



Avonlea  
CHRISTCHURCH

# Our Home



## A message from Armie and Brezel

Warmest greetings to you all!

The first part of the year has brought some important changes to our staff team, with Daphne stepping down from her role as Operations Manager in order to pursue her dream goal of continuing her Registered Nursing career. We are delighted that she will be continuing to work for us as a Caregiver on a part time basis, and extend our best wishes and thanks to her for all she has given Avonlea over the years.

We are very happy to announce the appointment of Brezel Banalagay as our new Operations Manager. Brezel brings a strong administrative and healthcare background to her new role. She looks forward to getting to know our residents, families and staff team, so please pop in and say hello!

We continue to welcome new staff members as needed, many bringing Registered Nursing skills and experience from overseas to strengthen our team.

Renovations of our Aroha home lounge are well underway, with residents enjoying Ofa and Rudo residents' company while their lounge is being refurbished. We apologise for any inconvenience the renovations have caused in terms of access, and look forward to the time when we will all be enjoying the new lounge and new garden landscape.

We are excited to announce that our new wing, Pyaar ('Love' in Hindi), is now ready to become home to some new residents.

It's been a challenging couple of years, and we're hugely proud of our amazing staff team. As time passes we're becoming comfortable with the 'new normal' and the familiarity it brings. We may never know who will be calling in next to report a positive RAT test, but we do know they will be back in a week, full of reassurance for teammates yet to go through the COVID experience.

Like many unexpected challenges, the tough times we've been through have made us stronger and more united as a team, and that includes you, our families.

We can't thank you enough for your kindness, your patience, and your understanding of the need to close, re-open, and close again. Your support makes it all so much easier, and gives us strength and inspiration.

As we continue navigating the COVID situation daily, we appreciate how hard it can be knowing from day to day what may have changed. If you are not receiving the regular updates from Peter please let me know and I can add your email to our list. If you are unsure whether we're open please don't hesitate to give us a call.

Our recent family surveys mentioned that some families don't feel comfortable coming behind the benchtop to make a cup of tea. We would love you to feel as relaxed and comfortable as you would in your own home. We're now returning to offering hospitality just as we have always done. Please wear your mask when you are moving around the rest home, but you may remove it when seated, to eat or drink.

We'd like to remind you that your loved one's bedroom is theirs to decorate in their own way. Please do remember to name anything you bring in, and to bring copies of precious photos rather than the originals. We're happy to help with anything if needed.

We have decided not to hold our traditional winter family gathering this year, but will be looking ahead to when the weather is warmer, to welcome in the spring together. We will be in touch once our plans are a little more definite.

We would like to remind you that we offer private Family Support Group sessions facilitated by Nicky Bishop of Workplace Support. Please talk to Brezel for additional information about this. Posters are located on our family notice boards.

We look forward to welcoming you often over the following months – please know that a warm welcome and a hot cuppa await you here at our home!

We do things differently, and it works.

July 2022

## Warmest greetings from Andrew



*Having fun making organic and gluten free purple peach, walnut and apple crumble together!*



*Plenty for everyone: the delicious result of our Creative Cooking Club project*



*Residents enjoy taking part in familiar household tasks*

Perhaps it's too early to be pausing and reflecting on the events of the past two years, but nonetheless as the days pass, I find myself taking a deep, refreshing breath and reflecting.

Wow, what a two years it's been. Who could ever have imagined it? What a team we have, with their huge commitment, understanding, patience and support. So many opportunities for learning and growth.

What a gift this time has been.

Anyone who has lived through one of New Zealand's earthquakes will understand the parallels between the earthquakes and COVID. Both rattle us to the core – one literally, the other figuratively. Both change the way we see ourselves, our world, our values, and our relationships. Suddenly we are reminded of the things that are really important. Sometimes, these surprised us.

These events bring us together. Suddenly we are caring for one another. Looking out for each other. Thinking about right now, instead of tomorrow. Noticing the small, beautiful things in a big, scary world. Realising that a smile works just the same through a mask.

For me, one of the sources of strength and joy has been my visits to the rest homes. Seeing the family of people within each home just being together, doing normal things in the usual way. Seeing our residents happy and well cared for, not giving COVID a thought because actually, in the here and now, it simply doesn't exist. Taking a moment to draw a deep breath and take the pressure off. To be still. To be ok.

COVID has also gifted us opportunities to take a fresh, creative look at the way we do things. The aged care sector as a whole has faced – and still faces – unprecedented challenges in terms of Caregiver and Registered Nurse staffing. Some family members have just quietly chipped in and helped where they could. Others have worried about all the 'what ifs'.

We as an organisation have done both. We have identified the worries and then focused on what we can control. We've found our own solution to the national staff shortages by quietly recruiting highly qualified and experienced Registered Nurses from overseas to work for us, initially as Caregivers, with the expertise to provide support to our own Registered Nurses, and soon to transition to being NZ Registered Nurses themselves. More than 30 new staff have arrived so far to start their new lives in New Zealand, some at each facility, with the same number currently in the recruitment process, and more to come. We welcome them. We thank them.

Each of our facilities is a little island in a bigger island that is New Zealand, in a bigger island that is our planet. We are not alone. Support, solutions, and helping hands can be found if we reach out for them.

