



Admatha
CHRISTCHURCH

July 2019

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Our Home

A message from Mary and Debra

A warm winter welcome to our Family Newsletter. As usual the year is speeding along and soon blossoms will be appearing on the trees. Our new landscaping at the Rest Home now includes the play area for visiting children. It's already being enjoyed by lots of young ones and even some not so young! It makes a difference to visiting families for children to have somewhere to keep busy and happy while they visit, with the bonus that Nana or Grandpa can watch them play just as they would at home.

A further improvement nearing completion is the new parking area across the creek south of Admatha Lodge. The now-vacant section beside the river is being transformed into a dual-purpose parking area and walking destination. A pleasant seating area overlooking the creek will provide a safe and accessible focus for short accompanied strolls, impromptu picnics and feeding the ducks. We encourage you to make use of this and pass on any further suggestions you may have regarding its use and enjoyment. Autumn has seen an abundance of leaves falling and we have quite a few residents who are enjoying raking them all up and making the garden tidy again. Getting out in the garden is such an important part of people's day and it's great to see them outside rugged up in their warm clothes enjoying everyday tasks in the sunshine.

Our Diversional Therapy team have made some lovely soups, pickles and baking lately and these have been enjoyed by everyone. Being involved in the making of childhood treats can bring back lovely memories. Whilst not everyone is able to be fully involved in the preparation process, the aroma of



vegetable soup or freshly baked scones is something we all relate positively to and which brings warm feelings and happy memories.

Our Clinical Manager Maira has now begun her maternity leave, and we join in wishing her everything of the best for the arrival of her new family member. Mary Calonzo, one of our senior Registered Nurses, will be filling in for her while she is away. Mary knows our residents and families very well and it will be wonderful to have her fit in to this important role.

These chilly winter days can be a perfect opportunity to settle beside our fire together with some old photographs, a magazine or a jigsaw puzzle. You are always welcome to join us for a meal or afternoon tea and spend time with your loved one sharing special memories. Visiting a loved one with dementia can be daunting, but remember you know your loved one from many wonderful years together and reminiscing can be very therapeutic for you both.

Keep warm over the winter months and as always feel welcome to pop in and see us whenever you are in to visit.

Thoughts on Atul Gawande's "Being Mortal"



Enjoying making savoury pinwheel scrolls

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End, by Atul Gawande, is a most important book. It challenges us to think about the 'medicalising' of old age and death and what we could offer instead.

With much advance in medicine and surgery, death comes to many people after a long medical struggle with an ultimately unstoppable condition. Ageing and death has become a medical issue. There is often a focus on repairing health, trying to fix and control, rather than sustaining the soul.

People who are sick and/or aged do have priorities beyond staying safe and living longer.

It seems that when we see our future as finite our focus shifts to the here and now, to everyday pleasures and the people closest to us. People want to continue to be "the author of their life", to keep "shaping the story of their life in the world ... by making choices and sustaining connections to others according to their own priorities."

This has been identified as crucial to maintaining the integrity of our lives. This is the "battle of being mortal."

Often older people hand over the decision making to family. The author suggests that family will choose safety above all else. He believes that we want autonomy for ourselves and safety for those we love. We often see this thought process when families are viewing our rest home for a loved one. They ask the unspoken question: "Is this a place I feel comfortable leaving him or her?" instead of "is this a place he or she would like to be?"

The health system and aged care can help people achieve what is most important to them at the end of their lives. It is important to keep people safe, but is this the primary goal of the people we are caring for? Does this primary focus address their hopes and fears? Perhaps not.

In our homes, we want to hear laughter, to see love and friendship, to see joy all over people's faces, to encourage wonderful moments with families, to plant gardens in the sunshine, listen to beautiful music ... and we do. We want to focus on helping people to achieve what is most important to them at the end of their lives.

Accompanying loved ones to appointments

Our residents attend outpatient appointments for a variety of reasons. All residents with dementia require an escort to these appointments, and often people prefer to have a support person with them even if this is not a requirement. Please don't be surprised to receive a phone call from one of our RNs asking you to escort your loved one.

Having a family member escort a resident is a good option for residents as at these appointments health and family history are discussed and there

are decisions to be made. If you are happy to attend the appointment but have any concerns, please do not hesitate to discuss this with the registered nurse. He or she will arrange for a staff member to go with you.

If the time of the appointment does not suit you please discuss this also with the RN and they will liaise with the service provider to change the time if possible.



