



# Focus on Floradale

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Floradale Mennonite Church

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## Introducing the Schroeder Kipfer family

*Written by Doris Kramer of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church*

The warmth of Bryan and Anita's home and the aroma of coffee cake baking was a welcome greeting as I arrived at their home near Heidelberg. Bryan and Anita Schroeder Kipfer and their four children live in a lovely bungalow on Lobsinger Line.

Bryan and Anita met while attending Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and began dating when in Grade 11. Their relationship continued through their years at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) and after graduation they were married on June 18, 1994.

Bryan Kipfer was born on May 29, 1972 to Lloyd and Barbara Anne (Baechler) Kipfer at their home near Brunner. He is the second child of four brothers. His eldest brother, Brent, is pastor at Maple View Mennonite Church; Bryce is a firefighter for the City of Waterloo; Brad works as a research analyst with Peel Regional



*Anita, Julia, Daniel, Markus, Lena Kate, Bryan*

Catholic Board. They were raised on a dairy farm. His parents now reside in St. Jacobs. Bryan attended Central Perth Public School from Kindergarten to Grade 8, spent five years at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and then graduated with a Bachelor of Theology degree from CMBC in Winnipeg. His home church was Poole Mennonite Church where he was baptized at age fifteen. While growing up he played hockey and baseball with community teams. His

spare time activities now revolve around family and friends.

Anita Schroeder was born in Zaire, Africa (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) on March 4, 1972 to Hardy and Elfrieda Neufeld Schroeder. Her parents had met in Winnipeg. Anita is the middle child of three daughters. Both her sisters, Christine and Heidi live in Manitoba with their families. Anita shared interesting stories

regarding her parents. Her father's parents were refugees, moving from Poland to Germany and then sponsored by a Mennonite family to come to Manitoba, Canada. Her mother, who was born in Russia, was only six weeks old when her parents fled to Germany with the German Army. Her family was among the refugees who went to Paraguay on the ship, Volendam. Her mother was one of eight children. The family later emigrated to

*Continued on page 2*

Didsbury, Alberta and still later moved to Winnipeg.

Anita's parents were missionaries in Zaire for 18 years with the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions and Services. Anita's schooling in Kindergarten was at an American school in Zaire's capital, Kinshasa. In 1979, while her parents were on furlough, she went to school in Winnipeg. Upon returning to Zaire, she continued her studies from Grade 2 to 6 at the American school.

In 1984, when she was 12 years old, the family moved to Kitchener where she attended Stanley Park Senior Public School for grades 7 and 8. Her parents lived here from 1984 to 2008 when they moved back to Winnipeg. In Kitchener, her father worked for the Canadian Bible Society. During that period Anita was baptized at age 15 years at Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church and attended Rockway Mennonite Collegiate for five years. She then moved to CMBC where she graduated with a Bachelor of Theology in Service Education. She had a summer internship with Habitat for Humanity working in Americus, Georgia.

Bryan has had a variety of work experiences. He worked at a hog barn (400 sows from farrow to market); worked as a roofer for one year and then on a veal farm

near Cambridge for ten years. In August 2006 they moved to Carman, Manitoba, where Bryan got his Livestock Dealer's License and started his own business of buying and selling dairy calves, as well as working at a hog barn. In August 2008 they returned to Ontario to start his work in sales for Winnipeg-based J. H. Hare and Associates. He was their Ontario sales representative to feed mills and farmers selling their feed supplements and natural animal health products. He currently works as the Service Manager for Advanced Dairy Systems near Wellesley.

After their marriage, Anita continued her education and received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Waterloo. During that time, she worked part time as a Home Support Worker for the Canadian Red Cross. Bryan and Anita moved to Elkhart, Indiana (1996-98), where she earned her Master of Divinity at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries and Bryan did volunteer work on the campus. Upon returning to Kitchener, Anita served on the pastoral team at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church where she was ordained for ministry in 2002.

During this time Anita was also the Chaplain at Parkwood Mennonite Home. She resigned from these positions in 2004 fol-

lowing a maternity leave. Anita returned to work part time when their youngest son Daniel started Kindergarten. She has had a variety of jobs including working at St. Jacob's Public School, at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in the main office, and as a Chaplain at Lanark Heights Long-term Care. She began as Pastor at Floradale Mennonite Church on June 1st, 2019 and also serves as the Chaplain at St. Jacobs Place Retirement Community.

