

Hello everyone. My name is Peter Kuipers and I serve on the Charis Board as co-chairman. I want to thank all of you for coming out today and I would like to take a few minutes to talk about the history of how Charis has come about and also a little bit about our vision.

Back in 2008 Pauline Prins instigated a meeting with a group of volunteers to explore the possibility of providing an “aging in place facility” based on Christian values for the Lacombe/ Central Alberta region. At ensuing meetings a vision statement was developed and we selected the name “Charis” which means “grace”. We envisioned a community where seniors may “age with grace”. We believe that grace is a gift from God, and we hope as Charis grows, it will integrate within the community and develop into a gift for the Lacombe and Central Alberta communities. In 2009, we raised seed money to help us get this project off the ground. By the end of 2009, after many organizational meetings, we elected Board members and formed two societies: a Housing Society and a Housing Foundation. We also secured charitable status for our Housing Foundation.

In 2009 the Board also commissioned a study which was completed by two professors at The King’s University in Edmonton. They were entitled, “Creating Outstanding Practices in Continuing Care” and “Building a Community of Grace, Dignity and Hope.” These documents helped us to formulate the type of facility and community we hoped to build.

The next tasks were to look for a piece of land on which to build this facility and to look for investors who shared our vision. Over a period of a few years we looked at a number of different parcels of land and in 2015 we signed a conditional contract with Burman University to purchase 15 acres with an option to purchase an additional 10 acres in the future. We want to thank Burman University for their support and for the opportunity to purchase these lands. In 2015 and 2016 many visits were made to potential investors who shared our vision. Investors were secured and, a few weeks ago, a limited partnership was finalized. The funds raised enabled us to purchase and begin development of the land. We closed on the 15 acre property on September 28, 2018 and, weather permitting, the grading and deep services will begin shortly. In the past couple of years we have worked closely with the City of Lacombe and I would like to thank them for their support. Mayor Grant Creasy along with the City councillors and the City administration have been most helpful.

In the spring of next year we hope to begin construction of a 46 suite apartment building and 20 duplex units which will be all independent living. The apartment building will be a pre-cast building supplied by Eagle Builders from Blackfalds. This is the first of five phases for the 15 acre parcel. As the need increases and resources become available the “Village” hopes to expand into assisted living and long term care. In a couple of weeks we will begin pre-leasing units as we will open a sales office in the top floor of the Co-operators building in downtown Lacombe.

Our vision statement says the following, (quote) “to establish a not for profit organization based on Christian values, providing a caring community for seniors by respecting their needs with dignity and compassion.” (end quote)

The Christian values mentioned in our vision statement will become the core of who we are and how we provide care. They encompass things such as care, respect, compassion, dignity and love for others.

I want to thank all of our Board members and committee members who have spent many, many volunteer hours working on this project over the past 10 years. These women and men are from all walks of life: land developers, farmers, business owners, retirees, an accountant, and all of them have dedicated an incredible amount of time to make this project move forward. I want to thank other volunteers, donors and our investors. Without their vision this

project would not be able to move forward. I would also like to thank our consultant, Marten Van Huizen and his team who have guided us every step of the way for the past ten years. Their direction and expertise have been invaluable to us.

I am thankful to the Lord for His guiding hand over the years. Throughout this process we have always felt the assurance that He has been with us, moving Charis forward. We trust that He will continue to lead us into the future.

Thank you.