



Avonlea
CHRISTCHURCH

Our Home

December 2019

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A message from Armie and Daphne

Warmest greetings from all of us here at Avonlea. It was with great joy we welcomed spring time and it is a delight to see our residents enjoying the warmer weather out in the garden.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Daphne Abellanosa as our new Operations Coordinator here at Avonlea. Daphne, who has been with us for more than three years now, is well known to our residents and their family members, as well as having the trust and confidence of our staff team. Daphne is a qualified and experienced Registered Nurse back in the Philippines, and also brings qualifications and experience in healthcare management to her new role.

We would also like to formally welcome Armie Abalos as our Clinical Manager. Armie, who has done a great job as Acting CM over the past months, has now taken up the post permanently. Together this energetic and experienced team are very much looking forward to working with the staff, family members and most especially our residents here at Avonlea.

As we welcome warmer days, we have added extra fluid rounds at several times during the day, not only to prevent infections, but to keep our residents hydrated. We invite you to join your loved one on sunny days in the garden for a walk or just to sit and relax in our gazebo. Our staff will be happy to provide you and loved one with sun block as well as hats if needed.

Speaking of hats, a recent highlight has



been our traditional annual celebration of the Melbourne Cup and Canterbury Show Day, with a special day of festivities, glamour and fun. This was greatly enjoyed by residents, families and staff alike.

The excitement of Christmas will soon be upon us and we ask that you talk with the Registered Nurse if you are planning to take your loved one home for Christmas day. We can then ensure they are prepared for the day with medications and anything else they may require for their comfort and wellbeing.

We hope you will join us for our Christmas Family Gathering and look forward to sharing with you the spirit of Christmas.

In parting, we would like to thank you for trusting us to care for your loved ones. It is indeed a privilege and our pleasure to have you as part of our Avonlea family. We look forward to welcoming you at Avonlea in the next months to come. We wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

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

Thursday 19th December at 2.00 pm

Education update from Simon Hamley

Every month I have the pleasure of travelling from Nelson to Christchurch to visit the staff and residents at Avonlea.

It is always great to visit Avonlea, the staff and residents are always so friendly and welcoming. Avonlea is also a place I used to work, so it sometimes feels like I'm 'coming home'. This year I have helped to provide a wide range of training for staff, including The Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care and sessions on De-Escalation skills. These

sessions highlight the compassion and caring nature of the staff at Avonlea, which is always evident in care I see them provide. Caring for someone with dementia is not always the easiest thing to do, but I enjoy listening to staff tell their stories of special moments they have experienced with residents.

I am looking forward to visiting regularly again in 2020.



We made the most of lemon season with delicious home made lemonade and "lemon art"

Summary of 2019 EPOA Survey Results

Every year we send out a survey to the Enduring Powers of Attorney for our residents requesting feedback on the service we provide. This is an important and valuable process for us, and enables us to identify areas in which the service we provide to your loved ones may be improved.

We would like to thank those who were able to complete and return their surveys. This is much appreciated.

For the first time this year we send surveys out via email where possible, offering the option on completing the surveys online. We include the comparative response rate for your interest. Using Facebook to promote and remind EPOAs to return the survey was useful and boosted the return rate.

Please let us know if you would prefer to receive the survey electronically in future.

Specific feedback received included the following:

- 80% had not used Family support
- 65% do not use Facebook
- 25% said they did enjoy the Facebook page

- 95% said they were offered hospitality when they visited

Areas which included a rating of 3 out of 5 or less included Laundry, Cleaning, Maintenance and Food. Comments of concern generally fell within the areas above, with most concern expressed regarding laundry service, specifically clothes being lost or misplaced, and food quality, variety and temperature. Of note is that we are currently recruiting for cooks, and hope to improve the standard of the food service as a result.

Quality Improvements have been raised in respect of negative comments received.

We thank you for the many positive comments and compliments received, especially in regard to the loving care provided by our staff team.

We welcome further feedback in respect of these or any other concerns you may have, now or at any stage in the future.



We all enjoy when our residents play their favourite songs for us

Visiting a person with dementia

As the Christmas season approaches, we would like to remind you that although visiting a person with dementia can sometimes be a difficult experience, it doesn't have to be so hard. These strategies may help to ensure the best outcomes for your visit.

1. Be in the moment

Being educated may help to relieve any feelings of anxiety that may exist for you.

Be prepared to 'go along' with stories positively, rather than disagreeing with the person if their story doesn't seem logical or relevant.

Remember that the person may be at another time and place in their mind, and confused about who you are. As hard as this can be to accept, remember that their 'happiness in the moment' is what is important. Keep in mind that their unusual or 'out of character' comments or actions are a part of their dementia experience.

2. Be self aware

What we are feeling and thinking is often more apparent to the person with dementia than any words we may use. Be in a positive frame of mind when visiting, and be prepared to laugh together!

3. Go at the person's pace

People with dementia often need more time to respond. Use slow and gentle motions and make sure you have the person's attention. Sit at eye level with the person, using good eye contact.

4. Communicate with staff

Try calling before your visit. This is a good way to gauge how the person

is doing, what time they are most alert and to check they haven't gone out with staff.

5. Arm yourself with a 'visiting kit' of ideas and activities

6. Reminiscing is one of the most valuable and meaningful activities for a person with dementia, as often their long term memory remains intact. Bringing the family photographs can trigger fond memories and validates the individual.

7. Learn to be comfortable with silence and changes of mood

Dementia can cause abrupt changes of mood and difficulty in communicating. Allow time, and be patient.

8. Develop an 'end-of-visit routine'

Try to leave at meal times as the person is naturally interested in another activity. Ask a staff member for help if needed. They will be able to divert the person gently when you leave.

9. 'Look after you'

Ensure that you have support to help you process your feelings about the changes you are experiencing, and to arm you with knowledge about what to expect.

Join a dementia awareness group, or contact your local Alzheimer's organisation.



During spring we are very active planting seedlings for summer



Enjoying baking something tasty for everyone to share

Happy Christmas from Andrew Sheard

Christmas is a busy time for me, but also manages to be a time of reflection. As I share my time between my work and home 'families', I often find myself pausing and smiling as I consider the special magic of this time, highlighted by the joy and excitement I see reflected on the faces of those around me.

There is a special energy at Christmas time, and young and old look forward to its arrival. We have to remind our staff that October is really too soon to begin the traditional Christmas craft activities with our residents, and that the Christmas tree shouldn't be up and decorated until December is at least partly underway!

There is no doubt that Christmas means different things to different people, and that this changes as we journey through our lives. My littlest daughter is still caught up in the wonder and excitement without fully understanding why. To the older children, the magic of Santa is as much a reality as the deeper mysteries and true meaning of the day. As for my

eldest, there is a special pride in being old and wise enough to join the grownups in maintaining the belief in Santa and his reindeer for the little ones.

All of these 'evolutionary life stages' of Christmas time – as well as others yet to come – are contained within the life stories of our residents, and in the many past Christmases they have experienced over the years. There is a special light in their eyes as the first baubles go up on the tree, and as they accept their gift from an often very hot and uncomfortable Santa Claus on Christmas morning. Often we do not know what colourful and fragile fragments of Christmases past are surfacing for them, or where their particular joy in the season lies.

One thing is certain: for residents, staff and families alike, though detailed memories may no longer be accessible, the magic of Christmas will never be lost.

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



We made our own daffodils to celebrate Daffodil Day

Naming gifts

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.

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.



Enjoying a visit from Charlie, who chatted, sang and whistled and kept us all entertained

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