

# Family Newsletter

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## A message from Roxanne and Rhea

We extend our warmest greetings to you in this, the last newsletter of 2018.

It's great to finally shake off the cold weather of the past few months. Trees and plants are back in bloom putting much needed colour into our gardens. The flowers in our raised beds are tempting our residents outdoors to pick them or spend time strolling in the garden enjoying the fresh air, sunshine and beautiful surroundings.

We have introduced a regular Gardening Day with Brian, our gardener, once a month. During this session, Brian talks to residents about what's best to plant for the season and shares some gardening tips with the group. Last month, we tried the activity with a group of men who happily helped Brian prepare the garden beds in Toe Toe home. This was followed by a second session in Tanika home where most of the ladies preferred to listen to Brian and watch him demonstrate the tips and techniques he described.

In September two of our Activities Coordinators had the opportunity to travel to Christchurch for the annual Diversional Therapist Conference. There, they also met with their counterparts from other Dementia Care NZ facilities and had the opportunity to learn new activity concepts and ideas to include as part of our activities programme for our residents. One of our diversional therapists, Ritu, brought home with her new ways to do arts and crafts while another, Theresa, was particularly drawn to the aromatherapy and massage presentation and has been trialling them in



Toe Toe home, to the delight of residents.

We are excited to be developing a further project extending the use of the outdoor areas by utilising our paddock for grazing. It has recently been tidied up and a new fence put in place. We are currently running an advertisement for grazing on the Neighbourly Page and on our noticeboards in the hope of soon having some lovely farm animals grazing there. We are hoping for some cows, sheep or even alpacas. Also part of this initiative was to create an access way for our residents in the dementia home around the fenced area via our garden gates. At present this is still in the planning stage as the safety and security of our residents must be taken into consideration.

Another source of interest for our residents in the dementia home is watching earth movers and tradesmen work in the paddock in preparation for the construction of our new small home. Residents also enjoy occasional interactions with the 'tradies' through the fence.

We look forward to sharing many special times together as you visit your loved one over the coming months, and hope you will be able to join us as often as possible over the holiday period.



*You are very warmly invited to join us for our*

***Christmas Gathering***

*Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December from 2.00pm – 3.00pm*

## Dealing with the heat of summer

As we move into the summer months some families express concern regarding the comfort and welfare of our residents on very hot days.

An article published in the NZACA's Insight magazine in August 2018 acknowledged that indoor temperatures in aged care homes could have a dramatic impact on the wellbeing of residents, particularly those with dementia, according to new research out of Australia.

The World Health Organisation suggests that older people should not be exposed to temperatures lower than 20 degrees, while the International Organisation for Standardisation recommends maximum temperatures not exceed 26 degrees.

The study noted that it was interesting that residents felt comfortable over a wider range of temperatures than staff members.

It has been suggested that we consider installing air conditioning in our rest homes for use in the summer months. This has in fact been done at some of our rest homes, but is not an unqualified success and has itself led to complaints. People experience temperatures differently, and older people in particular tend to feel extremes of cold more than those of heat. Temperatures which active younger people find distressingly hot are not experienced as such by everyone, especially those who are not mobile.

We have complaints of 'drafts' from residents who do not enjoy the sensation of cool air indoors. Everyone experiences temperatures differently and has different preferences. People of our residents' generation are not usually used to air conditioning, as this was not common in family homes of

their era. They are accustomed to being hot in summer and cool in winter. It is generally not harmful for them to experience seasonality in this way, and may even provide opportunities for conversation and reminiscence.

Our care staff, under the guidance of our Registered Nursing team, are aware of the effects of hot weather on the elderly of the importance of ensuring that this is appropriately managed. Measures for doing so include the following:

- Take residents out into the garden area and let them enjoy the shade under the trees
- Ensure residents are wearing loose, light clothing
- Keep doors and windows open, especially door to the outside garden area
- Keep fluid rounds regular, and encourage residents to drink often
- Keep fans on and air circulating as much as possible

Rest assured that we will do all we can to keep our residents happy and comfortable during the summer months.

### Naming clothes

Please remember that all new items need to be clearly marked with the owner's name before they arrive. This is especially important at Christmas time, when many lovingly chosen new items are given as gifts by family members. We discourage expensive woollen items, which are easily damaged in the wash. Please select easy care clothing wherever possible.



We are enjoying using our new croquet set as the weather continues to improve



Visits from children bring so much joy into our home

## Learning and growing together

In the work we do we focus every day on people: our residents, our family members, our team as a whole, and the individual members of our team. We do appreciate each one of the special people we are privileged to have in our lives.

We are reminded of Aspen trees. Above the ground Aspens grow as individual trees. Below the ground, they have an interconnected system of roots. At the same time, each tree is both an individual tree and a part of a living community. When one Aspen tree gets into difficulty, it affects the whole grove of trees.

