

Our Home



A message from Junitha and Maja

It's hard to believe that we are already halfway through a year which to many of us, seems to have just begun!

As always, providing a relevant and varied selection of activities for our residents to take part in is central to life here at our home. Bringing Koromiko and Ngaio residents together for activities on Wednesday afternoons is proving to be popular, with a larger group size attracting increased interest and involvement, as well as added opportunities for socialising with like-minded and compatible new friends. Music activities such as musical Bingo and music quizzes are alternated weekly with active games such as darts, skittles, and quoits.

Van outings, including a trip to Picton to view the small yacht racing regatta, and to Lansdowne Park for the Pipe Band championships, were much enjoyed. We have started van outings to the library on the first week of each month, giving staff and residents access to a wider variety of reading and picture browsing material, DVDs and jigsaw puzzles relevant to the interests of the residents.

Waitangi Day and Valentine's Day were both celebrated with craft and music activities. We also celebrated St. Patrick's Day with residents wearing green hats, joining in a singalong of Irish songs and listening to Irish jokes.

Our canine friends Oscar, Carter, Zeus and Circe have been visiting regularly, providing a lot of joy. We are sad to hear that Zeus is no longer with us.

In Ngaio we have been focusing on reminiscing with a weekly session looking at aspects of people's lives. Some delightful stories emerge, as well as clear early memories from people with difficulty remembering more recent events.

Donya Nee wrote up the story of Mike Boyd's life as a poet, writer and shearer; he holds the current world record for the number of sheep shorn blindfolded! Mike's story, accompanied by photos, was shared on the Aberleigh Facebook page. One of our other residents, Beth McHardy, also shared some of her special memories of a quintessential Kiwi lifestyle with us in a series of six Facebook 'chapters' over the course of a week. Both of these special projects have received a large number of likes and positive comments from our Facebook community which is great feedback for them and us.

Sristika has introduced a Beauty Therapy session with Koromiko residents during which they are shown makeup and hair style options. As this was very popular and appreciated she will do this every month. Some residents attended the Multicultural Festival in Pollard Park and enjoyed this so much that we plan to offer two outings there next year. Stage performances from different dance groups dressed in national costume impressed all of us.

Staff education is a continuing focus for us, with sessions so far this year including Fundamentals of Palliative Care through Hospice Marlborough (16 staff are attending this course which is ongoing until November 2023), Best Friends Approach to Care, Fire Safety training, Abuse & Neglect Awareness, Advocacy & Code of Rights & Drug Administration through Unichem Pharmacy, and Pressure Area Care.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Winter Family Gatherings, and we hope to see you here often as regular visitors over the months to come.

Greetings from Andrew Sheard

I'm enjoying the crisp wintry days as I go around our homes at the moment. The cool weather makes the hearty lunchtime soup on our winter menu smell all the better. Please do join your loved one for a meal or even just a cup of tea when you come in to visit.

We have run focus groups at several of our homes over the past month or so. These sessions are great for providing us with some feedback on what we are doing well and what we can improve on. This is something we did regularly before COVID-19 so it is great to have these sessions back up and running.

Involving residents and their whānau in care is a priority for us. The conversations we have guide us in the development of policies, the delivery of care and the monitoring of care. Family are our partners in care and we value your input very much.

We have received some great feedback and very useful suggestions so thank you to everyone who has been involved in these groups.

Do take care of yourself over winter. The early mornings are darker now and it is getting dark in the late afternoon. It is a time to quieten, to take note of the beauty that surrounds us. It is everywhere.

When I am outside at night I like to look at the moon and the stars. In the first light of day I am amazed to see some jonquils already. Going outside, noticing the ever-changing landscape outside changes the way I feel in a positive way.

Ngā manaakitanga

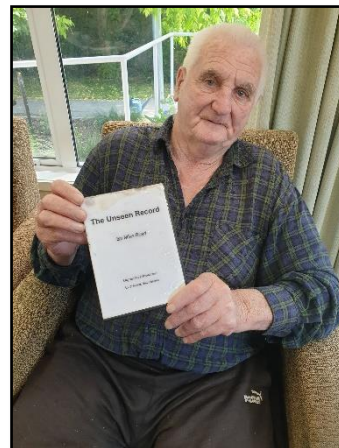
Andrew Sheard



Residents enjoy a visit from Arku, an Anatolian Karabash with a delightfully calm and friendly temperament



Beth shared special memories of her prize-winning poodles as part of her Facebook story



Mike Boyd's innate Kiwi reticence and modesty hide a fascinating past with some major achievements

Celebrating our wonderful nurses

Magic Moments from our homes

I was on my rounds when I saw N sitting alone in her room, I asked her if she needed help. She asked me if I could help her go to bed. I assisted her and tucked her into bed. She then asked me: "Can I give you a kiss?" She kissed my cheek and whispered "Thank you for helping me my dear."

One of our residents turned 92 in April. The staff had decorated the lounge for her birthday with purple balloons, which we knew was her favourite colour. She told her son that the staff had read her mind. She was so happy to see the purple balloons everywhere.

One resident wears a very pretty necklace when her husband visits. I complimented her in front of him about it and she blushed. It was a moving moment between them. I loved being part of this.

When I returned from a couple of days off over the holidays, J instantly recognized my voice and started to get very animated hearing me talk to her. Although she no longer talks, her eyes spoke volumes.