Experimenting with colour to create abstract art

Communicating with families

Communication with one another is very important, especially when it involves residents in our care – your loved ones. We are often asked how our communication system works.

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, there will be times when a resident sustains an injury, is harmed, or an error occurs. In these instances, or if a resident's condition changes and the doctor has visited, the RN will contact the resident's Welfare Guardian to inform them of the incident. It is then their responsibility to inform other

family members.

Multi-disciplinary team meetings are held on a regular basis 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 Welfare Guardian. This invitation can then be extended by them to other family members if desired.



We are enjoying harvesting fruit from a number of young feijoa trees at Admatha Lodge

Safe footwear for older people

We are often asked for advice on the best shoes to choose for elderly people.

Firstly, if the person has foot pain or known foot problems, a doctor or podiatrist should be consulted.

Choosing the correct shoe is important because ill-fitting shoes and shoes with poor contact with the ground or poor grip may upset balance and the way one walks, increasing the risk of falls.

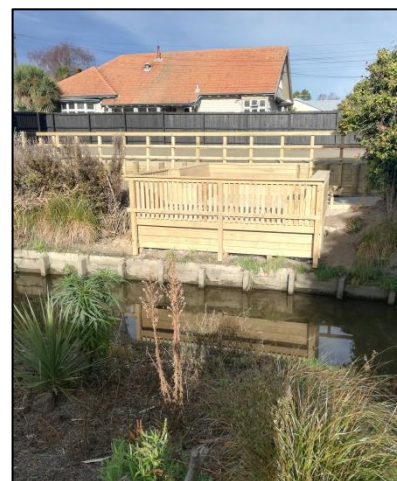
Important points to remember are:

- Buy for fit, not size
- Try out the shoes on a variety of surfaces before buying
- A firm heel cup provides support when walking
- Low, wide heels provide more contact with the ground and prevent slipping

- Thin soles with tread reduce risk of slipping
- A wide, deep toe box allows room for toe movement and comfort
- Choose laces, buckles or Velcro that hold the foot firmly.

In winter we often find our residents return to a lifelong habit of putting on socks at night time to keep their feet warm. This can result in slips and falls during night-time visits to the toilet.

A lovely winter gift for loved ones in residential care is a couple of pairs of cosy bedsocks with special non-slip soles – practical and always received with appreciation and delight.



View from the Lodge across the creek, showing the new picnic area with the car park beyond

Admatha's Facebook page

We warmly welcome visits, 'likes', questions and ideas from the families and friends of our residents.

Find us by Googling: *Admatha Dementia Care Facebook*



A message from Andrew

We have chosen a new name for our newsletter, "Our Home". This feels just right to me, as the concept of home is at the centre of our philosophy of care.

Winter is a time when home feels especially important. Standing on the sidelines watching my son George play ripper rugby, my thoughts often turn to our warm home and the cosy evening ahead. Winter here in New Zealand is a time for snuggling with the kids on the sofa reading stories. It's a time for sharing home-made soup by the fire, and teaching the kids about how hot chocolate just isn't hot chocolate without a marshmallow or two floating in it – usually making it spill over the side.

These are things I remember from my own childhood, and unconsciously, instinctively, I am passing them on to the next generation.

These common human experiences are what bind us together as a community. We recognise these shared traditions and experiences, and they are important because of their

symbolic power. Shivering on the sidelines of a rugby game symbolises love and sacrifice, pride and parenthood. The rich aroma of the hot chocolate symbolises warmth and safety, love and nurturing.

As I travel around our nine rest homes meeting new staff, getting to know them and sharing our Vision and Values, I feel both proud and humbled to think how many of our staff have left their own homes and families, their own countries and cultures and traditions, to start a new life here in New Zealand. They are learning our ways and blending them with their own to form a new legacy.

The love and care they are creating and sharing in our homes is central to this process.

In the same way, each and every resident at our homes brings their own history and traditions with them to enrich our small communities.

Home is where the heart is, and where we all belong.



Enjoying dressing up for an impromptu "Hat Day"

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.

If possible, we would prefer you to provide non woollen clothing that is easily washed when selecting winter clothing for your loved one.



Our residents love watching children play on the recently completed playground

If you would like to receive our newsletter via email, please email your name and email address to amyd@dementiacarenz.co.nz.

Second Point of Contact: Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, there may be a need for a second point of contact to discuss an issue with. Vicky Jones, our Operations Management Leader, is available Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. to discuss any issues of concern. (03) 347 7724 x 2 or vicky@dementiacarenz.co.nz