

LUMINARIES



A message from Lucie Leduc

Executive Director

It is difficult to find enough words to express our gratitude to you – our faithful benefactors – for your ongoing support.

We are humbled by and in awe of your generosity, and constantly seek ways to express our gratitude to you. Because of you, we have been able to continue our mission even in these difficult times.

Thank you and thank you again. In the words of St. Paul 1Thess 2: “*We always thank God every day for all of you, remembering you in our prayers*”. This special newsletter is dedicated to you. We have named it “*Luminaries*.”

What exactly is a luminary? Its meaning is two-fold: (1) a body that gives light, and (2) a person who inspires or influences others.²² By extension of this definition, persons who give of their time, talent and treasure are luminaries, and the Star is blessed by the support of all of you.

The COVID pandemic has had a profound effect on the Star and its programs and services. Initially, we were forced to close our doors entirely and cancel all programs, courses and meetings. Staff had to be temporarily laid off; revenue from fees and tuitions ended; yet, we were still faced with expenses to operate and maintain the facility.

Somehow, donations continued to come in, most of them, without us even asking. Here are but a few of the highlights of 2021 and of our three-year capital campaign:

- Our Camino fundraiser became a virtual fundraiser for the second year in a row. Thanks to the generosity of our participants and their sponsors, we raised \$31,161.
- In November 2018 we initiated a capital campaign. Though personal hardships and difficulties were experienced by some of our luminaries, they fulfilled their campaign pledges, and The Star received approximately \$365,000 in donations over three years. Thus, in 2019, we were able to replace our roof shingles and add chapel windows. In 2020, we painted the exterior of the retreat house, fortified all our exterior fire exits and doors. Finally, in 2021, our chapel was completely renovated! Our campaign is concluded and, owing to every one of you, it was a great success.
- Our three-year plan for the upgrades and maintenance of the Star of the North buildings didn't miss a beat! Special mention goes to the Catholic Women's League who came forward in 2021 with a large donation that covered the cost of brand new and high quality chairs for the chapel. An individual donor

also came forward with a significant gift which paid for the completion of the chapel of repose for the Blessed Sacrament and for private prayer.

- Then, in December, an anonymous donor pledged a gift of \$25,000 to match gifts made by other donors. In total, \$75,950 was raised. We have been greatly blessed at a time when it has been so very needed.
- Our dear friends, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, are always willing to offer their support. This year was no exception. They contributed a total of \$20,000 to assist with the chapel renovation.
- Many donors contributed throughout the year: old friends and new friends granted their support. Among them, a private family foundation made a first-time gift. Your support not only helped cover the operating expenses, it provided the funds necessary to develop and launch the three-year Aurora Living program. This is a 3-year program aimed at contemplative living, informed by Christian, Indigenous and other wisdom traditions to guide our response to contemporary needs and times. Because of your contribution, this program is currently in its second of the nine modules with inspiring presenters and engaged participants delving into scripture, ecology, truth and reconciliation. Thank you for your help to make this a reality!

There are so many generous people who we are proud to count among our benefactors. In this first issue of our donor newsletter – *Luminaries* – we tell the story of one such donor, Pius Pfeifer. Mr. Pfeifer passed away in 2020. His impact on the Star of the North will be felt for generations.

In this issue, we provide information on other forms of giving you may wish to consider in your future planning. Also, watch for information on the 2022 Camino and read the first-hand experience of one of the pilgrims on the journey in the 2021 Camino.

And most importantly, in this newsletter, we want to express our gratitude to you once again: our cherished luminaries and friends. Thank you! May this year, 2022, be blessed with good health, wonderful memories, and an abundance of God's blessings.



The Camino

Written by Josee Marr
Board Member

On the evening of Saturday 26 June 2021, while the heat dome was hovering over the Western provinces, I began my 10k Camino pilgrimage on the shaded trails along the Edmonton river valley. It was +28 degrees Celsius.

I was not alone on this prayerful walk. Many other friends of the Star of the North Retreat Centre were walking and praying on various trails and paths near and far. We were walking together virtually carrying the prayer intentions of our sponsors who generously supported us on the way for The Star of the North.

The annual fundraiser, Camino walk, for the mission of The Star of the North Retreat Centre, is inspired by the famous Camino De Santiago de Compostela, in Spain. The word 'Camino' means path or way. A common experience shared by pilgrims on their Camino points to the providence of God manifested through circumstances and people at a moment of need.

The Star of the North is an oasis on the journey for many as they experience the need for a rest, for a listening friend, for encouragement, and for a sign of God's presence - the providence of God expressed through the effort and contribution of walkers and their sponsors.

In 2022, everyone is invited to walk the Camino on Saturday or Sunday 25 & 26 June. We have learned these last two years that we can walk together while on different paths. Like the rest of the world, we have learned that our connection reaches beyond the physical and geographical dimensions. Participants walked at their convenience on the designated Camino weekend (Sat or Sun). It proved fruitful. Hence, for the 2022 Camino, participants will have the option of walking as a group from a starting point on a specific day or continue with a personal walk, on a day, time, and route of their choosing.

