

Recreating a Memory in Peter's Pantry

By Rachel Dobson, Recreation Programmer

Peter Lambros, 93, moved into the Perley Rideau on November 18th 2015. He was immediately involved in the daily routine on his unit, making friends with his tablemates and joining every recreation program that sparked his interest. We were quick to notice what an outgoing man Peter is, and how much he enjoys the company of others.

Born in Montréal in 1922, his parents had moved over from Greece with two daughters. Peter's mother died before he was one so his father raised Peter and his two older sisters. When Peter was 19 he joined the Army, Blackwatch Montreal, and was transferred to west Nova Scotia. He went overseas, landing in France then travelled through Belgium, Holland, and into Germany. Peter saw the end of the war in Germany.

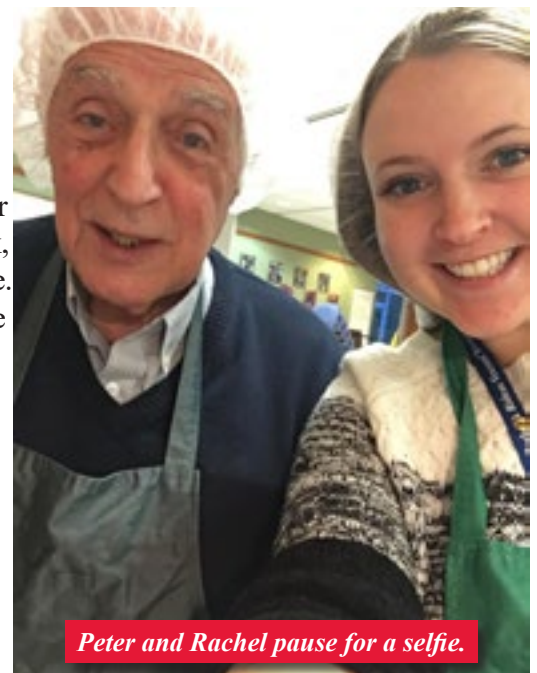


Stef, Peter and Rachel work to recreate the magic of Peter's Pantry

When Peter returned from the war, he married Beatrice in Montreal and together they had three boys; Nick, Frank, and Peter. During his life after the war Peter owned three restaurants. He opened Au Petit Cyne (the little white swan) on Main St in Hull, then Miss Lynwood in Bells Corners, and finally Peter's Pantry in 1965 located at 1394 Richmond Road, Ottawa. Peter's Pantry was open for 33 years, including when Peter retired and passed the restaurant over to his 3 sons. Many people in Ottawa will remember Peter's Pantry with reviews like "it was the best restaurant in the west end, the best Boston cream pie!" and "the food was excellent, best pizza and zucchini sticks in town." (Source: peterspantry.foodpages.ca)

As you can imagine we were excited to get Peter back in the kitchen! Recreation Programmers Rachel Dobson and Stef Deschamps got to work on creating a Peter's Pantry Special meal on his unit in the Rideau Building. Working with Peter we created a menu out of his old cook book! He chose to make a homemade lasagna and Caesar Salad! On Friday January 15th, the big day was here! We invited a few residents from his building to join us for dinner as well as a lifelong friend of Peters, Claudette, joined us. We got right to work, chopping the veggies, sautéing the meat, and simmering the perfect meat sauce. Layering it between lasagna noodles, and lots of cheese, we could see the pride and focus in Peter's face paying attention to every detail in his food.

In total, there were 8 residents, staff, and friends gathered around the table ready to enjoy Peter's Pantry meal. A neighbouring resident of his gave a toast to the amazing meal Peter, Rachel, and Stef had created! The most rewarding part was the permanent smile Peter had on his face while everyone dug into their plates! He was very appreciative for the experience. Needless to say everyone licked their plates clean!! We are looking forward to cooking with Peter again!



Peter and Rachel pause for a selfie.