Anita and Bryan have four children: Markus, born March 17, 2003; Julia, born November 22, 2005; Lena Kate, born July 3, 2007; and Daniel, born November 23, 2009. Church and family are important to them and they're very grateful that Bryan's parents and siblings and their families live nearby. Embarking on an annual road trip to Winnipeg to visit Anita's parents, sisters and their families is always the highlight of summer holidays.

St. Jacobs Mennonite Church has been their home congregation for the last eleven years and while Anita will predominantly worship at Floradale, the family will continue to divide their time between the two congregations. They're grateful for the warm welcome they've received at FMC.

## Sunday School for adults

We have been meeting downstairs in Room 9. We have seen a slide show about Floradale's mission program of 24 years ago and heard about some of Zenas and Eleanor Buehler's service experiences. We look forward to hearing about MDS and Hopping Thursdays. After Thanksgiving we will have three sessions on "Music and worship" and then a few weeks of "Local heroes of the faith."

**Oct. 20:** Music and worship  
led by Ingrid Loepp Thiessen & Nichelle Bauman

**Oct. 27:** Breakfast and worship in the fellowship hall

**Nov. 3:** Music and worship

**Nov. 10:** Music and worship

*Focus on Floradale* is published five times each year.

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# Grandparenting

*In this issue we asked several people to reflect on the grandparent/grandchild relationship.*

## Grandparents Day

*By Mary M. Martin*

Grandparents Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of September and was first instituted in the United States in 1978 by then-president Jimmy Carter to acknowledge the grassroots efforts of Marian McQuade, a grandmother from West Virginia. Grandparents Day is a secular holiday celebrated in various countries with official recognition in some; Canada first observed Grandparents day in 1995 but its official status was discontinued in 2014.

Grandparents day was not invented to sell flowers, cards or chocolate but rather to acknowledge the importance of grandparents in the family as they support the nurture and education of children. Among the primary purpose of grandparents Day are:

- To honour grandparents
- To give grandparents an opportunity to show love to their children's children
- To increase the awareness that children, grandchildren and all young people of the strength, wisdom and guidance older people can offer."

The above information was found on the internet. As I was reading different writings I thought of my own grandparents and how they influenced my life, especially my grandfathers. I thought of my role as a grandmother and I wonder how I influence my grandchildren's view of the world and their experience of life.

I am honoured to be a part of my grandchildren's lives. It is a

responsibility I don't take lightly, and I trust I will be forgiven when I screw up because it can happen.

## Grandparenting is Awesome!

*By Ron Martin*

As a child, I was raised on a four-acre property outside of St. Jacobs and my grandparents lived a quarter mile up the road on a dairy farm. When we had our own chores at home finished, we would walk or bike down the road to the farm; we would "ba-room" with our mouth motors as we biked down the road to Grandma's, with such volume, she could hear us leave home!

Whether it was picking apples, pruning trees, or helping with barn chores, we spent most of our childhood on the farm. My grandparents were almost like parents to us; they taught us life lessons about respect and responsibility. I figured out quite early that when Grandpa says the chickens have been fed enough and I continue to feed them, Grandpa doesn't laugh anymore!

Grandpa was a very patient man; when he was teaching me to operate the farm equipment, my legs did not reach the pedals properly and I ran the tractor into the garden fence. Another time, I got stuck in the middle of a wet spot in the field with the tractor and cultivator. As I tried to extricate myself, the tractor overheated and caught fire and burned all the wiring off!

In the fall we would go pick apples in their large orchard; we would get \$0.01 for each pail picked! Who knew that 40 years

later they would get rid of the penny we so longingly looked forward to as we picked! Maple Syrup season was also a big family tradition; March Break was spent in the sugar bush with Grandma and Grandpa. We would boil eggs in the sap and have soft-boiled eggs in the bush. Even though there were many spilled buckets of sap, Grandpa never seemed to run out of patience. When they had enough of us, we would be told to go back home to Mother.

As I turn the clock ahead 40 years, I try to be very mindful of the lessons my Grandpa taught me and to remain patient and teach our own grandchildren the same life lessons. I think, as a relatively young grandparent, it's the best of both worlds. You get to spend time with the little treasures and spoil them, and then send them home with their parents.

Parenting is great, but grandparenting is AWESOME.



*Grandma Rosie holding Everly and Grandpa Ron holding Liam.*



## Parenting offers a new look at grandparenting

By Nicole Woeschka

Growing up we spent a lot of time at my dad's parents' house; we got to "help" Grandma with her canning, baking, cleaning, yard work, etc. We especially enjoyed "helping" Gramps mow the lawn on the riding mower as we didn't have one at home. I have a lot of memories spent at the Three Bridges homestead, but not as many from the Gingrich side.

