



Avonlea
CHRISTCHURCH

Family Newsletter

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A message from Kirsty

Warmest greetings from all of us here at Avonlea!

Over the last few months we have had a busy time preparing to open our new hospital wing. This is now in full operation it has been great to see our residents who were in the dementia rest home progress over as the need arises. As I'm sure you will appreciate, in the past the residents would have had to leave Avonlea and this was not only stressful for families trying to gain trust and familiarity with a new facility and staff, but hard for us at Avonlea to lose a resident whom we regarded as 'family' here at Avonlea, which had become their home.

We are excited to announce that we will soon be replacing our old van with a wheelchair hoist van to accommodate the new level of care.

In July Avonlea underwent our certification Audit. The audit was conducted over two days and was a very exciting time for us all to share with the auditors the new initiatives which have occurred at Avonlea and the changes which have taken place.

I am pleased to announce we have again achieved four years certification and we also gained continuous

improvements (special recognition for initiatives over and above those normally expected) in various areas including: Good Practise, Governance, Quality & Risk Management System, Human Resource Management and Planned Activities.

We are all very proud of this result as currently only 10% of age care facilities have reached the 4 year certification standard.

We have seen some changes in our clinical team following Kathy's decision to return to a senior registered nursing role in March. The Clinical Manager role was ably filled by Ruth on a temporary basis during the introduction of hospital level care. Ruth has now been promoted to Regional Clinical Manager (South Island), and we are currently advertising for a very special person to take over the clinical management of Avonlea in tandem with Kirsty in her role of Operational Manager.

Last month at Avonlea we had a 'bake-off' between each home. This was a fantastic day where the residents and staff from each home competed to win a highly coveted award. It was wonderful to



watch the planning, discussion and practise runs that occurred! I was overwhelmed by how seriously this was taken and by the pride taken in each individual home.

We encouraged input from family, with one home even engaging the help of a family member to provide the recipe and teach them how to make it!

Mahal was the overall winner, and we congratulate Cherry and her residents for the mammoth effort.

This was such a success that the staff would like to make this an annual event.

Recently we have been lucky to have beautiful spring days and it has been fantastic to see our residents once again out enjoying the gardens. I encourage you all to make the most of the garden. There are wheelchairs on hand for your use to either enjoy the garden or take a walk together to the dairy to get an ice cream.

We look forward to making many happy memories and special moments with you and your loved one in the months to come.

“The Power of Eternity”

Every day we are privileged to experience special moments with the people we care for, moments which remind us of the power of living ‘in the present moment. There may be no ‘cure’ for dementia, but these moments affirm that there is definitely joy, empowerment and healing. We keep a ‘magic moment book’ to record these in, which you are also welcome to use. We would like to share some of these special moments with you.



The winner of the Great Avonlea Bake-off, Cherry Liu, serves her cake up for residents to enjoy

A male and female resident were sitting together. Suddenly the female resident started to weep. The male resident took hold of her head and placed it on his shoulder, offering his shoulder for her to rest her head on and gently patting her back.

Staff sitting doing crosswords with 2 residents, and the residents’ delight when they knew many of the answers!

Two female residents walking hand in hand down the hallway together deep in conversation.

I was walking in the hallway when a male resident greeted me and gestured to me to follow him into his room. He went straight to the wall where a family picture was hanging. He pointed to the picture and said “These are the girls,” and “This is Mum” and “That’s me!” I was so touched by the way he was still able to recognize his family and how much the picture meant to him.

While I was replacing light bulbs in the lounge one of our male residents came up to me and held the chair I was standing on. He did not leave until I had finished all the bulbs. At one point he tried to hold me steady, as if he was afraid I might fall.

On night shift I sat down to have a cup of tea. One of our residents walked in and said to me, “Are you having a cup of tea?” “Yes,” I said. He said to me, “Have you got extra?” I said “Yes. Sit down and I will make a cup for you.” He sat down and I offered him cake and sandwiches. When he had finished he looked at me and said with a lovely

smile, “Thank you. I’m going to bed now.”

During conversation one of our female residents told me that her son was her “Power of Eternity”!

A heartwarming moment of bonding when two male residents were seated together in conversation, one holding the hand of the other.

