

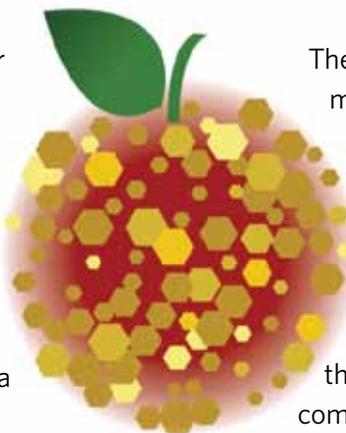


CUMMINGS JEWISH CENTRE FOR SENIORS FOUNDATION

THE POWER OF INSPIRED GIVING

Shana Tova!

Welcome to the second edition of our Foundation newsletter, offering an in-depth look at some of the exceptional people and programs that help support the senior population at the Cummings Centre. It is through the care and generosity of donors like you that we are able to continue to offer programs and services that make a difference in the lives of so many.



The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed to us, more than ever before, how many seniors are vulnerable and facing an uncertain future. With your help, we can continue our work to ensure that no one is forgotten.

We thank you for helping to make this a sweet new year for everyone in our community!

Roslyn Wiener

Co-President

Allan Chandler, CPA, CA

Co-President

Cathy Simons, MSW

Executive Director

PASSIONATELY DEVOTED TO THE CUMMINGS CENTRE AT 98

Encountering Helen Scharf's ebullient spirit and infectious energy, anyone she meets would be amazed to learn that she recently marked her 98th birthday. "I'm still celebrating - I'll be celebrating the whole year," Helen says with a smile.

A familiar face at the Cummings Centre for many years, Helen thrives on being active: "I feel great, I feel energetic. I cannot just sit - ever. I multitask."





Born in Ottynia, a shtetl in Poland (today part of Ukraine), Helen joined cousins in Montreal in 1939, the only one in the family able to get a visa. Tragically, she arrived just three months before the invasion of Poland and there was no time for her family to follow.

"I lost all my family - my mom, dad, sister, and grandma."

Not long after she arrived in Montreal, Helen married and had a daughter then a son. The family also fostered a young woman from Czechoslovakia, who had first been sent to the UK as part of the Kindertransport.

Helen quickly learned English, as well as French, so that she could join her husband in the fur business.

"I came here with five languages so, I thought, what is one or two more?"

In addition to speaking Polish, Ukrainian, Yiddish, Hebrew, German, plus English and French, Helen later added Spanish, attending evening school in Florida, where she lived for 30 years to be near her son. Previously, at home in Montreal, Helen had always worked full time but also found time for volunteer work, including joining friends to raise money for cancer research: "We would go downtown to St. Catherine Street to all the chichi restaurants and nightclubs and go from table to table asking for donations. They would offer us a drink at the bar, we would catch a beautiful show - boy, did we have a good time."

In Florida, Helen continued to give her time to those who needed it. After she babysat for a family with three children while the parents went on holiday, word spread quickly. "I went from place to place with a little suitcase - like Mary Poppins but without the umbrella. I met such wonderful people, beautiful families. It was heaven, just heaven."

After her son passed away, Helen moved back to Montreal to be close to her daughter once again. A friend invited her to lunch at the Cummings Centre cafeteria,

which offered subsidized meals. Helen was eager to help in any way she could, moved and inspired by the clientele who had trouble affording nutritious meals: "I used to come in every morning at 8 am, put my apron on - making salads, making sandwiches. The people there were wonderful."

Helen also volunteered with the Centre's Day Program, which caters to clients with varying needs and health challenges: "Most of these people were much younger than I am but they had many issues which I had not experienced yet - memory problems, confusion. It gave me such a lift to see how much they could do. Vicky [music therapist Victoria McNeill] would bring her ukulele and sing songs - these people remembered every song from way back, all the words ... I was always very grateful that I was there. "

While she remains very independent, Helen greatly appreciates her **Meals on Wheels** from the Cummings Centre, especially during the pandemic: "I am very pleased with it. It's delivered to the door and I see a volunteer and I get to thank her for what she is doing. A cheese blintz and some sour cream - with maybe a little soup or salad before - and I am happy as a lark."

The CJCS Foundation's Mitzvah Meal program helps support Meals on Wheels at the Cummings Centre.