One of the memories that stick out is when my brother Tyler was a newborn and was in the hospital with Whooping Cough, so Kaitlyn and I stayed at Gramps' house for a week or so. Every evening Dad would come after work for supper before taking supper to the hospital for Mom; Gramps would colour with us before bed. He would always colour the pages with every colour you could think of; Bugs Bunny had never looked so ill as when Gramps coloured his face with 72 colours! There was also the time Gramps went biking with us on the driveway using one of the several kids bikes they had. If you know Henry B, you know he's not a slight man! It was quite a sight to behold!

I remember thinking as a child that Grandma and Grandpa Gingrich were "old," whereas Gramps and Grandma Martin were so much younger. Memories with my Mom's parents included sewing, playing tea party and sometimes helping Grandpa in their backyard garden when they lived on Pintail Drive. Once they moved to the Duke Centre, they became "Grandma with the elevator." They then offered more entertainment in the way of pool table, shuffleboard, and of course more sewing/quilting.

One memory that sticks out for me was helping Grandma Gingrich with one of the coverings she was making, thinking how cool that her template was made of pieces of a Cheerio box, and I somehow cut my finger (undoubtedly because I touched the scissors I had been instructed to avoid). Grandma didn't have Band-aids so I got a tuft of Kleen-

membering the fun activities I try to include them in!

I feel so incredibly blessed that I was able to grow up having two loving sets of grandparents, as I had friends who had already lost theirs at young ages. It was only this past year that I lost my first grandparent, Grandpa Gingrich. I am so glad I used the handful of opportunities to take

my



*Nicole and Liam visit with Nicole's grandfather.*

ex and piece of Scotch Tape! I remember Grandma always had a jar of gumballs in her kitchen cabinet and those candies with wrappers that look like strawberries. One thing I still think of fondly, is Grandma Gingrich ALWAYS had Bachelor Button (Jam-Jam) cookies (or Gramma cookies, as I called them). I will forever think of her when I eat them.

Now that I have children of my own, I have a whole new appreciation for the time and patience my grandparents offered us (Grandmas especially). I can also appreciate how much work it must have been for my mom to cart us to St. Jacobs so often! How did she manage naps?? How did she always seem so patient?? Writing this article has been refreshing for me, as a mom, that my kids will (hopefully) not remember all the times I bellow at them, rather re-

kids to see him and Grandma before he was gone.

One of my favourite things about being a parent is watching my parents absolutely thrive as grandparents! My kids have already got such an amazing relationship with them that warms my heart so much. I love that whenever something exciting happens in her life (everything from using the potty to having an owie), Everly needs to immediately reported it to Daddy and Nama and Papa! I love and appreciate my parents and all the time and enthusiasm they share with my kids more than I could ever say. I look forward to making many more memories with them in the years to come!

## A well-loved “grandmother”

By *Ingrid Loepf Thiessen*

Tante Michi was a gem, a life-line, a role model, deeply spiritual and just all around, a wonderful person. Genuinely positive and gracious she stood out among her peers. She was at the centre of my childhood, my dear great-aunt, Tante Michi (Maria). And, she was deeply loved.

We probably knew her in some of the best years of her life. She was born in peacetime. It was 1898 and she enjoyed a happy childhood in a big stable family. She was married in 1922 during a year of famine. Her world had been turned upside down and shaken beyond recognition. She and her husband, my father's uncle, Onkel Heinz, never had children, or maybe never could as famine and repression and politics and war interrupted their marriage again and again, and finally, violently, tore them from one another. In time she and her sister made their way to Canada, where at the age of fifty she started life again. When we children knew and loved her, she had been in Canada for about 14 years and had scraped together enough money to buy her first home. In her little old home near Portage Avenue in Winnipeg, peace prevailed, finally.

We children held her in the highest esteem. We would race to the car when heading to her house to position ourselves in the seat nearest her front door once the car was parked. This way we could be the first at her door. At our arrival, and she was always waiting for us, her ancient front door would swing open and the welcome would begin. We would fall into the tiny entryway with all our youthful energy and

she would graciously draw us to her.

She would have cooked all day and would usher us to her dining room table. Her usual place setting: a placemat, her Bible and a devotional book where carefully tucked away and a white linen tablecloth and table setting for eight replaced them. Each of us had our own colour of teacup, showing us exactly where we were to sit. On each plate was an ironed cloth napkin and a small card with our name written in the most beautiful Gothic script. Inside was a Bible verse for us to read. Dessert was always Blue Boy ice cream served in tiny glass bowls. Blue Boy ice cream came in small orange and blue boxes it was far superior to the Snowstar ice cream that came in pails which we ate at home. And on extra special days she served us Seven-up.

