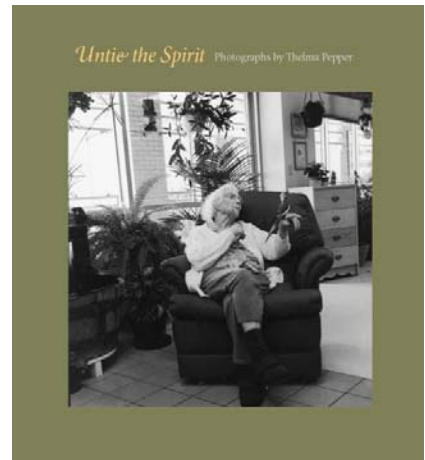


*Untie the Spirit:*  
*Sherbrooke Community Centre & The Eden Alternative™*

## **Photographs by Thelma Pepper**

*"The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see  
without a camera."*

- Dorothea Lange



IN UNTIE THE SPIRIT, THELMA PEPPER explores life as it happens in a single small village. We see people engaged in simple pleasures – picking berries in the garden, baking cinnamon buns, or sitting comfortably in a favourite chair holding a cockatiel. What makes this so unexpected is that the village is Sherbrooke Community Centre, a long-term care facility in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Many believe that if people are cognitively impaired, they are lost to the disease and are separate from the world and their families. Thelma challenges that belief. Her subjects still participate; they experience sadness and joy and give of themselves. Thelma demonstrates that her subjects' lives are about more than their diseases or disabilities. In depicting their lives, she reveals their spirits. She challenges us to see what is possible when we embrace a philosophy that makes life worth living.

Says Dr. William Thomas, founder of the Eden Alternative™ philosophy, "The photographs contained in *Untie the Spirit* open a door to a new reality. In this work, older people and the people who care about them can be seen as the beautiful, wise, patient, and understanding human beings that they are. This new story has the power to change the world."

Thelma's journey is a labour of love, not only as a tribute to her husband, Jim who was a resident of Sherbrooke until his death in 2003, but also to the residents and staff of Sherbrooke Community Centre. Thelma has the ability to look at people through loving eyes. Where others might see sorrow and despair, Thelma sees the spirit of the person and captures that spirit with her camera. Enjoying ice cream cones, playing with a pet, baking, cooking a meal, making a child smile are all things that make the world go 'round. Thelma tells a person's story through her photographs, and through her actions she is helping to create a revolution in the care of our elders.

- Patricia Roe,  
Sherbrooke Community Centre