



Avonlea
CHRISTCHURCH

Family Newsletter

June 2014

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A message from Kirsty and Charisma

We were very proud to see the opening of Aroha as a specialized dementia hospital unit. This is very exciting for us as this enables us to deliver a full continuum of care for our residents at Avonlea. This means that as your loved one's care needs change, they will be able to remain here in their home with people who know and love them.

Over the construction time there was lots of fun had in picking the new furnishings to create that very special homely feel. Training has occurred for staff to ensure we are offering the very best of care at this very specialised level. We currently have 7 residents who have joined us in this home and we warmly welcome them to the Avonlea 'family'.

We would like to thank our family members and visitors for their patience and understanding throughout the building process.

Mothers' Day was a special day here at Avonlea with rooms decorated and special chocolates enjoyed by all. It was great to have so many visitors on the day.



We would like to invite all new families to join us for our next course of Orientation for Families. This fun, interactive and informative course is scheduled for

- Tuesday 17th June 2.30-3.30pm
- Tuesday 24th June 2.30-3.30pm
- Tuesday 1 July 2.30-3.30pm

The transition to residential care can sometimes be both daunting and mystifying, and this is a good opportunity not only to meet others on the same journey, but to find out why we do what we do. Please confirm with Kirsty if you would like to attend.



You are warmly invited to join us for our
Winter Gathering
Tuesday 10th June 2.30pm for Mahal, Awhi Whanau and Hoa Pumau
Thursday 12th June 2.30pm for Aroha, Ofa and Rudo

Highlights of our activity programme

We would like to share some of the recent highlights of our activities programme with you.



All good for the picking: fresh strawberries in our garden

A fun day was celebrated at Avonlea for St Patricks Day, with residents and staff wearing clothing with a "Green" theme and a special afternoon tea enjoyed by all. One of our residents in Ofa offered to perform for us all on his piano accordion, and the home was filled with traditional Irish tunes. It was great to see our residents and staff up dancing while others sat clapping their hands to the music.

From time to time family members and staff bring in their animals to visit us at Avonlea. This is always loved by our residents and we encourage you all to do this if you wish.

Another activity that has been very successful is the baking in the homes. It is always wonderful to see the

residents getting so involved in this homely activity at all of our levels of care, whether taking active part in the baking process, helping with tasting, sampling the end product, or simply sitting at the benchtop enjoying being part of the experience.

We would also like to share three very special 'magic moments' which touched our hearts recently:

... Watching the resident mentioned above entertaining us all playing the accordion with a look of absolute delight on his face

... Seeing a resident get dressed up for Anzac day and very proudly wearing his medals for the day

... Watching a resident and a staff member water the garden, enjoying being outdoors together and laughing as the water splashed everywhere.

Podiatry service strongly recommended

Caring for our residents' feet is more specialised than you may first think. The risks of infection and pain caused by incorrect technique and the importance of assessment by a professional are important issues to consider in relation to the feet of our residents.

For this reason our facilities have accessed specialised podiatry services to assist staff to care for residents' feet.

There are many benefits to making use of a specialist podiatry service. The following services are provided:

- General toenail care
- Treatment of painful or problem toes
- Removal of corns or calluses
- Overall assessment of foot health, especially with regard to circulation and nerve function

- Specialised care of "at risk" feet, e.g. diabetic care.

This specialised care is arranged for residents, and the account passed on to the resident (with the exception of diabetic foot care). Generally podiatrists see our residents every six weeks. We believe that this is well worth the extra fee, as many elderly people suffer from painful or problematic feet.

If you choose not to make use of this service, we cannot take responsibility for cutting residents' toenails. This will need to be organised by the family, and we will request that a disclaimer is signed and kept on the resident's file to that effect.

Please discuss this with the registered nurse if this is the case.



Avonlea roses in full bloom

Being a friend

I am greatly privileged to facilitate some of our education sessions on the Best Friends Approach to Care – our flagship programme that underpins our vision and values. Every member of our team participates in the course soon after joining us.

We always begin session two by talking about our own best friends. Each member of the group is invited to share what their best friend offers them or what special quality he or she has. People share the things they most treasure about the special people in their lives, such as: she is always there for me ... he accepts me no matter what ... I can talk with her about anything ... he knows much about me and sometimes knows what I need without me having to ask ... she forgives my mistakes ... he makes me laugh.

We then go on to talk together about how we can be like a very best friend to our residents. To do this we are totally accepting of our residents, being there for them no matter what. It was Thomas Merton who said: "The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves."

Lately I have found myself thinking about the importance of friends in my

life. I have a few thoughts to share with you.

The German root of the word friendship means "place of high safety". We feel very safe when with a wonderful friend. We feel warmth and love when with a friend. Friends soften our world and they help us to open the door to our souls.

To be a true friend to another, we must be exactly who we are. We need to attend to our own inner growth. When we do this, we bloom and there is much to share.

Have you ever had a friend say "You don't seem quite yourself today" or "You acted out of character today"? We human beings are constantly growing and changing, breaking patterns of how we used to be. As friends it is necessary to work at our love for each other so that we know each other more fully as the days go by.

I disappoint myself and others often but I keep on trying to make sure my presence is a gift of love.

Being a friend is a most wonderful thing.

Alison Hume



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.

We would prefer you supply non woollen clothing that is easily washed.



Communicating with families

Communication with one other is very important, especially when it involves residents in our care. We are often asked how our communication system works. There are two main reasons for a registered nurse (RN) contacting family. One is open disclosure after an incident has occurred, and the other is to impart information regarding a resident's change in condition.

We are committed to providing safe, quality health care to our residents. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, there will be times when a resident sustains an injury, is harmed, or becomes unwell. In these instances, it is important to ensure that full and open disclosure to families occurs. The

RN will contact the resident's EPOA (Personal Health and Welfare) to inform them of the incident. It is then the EPOA's responsibility to inform other family members.

Multi-disciplinary team meetings with families occur one month after admission and every 6 months thereafter 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 EPOA. The EPOA can extend the invitation to other family members if they wish.

In addition, you are always welcome to come to us with any concerns that may arise from day to day.



'Gardening Club' is an opportunity for residents to continue outdoor activities they have enjoyed in the past

EPOA Family Survey results

Thank you for taking time to complete the EPOA surveys this year. We are happy to report 48% of surveys were returned. This was pleasing as it provides us with an overview of how we are doing in your eyes.

92% of respondents said that they would recommend this facility to a friend. 95% felt we had a friendly atmosphere and that the staff were approachable.

On analysis of the results we found that we did not meet families' expectations in the following area:

- EPOA Survey Question 15: Some respondents were not entirely happy with the laundry service
- EPOA Survey Question 23: Some respondents were not entirely happy with the presentation of the meals
- EPOA Survey Question 24: Some respondents felt staff were slow to offer assistance to residents at meal times
- EPOA Survey Question 25: Some respondents felt the likes, dislikes, cultural preferences and special

dietary needs of their loved ones were not taken into account

Four quality improvements have been raised as a result of this survey. We are now working to improve on these aspects of our service.

We take all comments extremely seriously, and raise Quality Improvements where appropriate. We would like to remind families if at any time they would like to make suggestions on how we can improve our service, our manager is always available or if you prefer to write your suggestion down we have what we call 'Quality Improvement Forms' which we use to make changes to the way we do things.

Please remember that this survey is anonymous. If you have something you are really unhappy about, it is important that you come and discuss it with a manager so that we can address it.



Enjoying a cuddle with a visiting dog