After supper, while our parents talked with her about life, and the past, and Canada and our few relatives either long-gone or too far away to know, we would explore her house. Everything neat as a pin. Everything in order. Her old house boasted a wool carpet on the steep steps to the second floor. Beginning at the top we would bump down the steps as if they were a tobogganing hill. Her basement was a cellar, but it held a few toys and finally one of us would muster up our courage and head down there to get them. In her dining room was a cuckoo clock; eagerly she waited with us for the cuckoo bird to burst through the door. Never did our antics reach beyond the periphery of her patience.

So many of my childhood memories include Tante Miche. Maybe that is because she was all we had, and in truth we were all she had. Three of our grand-

parents had died decades before we were born and our living grandmother, Margaret Loepf, was out of our reach, living 5000 kilometers beyond the borders of western Europe. Deep inside the USSR, she lived behind an impenetrable iron curtain that our family knew would never be drawn to let anyone in, not children, not grandchildren.

Dutifully, and affectionately, we wrote letters to our far away grandmother. We sent her photos, pictures, drawings and cards and wrote “I love you” in English. And she wrote back and told us of her life in her one room house, of our uncle, our dad's brother, and always of her prayers for us and of her great hope that we never forget how to speak German! She was our grandmother and we ached to know her. But, she was out of reach. So, Tante Miche entered our lives and filled our ocean of emptiness.

It was a gift of grace to our family that she was within reach. It was a gift of mercy that the remnants of a family could find each other again in Canada. It was a gift of love when Tante Miche found her grandchildren and her grandchildren found her. She was a healing balm to our orphaned parents who found in her, a mother.

She, who had never been able to bear children, held us in her mother's embrace and lavished us with love. She gave us the gift of belonging. We were her beloved people and she was ours. Tante Michi was God's gift to us and a wonderful grandmother!





## Grandparenting is a wonderful experience

*By Donna Freeman*

We have been blessed with 12 wonderful grandchildren and are very thankful they all live close by. Three live two doors away, four live within a 20-minute walk and five live ten minutes away by car. It is great to have our grandchildren close by and to be involved in their lives.

In the summer we can pick any night of the week to go watch them play baseball or soccer. In the winter it is school programs, church programs, hockey and karate. There are also numerous sleepovers throughout the year when parents are away.

To celebrate birthdays, we take each child out for dinner and a movie. It is nice to have time alone with each one and find out their special interests and what is happening in their lives. On Valentine's Day each year we host a mystery dinner for grandkids only. They seem to look forward to their food items. It is always a fun evening, especially if they all stay for a sleepover.

We try to spend time with each child equally but have probably spent the most time with our oldest grandchild because of tragic circumstances. When Kyle was eight months old, his father was killed in a car accident. We stayed with Kyle and Sherrin (our daughter) for six months after the accident. Because Kyle was so young, we weren't sure how much he understood about what had happened and the whole grieving process. A lot of times during the night he would wake up and cry for hours. Family support was very important at this time in their lives.

For the next three years we were very involved in Kyle's life

and shared many memorable moments. One memory that comes to my mind is a church service when he wasn't behaving to my expectations. When I stood up to take him out, Kyle said in a very loud voice, "Grandpa, save me!" Grandchildren do keep you humble. Sherrin remarried and Kyle has a wonderful new father. We still share a special bond because of these early years.

Grandparenting is a wonderful experience and we thank God for twelve healthy grandchildren, raised in Christian homes.

## Grandparenting experiences

*By Lester Kehl*

I never knew my grandparents on my father's side and only one grandfather on my mother's side. Wanda spent about a year when she was 10 staying with her grandmother after her grandfather died. They lived down the road and she would go there to sleep with her each night. She enjoyed drinking weak coffee there which she couldn't do at home. This was

a very special relationship for her.

Wanda and I were blessed with 10 grandchildren in seven years. They lived in different communities and so it was a special time when we could get together. We planned for camping experiences in Ohio, Michigan and Ontario, beginning with babies in tents or sometimes in camp cabins.

As we outgrew the diaper stage, we moved to going to recreation places where we all participated—like racing in go-carts. It was a real challenge to try to pass grandma and grandpa. It was exciting both on the track and comparing who got passed and who seemed to have a slower cart.

A more relaxed experience was to sit on the beach of Lake Michigan and watch the grandchildren dig in the sand on the beach or watch the sun set over the water before returning to our camp for a camp fire and marshmallow roast. One of those times there was quite a wind storm on the lake. The next morning some of the parents went to the beach with some of the older children and ended up on Michigan TV because the Red Flag was still up



*The Kehl Clan*

for no swimming. But the parents defended their children as being in a safe part of the water and didn't get a fine.

