



Millvale House
LEVIN

March 2016

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Family Newsletter

A message from Dianne and Rhea

A New Year, and new opportunities for all of us!

We hope all of you enjoyed the long holiday period and the warm weather.

We had our Christmas Gathering on 18th December and it was well attended by families and friends. As always, this shared time together was enjoyed by all. Some of our residents went out for Christmas dinner and lunch with family and friends. We would like to thank those who made the festive season so enjoyable for us all.

Late last year a few new staff joined us, and already they have become an integral part of our activities and nursing team. All are well qualified and experienced in their respective roles. We are sure you will enjoy meeting them and getting to know them better as time goes on.

We have also had changes this year with residents coming and going in both Hospital and Hospital Dementia areas. As always we love welcoming new residents and families, who arrive as strangers and soon become valued and familiar members of our Millvale family.

Many thanks to those who responded to our recent Welfare Guardian survey. Generally comments were very positive, with suggestions made in the areas of kitchen equipment, GP allocation, garden and parking improvements (already completed), laundry, and the Facebook page. As appropriate, Quality Improvements have been raised to address these, or they have been followed up personally with the families concerned. A suggestion regarding electronic equipment such as laptops may be something for future consideration. Families are welcome to bring in personal devices for use with residents during visits.



We have also now completed repainting the home to the new colour scheme and are looking forward to receiving the art work that will complement the long hallways.

Recently we had our surveillance audit. This was an unannounced audit. Some of you may have been invited to comment on the service we provide. We thank you for your input during those two days and the residents and staff team for their continued contribution and support.

A magic moment to share with you

One of our ladies experienced a day of remarkable clarity recently. For a period, her usual symptoms of dementia seemed to disappear as she conversed, fed herself and shared insight into the effects of her dementia making her “there physically but not mentally”.

We looked on with delight as she carefully chose movies to watch and music to listen to.

It was a beautiful day to be able to get to know her as she had been before her illness.

In closing, we look forward to another busy and happy year at Millvale House. Please feel free to pop in and chat with us at any time about any concerns you may have.

Free online course on dementia



Our cooks excelled themselves over the festive period

Have you ever wanted to go on a tour through the brain? See how everything works? Learn the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia? The University of Tasmania offers a free on-line course on Understanding Dementia. The course content is easy to understand and is open to anybody and everybody from family members to care staff, registered nurses and managers.

The 9 week course is broken down into 3 sections with no exams or assignments.

- The Brain – how it works and what causes dementia (including an interactive tour of the brain)
- The Diseases – exploring the differences between normal

aging and dementia, issues surrounding diagnosis, and medical management

- The Person – addresses living with dementia, progression and stages, palliation, changes in behaviour and alternative therapies.

If you are interested in finding out more about this fascinating course, please visit

<https://mooc.utas.edu.au/courses/understanding-dementia> and register your expression of interest. A

Facebook page is also available at

<https://www.facebook.com/UnderstandingDementia>

Concerns and complaints: your gift to us



Children from Levin School came to entertain us at Christmas

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. Your concerns and complaints provide the opportunity for us to pass on this feedback to all our staff and take corrective action when needed, as part of our ongoing quality improvement programme.

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 should be made on a Quality Improvement Form. 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 box.

Please ensure that any verbal complaint is made directly to either Dianne or Rhea. 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.

The symptoms of dementia

Dementia is a condition that affects the way we think. It can affect our memory, our language and our perception of the world around us. These changes can affect the way we behave as we try to make sense of our experiences.

Imagine waking up in a strange room every day. Our brain will try to understand what is happening, and will use our life experiences to do so. It is not uncommon for the people we care for to think that they are in a hotel, a restaurant, a doctor's waiting room or a bus station. We know this because they may ask us how to pay for the meal they are served.

Changes in behaviour are symptoms of the dementia they are experiencing, just as a fever, runny nose and cough are symptoms of a bad cold. The changes to the way we see the world can make us anxious, frightened and frustrated. This in turn can make us restless, agitated, repetitive and sometimes aggressive.

We teach our staff to think of these changes in behaviour as symptoms of a disease, rather than part of the person themselves. This helps our staff to care for people with dementia with empathy and respect.

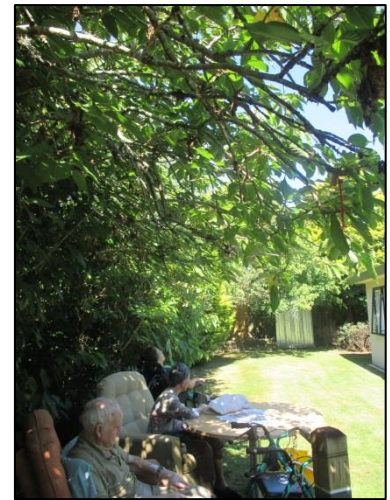
Our staff offer reassurance and calm to those they are caring for. Alleviating fear and frustration will often prevent

changes in behaviour occurring.