One of St Augustine's well-known quotes is "It is solved by walking." Thousands of pilgrims from around the world make pilgrimages as a personal and spiritual journey, as a way of prayer and reflection for their needs, the needs of others and the world. Walking the Camino (the Way) offers the experience of simple living in the present moment.

In gratitude for the ministry of the Star of the North, let us walk together the Camino 2022 and illuminate the way to this place of rest and peace, this place of healing and hope ... a beautiful place on the Camino of life.

Pius Pfeifer: Community Builder – Entrepreneur – Philanthropist



You know you have led a remarkable and meaningful life when those are words people use to describe you after your death. Such is the case with Pius Pfeifer. Pius, the youngest of five children, was born in Heidelberg, Germany, where he met his wife of 67 years, Ida Bader. At the age of 19, she followed him to Saskatoon, (where he had recently moved with his brother, Peter), and they were married in 1953. Pius initially worked as a goldsmith, but soon saw that there was a better future in the construction industry and became a plumber. The business thrived, and by 1963, he had purchased his first hotel – one of his many and varied business interests. Others included engineered home development, cattle ranching, a laundromat, apartment buildings, and restaurants. Likewise, his interests were varied, from Golden Gloves boxing, to playing the accordion, to fishing, hunting, and traveling – both near and far.

In addition to his wife, Ida, Pius left behind four children, and twelve grandchildren. Daughter Linda felt one of Pius' strongest qualities was that he was a good and empathic listener, who would listen to her concern or interest, and offer a response that would set her at ease or point her in a positive direction. Gary, his eldest

son, described him as a “wise, discerning thinker”, who would always challenge him to look at any issue twice before making judgements, and to probe deeper to see what was really being said or was at stake.

But what Pius will be most fondly remembered for in his community is his deep faith and determination to make our world a better place. He was a member of his parish council, a lifelong member of the Knights of Columbus, and a generous supporter in time and treasure of a great variety of charities. It was no surprise to anyone who knew him when he was awarded the 2018 Battlefords Citizen of the Year Award for his dedication to the community.

The Star of the North Retreat Center was blessed to be among the charities he supported. Pius first became a friend of the Oblates when his sons attended St. Thomas College. His friendship with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate continued for decades, growing further to include the entire community of St. Mary’s Province when he and Ida moved to Edmonton. In the words of Bishop Sylvain Lavoie, “He was a man of deep faith in God’s love for us all, lived that faith with integrity, and expressed it best through his love and concern for Ida, his family, his church and all those who were in need.”

In his book, the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, author Steven Covey suggests we begin the process of becoming more effective people by starting at the end. That is, by imagining ourselves observing what other people will say about us at our funeral, and adjusting our lives to reflect what we would like them to say. Some of the material in this article came from Pius’ eulogy. Had Pius Pfeifer had the ability to witness his own celebration of life, he may not have found much in need of change.

(Pius was a generous contributor to The Star over the years and especially to the Capital Campaign these past three years. Our projects would not have happened without him. We honor his memory with gratitude.)

Where there’s a Will, There’s a Way!



You have supported your favorite charities for decades. You can continue your support with a valid Will, so that the life and love you have given through your generosity to the Star and other charities can continue to bear fruit after you have passed.

There are two common types of bequests in Wills. The first is one that is made for a specific amount. It would look somewhat like this: “I direct that \$5,000 be given to the Star of the North Retreat House”. The second leaves a percentage of the residue of the estate as part of a Will: “I leave 25% of my estate to the Star of the North Retreat House”.

Either way, the Star of the North benefits from your support. We are grateful to you! For further information, please contact Lucie Leduc, Executive Director, at 780-459-5511.



Planning Your Gift for the Future

Do you have shares in publicly traded securities that have enjoyed growth over the years? Did you know that there are great advantages to donating them to a charity, such as the Star of the North?

The first is that you may realize some great tax advantages. The second is that you will help secure the financial stability of the Star for future generations.

This is how it works. When one cashes in publicly traded securities, 50 percent of the capital gain is taxable. However, should you directly **transfer them to the agent for the Star of the North**, you receive a tax receipt for their full market value at the time of transfer. In effect, you are more than cancelling out the taxes on the capital gains through the charitable tax deduction you will receive.

Here is an example. You have shares worth \$10,000, and of that 2,000 is capital gains. You would be required to pay taxes on 50% of that capital gain or on \$1,000. At a 35 percent tax rate, you would pay the Canada Revenue Agency \$350. However, if you were to donate the \$10,000 in securities by transferring them directly to the agent for the Star of the North, you would receive a charitable tax receipt for \$10,000. Of that, you would receive approximately half back, or roughly \$5,000, in the form of charitable tax credits, thereby more than eliminating the capital gains tax. Instead of paying \$400, you would receive \$5,000 back, and would have the satisfaction of knowing they are making a difference in our community. It is truly a win-win situation for both you and the Star.

Publicly traded securities can be donated now, or through one's estate plans. For further information, please contact Lucie Leduc, Executive Director, at 780-459-5511.