For several years we celebrated Christmas in July with special t-shirts with the date and place of camping with the Kehl name. This always included a meal at a Chinese smorgasbord where the grandchildren picked their own food from raw sushi, beef and rice and lots of desserts. This was a delayed Christmas present from the grandparents. It was a proud feeling of grand parenting, taking pictures with everyone in the same shirts with Kehl name on the back, and paying for the meal.

But life as grandparents keeps changing and grandchildren grow and prepare to become part of the adult world. Our sharing becomes more a time of listening as they talk about training opportunities, and places to work and learn. We listen and pray for them in their decision-making and often reflect back to the times we have shared together. We know we can never relive the past, but we walk, or stumble, forward, trusting in God.

## Moving to our Grandchildren

By Sandra and Ed Petryschuk

We took our decision to move to our children and grandchildren seriously. There were many discussions between us and with God. We knew that it would take many considerations and courage to start over at this stage in our lives. There were so many things to consider.

We were leaving a well-established circle of friends, our church, volunteer jobs and family. We were leaving familiar surroundings and routines. We didn't want to invade our children's lives (although our children said that

this couldn't happen because we are always travelling☺). We knew that we needed to develop our own new life and figure out how we would spend our time in this new location. There was much soul searching and analysis for over a year.

Days after our first grandson was born, we started the weekly or bi-weekly 401 treks from Leamington to Elmira. We have a close relationship with our children and wanted the same with our grandchildren. Our children started asking us when we were going to move to the area now that we were both retired.

We know it is common for children to go off to school and settle somewhere other than where they grew up, sometimes in other provinces and even other countries. We always felt so grateful that our children moved only 2½ hours away and that they were in the same city AND more importantly that they wanted us to be close to them! Wow! We started realizing that we had the perfect scenario.

We have to admit that telling friends and family that we were moving was rarely with a dry eye. Parents were caught off-guard when we first told them our thoughts. Sandra's mother's response after a few minutes of silence and after she took a deep breath was, "Well... we wanted our children and grandchildren around us, too. We understand." Her response helped us tremendously. Not everyone understood.

Once our decision was made, we started looking for a location. It didn't take too long to find a place that was

about 10 minutes from each of our children and with a playground right across the road. Perfect for when the grandchildren would be visiting!

Now here we are. Our grandsons are Brayden (3 ½) and Connor (1 ½) and we are having so much fun with them. The bond we have is irreplaceable. We miss them dearly if we don't see them within a week.

Our travel getaways have lessened to two, maybe three weeks maximum now. We have found and feel comfortable with our new church family. Our friends laugh that we see them more now because we book regular visits. We have quality visits with our parents every few weeks.

It takes work and effort to maintain our Leamington relationships but being able to be hands-on with the grandchildren is so worth the effort. We believe that we have found the best of both worlds! We feel so very blessed.



*Brayden and Connor Petryschuk*



## Becoming great-grandparents

By Joan Martin

Becoming a grandparent was a wonderful experience. We had four in sixteen months, so lots of visits from them in the early years. The one thing about being a grandparent is that you don't have to discipline them, you just "love them and leave them."

I remember one time I asked my grandson if he wanted a certain thing to eat and he said that mommy does want me to eat that. But when I said that Grandma says you can have it, he enjoyed the treat. I don't know if he told his mommy or not.

When the grandchildren were two years old, I started the tradition of having the birthday child at our house for dinner every year—no parents allowed! Since we ended up having 12 grandkids, it has kept me busy coming up with new things to do with them. To this day we still have them in or go out for dinner, however the married ones can bring their spouses and the great-grandbabies along. I usually cook a lot so they can take leftovers home with them. We have made many memories in the 26 years I have been doing this. It is such a nice way to stay connected with them on a one-to-one basis.

Now that we are great-grandparents, it is a different relationship since they have their grandparents. We now have seven great-grands and another one on the way in January, so we will have eight aged four and under!!! What a joy to watch them parent their young ones.

When our daughter-in-law passed away three years ago, she left behind two grandchildren ages one and three-weeks old. I was a little more involved with her children after that and I would say, "Come to Grandma," to the little

ones. Then I said to my granddaughter that I don't want them to think that I am the Grandma, so she suggested that I be called "Gigi." It warms my heart when my little great-grand-babe says, "Hi Gigi!"

We have been so blessed with our family. One thing I know for sure is that the Martin name is not about to die!!