We are a bit like the Aspen trees. We are inextricably linked. Each individual linked with the team, and the carers with those they care for, and with their families and friends. As with the trees, what happens to one of us, affects all of us.

Each of us is a unique and incredibly special individual, and yet at the same time part of a greater whole. We need each other. We are interdependent.

As we compile our strategic plan, business plan and annual training and professional development programme for staff, we are reminded of this. Our Vision and Values, Best Friends, Changing Minds, Embracing Diversity and De-escalation education programmes are important learning opportunities for all staff, above all in terms of the nature and quality of personal interaction. Our philosophy of care is backed by best practice and embedded in all we do. We are a values-based organisation and have further enhanced our learning by applying the learning from a DHB training initiative "Walking in Another's Shoes". This offers workshops and full day classes. This programme supports the application of person-centred care, a philosophy of care deeply important to our business.

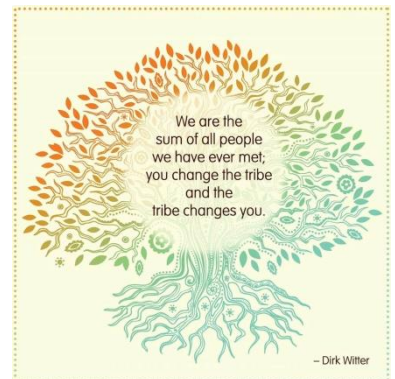
Supervision and coaching continue to be

strategies used to develop key employees and build strong teams, with clinical supervision occurring for our registered nursing staff on a regular basis.

The web of interconnectivity extends further, to the large number of allied health professionals who are contracted to each facility, including GPs, dieticians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, podiatrists and pharmacists, as well as to the MoH and DHBs.

We love to bring our teams together to share, learn, grow and explore. Over the course of the past year we have supported staff to attend the National Diversional Therapy Conference in Christchurch, as well as hosting a National in-house Diversional Therapy Day, Registered Nurse Education Days for each region, and a National Clinical Manager Professional Development Training Programme. This is over and above the regular in-house training sessions and competencies which occur on an ongoing basis in each home.

The result is a holistic care experience informed by passionate and committed individuals who together make up a team of which we are humble and proud to be part of.



In September Jeddah, Preeti, Garette, and Connie attended an RN education day here at Millvale Lodge Lindale



Dementia Care NZ had a great contingent at the Annual Diversional Therapy Conference in Christchurch

## Happy Christmas from Andrew Sheard

As Christmas approaches each year, I find myself enjoying the special magic of this time of year. This is increased by the presence of the children in my family, and especially this year our newest arrival, Stella.

We love to have families and children visit our rest homes over the holiday period, and their presence never fails to leave a special sparkle in the eyes of our residents. Christmas is a family time, and the sense of family within our homes is heightened as together we prepare by decorating the home, trimming the tree, and making cards and small gifts together for family members. Christmas music is played, and we welcome visits from various volunteer groups who come and sing carols with us. The song sheets are seldom needed as people recall the words of the songs they sang as children.

As I travel around our homes and absorb the sights, sounds and smells of this

special time of year, it is wonderful to see our new Vision and Values reflected in the kindness, love, comfort and joy I see reflected in the faces of those providing care and those receiving it. It is heartwarming to see how the members of our team, themselves often far from home and family, embrace our homes as their own, and our residents as their families.

We have always spoken of the care we provide as 'person-centered'. Increasingly, I find myself taking this a step further, and seeing our care as in fact 'relationship-based'. Any relationship is a two-way street, and in giving love and care, one receives it back a hundredfold. The giving and receiving of love is for me the true meaning of Christmas.

I wish each and every one of you a very happy Christmas.



We have all enjoyed watching the diggers in the paddock outside

## Life in our small homes

You may not see a traditional 'activities programme' in action in our home.

The reason is simple: it is important for people to have the freedom to experience life in their own way.

An older person in a family home in the community does not often take part in regular organised 'activities' within their home. When at home they simply live life.

We have diversional therapists who will spend time with residents doing things they enjoy. We create an environment

that closely mirrors a household living experience, with access to familiar homely pursuits such as showering, choosing what to wear, applying makeup and selecting jewellery, shaving, setting the table, folding linen, peeling vegetables, flower arranging, gardening, preparing and eating a meal, washing the dishes, or reading a magazine. In our small homes these interactions occur spontaneously with all staff and all residents every day, many times within a day.



Enjoying our fortnightly "Garden Club"

## Outing reminder

If you intend to take your loved one home for the day or afternoon over the Christmas period please discuss this with a Registered Nurse so that medication and comfort requirements can be arranged.

For safety reasons outings of this nature first need to be discussed and approved by the EPOA.