

Our Home

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91 Main Road North
Lindale
Paraparaumu
Waikanae
5250

Phone:
04 297 0059

e-mail:
[om@millvalelindale
.co.nz](mailto:om@millvalelindale.co.nz)

Web:
[www.millvalelindale.
co.nz](http://www.millvalelindale.co.nz)

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A message from Roxanne and Rhea

Warm winter greetings from all of us here at Millvale Lodge Lindale!

When I was writing this article, I couldn't help but complain about how cold and wet it has been, but Brian our gardener said it's the perfect time for planting and growing, especially flowers. Recently he has focused on sprucing up the grounds and adding more colour to the front area of the home, with over 100 daffodil bulbs planted by the entrance driveway under the big trees. A few Daphnes have been added, as well as some potted plants donated by friends and families. We would like to thank those who brought in seeds and seedlings for our raised beds also. Residents have enjoyed clearing the strawberry patch and planting winter vegetables. Many of us love the familiarity of pottering in the garden engaging in seasonal tasks we have always enjoyed at home.

Last month, a couple of horses have come back to graze in the paddock at the front of the home. Our residents thoroughly enjoy visiting them and bringing them carrots, and the sight of them peacefully grazing reminds us how lucky we are to live in this tranquil rural valley.

We would like to thank the friends and families who joined us for our Midwinter Family Gathering on 21 June. As always, it was a special time of connecting with family and friends and enjoying delicious food and music together.

Construction on our home extension has been ongoing since November last year. The new secure home accommodating people with advanced dementia will be completed before the end of the year. We apologise for the inconvenience this has caused to our residents and families, but our builders are always conscious of this, and try to keep disruption to a minimum. The last piling for an outside deck was



completed a few weeks ago so there will be no more ground shaking. As always, we will keep a close eye on the activity and making sure it is safe for everyone. In addition to our regular activities programme, our involvement with the local Diversional Therapy support group has led to an increased awareness of the social and community activities available in our area. Recently residents visited the lavender farm in Te Horo and tried some of the lavender-infused cakes. This outing was greatly enjoyed by all concerned. We were proud to have a 100% uptake from staff on the free influenza vaccination programme we offer each year. Having our staff team fully protected reduces the risk to our residents of becoming ill during the winter months. A further source of pride was our recent surveillance audit during which the auditors emphasised the warm and welcoming atmosphere, loving care and homely environment our staff provide. They also remarked on the supportive team spirit, strong positive focus on residents' welfare and happiness, and above all, the wonderful staff who provide truly personalised care. Well done team! We are proud and very privileged that you entrust the care of your loved one to us here at Millvale Lodge, and look forward to spending many happy times together over the next few months.

Thoughts on Atul Gawande's "Being Mortal"

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.



Residents enjoyed getting out in autumn and engaging in the seasonal activity of raking leaves



Our yearly trip to Te Horo Lavender farm is always thoroughly enjoyed

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.



Residents have enjoyed inspecting the new gate and fencing built for the retired showjumpers grazing on our land

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.



Residents enjoy familiar tasks

Millvale Lodge's Facebook page

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

Find us by Googling: *Millvale Lodge Lindale 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.



Special occasions like St Patrick's Day give us the opportunity to create themed decorations

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.



With the arrival of winter, we cleared out the strawberry patch and planted winter vegetables

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