



Avonlea  
CHRISTCHURCH

# Our Home



## A message from Armie and Daphne

Warmest greetings and welcome to 2022!

Here we are safely two years into the new reality of life with COVID-19, and what a journey it has been. As this new year begins, we have come a long way down a tunnel that has felt dark at times. Though it still holds challenges and unexpected twists and turns, each passing day brings us closer to the light at the end.

Meanwhile, we are focusing on the rich experiences and learnings that we have shared along the way. There is a sense of familiarity as we settle into this 'new normal'. We can do this together, we realise, with kindness, support and planning. Yes, the year ahead will have challenging times, but it will also have many opportunities for families and friends to visit, hopefully with fewer or no lockdowns. There is a safe and effective vaccine with incredible uptake throughout the country. Our borders opening up again will make a positive difference to our economy and employment, and the increased opportunities for travel will allow loved ones to reunite, making another step towards an all-important return to normality.

Most importantly, we can recognise and cherish the precious, magical moments we share together each day.

As part of our Covid-19 preparedness, we have made the decision to relocate residents to areas of our home which will maximise efficiencies of care by bringing residents with similar clinical needs into adjoining areas of the rest home. This move took place in early February. We would like to thank everyone involved for ensuring the move went smoothly, as well as our family members for their cooperation, patience and understanding.

The building work on our new dementia rest home is now complete, and we are awaiting the final sign-off from Council before inviting our first new residents to join our Avonlea family.

The refurbishment and relocation of our kitchen is also now complete, and the result is sleek, professional and highly functional. It continues to amaze us how, with experience and thoughtful planning and management, so much major building work can go on 'behind the scenes' with our residents completely undisturbed.

Our Diversional Therapy team currently has a focus on sensory stimulation for our residents. We will be working towards creating activities to stimulate all senses of our residents, be it through sight, smell, taste, hearing or touch. If you have any suggestions you think we could include in this project, please do not hesitate to have a chat with Ganga or Daphne.

Events in the past months have stirred many different emotions and feelings as we slowly progress through this pandemic. We are proud that we all standing strong in support of each other. If you are needing any support, our lovely Nicky Bishop facilitates our monthly family support group where you can share your experiences and challenges in a safe, understanding and confidential environment. This is held every second Wednesday of the month at 1pm in the Rudo back lounge.

As Autumn and Winter will be soon upon us, please look out for your influenza vaccination consent form which will be arriving soon, and return it to us as soon as you can.

We would like to say a huge thank you for sharing your loved one with us and entrusting them into our care. We will always be proud to call you our family.

We start the new year with renewed energy and optimism, and look forward to welcoming you here often to share special times with the ones you love.

We do things differently, and it works.

March 2022

## Living in the moment

You will have seen a lot of information about COVID-19 cases in the community and the way this is being handled. We are managing the risks the best we can at our homes.

While all this is going on it is wonderful to see residents getting out and about over summer to garden or to just enjoy the sunshine. It can bring many of our residents a lot of joy to harvest some veges from the garden and this often brings back fond memories.

While the COVID-19 restrictions have been difficult and we are all concerned about what the impact of cases in the community will be, our residents often remind us that living in the moment can bring so much joy. We can enjoy connections with the people and environment around us without dwelling on the past or worrying about what is still to come.

Our Best Friends model of care is all about understanding what our residents are experiencing and being present with them to help them enjoy their hobbies or to hear their joys and concerns. These experiences help us all to live in the moment.

As we've started the new year I've reflected on the challenges of the past couple of years and how we've come through a difficult time with our committed and caring staff team. We are fortunate to have a team who are happy to go the extra mile to make sure our residents get the best care possible.

I'd like to thank you all for the support you've given us – I know it hasn't been easy with lockdowns preventing you from seeing your loved ones. Thank you so much for your understanding and messages of support. Staff at our homes tell me how your messages have helped to keep morale up. Please keep them coming!

We have entered another testing time with COVID-19 cases in the community climbing. However, we now have a well vaccinated population in New Zealand, rapid antigen tests are available, lockdowns are largely a thing of the past and our international borders are reopening. This is a relief for many of our international staff and no doubt for many of you.

We have ideas, projects and other good things planned for this year. We have many moments to look forward to. I wish you all the best for 2022.

Andrew Sheard, Managing Director



*Making spicy plum chutney together amid much fun and laughter.*



*Fresh savoury muffins: another good baking session with our aspiring chefs!*



*Cooking together connects us with lifelong pleasures and skills.*

## Magic Moments from our homes

I was serving afternoon tea and I tripped on the carpet and Mike said "Did you enjoy your trip?" (laughing)

When we went to the Seniors' Concert, one male resident was really singing along, and I could see him about to dance in the chair.