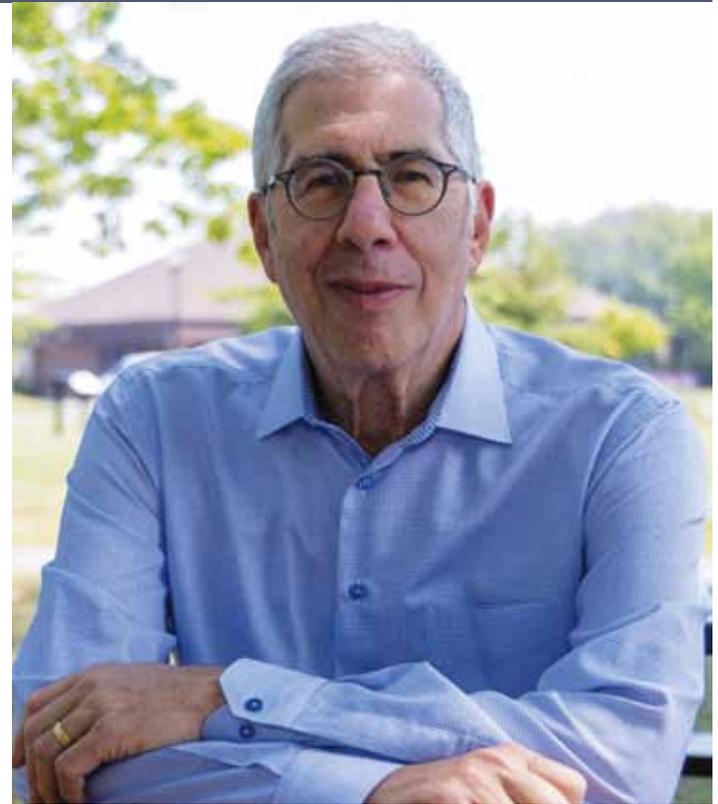
This has been our most successful Rosh Hashanah edition to date! Participants sent beautiful holiday cards their loved ones, while their donations helped to ensure seniors in our community are able to enjoy nutritious meals.

A warm thank you to all the generous donors and volunteers who make this essential program possible!

Helen occasionally takes advantage of transport services but will still get on a city bus or walk as long as she can. "I like the action. I was always very active - I bicycled, I skiddooed, I skated, I bowled, I danced - I can't stay put. That's my demeanor and I'm not going to stop until they carry me away ... and I want to be carried like some Greek Goddess on the shoulders of several tall, dark and handsome men!"

Funds raised through our Foundation help ensure that The Cummings Centre can provide a home away from home for seniors like Helen. Learn how you can contribute by calling 514.734.1825 or see: [Ways to Give | Cummings Centre](#)

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A DEDICATED DUO BECOMES THE FOUNDATION BOARD'S FIRST CO-PRESIDENTS

At the Foundation's Annual General Meeting in June, we were thrilled to welcome our first Co-Presidents, Roslyn Wiener and Allan Chandler. Both Roz and Allan, who just completed his two-year term as President, are exceptionally dedicated volunteers at both the Cummings Centre and Foundation, bringing a wealth of experience, energy, and a co-operative spirit to their new roles.

Roz Wiener is a dynamic presence in and around the Cummings Centre, where she was President from 2017-2019, after previously being Vice President and serving on numerous committees.

"I have always been inspired by my mother as someone dedicated to community," says Roz, recalling her mother's involvement at Hadassah-WIZO and other organizations. In turn, Roz has passed on her passion for volunteerism to her two grown daughters who are also involved in community causes, as well as being mothers to Roz's four granddaughters, ranging in age from 7 to 21.

Following in the footsteps of her two sisters, Roz began her career as a teacher. When her children were in high school, she became Executive Director of the Starlight Children's Foundation, the first Canadian office of the international wish-granting organization. While the job could be emotional, it was also inspiring. "It was very heartwarming ... dealing with the families and seeing how optimistic the kids were, and how upbeat the parents were." Roz's next role was as Executive Director of the Canadian Technion Society. "It was stimulating and merged well with my background in education and fundraising."

When she retired in 2005, Roz came by the Cummings Centre to pay a visit to Lynn Gordon, Director of Volunteer Services - who had been her camper when she was a counselor at Camp Hiawatha in Sainte-Agathe - and was soon inspired by all the Centre had to offer.

