



# HALFERTY FAMILY NEWSLETTER

FAMILY UPDATES

WELL WISHES

SAME CUTE KIDS

## *Happy Holidays*

This holiday newsletter is to keep friends and family updated on the events in our family's life and share holiday greetings. We hope you enjoy our tales and we look forward to hearing yours!



# *The Zunic Family*

**T**his summer we celebrated the wedding of our oldest son, Christopher to his new wife, Cindy. It was a beautiful celebration and a beautiful day. Christopher and Cindy are now living just around the corner from us in the basement suite of her parents' home. Matthew continues to work on home renovations in his uncle's company in Toronto. He is learning a lot and enjoys the challenge. Thomas lives at home and is in his second year Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo and all is going well. Simon is in grade 12 at Resurrection and looking forward to graduation in the spring. Both Thomas and Simon are working as lifeguards. Elizabeth is in grade 10, also at Resurrection. She enjoys school and is doing very well and in her auto course - recommended by her brothers. Katherine is in grade 6 at St. Dominic Savio. Both she and Elizabeth continue their piano lessons. Erin is still teaching English at Resurrection and has now been hired as a permanent teacher. Nick is still teaching philosophy at St. Jerome's University. In the spring he was able to bring all of the kids with him on a trip to Hawaii while he attended a conference. Lucky them!

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



From left to right: Simon, Matthew, Thomas, Christopher, Cindy, Elizabeth, Erin, Nick, and Katherine.



# *The Kousek-Halberty Family*

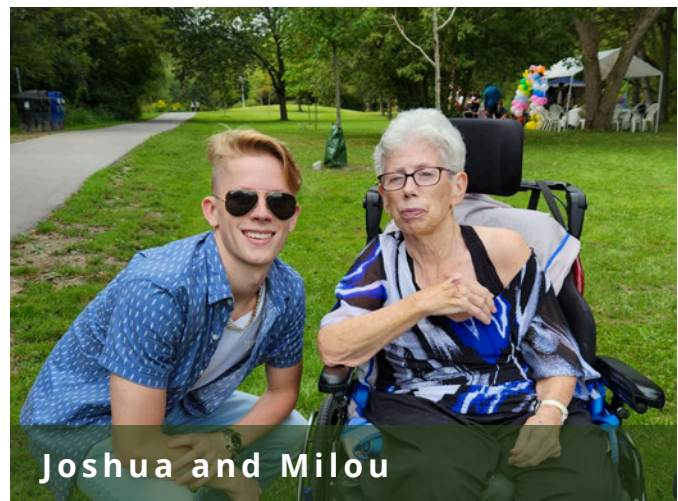
**P**eter and Colette had some relaxing trips away this year in Florida and Mont Tremblant. Peter continues to work at York University and Colette continues to enjoy her role with Moorelands Kids, a value based charity that works with marginalized children and youth. Joshua is taking a break from formal education at the moment and is working while deciding on next steps. Willow continues to keep the family in check with her constant need for attention and treats.

Megan and Corey are engaged! They will be moving to a new apartment in Innisfil in January. They are both busy pursuing their careers while having fun being a family with Oli, their beloved dog.

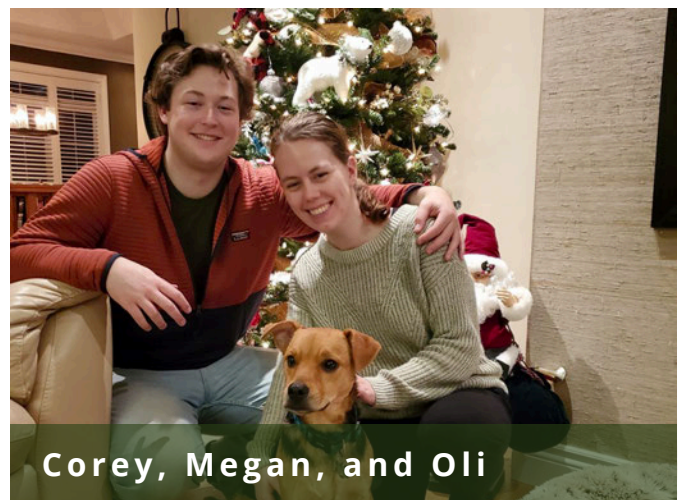
We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Peter and Colette in Mont Tremblant



Joshua and Milou



Corey, Megan, and Oli



# The Kraay Family

**T**he Kraay family had another eventful year. Emma (14) started Grade 9 at Rosedale Heights School of the Arts, and Jacob (11) started Grade 6 at Queen Alexandra Middle School, where he is still in French Immersion. On the extra-curricular front, Emma is taking Bronze Cross, and Jacob is also doing swimming lessons and floor hockey.

The kids have their first part-time job of sorts, doing regular yard work for a neighbour. In the winter, both kids really love snowboarding, and Emma is hoping to become an Assistant Snowboard Instructor this winter. As for the summer months, highlights include time at the Halferty cottage with family, and several weeks at their beloved summer camp.

