



Millvale House
LEVIN

July 2019

42 Mako Mako Road
P.O. Box 1131
Levin
5540

Phone:
06 367 2027

e-mail:
omlevin@millvale.co.nz

Web:
www.millvalelevin.co.nz

In this issue:

- A message from Maria and Teena
- Thoughts on Atul Gawande's "Being Mortal"
- Accompanying loved ones to appointments
- Communicating with families
- Safe footwear for older people
- Millvale House Levin's Facebook Page
- A message from Andrew
- Looking after winter woollies

Our Home

A message from Maria and Teena

Warmest greetings to you all.

Every time you tear a leaf off a calendar, you present a new place for new ideas and progress. Already the new year has seen some positive changes to our home, including new paintings, garden modifications and home improvements. We have some new residents as well as new staff members who make our home a complete, if ever-changing, family.

We have been sorry to say farewell to Nisha Bijoy, our Clinical Manager, who has moved on to new challenges. We are looking for just the right person to step into this important role, and in the meantime are happy to have our senior Registered Nurse Teena Mamachan as our acting Clinical Manager. Teena, who has been with us for over a year, brings a strong clinical background and sound knowledge of dementia to the acting CM position, combined with established relationships with staff, residents and families. We join in thanking Teena for stepping forward into this role and offer her our full support.

Now that winter has set in we are taking extra care of our much-loved residents by ensuring that they are wearing appropriate clothing during the day, and at night their rooms are warm and cosy. We are also taking special pleasure in presenting traditional winter meals such as wholesome hot soups and delicious roasts with all the trimmings.

We have a multi-cultural group of residents here now and take much pleasure and pride in providing culturally appropriate care to meet their individual needs.

Unfortunately winter is also the flu season. Most of our residents and staff



members have had their flu vaccines which will help to protect them from flu and associated ills. Please remember not to visit if you feel at all unwell.

We had a Kitchen Audit in March and are delighted to report that we received a Grade A result from Horowhenua Council.

Recently five of our staff completed the Fundamentals of Palliative Care workshop. De-escalation training to equip staff to deal positively and effectively with challenging situations relating to residents has also been recently completed.

In June we held our traditional annual mid-winter gathering. Residents and staff enjoyed working together to prepare for this special afternoon tea, with hand crafts and decor such as snowmen and snowflakes supporting the winter theme. This is a very special opportunity to spend time together here in our cosy home, sharing music and a delicious afternoon tea and just enjoying being together here in our home.

We look forward to another year of supporting your loved one and family on our journey together, with all its challenges and many joys.

Thoughts on Atul Gawande's "Being Mortal"



Musical performances never cease to bring our residents joy

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End, by Atul Gawande, is a most important book. It challenges us to think about the 'medicalising' of old age and death and what we could offer instead.

With much advance in medicine and surgery, death comes to many people after a long medical struggle with an ultimately unstoppable condition. Ageing and death has become a medical issue. There is often a focus on repairing health, trying to fix and control, rather than sustaining the soul.

People who are sick and/or aged do have priorities beyond staying safe and living longer.

It seems that when we see our future as finite our focus shifts to the here and now, to everyday pleasures and the people closest to us. People want to continue to be "the author of their life", to keep "shaping the story of their life in the world ... by making choices and sustaining connections to others according to their own priorities."

This has been identified as crucial to maintaining the integrity of our lives. This is the "battle of being mortal."



Sitting down to enjoy a good book

Often older people hand over the decision making to family. The author suggests that family will choose safety above all else. He believes that we want autonomy for ourselves and safety for those we love. We often see this thought process when families are viewing our rest home for a loved one. They ask the unspoken question: "Is this a place I feel comfortable leaving him or her?" instead of "is this a place he or she would like to be?"

The health system and aged care can help people achieve what is most important to them at the end of their lives. It is important to keep people safe, but is this the primary goal of the people we are caring for? Does this primary focus address their hopes and fears? Perhaps not.

In our homes, we want to hear laughter, to see love and friendship, to see joy all over people's faces, to encourage wonderful moments with families, to plant gardens in the sunshine, listen to beautiful music ... and we do. We want to focus on helping people to achieve what is most important to them at the end of their lives.

Accompanying loved ones to appointments

Our residents attend outpatient appointments for a variety of reasons. All residents with dementia require an escort to these appointments, and often people prefer to have a support person with them even if this is not a requirement. Please don't be surprised to receive a phone call from one of our RNs asking you to escort your loved one.