"The Cummings Centre provides wonderful opportunities to people who are looking for something new in their lives that will either help them to grow in new directions or help them to give back - wherever their interests lie," says Roz, continuing, "It's such an important place ... not only for its courses and programs but because of the people it helps: those who benefit from dementia programs or adapted exercise programs, Holocaust survivors who have a place to go and meet - there are just so many needs that Cummings fills."

Looking ahead, Roz expects many more needs to come up in the future: "So many of the older generation of our seniors have suffered throughout the pandemic, unable to see their families, or even to go shopping - it made life very lonely and very difficult. Our Foundation's work is more important than it ever has been."

A chartered accountant by profession, Allan Chandler loves numbers, searching out problems - and finding solutions. As Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer of Maxwell Cummings & Sons Holdings Limited, the management arm of the Cummings family of Montreal, he has worked in the same building on Sherbrooke Street West for more than 50 years. Allan and his wife Diane have three grown children and five grandchildren, including identical twin boys born last year.

Now "theoretically" working just one day a week, Allan dedicates an abundance of time to Cummings Centre Foundation business, bringing a lighthearted sense of humour along with his exacting eye.

Allan's first introduction to Cummings was as a volunteer waiter at the Centre's Le Café in 2012. Intrigued and impressed by the range of activity at the Centre and those it served, he got involved in several committees, becoming Treasurer of the Foundation Board in 2015.

"I love every minute of the work helping people," says Allan, "and I love accounting and financial statements." Allan also notes Montreal's aging population and how many of the younger generation have left Montreal. "We are also committed to getting the right people ready to replace us."

Going into his new term as Co-President, Allan is enthusiastic: "This is the strongest professional team the Foundation has ever had. There are so many great people involved who have also become great friends. And Roz and I have worked together on many committees and get along extremely well."

Roz concurs: "Allan and I have the same focus. He has a great sense of humour and a very big heart."

Both are looking forward to that first day when everyone can be back at the Centre and see familiar faces. "When we actually do that," says Roz, "it will be a great celebration."

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CATCHING UP WITH BRAM BESNER...

"I'm a people person - I like to be busy and to take charge," says Bram Besner, a former President of the CJCS Foundation from 2013-15 and, at age 88, an active volunteer and donor who remains devoted to the Cummings Centre.

"When I retired, I was looking for something to do and I was happy to connect with some wonderful staff at the Cummings Centre." While it was already attracting a lot of people, Besner knew that there were even more who could benefit from the Centre's wide range of activities and services.

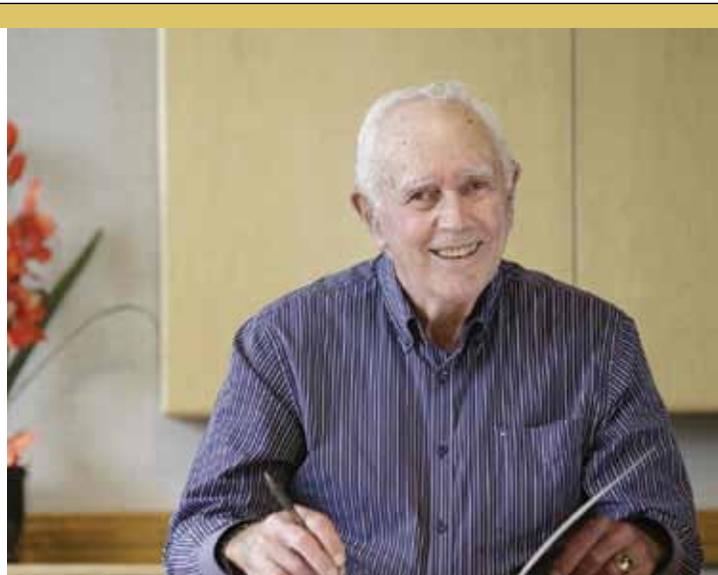
"Many people are very lonely," he reflects, "especially as they get older ... they lose their spouse, their jobs are over - they have to have something to make them feel good about themselves. People need to belong to something. I knew what they were going through, and I wanted to bring in more."