## Grandparenting is rewarding

By Bonnie Martin

Becoming grandparents has been such a rewarding experience. We haven't been grandparents very long, the oldest grandchild is 27 months; we have three with one on the way in January.

Storytime, snacks and wagon rides to see the "moo-moos" are always sure to please. We have yet to experience sleepovers and day trips with them, which as soon as they are ready away we go!!

It is such a joy, watching them grow and develop into their own special personalities. Not having the responsibilities and the day-to-day stressors of raising them is a bonus of being a grandparent. We enjoy helping out whenever needed, which has been such a fulfillment in our lives. We know how much we appreciated help when raising our own children and how busy and demanding it can be.

My children said to me it's not the gifts that they remember the most from their grandparents, it's the time they spent with them and the words of encouragement as they grew up!

We hope to pass that onto our grandchildren as well.

## Grandparenting is indescribable

By Laurel Martin

In April of this year we became grandparents for the first time. It's like most events in our life experiences, hard to explain unless you have experienced it. To watch your children become parents is really truly a new chapter. The joy and love that spills over for a grandchild is indescribable.

We feel grateful and blessed to have the gift of Addy in our lives. We too have lots of visits and spend lots time together, even in this short time. As I reflect, I don't think Addy will say her Grandma Martin is quiet! However, I do pray Addy grows up knowing that her faith, family and heritage are important and will provide her with a blessed path.



Addy at 5 months

## Grandparenting is fun

By Susan Martin

What does it mean to be a grandparent? All sorts of emotions surface. Excitement, tenderness, love for these new little people who have entered your life. James and I have four grandchildren—Colton, Lane, Sullivan and Wren. They each have their own unique personalities...well we expect Lane



will as he is only 27 days old as I write this.

We are called “Grandma and Grandpa from the farm” and “Grandma with the crazy hair” and “Grandpa with the white moustache.”

The farm is a big fun place for our grandchildren to explore. New lambs in the barn—sometimes a bottle lamb to feed!! The garden is potluck heaven. You can eat your way through the blackberries on to the peas and carry on through to the carrots, and on to the cucumbers. Pick some pretty flowers for your Mom.

Don’t forget the tractors and equipment. Oh the joy if there is crop to be harvested—watching as the tractor and baler with a wagon in tow march down the field baling hay or straw. Or an extra special event if the combine is there chewing through the wheat. It is no wonder there are tears sometimes when it’s time to go home. But there is always the reassurance that they can come to the farm again the next day!

I hope they never lose their sense of wonder at the small regular things in life. It’s a good reminder to stop, slow down and just let life happen.

AHHH Grandchildren! Who knew they would be so much fun!!

## My grandparents were people of deep faith

*By Jim Loep Thiessen*

My grandparents on my mom’s side of our family were German-speaking, and that fact speaks a great deal about my relationship with them. They came to Canada from the terrors of Russia as thirty-year-old adults. Canada was their second home. I have memories as a young child of listening to my grandmother speak German and being able to understand her. I probably got most of the little Ger-

man I have from them. (My parents had decided with my younger sister and I that we probably wouldn’t want German, and didn’t speak it to us, something I wished they had done!)

I had little relationship with these grandparents. They lived in another part of the province, and then later in another province entirely, so I didn’t see them very often. But even when I did see them, there was no real connection with them because of the language barrier (And they just seemed so old to me!). In any case, I have no memories of my grandparents playing with me, or really even interacting with me, although I’m guessing that must have happened. A primary memory I have of my grandmother is her standing over the stove stirring chicken soup. Both grandparents died when I was in my teens.

On my father’s side, his dad died two years before I was born. His mom spoke some English, but she was also primarily German-speaking. I remember visiting her home as a child and playing with the toys she had, and later as a young adult visiting her once in the nursing home where she lived.

My grandparents on both sides were people of deep faith, and their faith would have provided a spiritual backdrop to my faith. The spiritual values they held were passed on to my parents, who in turn passed them on to me. I just got an autobiography that my grandmother wrote, and the theme throughout the difficulties they faced in Russia, leaving to come to Canada, and the struggles of crop failure and hardship here, was that God provides in and through the difficulties.

## Grandparenting brings new life perspective

*By Mary Frey Martin*

The joke is told: if I’d known being a grandparent was this much fun, I would have done it a long time ago.

I knew after my children grew up that I was hoping for grandchildren, but of course there was no control over that situation, so I was very, very thrilled when I found out it was to be!

