



Avonlea  
CHRISTCHURCH

# Family Newsletter

April 2019

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## A message from Charisma and Sue

Together we warmly welcome you to our first family newsletter of 2019.

Firstly, we would like to extend a very special thank you to families and friends for joining us at our family gathering for Christmas and New Year celebrations with your loved ones. We really appreciate the expressions of thanks and support given during this time. It is a privilege to experience this special time with the people who have come to mean so much to us over the time we have spent together. We hope that you enjoyed these special celebrations as much as we did.

We have enjoyed exceptional weather this summer, and our staff have been busy making iced drinks, jellies and ice blocks to keep everyone hydrated and comfortable. It has been a pleasure to make use of our lovely gardens and have the doors open for residents to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas of their home.

The occasional cooler days have been a welcome contrast, with our Diversional Therapy team leading some more active outdoor games for residents, with staff joining in and enjoying the fun as much as the residents.

Although it is hard to believe with the hot weather we have had, Autumn is now upon us. It is important that your loved ones are vaccinated against the flu. Please look out for your Influenza vaccination consent forms which will be arriving soon,



and return it to us as soon as you can.

We would like to remind you that Nicky Bishop runs a monthly family support meeting, restarting in March, every second Wednesday at 1pm in the Rudo back lounge. This is a safe, independent environment where you can share your experiences on this challenging journey.

We are very aware that visiting your loved one in our dementia units can be difficult at times. If you are finding visits hard, please come and see us to discuss any concerns you may be experiencing, as it is our aim to make your visit an enjoyable experience. We have a "Memory Room" available for residents at all levels of care which is a soothing and private environment to spend time in during a visit. Please ask our care staff for directions and assistance.

Thank you for sharing your loved one with us. We wish you many wonderful times together during 2019.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please ensure that all items of value, especially hearing aids, dentures, glasses and jewellery, are fully insured. Unfortunately we do not take responsibility for loss or damage which may occur.

We advise against the purchase of delicate or woollen items which may be damaged during the laundry process.



## Representational Child Therapy



A person with dementia interacting with their new representational child is intensely moving

At times you may see residents with dolls or soft toys. The use of these 'representational children' is a recognised form of therapy for certain carefully selected residents.

Representational Child Therapy was first researched in 1985 at Queen Elizabeth Psychiatric Hospital in Toronto by Isabel Milton and Judith McPhail. In 1983 Representational Child Therapy was established by Judy Cooper in the Dementia Unit of Parklands Hospital, Christchurch, with the dignity and respect of clients being paramount.

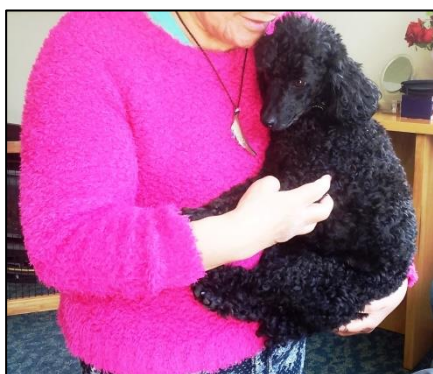
In some of our rest homes/hospitals the therapy is led by the diversional therapy team, with the support of the diversional therapy team leader, registered nurses and caregiving teams. All staff have a full understanding of and commitment to the therapy, and family members are consulted and give their consent prior to the therapy being made available to a resident.

The introduction of this recognised therapy for certain residents means that at times you may see residents with dolls or soft toys. The use of

these 'representational children' has significant potential benefits to the resident concerned. These benefits may include:

- A minimisation of distress, improvement in social interactions and raised self-esteem
- Isolated residents becoming involved in other activities and therapies
- Uncommunicative residents communicating more readily
- Reduction of repetitive speech and behaviours of concern
- Medication being reduced
- Restlessness at night decreased
- Mobility encouraged
- Communication becoming easier for relatives, who visit more often as a result.

If you have any questions or concerns relating to Representational Child Therapy, or feel your loved one might benefit from this, please speak to our Diversional Therapy or Registered Nurse team.



A number of our families enjoy bringing in their dogs to spend time with our residents.

## A hand picked team

Occasionally family members and visitors express surprise at the age and multicultural makeup of our staff team.

Each member of our team has been hand-picked with great care. Many are registered nurses in their own country, with the courage and initiative to start a new life far from home and family. Every staff member is chosen because they have what we call 'knack' in working with people

with dementia. They know how to love and care for someone as if that person is their very best friend, and they are passionate about working in this way. Our staff are loving, capable and experienced. We are enormously proud to have such committed and professional people working with us. Their cultural diversity, energy and dedication enriches us all.

