you are at risk for being disconnected from utility service, the Utilities Consumer Advocate can help with mediation with utility companies for arranging relief, if necessary, at 310-4822 or ucahelps@gov.ab.ca.

If you require greater assistance with utility bill payments, Please call 1-877-644-9992 or visit Alberta Supports at [Alberta Supports | Alberta.ca](https://www.albertasupports.ca)

Around Westwinds



Clockwise: RCMP in service High Country Lodge, pop up story time Medicine Tree Manor, Employee Appreciation Day – December 2023. And Drive By Pie Fundraiser Sandstone Lodge.

Maintenance Tip

Effective Jan 1, 2024, the maintenance rate increased to \$55 per hour and housekeeping to \$35 per hour for damage beyond normal wear and tear.

Your Relationship As Neighbours

Maintaining peaceful neighbor relations is important to ensure a harmonious living environment. By following a few simple strategies, you can build and maintain a positive relationship with your neighbors, ensuring a peaceful and enjoyable living environment for everyone.

1. Communicate openly and respectfully with your neighbors. If you have an issue with them, try to address it directly and calmly.

Communication is key when it comes to maintaining peaceful neighbor relations. By communicating openly and respectfully with your neighbors, you can build trust and understanding, and address any issues that may arise. When conflicts do arise, it's important to address them directly and calmly. Avoiding or ignoring conflicts will only make them worse in the long run. Instead, try to understand the other person's point of view and approach the situation with the goal of finding a solution that works for everyone. By addressing conflicts in a calm and direct manner, you can prevent small issues from becoming larger problems and maintain a positive relationship with your neighbors.
2. Be considerate of others.

Being considerate of others is essential for maintaining peaceful neighbor relations. One of the most important ways to be considerate is to be mindful of your noise levels, particularly at night. Noise can be a major source of irritation for neighbors, especially in close living quarters. Being mindful of your noise levels, whether it's from television, talking, or moving around, can make a big difference in maintaining a peaceful living environment.

Additionally, try to be aware of any shared spaces and common areas and respect any rules or guidelines for their use. Taking these small steps to be considerate of others will help keep the peace and foster positive relationships with your neighbors.
3. Show respect for shared spaces and common areas. Keep them clean and be mindful of any rules or guidelines for their use.

Shared spaces and common areas are an important aspect of life in seniors' buildings, and showing respect for them is essential for maintaining peaceful neighbor relations. Keeping these areas clean and tidy is an easy way to show respect and care for the community. When using these spaces, it's also important to be mindful of any rules or guidelines for their use.

Following these guidelines ensures that everyone can enjoy the shared spaces and common areas without any issues.
4. Get to know your neighbors. Invite them over for a cup of coffee or a drink. Building relationships with your neighbors can help create a sense of community and reduce the likelihood of conflicts.

Maintaining peaceful neighbor relations starts with getting to know your neighbors. One way to do this is to introduce yourself when you first move in and take the time to chat with your neighbors when you see them. Another way to foster peaceful neighbor relations is to participate in community events, such as BBQs, potlucks, or holiday parties. These events are a great opportunity to get to know your neighbors in a relaxed and casual setting.
5. Be willing to compromise. Remember that you are all living in close proximity and that sometimes small concessions can go a long way towards maintaining a peaceful environment.

Being willing to compromise is crucial for maintaining peaceful neighbor relations. Living in close

proximity to others means that conflicts and disagreements are bound to arise from time to time. When these conflicts do arise, it's important to remember that you are all living in close proximity and that sometimes small concessions can go a long way towards maintaining a peaceful environment. Being willing to compromise means being open to finding a middle ground or a solution that works for everyone. It also means being open to hearing the perspectives and needs of others and being willing to make adjustments to your own behavior when necessary.