Having a family member escort a resident is a good option for residents as at these appointments health and family history are discussed and there

are decisions to be made. If you are happy to attend the appointment but have any concerns, please do not hesitate to discuss this with the registered nurse. He or she will arrange for a staff member to go with you.

If the time of the appointment does not suit you please discuss this also with the RN and they will liaise with the service provider to change the time if possible.

Communicating with families

Communication with one another is very important, especially when it involves residents in our care – your loved ones. We are often asked how our communication system works.

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, there will be times when a resident sustains an injury, is harmed, or an error occurs. In these instances, or if a resident's condition changes and the doctor has visited, the RN will contact the resident's Welfare Guardian to inform them of the incident. It is then their responsibility to inform other

family members.

Multi-disciplinary team meetings are held on a regular basis to fully inform you of your loved ones general condition and care. Again, an invitation to this meeting will be given to the resident's Welfare Guardian. This invitation can then be extended by them to other family members if desired.



Visits from pets brightens everyone's mood

Safe footwear for older people

We are often asked for advice on the best shoes to choose for elderly people.

Firstly, if the person has foot pain or known foot problems, a doctor or podiatrist should be consulted.

Choosing the correct shoe is important because ill-fitting shoes and shoes with poor contact with the ground or poor grip may upset balance and the way one walks, increasing the risk of falls.

Important points to remember are:

- Buy for fit, not size
- Try out the shoes on a variety of surfaces before buying
- A firm heel cup provides support when walking
- Low, wide heels provide more contact with the ground and prevent slipping

- Thin soles with tread reduce risk of slipping
- A wide, deep toe box allows room for toe movement and comfort
- Choose laces, buckles or Velcro that hold the foot firmly.

In winter we often find our residents return to a lifelong habit of putting on socks at night time to keep their feet warm. This can result in slips and falls during night-time visits to the toilet.

A lovely winter gift for loved ones in residential care is a couple of pairs of cosy bedsocks with special non-slip soles – practical and always received with appreciation and delight.



The challenge of completing a puzzle is very satisfying

Millvale House Levin's Facebook page

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

Find us by Googling: *Millvale Levin Facebook*



A message from Andrew

We have chosen a new name for our newsletter, "Our Home". This feels just right to me, as the concept of home is at the centre of our philosophy of care.

Winter is a time when home feels especially important. Standing on the sidelines watching my son George play ripper rugby, my thoughts often turn to our warm home and the cosy evening ahead. Winter here in New Zealand is a time for snuggling with the kids on the sofa reading stories. It's a time for sharing home-made soup by the fire, and teaching the kids about how hot chocolate just isn't hot chocolate without a marshmallow or two floating in it – usually making it spill over the side.

These are things I remember from my own childhood, and unconsciously, instinctively, I am passing them on to the next generation.

These common human experiences are what bind us together as a community. We recognise these shared traditions and experiences, and they are important because of their

symbolic power. Shivering on the sidelines of a rugby game symbolises love and sacrifice, pride and parenthood. The rich aroma of the hot chocolate symbolises warmth and safety, love and nurturing.

As I travel around our nine rest homes meeting new staff, getting to know them and sharing our Vision and Values, I feel both proud and humbled to think how many of our staff have left their own homes and families, their own countries and cultures and traditions, to start a new life here in New Zealand. They are learning our ways and blending them with their own to form a new legacy.

The love and care they are creating and sharing in our homes is central to this process.

In the same way, each and every resident at our homes brings their own history and traditions with them to enrich our small communities.

Home is where the heart is, and where we all belong.



Indulging in the increasingly popular activity of adults' colouring in

Looking after winter woollies

Occasionally, no matter how much care is taken, a woollen jersey or cardigan slips through to the laundry and shrinks beyond recognition.

This is upsetting for all concerned, especially the family member who has hand-knitted or chosen the gift with love.

All care is taken in laundering clothes. However, woollen clothing may be

safer hand washed by family. When buying new woollen clothing please buy machine washable items.

If possible, we would prefer you to provide non woollen clothing that is easily washed when selecting winter clothing for your loved one.



Engaging in the familiar homely task of folding laundry

If you would like to receive our newsletter via email, please email your name and email address to amyd@dementiacarenz.co.nz.

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