A lifelong Montrealer, Besner had run a successful business manufacturing boys' suits - "every kid in Canada who had a suit, had our suit" - and turned to his impressive personal network to help increase awareness about the Cummings Centre.

"I had a lot of friends and one day I invited a whole bunch of them to a meeting at the Centre. I wanted them to get involved and they did - they became the biggest helpers in the Foundation." Indeed, Besner brought in a group that was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the Governors Program - today the Foundation's largest annual initiative. These friends included the late Norm Latsky, the late Irving Lubin, the late Martin Levine, and David Oberman. From this original network came the first donors to the Governors program, a group that has now blossomed to over 1,800. "Look how many people are on the Governors' list today!" he exclaims with a smile.

Besner praises the wide variety of interesting and inspiring programming that has continued online at the Centre throughout the course of the pandemic: "There are fantastic speakers, about travel and politics - we really need that." As a previous member of the Centre's choir, he is especially fond of a weekly online sing-along every Thursday morning,, with everyone joining in to sing and remember favourites from the 60s.

As a music lover and someone inspired to give back, Besner sponsored several evening events at the Cummings Centre - featuring Kim Richardson, Cantor



Gideon Zelermyer, and musical duo Bowser and Blue - and a special invitation was extended to Governors. "People loved them - they filled the room. There wasn't a spot to be had."

More recently, in October of 2020, he created a special designated fund to help seniors who were living below the poverty line and having trouble accessing medical and other care services. *The Bram Besner Fund for Seniors in Need* continues to enhance the quality of life of many recipients at the Centre.

Besner remains close to his large family including his three children, grandchildren, and a great-grandchild - all of whom live close by. Last year, he contracted Covid-19 and was hospitalized for a week. Now, totally recovered and fully vaccinated, he is philosophical but positive: "At my age, my friends are no longer around ... but that's what I'm doing here at the Centre - I'm making more friends as I go along."

"You know, we have a wonderful community in Montreal and we're lucky. The Foundation is there to support the Centre and that's what it always should be there for," Besner emphasizes, "It is an important part of the community. No matter what happens, the Centre has got to be there."

The Governors Program is the CJCS Foundation's largest single initiative, with all funds raised going directly to where the need is greatest at the Centre. This crucial, ongoing support helps the Cummings Centre to consistently provide a safety net of programs and services for vulnerable seniors in our community. If you are not already a valued Governor, please join this distinguished group today. Contact Harriet Krakower at 514.734.1756 or visit [cummingscentre.org/governors](https://www.cummingscentre.org/governors)

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SUPPORTING A BENEFICIAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM WITH HEART AND GENEROSITY

Allan Levitt, along with his sister Marilyn Levitt Yunis, had always felt both the desire and the obligation to give back, and the family had been a loyal supporter of the Cummings Centre over the course of many years. Already a Life Governor of the Foundation, Allan's concern for others in the community only grew when he became a senior himself. In 2015, the Centre was seeking to secure new funding to start a Community Mental Health Day Program to provide a structured therapeutic, stimulating, and safe environment for isolated individuals with a diagnosis of mental illness, most of whom had limited social networks and resources.

When Foundation Executive Director Cathy Simons reached out, Allan, along with his sister Marilyn Levitt Yunis, immediately stepped forward. The Rona & Irving Levitt Family Foundation, named after their late parents, designated a gift of \$600,000 as an Endowment Fund to benefit the new Day Program, ensuring its support well into the future.

"I thought it was extremely important," said Allan, "As we get older, we have different needs, different ideas, sometimes we get a little lost in our thinking ... I felt that a mental health program could definitely help a lot of people."

Overseeing the program over the last four years is Rosanna Magnone, Program Manager for Mental Health at the Cummings Centre.

"We were able to design a new creative therapies program, and had wonderful specialists in music therapy, art therapy, and drama therapy," said Rosanna. Offered two days a week to groups up to 12 people, the program's schedule - either a morning or an afternoon session - sometimes included chair yoga or other exercises, and always included a nourishing lunch.

The program is offered to clients starting at 55 years of age, with its current oldest participant at 91 - all of whom are followed closely by case managers at the Centre. These clients have a wide range of needs and challenges, whether they are living with schizophrenia or bipolar and other disorders, and sometimes with intellectual disabilities in addition to mental health issues.