One of our residents in the lounge was really restless and upset. Then A came up to her and patted her head and sat beside her. She then held the resident's hand and massaged it while she sang to her.

A staff member assisted a resident who was feeling cold, fetching a blanket and making him comfortable. He thanked her and said: "You must be an angel. What kind of angel are you? Come and tell me something about yourself."

All around the world, 12th May is the day we celebrate our dedicated and hardworking Registered Nurses. They work hard, guide, supervise, inspire and mentor the care team; approach each day with love and compassion; liaise with and support our families; and put their all into keeping our residents and community safe and healthy.

People who dedicate their professional life to this are characterised by their compassion, patience, sympathy for and empathy towards the people they serve. In our modern times, they also need to be highly knowledgeable and professional in their work. Nurses working at our nine rest homes undoubtedly demonstrate all of the above traits, and more.

Nursing is not a job, but a vocation. Working as an aged care Nurse is giving of yourself, heart and soul, working with others in a role that truly means something and makes a difference to the world, person by person and day by day. It is an important life pursuit.

On 12th May, we took the time to acknowledge all of the work our Nurses do throughout our homes, and say a genuine thank you.

To celebrate and show our gratitude, our homes held afternoon tea for our nurses and staff where they enjoyed a lovely cake and some home-cooked food and drinks. This was an opportunity to recognize our Nurses' unconditional services and letting them know that they are an integral part of our DCNZ team. It was their time, and also our chance to express our deep appreciation for all they do and are.

In addition, the directors and senior clinical team arranged a Zoom session to meet with the nurses and Level 4 RN support staff across all our homes to personally express their thanks and appreciation for all they do.

The history behind the 12th May Nurses Day celebration

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every May 12th, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth.

Florence Nightingale was a celebrated English social reformer, statistician, and founder of modern nursing. She became well known for taking care of the wounded soldiers during the Crimean War, dubbed "The Lady with the Lamp" because of her habit of making rounds at night.

On this day, we felt privileged to thank all our incredible "Ladies of the Lamp" right across the DCNZ homes: for the hard work, dedication and the invaluable role they play in the lives of our residents and their whānau, each and every day.

Urmeem Rahman and Arrah Bagtang, Regional Clinical Managers

The importance of being different



Making a delicious jam together to have with our morning scones

Aged care sector update

We were pleased to get some additional Government funding to start to address the pay gap between Registered Nurses in aged care homes and nurses working in hospitals. However, there is still a significant difference and pay equity for our nurses has not yet been achieved.

We are still many nurses short across the aged care sector and we are doing everything we can to manage working towards recruiting, training and retaining new nurses to lead our clinical care teams. We have been fortunate to be able to recruit Caregivers who have been Registered Nurses overseas which has helped us to fill this skill shortage. Many of these Caregivers will be able to become Registered Nurses in New Zealand over time, and we are committed to supporting them through this process.

You will have seen a number of new staff starting over the first half of this year.

Following the Pay Equity Settlement of 2017, a fair pay agreement is also being negotiated with the goal of providing Caregivers with a pay increase. There is still some way to go in this process but we are hoping for an agreement to make Caregiving a fairly-paid career path.

As this is an election year these issues will be under more scrutiny than usual. We are hoping for good outcomes.

Several times a year I facilitate sessions with our staff about cultural awareness and respecting diversity. Much time is spent discussing Māori and Pacific Island culture, as well as staff sharing information about their own culture. I am always struck by how people become more animated and alive when talking about their own culture. I shouldn't be surprised of course, because our culture is at the very core of our being. I encourage staff in these sessions to remind themselves how proud they are of their own culture when they meet a resident or colleague from a different culture.

Despite this pride in our individuality, some of us spend our time trying to 'fit in', trying to be the same as others, perhaps from a fear of being ridiculed. When I was young, which is a long time ago I agree, it was extremely important NOT to fit in, but to be as different as possible. It was common for the clothes, hairstyles and behaviour to be as unique as we could make them. Thinking about this and the sessions I help run has led me to wonder about the importance of difference.

Human beings need to accept and respect the differences in others. This is particularly important when providing care for our residents, whose differences become more apparent as they are living in a communal setting. Accepting our own differences is an important part of this process, as accepting ourselves is a way of learning to accept others. And as we all know, loving ourselves (which can sometimes be the hardest thing of all) is a vital step in truly loving other people.

We live in a world where on one hand differences in gender, sexuality and culture are celebrated and encouraged, but on the other hand war and conflicts based on cultural differences are common events. Isn't being different from each other what makes life so interesting? For us all to be the same gender, height, colour, age and culture would be dull beyond belief.

It's interesting to consider why humankind seems to have such an innately negative view of differences. We feel suspicious of difference. We are often threatened by difference.

This can be true of the behaviour of some of our residents who have dementia. Sometimes the actions of our residents may seem 'different', unexpected or irrational. Yet if we look more deeply into the reasons underlying the behaviour in the mind of the resident and seek to understand why it is happening, this can result in an 'aha' moment of real connection.

This is at the core of our foundation 'Best Friends Approach to Care' training. This teaches us to look not for the ways in which we differ from one another, but the ways in which we are the same. Once we feel that sense of shared humanity, it sets us free to celebrate the differences in culture, appearance, attitudes and behaviour that make each one of us so unique and precious.

Simon Hamley, Education Coordinator