Mary Beth is still enjoying her work in the Faculty of Nursing at Toronto Metropolitan University, working with graduate students in Nursing and in Urban Health. Klaas is still in the Philosophy Department at Toronto Metropolitan, and is looking forward to starting a sabbatical in Winter 2025.



From left to right: Jacob, Klaas, Mary Beth, and Emma





# *The Halberty/Martel Family*

**T**he Martel-Halbertys continue to live their best life in Ottawa. This year has brought many milestones: Delphine graduated from elementary school and started high school at De La Salle in the visual arts stream. Fiona bravely dove into grade seven at Trilles des Bois, taking on new responsibilities like helping younger kids with their lessons, volunteering, and speaking at school events. Lesley finally found time to finish some long-delayed personal writing projects (stay tuned for updates!). JF, ever busy, recorded the audiobook for *Reclaiming Art*, prepared the new edition coming out next year with Basic Books, made progress on a new book, and stayed busy with various writing collaborations, articles, events, and, of course, the *Weird Studies* podcast.

The family enjoyed several wonderful trips this year, including a dreamy visit to PEI in August. It's been a fantastic year, and we're excited to see what 2025 has in store. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, with hugs and high-fives all around!



From left to right: JF, Delphine, Fiona, and Lesley



# *The Halberty/Iraci Family*



From left to right: Ansel, Jess, and Mike



**T**his year has been a year of many firsts for Jess, Mike, and Ansel. Ansel (4) started school for the first time as a Junior Kindergartener in French immersion to have secret conversations with Grandpa Brian, Milou, and Halberty/Martels, in Ottawa. He took his first plane ride to vacation in Mexico in March. When he's not learning letters and numbers, Ansel enjoys bike rides around Toronto's ravines, eating all the time, asking the best questions ("who will win in a fight: a T-rex or Spinosaurus?"), and snuggling his cats, Maow (9) and Mooter (14). He continues to like sushi, toy cars, the Buffalo Bills, and not wearing weather-appropriate clothes. He dislikes vegetables, the Kansas City Chiefs, and when Mama and Dada "go on dates" that second time.

All are happy and healthy living in Toronto's east end. Jess and Mike continue to work for the City of Toronto in Forestry. Jess still paints and Mike is still interrupted by Ansel every time he picks up his guitar. From our family to yours: all the best in 2025!



# *End of the year notes by Brian*

**O**n December 2nd, Mary Lou and I celebrated our 57th wedding anniversary. We found it intriguing that at the same time there was much in the news about Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris and how its official reopening was near, following five years of restoration after the fire. In October of 1966, when I was about six weeks into my sojourn at L'Arche in France, and Mary Lou was in her first weeks of living au-pair in Paris, we met in Paris and spent most of a day at Notre-Dame, looking around and admiring the amazing sculptures and artwork. Our romance began there, to be followed by more than a half century of life together, so we have enjoyed watching the news reports about the renewed Notre-Dame, with its stonework now restored to a gleaming white. We love the place and hold close those memories.



Speaking of anniversaries, November 24th was the second anniversary of Mary Lou leaving our apartment to go to hospital, never to return home. After a few weeks at St. Michael's, and then at Providence Health Care, she moved to her current long-term care home, True Davidson Acres, in January of 2023. We spend part of each day together, but it's hard to be living apart.

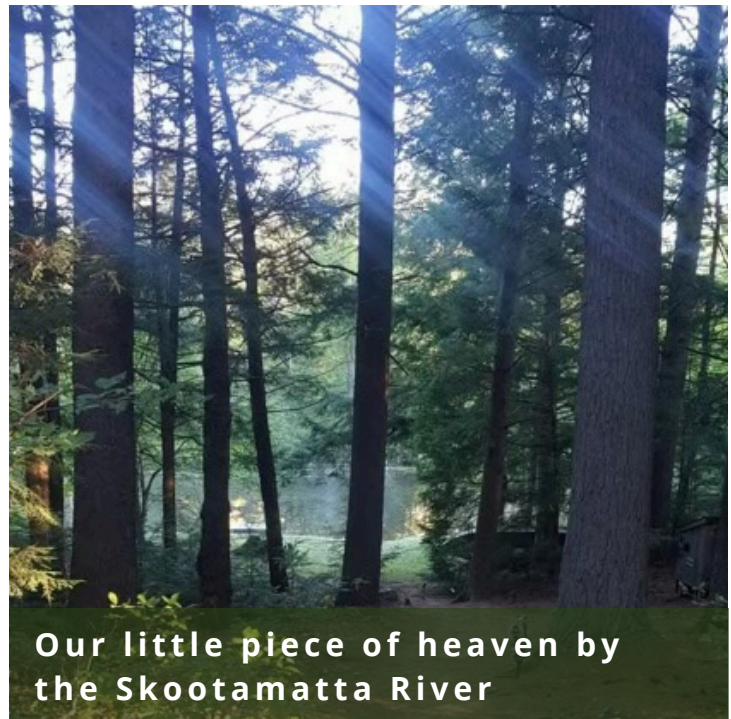
About 3 ½ years ago we acquired a used wheel chair van, thanks to L'Arche Toronto, which facilitated transporting Mary Lou to various places in her wheelchair. A couple of months ago, I replaced that van with another used wheelchair van (in better condition). Having this special transportation means that I can bring Mary Lou to various events, including dinners and family get-togethers. There are limitations, due to Mary Lou's need for full physical nursing care, which means that longer trips, such as going to our summer place in Flinton, are not possible for her, which causes her grief.