I despise driving on the 401 to Toronto, and I despise driving on the Don Valley Parkway, however I do it to get to see my grandbabies. Often I take the GO train, but that is a long day as I have to take two subways and a bus after I arrive at Union Station, and it seems like the entire city of Brampton gets onto that GO train, making it very crowded. In the evening I sometimes have to stand until Brampton till I get a seat on my return journey. However, this is all done so that I can see my grandchildren.

The only thing about having grandchildren that is difficult is that it causes us to really look at the world we live in and worry about the future for our grandchildren. What kind of a world will they have to live in? I suppose we all have concern for the next generations, but it feels more acute when we know and love the ones who are going to be here when we are no longer.

We do what we can to make this world a better place for them.

And, of course, every time Orval and I hear of another shooting in downtown Toronto we have a little more reason for prayers for the safety of our family.



*Jonas with Grandpa Orval.*

## Little things make memories

By Erma Wideman

I have no memories of my Grandma Frey as she passed away before I was born and all I remember about Grandpa Frey was seeing him in the casket. My Dad had to lift me up so I could see. I was only three, but that memory has stayed with me all these years.

My sister and I would go to the Martin grandparents in the summer holidays. I was influenced as I watched Grandma work in her kitchen (simple but spotless), humming away with me at her side. She was a kind and gentle soul. She would make a nest on the floor for my sister and I in a room right next to her bedroom so we would feel safe.

So now I do the same thing for my grandchildren who don't want to be far away from me. For the two that are close by, I spend time with them on PD days. I pick them up from school and take them home when they are unwell or if they have an appointment. I try to go to some of the sports—hockey, baseball and volleyball.

It's different for the two in North Carolina. When they come home, one of our special things to do is we go together to the bakery for my morning coffee and their hot chocolates. I once read that putting faith in traditions and doing special little details brings warmth and security to a young child. It's the little things that make the biggest memories—like making a grilled cheese sandwich, French toast, baking cookies, making applesauce. These are some of our traditions.

When Jackson comes from Toronto, we too go to the bakery, but his treat is a chocolate whoopie pie. The other highlight for him is going to the Conestoga River or to the St. Jacobs dam to fish. He takes after his grandpa in his love of fishing.

It is so interesting to me to see how our genes get passed on through our children and grandchildren. In some you see more of yourself than in others, but they are there if you observe long enough.

I have been blessed with nine grandchildren. They bring much joy and happiness. I hope my grandchildren will be able to say that their grandparents made their world a little softer, kinder and warmer. To always unconditionally love them, no matter what, is my prayer.

## Bidding Farewell to Khadeejah Badu

By Darrell Jantzi

On August 30 we received a call from our friend, Hilda Badu, sharing the sad news of her 12-year-old daughter Khadeejah's unexpected death in her sleep....*she just didn't wake up*. They had just arrived home from a vacation to visit Grandma Byay in Granada the evening before without awareness of any visible signs of discomfort.

Khadeejah was excited to reunite with her dog Peewee and best friends Julia and Shaya and begin 7<sup>th</sup> grade at St. Timothy's School the next week. She was an A student and desired to become a veterinarian. She gave her dog a long bath and lovingly dried and brushed her down before heading to bed after their hot tiring trip.

Khadeejah shared a bed with her mother who arose at 8 a.m. while her daughter slept in that morning. Natisha, her older sister, made the terrible discovery and frantically called her mom Hilda upstairs at about 11 a.m. Everyone was in shock and they called 911 for assistance, but her body was already cold. An autopsy revealed death was the result of silent pneumonia and choking with much fluid and food in her lungs.

Several days later, Khadeejah's dog ran away from home and was finally found by

Hilda waiting for Khadeejah in the park behind her school. Her dog is also grieving.

Hilda Badu's family were part of the Jane-Finch Faith Community when Khadeejah was born and Hilda lived as a single mom with four growing children. She was thankful to their pastors Clayton and Amy Kuepfer for inviting their family to share in semi-annual exchanges with Floradale Mennonite over



*Hilda Badu, with her family around her, releases a dove at her daughter's graveside.*



many years and endeared themselves to us, their host family.

The dad, Steve, had become an absentee father soon after Khadeejah's premature birth when mother and child remained hospitalized for several weeks. Although her birth weight was below three pounds, she grew quickly, walked at 10 months old and became a very active child appearing much older and mature for her age. She was adored by her family, friends and teachers at school, often expressing herself on behalf of her peers.

We have wonderful memories of their weekends with us when the family, and sometimes Hilda's mother, joined in with those bus trips for a great weekend with Floradale...an event that included an outdoor barbecue at Orval and Mary's farm, picking strawberries, visits to a neighbouring farm to see all the animals and chickens, enjoy pony rides and play games till midnight with the Jantzis who loved and welcomed them warmly into their home.