We had fun and enjoyed dancing with a male resident in the lounge with him smiling and carried away by the disco music on the radio.

When I told a male resident “I have finished working here and I am leaving today” he said to me, “God bless you dear.” It was really a blessed moment for me.

Smiles of delight from a female resident when she was playing ten pin bowling, saying “I’m lucky!” as she hit down the pins.

Playing with the big beach ball with a female resident who kicked the ball and it hit a male resident on the behind as he was bending over. With barely concealed delight she exclaimed: “That was a good shot!”



Our Operations Manager Kirsty represented Avonlea at the Age Concern Positive Ageing Expo in Christchurch in September

Planning for excellence

As we move towards the end of the year a number of significant projects forming part of our annual business plan are now well underway.

These include important initiatives such as falls prevention and a reduction in staff and resident incidents and injuries.

We have a significant focus on medication, comparing the use of antipsychotics both within our facilities and hopefully with comparable external agencies. Our aim is to continually strive to achieve the best balance for each resident, with the least possible medication our constant objective.

As always, our activities programme is high on our list of priorities, with a renewed focus on familiar, homely activities which are age-appropriate

and lead to a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Staff education has taken place recently in falls prevention, protection and prevention of pressure areas, and abuse and neglect.

In addition, a new role of BPSD (Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia) Advisor has been created to provide a specialised 'go-to' person for any concerns or challenges relating to residents. Catherine Nation is our BPSB Advisor at Avonlea.

An organisational continence specialist is also soon to be appointed to assist our staff team in the continuing quest to maintain continence and enhance the personal dignity and quality of life of our residents.



Our residents will soon be enjoying summer in our beautiful gardens

Summer's on the menu!

With daylight saving comes summer and the re-introduction of our summer menu.

As well as taking the dietary requirements of our residents into account, the menu devised by our dietician changes with the seasons. The hearty soups, stews and hot puddings that provide warmth and comfort in winter give way to lighter, more summery seasonal fare featuring fish, pasta, chicken, cold meats and salads, sandwiches, savouries and quiches.

Desserts remain a highlight of every meal, with ice cream and fresh fruit

salads, mousses, jelly whip and crumbles being among the favourites.

Fresh home baking is always on offer for morning and afternoon tea.

Please remember that there is an open invitation for you to join your loved one for a meal.



The homely dining area and kitchenette in our new hospital, Mahal

Courses for families

If you are new to Avonlea you may not be aware of the two short courses we run for family members, Orientation for Families and Sharing the Journey. These courses are a free, fun and supportive way of introducing you to many of the practical aspects of having a family member in residential care, and of understanding more about the dementia journey. People who attend the courses find them both enjoyable and enriching. Please pop in and speak with Kirsty to find out more about the courses and register your interest!



The homely activity of folding towels

A special request

Our organizational accounts team in Nelson has asked us to bring your attention to the importance of giving the resident's name as a reference for any payment, whether on an account or an Automatic Payment. If any other name is given, such as the person making the payment or the EPOA, for example, it can take time to identify which resident the payment applies to, and there is greater potential for confusion and mistakes. Thank you for your assistance with this.



Baking chocolate chip cookies

Heading away?

Please remember that if for any reason you are heading away, it is essential to leave our RN with contact details (whether a cell phone, close family member or email address) so that we can reach you if we need to for any reason.

It will also give you peace of mind while you are away, knowing that we are able to notify you immediately if anything unexpected should occur.

Our Thanks to You

A poem for our volunteers

by Diversional Therapy Team Leader
Helen McLeane and our
Millvale Levin residents

Thank you for the gift of time,
You've given us so often,
The kindness of your voice and care
Has helped our journey soften.

Your smiling face, the words you share,
Can touch our hearts and minds,
And while we may not often say,
We love that you are kind.

You share your joy, your song, or words,
Or maybe just a smile,
And on a day when life seems hard
You stop and stay awhile.

There are no words to capture
and value what you do.
Today is just a little chance
To show our thanks to you.

At times our lives are busy,
Or we seem far away,
But always know you've left a mark
And on our heart it stays.

Please know how much you mean to us,
And trust these words we say,
You've made a difference in our lives.
A gift we can't repay.

We wish you love and happiness,
And joy in all you do,
Our world has been a better place
Because it's shared with you.