We are learning courage. We are learning to seek and give help. We are learning humility. And we are learning kindness.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Andrew Sheard, Managing Director

## Magic Moments from our homes

I was walking with a gentleman in the lounge and he turned around me and suddenly said: "I love you, Supergirl!", then smiled.

During the morning exercises, residents and family members thoroughly enjoyed stretching their limbs. This has become a favourite activity that we plan to do each morning as well as the daily walks.

We've recently welcomed a new volunteer entertainer who sings 1930-40s music which a few of our residents sing along with. She also sings some songs in Te Reo Māori which one of our ladies especially enjoyed.

A recent one on one chat with a resident went really well. She was so happy talking. Now every time I see her, she gives me a smile.

I was serving one resident, who speaks another language, her pre-dinner drink. As I was setting the drink down, she smiled and said "thank you" in English. In my three months working here, I have heard her say only a handful of English words. It was the smile that made it even more special.

During one on one time with a resident, we were having afternoon tea in her room. I had brought in a drink to have with her. I clinked her glass and said "cheers". She immediately starting laughing and said "cheers" back. The clarity of her response in that moment was wonderful to experience.

I was in a resident's room standing in front of her brushing her hair. My hair had fallen down over my shoulders and she reached up and started playing with my hair.

## Havening

Havening is sometimes known as 'first aid for the emotions' for its ability to very quickly soothe and down-regulate stress neuro-chemistry and promote calm and tranquility.

Havening is a psycho-sensory therapy that helps people identify the root causes of their issues and rewire their response so that they can release issues like stress, trauma and anxiety.

Over the past 18 months I've completed Havening training which included a three-day intensive training programme, passing 30 written client case studies, two client case study videos, ethics and a neuro-science exam.

The objective of this training is to explore how Havening techniques might help people living with dementia. Over the next few months we will be considering how simple Havening techniques could help de-escalate situations our residents find distressing or confronting, and create a sense of safety and calm in our homes.

### How it works

Havening is based on neuro-science and is all about training the brain to respond differently to particular issues. People's brains can become stuck in a pattern of high alert around certain circumstances and situations. These situations will trigger extreme or disproportional responses.

Havening techniques can interrupt this pattern by creating healing delta waves. It is gentle, healing, effective and often rapid, and has no negative side effects.

In a session we use Havening Touch to create the change. This technique switches off the brain's 'alarm' button associated with a particular stored trauma, preventing future unhelpful responses. Havening is simple, safe and highly effective, gently down-regulating anxiety and distress and creating a sense of safety ... a sense of a safe 'Haven'.

Donya Nee, Promotions and Public Relations Coordinator and Havening practitioner.

## Strengthening our clinical team



*In March we were privileged to celebrate James's 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday with him. Such a special day to enjoy together.*



*The small kitchenettes in each home gives residents the opportunity to take part in the preparation and serving of food*



*We love celebrating birthdays at Avonlea, and it was wonderful to share Jenny's special day with her in April!*

The current shortage of aged care workers is impacting on the sector nation-wide. Caregivers, support staff and especially Registered Nurses simply cannot be found, with competition intense for the few available. This places pressure on existing staff teams who are spread thinly, even more impacted by isolation requirements relating to COVID.

We are therefore delighted and privileged to have recently secured the services of two highly skilled and experienced clinicians to join our organisational team in key leadership roles.

Urmee Rahman and Arrah Bagtang have accepted positions as Regional Clinical Managers with Dementia Care NZ. Their role will be to mentor, guide and support the Clinical Managers of our rest homes, and indirectly through them the Registered Nursing and care teams.

Based in the South and North Islands respectively, they will provide leadership through regular on-site visits, Zoom sessions and telephone support. They in turn will be supported by our wider DCNZ team, Clinical Adviser, Clinical Support and Quality Team Leader, and specialist DCNZ Mental Health Nurse.

In welcoming Urmee and Arrah to our family, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce them to you.

A dedicated professional with over eight years of clinical and managerial experience in the health sector, Urmee's expertise is in aged care nursing, with the past four years in clinical management roles.

Urmee's approach is strongly people-focused, with a commitment to empowering and supporting our older population to continue to be in charge of living their lives in the way that makes them happy.

Urmee is at home working within a multi-disciplinary team setting to provide the highest quality of care at all times. She thrives on leading and developing successful teams, and implementing change in a dynamic and complex healthcare environment.

Her personal interests include reading, travelling, and exploring and getting to know different cultures and places.

Arrah comes to us with more than seven years experience as Clinical Manager for aged care facilities providing rest home, hospital and dementia levels of care, with proven ability to support both residents and staff. Her most recent role has been as Clinical Manager of a 60-bed rest home providing hospital and rest home level care.

Arrah has expertise in Infection Control, Health and Safety, Quality Improvement, facilitating staff education, interRAI assessments and all aspects of clinical team leadership. Her focus is on creating and maintaining warm, caring and effective relationships with residents, their families and the staff team to provide truly excellent holistic care.

Above all, Arrah's passion for older persons' care, and especially dementia, shine through the work she has chosen to do.

This dual appointment broadens and strengthens the clinical expertise of our team, making an additional level of knowledge, skills and experience readily accessible to staff, residents and families. The added benefits in terms of care will be significant, with a true passion for dementia and aged care characterising each member of our clinical team.