# *End of the year notes by Brian*

I also experience grief, and although I spent a few days at "The River" with the family at the beginning and end of the summer, which was good, I still felt the sadness of missing Mary Lou's presence there.

Over the years, in saying goodnight to the children or grandchildren, I have often tossed out the little rhyme: "Good night, sleep tight, don't let the bedbugs bite. If they do take a shoe, and hit them 'till they're black and blue." The verse came back to bite me – literally. In early May, the housekeeper discovered bedbugs in my apartment, which must have migrated in from some other part of the apartment building. It was 6 months later – November 8th – that my apartment was eventually declared "clear" of bugs.



**Our little piece of heaven by  
the Skootamatta River**

In between there was a lot of upheaval – emptying drawers, shelves and cupboards; doing tons of laundry; having linens and clothing heat-treated; having the apartment treated by a pest control company several times (at the expense of Chartwell); living in the middle of what could be described as a "storage unit", with the apartment full of plastic bins holding my belongings; etc. I'm grateful it's over, and I'm working at restoring the apartment to normal order.

In her piece for the Newsletter, Mary Lou mentions that a number of our friends have died over the past year. Ian Squires died in April, in Renfrew, Ontario. Peter and Colette drove me up to Arnprior for his funeral service, at which I was asked to deliver a eulogy. Ian was the first person to join Mary Lou and I at the farm when we started L'Arche Frontenac (now L'Arche Arnprior), in 1975, and he was thus a co-founder of the community.



# *End of the year notes by Brian*

Other L'Arche people died during the year: Maurice Charbonneau, who with his wife Mary had founded L'Arche Ottawa, and whose family were so close to our family over the years; Pat Lenon, who with his wife Jo was a central figure in L'Arche in Alberta; John Bloss and Gordie Henry, who were early and central Core Members of L'Arche Daybreak in Richmond Hill.

Mary Lou turned 80, in June, and I had my 82nd birthday in August, so we are now both members of the "Octogenarian Club" – sort of hard to believe, but also something for which to be grateful. And we're also grateful for all the good gifts we have received in our lives, including the love and support of our large family and of our friends. We send all of you our love for this special season of Christmas, and we wish you all a wonderful New Year.



Marylou and Brian with former teaching colleagues of Marylou's





## *End of the year notes by Mary Lou*

**C**hristmases keep coming along, and here we are at Christmas 2024. As I am writing this, it's only a few days after Toronto's Santa Claus Parade. Not all of the family went to it this year, but we all gathered together for the annual after-the-Santa-Claus-parade party.

So many things have changed in our lives during the past year and even in the past few weeks. Many of our dear friends have died. Very recently a dear friend and member of our Sunday Community, Elizabeth Whelan, died suddenly. After four years of Sunday Mass on Zoom, we returned to in-person Mass to celebrate Liz, with many of her friends, and with one of her brothers who joined us from California. Another close member of our community, Rita Shaughnessy, also died recently. And a number of friends from the L'Arche Movement died in this past year, including Ian Squires, our dear and longtime friend from L'Arche Arnprior, in Ontario, who was with us at the beginning of L'Arche Frontenac so many years ago. So many friends and close companions have passed and in their place are left precious memories to be cherished for the rest of time.

The things we're experiencing are what all people of our age go through – things that are sometimes tough and hard but which can also create memories filled with gratitude. The things that are now our memories are appreciated and cherished, and we try to live our lives in a spirit of love and gratitude that allows us to create new experiences that are memorable.

Added to our memories of children playing, and on swings, and swimming in the River, we now have new memories of grandchildren graduating from one level of schooling to another, and moving into the working world, and starting their own family lives. Our oldest grandchild, Megan, and her boyfriend Corey, are sharing life and well into establishing their careers. Our oldest grandson, Christopher, married Cindy in July, and how wonderful it was to be there with them, along with so many family members, to send them on their way. Our youngest grandchild, Ansel, who has just started kindergarten, comes to have dinner with us every week, usually on Wednesday, and brings his parents with him, Mike and Jess. These visits are a real pleasure.



## *End of the year notes by Mary Lou*

We would like to send Christmas wishes and New Year's blessings to all our family and friends, those who are geographically close and those who are elsewhere in the world. Thank you to all the folks who have been able to come and visit, who have phoned, or who have written and sent us cards. Our journey is a bit of an uphill one at this stage, but we're giving it our best effort, and with good friends and family around us, praying for us and supporting us our odds are pretty good.



Milou and Brian in Heart's Content, Newfoundland on August 18, 2018

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