## A message from Andrew Sheard

I write to you today as I wrestle with the events that happened in Christchurch recently. My thoughts are with those that have been affected so personally. I feel very sad and sometimes I am finding it a bit hard to go to sleep at night.

I have four children and I need to stay full of hope. We are going on bike rides and walks, swimming and reading stories at bedtime. We are noticing and talking about the wind in our hair, the leaves that are changing colour, the smiles on people's faces, the warmth of cuddles, the special words that are whispered at bedtimes. There is so much love and beauty in the world. We are focusing on all these wonderful things.

As carers for people who are needing a little bit of extra help in their lives, this seemed like the time to go back to our Vision and Values once again. We try hard to ensure they are embedded into the way we do things. Our vision and values say we work towards:

*Accepting all people with kindness and love*

*Providing peace, comfort and joy*  
*Establishing trusting relationships based on respect and acceptance*  
*Promoting inclusion and the rights and values of each person*  
*Celebrating unity in diversity*

We don't always achieve this, but by endeavouring to uphold these values we have the potential to enrich each person, the community and the world. We are immensely privileged to provide care for people and to provide employment for people from different countries, cultures, religions and sexual orientations.

We are asking our teams to talk with us if there are any instances of prejudice; anything that just feels uncomfortable. We ask you, our residents, family and friends to come to us, also, if we could do better in this regard. This is important to us.

I speak directly to each and every one of you: You are valued. You are loved. You are supported.



Residents at Avonlea had a very special treat recently with a visit from the Classic Motor Club with their spectacular classic cars

## The benefits of hip protectors

Hip protectors are a product designed to reduce the risk of serious hip injury as a result of a fall. They work by absorbing the impact as well as diverting impact away from the hip joint into the surrounding soft tissue. While there is no guarantee that wearing hip protectors will protect the wearer against sustaining a severe injury, research has shown that they can reduce the risk of sustaining a hip fracture by as much as 84%.

This is good news for our residents who, because of their age and dementia diagnosis, are at a higher risk of falling. For this reason families are usually asked whether they would like to purchase Hip Saver hip protectors for their loved one. We encourage you to consider the benefits of providing hip protectors for your loved one as a means to reduce their risk of serious injury.



A little thought and care makes an ordinary event into a special occasion

**Avonlea has a Facebook page!**

We warmly welcome visits, 'likes', questions and ideas from the families and friends of our residents.

Find us by Googling: *Avonlea Dementia Care Facebook*





## Concerns and complaints: When things don't go according to plan

As we strive each day to provide the very best possible care to our residents, it can sometimes be hard to identify where changes are required to improve upon the service that we provide.

We would like to say a special thank you to each and every one of you for providing us with feedback, either positive or negative. We really appreciate your honesty and the time it takes to let us know when things have not gone quite the way you would wish. As part of our ongoing quality improvement programme, your concerns and complaints provide the opportunity for us to pass on this feedback to our staff and take corrective action when needed.

Please remember that our door is always open. You are welcome to pop in for a cup of tea and a chat.

Suggestions to improve our service are always welcome, either verbally or in writing. If you wish to make a complaint about something you are unhappy with, a Complaint Form should be used. The completed form can be given to any staff member, or put in our suggestions/complaints box.

Please ensure that any verbal complaint is made directly to either Charisma or Sue. If they are not available then the complaint should be made in writing on a complaint form to ensure that it goes through the correct investigation and resolution process.

Advocacy Services (0800 555 050) is available to assist you, if required.

We always welcome your ideas and concerns, and your loved one will never be disadvantaged by anything you may share with us.



Christmas decoration craft-making brings us all pleasure and a sense of achievement

## The importance of flu vaccination

As summer draws to an end we ask you to begin thinking about the annual influenza vaccination which is offered free of charge to all residents.

We strongly advise EPOAs to take advantage of this to protect their loved one from the serious effects of the dangerous strains of influenza which are prevalent every winter.

There is a very clear correlation between those residents who struggle with persistent ill health over winter, and those who did not have the flu vaccine.

Please choose to vaccinate this winter, and help your loved one stay well!



All our staff, including our cooks, went the extra mile to make our recent Show Day a wonderful experience for our residents

**Second Point of Contact:** Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, there may be a need for a second point of contact to discuss an issue with. Vicky Jones, our Operations Management Leader, is available Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. to discuss any issues of concern. (03) 347 7724 x 2 or vicky@dementiacarenz.co.nz

**Admissions and Funding Navigator:** Deidre Hickey, our Admissions and Funding Navigator, is available to help you through the unfamiliar and sometimes confusing admission and subsidy application process. Deidre can be contacted at deidre@dementiacarenz.co.nz.