With the onset of the pandemic in March of 2020, the staff pivoted quickly to adapt. "Mental health issues have obviously increased," said Rosanna, "There was a huge impact on the



group. But they all know and support one another ... when one is down, another one is picking them up."

A number of the participants were not equipped with a computer or with internet access at home. Once again, Cathy Simons reached out to Allan and Marilyn for help. The family generously purchased fifteen iPads for the personal use of the program's clients.

"They were very excited," said Rosanna, "and participation actually increased online, with more people attending more consistently. At the beginning it was a huge learning curve - but they are all pros now."

"We have to be very creative in terms of how we work with clients on Zoom," she continued, "We didn't want to lose connection to each other or to the Centre. Most importantly, we wanted to break isolation. Previously, some clients were getting home visits, or they might come into the Centre to meet their case manager. Now, they all get a call every week. And they need it now, more than ever."

Online, the program has transitioned to various wellness topics, including discussions of coping mechanisms, and themes like hope, gratitude, and resilience. In addition, there is "Creative Zoomers" - a weekly online meetup for museum tours and trivia, as well as a journaling group.

"I have a great team," said Rosanna, "They are a wonderful group of people - both the team and the clients. I don't know how the clients would have gone through this pandemic without their case managers and this program."

Allan and Marilyn's dedication to the program hasn't wavered, and the family even provided a special Rosh Hashanah dinner to all the participants.



L-R: Roz Wiener, Marilyn Levitt Yunis, and Allan Chandler

"I am really impressed by how the program has been handled and by the participation," said Allan, "You can see that the people in the group are really appreciative to be a part of it. It's really something special."

To learn more about how your gift to the Cummings Foundation can help support the senior population, please contact Cathy Simons, Executive Director, CJCS Foundation at 514.734.1777 or cathy.simons@cummingscentre.org.

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NOT YOUR MAMA'S HORSERADISH BRISKET

By Gail Simmons

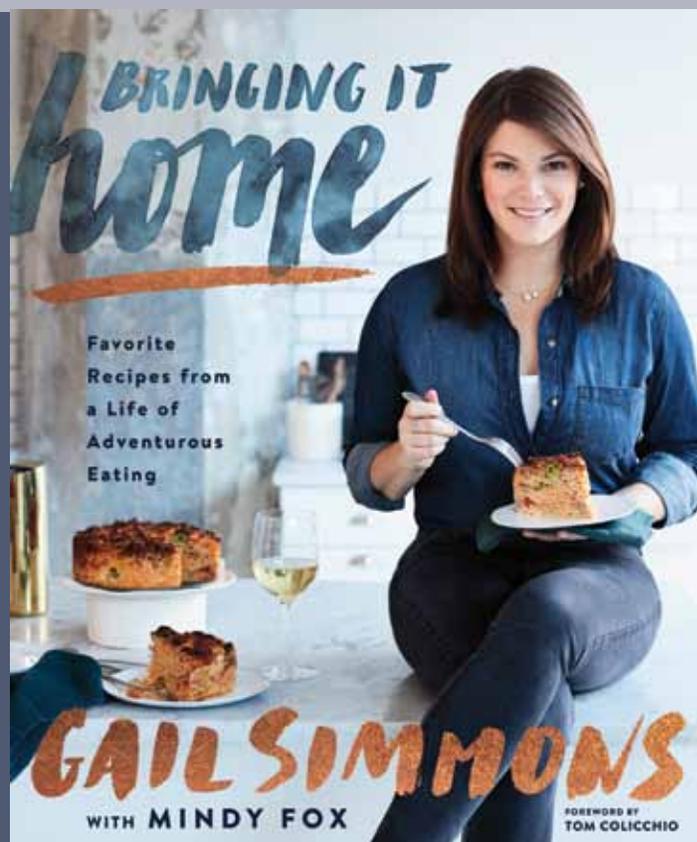
Many thanks to Gail Simmons for sharing this recipe with us! Gail is the daughter-in-law of Noreen Abrams, a long-time supporter of the Foundation.

Excerpted from *BRINGING IT HOME: Favorite Recipes from a Life of Adventurous Eating* by Gail Simmons. Copyright © 2017 by GMS Media, Inc. Reprinted with permission from Grand Central Life & Style. All rights reserved.