Hilda Badu had moved to Toronto from Granada years ago and was a confessing Christian mother who worked hard to teach and instill Christian family values. Her children are a tribute to her strong faith and effort to raise her family to know the Lord and walk in His ways. They associated with Jane-Finch Faith Community where Hilda taught a Bible Study when they lived at the Tobermory high-rise and with neighbouring Pentecostal and Seventh-Day Adventist churches close to where they lived in Toronto. She wanted Khadeejah to attend a Christian school and chose St. Timothy's RC in their community. We felt so proud of

Jamal, now 25, and Natashi 21, really fine young people, graduates of a local college, whose support for their mom touched our hearts.

The memorial service they planned for Khadeejah reflected their faith values with a strong contingent of their local Christian friends participating. Hilda's hometown Granada neighbours and many friends and those now living in Toronto, teachers, school friends with their mothers, and about 14 fellow Taxi drivers who worked with Mr. Badu in North York, came together in support of their friend in the taxi business.



*Colourful balloons were released to remember Khadeejah.*

Florence and I represented Floradale Mennonite Church friends in the service as part of a small minority of white people gathered at DeMarco Funeral Home and felt very much part of a Christian community who loved and grieved the passing of this dear child. Mr. Badu was deeply grieving as well, and the children and Hilda welcomed him into the circle surrounding the casket as they cried and said their goodbyes.

The pastor of St. Timothy's presided at the memorial service and graveside where about 150 friends attended. The service was meaningfully planned by Khadeejah's family with Natisha, a very gifted sister selecting four recorded hymns, *Break every chain; I give myself away; Mama's Hand;*

and *Yesu Du Me*, prepared the order and operated the audio visual controls throughout the Service. As the pastor spoke from the Scriptures, there were *Amens* and many tears as we anticipated in their cultural Christian worship settings and Jesus was truly honoured. Repeated several times, was a desire *that her death not be in vain and that all be prepared for God's call to come home.*

A long procession of cars followed the hearse to the Beechwood Cemetery in the neighbourhood of Black Creek Pioneer Village. At the conclusion of the committal service, many mauve balloons were released and Khadeejah's mother held a white dove and released it praying, "We now release our dear daughter to you oh God and entrust her into your loving and tender care." The casket was lowered and friends were invited place a rose on the casket and to help close the grave.

We were deeply moved throughout this whole experience as people were so present with the family. An afternoon reception followed at the Ghanaian Anglican Church basement where friends gathered to continue in a fellowship meal with the family.

An opportunity to contribute toward the funeral costs was arranged by friends and several elders accounted for funds received with names and addresses to enable the Badu family to send thank you letters. We were happy to share a sympathy card and love gift of \$1,000 on behalf of many individual friends at Floradale. Hilda wanted us to thank all for our kindness and wonderful memories over the years and for our assistance with gifts toward their funeral expenses.

## Births:

Congratulations to Casey and Bryan Horn on the birth of their son Logan William on July 31, 2019. He is a sister to Aubrey and a grandson to Sharon and Rick Cressman.

Lane James, a brother to Colton, was born Aug. 26 to Matt and Corrie Martin. Matt is the son of James and Susan Martin.

MacKenzie Mae was born August 31, a first child for Kaitlyn and Justin Bourtien. She is a granddaughter of Ron & Rosie Martin

## Engagements:



Jocelyn Martin and Brett Shantz plan to be married at Floradale Mennonite Church on May 23, 2020. Jocelyn is the daughter of Bonnie and Randy Martin. Brett's parents are Rick and Doreen Shantz who have a farm at Yatton. Brett and Jocelyn will join them in their farming operation.



*Phil Martin and Saskia Brennemacher plan to be married in the summer of 2020. Phil is the son of Mary and Orval Martin. Saskia's parents are from Germany.*



Hannah Redekop and Ala'eddin are planning to be married in a Muslim wedding on Nov. 22, 2019 in Jordan followed by a Christian wedding in Jordan in the spring. The traditional Muslim wedding will be small with close family only. Fred and Shirley plan to be there, so greetings to Hannah can be sent with them. This photo was taken at the Roman theatre in Amman, Jordan.

## Special Anniversaries

Congratulations to Earl and Karen Gingrich who will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary on Nov. 24, 2019.

## 90th birthday party



*Among those who helped Edna Bauman celebrate her 90th birthday were her daughters Sherrin Clemmer and Denise Bauman and her daughter-in-law Rita Bauman.*