Seniors Independent Living Laundry Room Etiquette

1. Be prepared. Save time and avoid hanging out in the laundry room by sorting your items before you leave your apartment. In addition, pre-treat stains in advance to keep from needing to lug an extra product with you. Don't forget to check your pockets for loose change or anything else that shouldn't go in the wash.
2. Be clean. A communal laundry room is a shared space, so it's up to every tenant to keep it tidy. Wipe up any spilled detergent, clean out the lint trap, and throw away used dryer sheets. Also, remember that trash receptacles in laundry rooms are for things like dryer lint and sheets, maybe an empty detergent bottle, but not your household garbage. Nobody wants to smell the remnants of last night's dinner when they go to switch their clothes over.
3. Be courteous. There are probably a lot of people on similar schedules using a limited number of machines. If you want to remain on good terms with your apartment neighbors, don't monopolize the machines. Washing a load of laundry typically takes 30 to 40 minutes, and drying takes 45 minutes to an hour. Use a timer to ensure you remove your laundry at the cycle end so that your neighbors don't have to wait around.
4. Be considerate. If you notice that a washer or dryer has completed its cycle and the owner hasn't returned to deal with it, try to be patient. They'll probably be back shortly.

Which brings us to a common laundry room etiquette question.

Is It OK To Take Someone's Laundry Out?

The general rule of thumb is to give the neighbor 15 to 20 minutes to return. After the time has elapsed, deal with delinquent laundry in a courteous way. If their basket is present, gently place the laundry inside of it. Otherwise, remove the laundry and leave it on top of the dryer or a table, if available.

Independent Living Washer & Dryer Vended Laundry

Westwinds is moving all of its congregate senior's independent units to a vended laundry system in the fall of 2024. Limited equipment replacement funding, and being efficient with resources, is driving Westwinds to make these changes, which have already been in place at Spitzee House. Rates will be \$2.25 to wash and \$2.25 to dry. An electronic card system will be implemented for each of use. We recognize this change will require some adjustment and Westwinds will be providing training sessions on the new equipment and system.

New Westwinds Website

Our new website has been designed to make it easier for the community to speak with us and access the information they need. One of the key features of our new website, is the ability for us to have discussions. We've added many new features including a blog, podcast, and virtual forums where we can host conversations. In 2024, we plan to invite you to test out the forum space to share ideas, discuss topics, ask questions, and connect with others about affordable and seniors housing. We have also added a page that provides tenant resources. We believe this will make it easier for all of our tenants and residents to access important and helpful information. At Westwinds, we care. And we can't wait to chat with you more about what's important to you.

Retirement Living, Affordable Housing and Rent Supplement Regulatory Changes

Your tax return, specifically Line 15000 of your last year's Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Notice of Assessment (NOA), will be used for your Annual Rent Review to determine your rent and on going eligibility.

- If your rent renewal is July 1 or later, the prior year's income tax will only be accepted.
- Income for youth under 22 years of age, will not be included as income when your rent is calculated. Previously, rent calculations included the income of household members 15 years of age or older, who were not attending a recognized school or educational institution full-time.

When your next Annual Rent Review is scheduled, you will be asked to provide your most recent NOA. If you believe your NOA is not a fair picture of your current income, please let us know. We can explore calculating your income over the last few months, to capture your more recent situation with verified information.

Help Us Build More Affordable Housing

Donating to Westwinds Communities, is a straightforward and meaningful way to support our mission of helping to make housing affordable for all in our Foothills region.

To make a donation, you can visit our website at www.westwindscommunities.ca where you will find a dedicated "Donate" or "Support Us" section. Once there, you can choose from various giving options, such as one-time or recurring donations. You can also explore specific projects or programs that resonate with you and allocate your funds accordingly. Westwinds Communities accepts donations through secure online payment platforms, making it convenient and safe for donors, as well, we will provide a charitable receipt for donations over \$25. Additionally, you can inquire about other donation methods, like mailing a check or making a direct bank transfer, through our contact information provided on our website.

Currently, Westwinds is accepting donations for our Okotoks D'Arcy project to build 38 units of affordable housing for modest income households, consisting of woman fleeing violence, families, seniors and singles.

By contributing to Westwinds Communities, you are directly assisting in their efforts to create positive changes and provide essential services to the communities they serve.