SERVES 8

My mother, and grandmother before her, passed along a few traditional Jewish recipes that remain holiday staples for me to this day—beef brisket among them. No matter how ubiquitous the dish may be, I crave it like clockwork at Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year), and again for Hanukkah. Over the years, I have modified my mother's sacred recipe (much to her dismay!), coating the beef with a garlic and horseradish crust and deglazing the pan with red wine to give the dish bright balance and a rich sauce. I hope that my daughter will one day make this brisket for her own family, adapting it as she sees fit.

- 1 (5½-pound) first-cut brisket
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped, divided
- 4 medium carrots, cut crosswise into 1-inch pieces
- 2 medium parsnips, cut into 1-inch half moons
- 2 celery ribs, cut crosswise into 1-inch pieces
- 2 cups dry red wine
- 3 cups low-sodium beef broth, heated to a simmer
- 2 dried bay leaves
- 4 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ cup drained prepared horseradish, divided



Cover Photo by Johnny Miller (@johnny_miller_)

Special equipment: extra-wide (18 inches) heavy-duty aluminum foil; fat separator (if available)

Heat the oven to 350 degrees F with the rack in the middle. Season the brisket all over with 1 tablespoon salt and 2 teaspoons pepper. In a large roasting pan set over 2 burners, heat the oil until hot but not smoking. Add the brisket and cook over medium-high heat, turning, until browned all over, 5 to 7 minutes per side. Transfer the brisket to a rimmed baking sheet, fat-side up.

Pour off all but 2 tablespoons of fat from the pan. Add the onions and half of the garlic and cook over medium heat until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the carrots, parsnips, and celery and season with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Continue cooking until the vegetables are browned, about 6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the vegetables to a plate; set aside.

Add the wine to the pan and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook, scraping up browned bits from the bottom of the pot, for 1 minute. Return the brisket to

the pan, fat-side up. Add the broth and bay leaves and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Cover the pan tightly with the extra-wide foil, sealing the edges; transfer to the oven and braise for 2 hours.

Remove the pan from the oven, then carefully loosen and remove the foil. Scatter the reserved vegetables and the potatoes around the brisket. Reseal the pan tightly with the foil, return to the oven, and braise until the brisket is very tender, about 1 hour more. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, stir together the mustard, 1/4 cup of the horseradish, and the remaining garlic.

Carefully loosen and remove the foil and spread the horseradish mixture over the top of the brisket. Return to the oven and cook, uncovered, until the top is browned, about 20 minutes.

Transfer the brisket to a carving board and loosely cover with foil to keep warm. Remove and discard the bay leaves. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the vegetables to a serving platter and loosely cover with foil to keep warm.

Pour the juices from the pan into a fat separator and let stand until the fat rises to the surface. Pour the juices into a small saucepan; discard the fat. (If you

don't have a fat separator, pour the liquid into a bowl and let cool completely, then refrigerate overnight or freeze until the fat solidifies. Skim off and discard the fat.)

Gently warm the juices over low heat. Whisk in the remaining 1/4 cup of horseradish, then season to taste with salt and pepper.

Thinly slice the brisket against the grain and transfer to the platter with the vegetables. Spoon a little of the warm pan juices over the brisket and pass the remaining juices at the table.

Note: This recipe can be made ahead through to when the brisket is braised and the top is browned. Cool in the pan juices, cover, and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Refrigerate the vegetables in a separate container. Before serving, skim the fat from the surface of the pan juices. Slice the brisket while it's cold, then arrange in a roasting pan or baking dish with the vegetables and pan juices; cover the pan tightly with foil, sealing the edges. Heat in a 350°F oven until the vegetables and meat are warmed through, about 30 minutes. Transfer the vegetables and meat to a platter and season the juices with the horseradish and salt and pepper directly in the pan.

REMEMBER THE CJCS FOUNDATION IN YOUR WILL



A gift in your will to the CJCS Foundation is a powerful way to make a lasting investment in the Cummings Centre and its mission to enrich and safeguard the well-being of our community's seniors. Planned Giving - including charitable bequests and endowment funds - can provide significant tax advantages for you and your family, while you continue transforming the lives of seniors for years to come. For more information please contact Cathy Simons, Executive Director, CJCS Foundation at 514.734.1777 or cathy.simons@cummingscentre.org.