"Ms.S was upset and crying in the hallway. I approached her and greeted her, comforted her and reassured her. I offered her a magazine to read and assisted her to the lounge. Unexpectedly, she gave me a tight hug and smiled at me while she was sitting in the lounge.

One of our ladies enjoyed the drive when I took her to the hospital and told me, "You're a great little helper!" and then she smiled.

While completing our assessment for Mrs. E, I heard her calling out from the lounge. So, I came to check her. I saw her sitting in front of the TV and pointing at it. When I checked the TV, it was on blue screen and I asked her if she wants me to turn it off. She held my hand and told me 'Blue, my favourite colour.' I've been working here for a while and I never knew what was her favourite colour. It was just amazing to hear it straight from her.

This gentleman has not spoken or responded for a long time but yesterday when I greeted him, he responded with "Good afternoon, honey."

While I was working on my computer, Mr. J came inside and greeted me with a big 'Hello'. I greeted back and then he suddenly told me 'Keep up the good work' then he gave me a warm hug. I was speechless for a while and then replied 'Thank you.'

## Discovering resilience

The last few years have been extraordinary and have brought many challenges for us all, in particular for all of our staff who have families overseas. All of our facilities embrace a wide range of cultures and ethnicities. We can truly call ourselves a global village.

All of these people, myself included, have chosen to come to New Zealand for many different reasons, but these past years have seen them all separated from friends and families due to restrictions on international travel.

As I travel the country, visiting each facility, I provide training for staff, and these sessions give the staff time and space to explore their feelings. The Best Friends Approach to Care specifically discusses family, friends and home. When I ask staff about their own home, they will describe the place they grew up, or where they raised a family.

Virtual contact has become the new normal and everybody is able to use Zoom, Skype and Facetime with their eyes closed. Not literally of course.

I have provided many training sessions and supportive meetings by Zoom over the past few years, which has given staff the opportunity to connect with each other across the country.

Training in Cultural Diversity has helped our staff teams to learn more about each other, what is important to each of us, and ultimately to embrace these differences. These differences can bring us closer together.

I would like to think that the support and training we provide to our staff teams has helped them to discover qualities within themselves, especially that of resilience. This is something within all of us, but sometimes we have to search and dig deep to find it. I am proud to see that our staff have done this. In the face of fear, anxiety, uncertainty, they have found that essential part of themselves and shown it. And shown it with humility.

"When we learn how to become resilient, we learn how to embrace the beautifully broad spectrum of the human experience."

— **Jaeda Dewalt**

Simon Hamley, Education Coordinator

## The beauty of change

It is March, the first month of Autumn, the verdant leaves of summer turning to yellow shades of gold and brown. The balmy winds cool into crisp breeze. As I observe these transformations, it brings to mind that humanity is also amidst a transformative period. During the better part of the past two years we have grappled with a global pandemic which has irrevocably changed most of us. The hustle and bustle of the city streets hushed; people were forced into isolation and uncertainty filled our minds. But as history has taught us, threats and challenges allow us to adapt and turn things around. We get up with each fall, stronger and smarter.

Change is the constant factor in our world; seasons, people, philosophy, and technology are ever changing, influencing us in all aspects of life. Changes that occurred during these recent times have tested our mettle, disrupting the norms and culture of society. Jobs have been affected; people needed to work from home, while others were displaced thanks to organisational restructures or closures. People have been living in a state of worry, wondering if they would ever reclaim their previous way of living.

Change has also been felt in each of our DCNZ homes; lockdowns, staffing and workforce challenges, and changes in visiting are some of the changes we have experienced in these recent times. These are some of the actions that have been initiated in response to these changes:

1. Creating and changing roles in the DCNZ management team to provide better support to the staff teams in each home.
2. Using novel strategies to recruit new staff members, both local and overseas.
3. Regular supportive meetings with the management team of each facility.

These changes help us recognise our strengths, both as individuals and as communities. It is certain that through our efforts to navigate this pandemic our worlds will change. We have been shaped and tempered to be more durable and resilient.

As we enter the final chapters of this period of transformation, it is my hope that we will all emerge stronger, kinder, and smarter.

Arah Cartagena, National Clinical Manager



*Spending time with friends in the fresh air, sunshine and dappled shade of our lovely gardens.*



*A few months ago, a very special resident of ours, Benny, was a prominent person in our 'American Veterans Day' remembrances. Benny was a US Master Sergeant Air Force examiner before his retirement from the US Airforce and also served in the Cold War. Benny's retirement was of particular significance as his plane 'the Starlifter C-141' retired right alongside him.*