We also work closely with our staff teams to try and understand the meaning and reason for changes in behaviour, as sometimes changes in the environment or the way we relate to the person with dementia can be helpful. These will often help the person to relax and feel more at home.

We have a diversional therapy team to help us provide meaningful activities for those we care for. Our activity programme provides opportunity for social interaction, occupies and stimulates the mind, and helps people to feel useful through engaging in familiar homely activities which provide a sense of familiarity and belonging.

Living with dementia is not always a distressing, negative experience, although the changed perception of reality can be disorienting. Dementia may appear more distressing to the observer than it is to the person directly affected. Caring for someone with dementia is frequently a joyful and rewarding experience, and sharing those moments is a privilege for each of us. If you have any concerns regarding any event or interaction you may see while at our facility, please speak directly with our Clinical Manager.



Residents enjoy the outdoor areas in summer time

Influenza – keeping your loved one safe

We urge you and your loved one to get immunised against influenza this winter to give everyone the best chance of being protected. The more vulnerable elderly do not gain as much immunity from influenza vaccination as healthy people do. Family that visit may unknowingly become the spreader of infection.

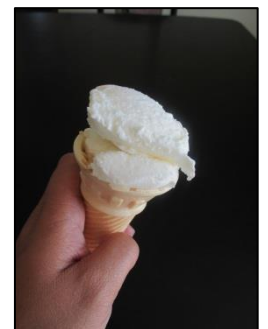
Few people are aware that if you become infected with the influenza virus you can spread the virus 24hrs before symptoms appear.

Symptoms of influenza come on suddenly and can include fever, chills, muscle aches, runny nose, cough and stomach upsets. The flu is worse than a cold, with the influenza virus infecting the nose, throat and lungs.

Older people, young children, pregnant women, and people with certain medical conditions are at a higher risk of developing serious complications from influenza, such as pneumonia.

If you are unwell, we ask you to stay at home and postpone visits to your loved ones. We also encourage our staff to be immunised to protect our residents.

Please ask the RN about our influenza consent form on your next visit to the facility. If you have received the consent form already, please sign and return it to the facility as soon as possible. If you are in doubt about the flu vaccination and the benefit of this to your loved one, please do not hesitate to see the Clinical Manager for further information.



Making the most of the summer weather with an ice cream

Spending time with loved ones

Alison Hume

I have personally experienced taking care of a number of family members in rest homes and continuing care hospitals in the last few years. This has not always been easy. Every now and again, the time spent with my loved one has been a time of closeness, love and tenderness. Other times, I have found the time together quite difficult. A number of situations have occurred. Sometimes my family member would cry for the whole visit (and many times I would cry along too). Other times we felt awkward because we couldn't find anything to talk about. I have experienced my special family member wanting to go home and struggling to settle and I have felt guilty that this is not possible. At times, leaving and ending the visit has been heart breaking. There have been instances when I have not been at all sure that the wonderful people who have loved and cared for me in the past actually recognise me. Sitting with a family member, knowing that the end is getting near is a particularly poignant experience.

I have found that a little thought and preparation before a visit increases my chances of a meaningful time with my loved family member. Many times I have resorted to the ideas of Virginia Bell and David Troxel in their book "Best Friends Approach to Care" and to ideas that our team have suggested. I would like to share some of their ideas with you. It is my wish that you will have wonderful touching moments with your loved ones.

- Share hand cream and admire the perfume
- Read a book aloud
- Brush hair

- Watch birds outside the window
- Polish nails
- Walk in the garden
- Provide an update on a favourite sports team
- Listen to music
- Visit with pets
- Watch the sky at sunset
- Tidy drawers
- Visit with a baby
- Look at family photographs
- Sing together
- Arrange flowers
- Go out for a drive – to feed the ducks or see the sea
- Smell the roses
- Play the piano
- Have an ice cream together
- Weed some garden
- Enjoy the silence
- Have a beer together
- Whistle a tune
- Make a cup of tea
- Share something to eat
- Look at a picture book
- Bring fish and chips to eat together
- Talk about grandchildren

It is important to be flexible. What has worked in the past may not be so effective today. Not easily done, but I have noticed that when I am accepting of the reality of where my loved one is at the time, then the visit goes a whole lot better. Remember to tell stories of the past. Reminiscing can be a winner. Stay in the moment with your loved one. Focus on what your loved one can still do. Smile, hold hands. Just be together.

Your time together is short. I hope this time together is precious, tender and full of love.

We promise we will give your loved one the very best of care.
 We promise we will appreciate, respect and love your special person.
 We will be honest, open and trustworthy.
 This is the work we have chosen to do.

– Alison Hume and Jim Haines, Directors



Art and craft activities take on a festive theme at Christmas time!