



Millvale House  
W A I K A N A E

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# Our Home

## A message from Dyan and Jocelyn

Warmest winter greetings from our team here at Millvale House Waikanae.

It is hard to believe that the shortest day is already behind us and we are entering what is traditionally the coldest and hardest half of the winter season. We are well prepared here at Millvale House, a warm, cosy and welcoming environment for our residents, families and friends.

We often find that winter is a particularly pleasant time to visit our home and spend time with friends and loved ones. The cooler weather lends itself to indoor pursuits as well as strolls in our lovely gardens on sunny days. Please remember our staff are always available to assist in any way which can make your visit more enjoyable.

We have had a number of changes in staffing over the past few months, with some of our registered nurses moving on and new faces replacing them. We extend a very warm welcome to Phyl, Jo Jaine and Korrina who bring much passion, dedication and experience to our clinical team. We also have three new care staff, Alysa Ashley, Ian and Marc Laine, as well as a casual home assistant who is available to step in as needed if any of our usual team are unavailable.

We have a strong focus on staff training, and this is of particular importance when new members join us. In-service training provided over the past few months has covered the following key areas: Safe Transferring (with the Physiotherapist), Infection Control, Advocacy and Code of Rights, Contenance, Restraint Minimisation and Pressure Area Care.

Residents enjoy participating in many of the simple, homely activities which provide people with a sense of continuity, value and purpose. In addition we encourage residents to participate in



music, art and craft, as well as magazine reading, conversation, garden walks and games. Our home is often filled with happy voices, jokes and laughter.

We welcome regular visits from our therapy dog Fern, a great favourite with many residents. Whether giving Fern a simple pat, taking her for a walk around the lounge on her leash, or simply enjoying the sight of her friendly face and wagging tail, she brings a smile to the faces of us all.

A highlight of our week is the special afternoon tea and entertainment session we have every Saturday. We have three entertainers coming alternately to entertain our residents and visitors with music, dancing, laughter and refreshments. Family members and friends are most welcome to join us.

Accompanying a loved one of the journey of dementia is not without challenges, and we remind you that our Family Support Group headed by Brent Cherry takes place on the first Friday of each month.

We also thank those family members who were able to join us for our recent Winter Family Gathering. It was a grand and memorable for the residents, families and staff.

We wish you everything of the very best for the remaining winter months, and hope to welcome you often here at our home.

## Thoughts on Atul Gawande's "Being Mortal"



Many precious memories are shared at our Winter Family Gathering



Shelling peas together

*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."

### 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

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.

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.

## 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.



The use of colour and art can be both enjoyable and therapeutic

## 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.



There's nothing like sitting down with a good book

### Millvale House Waikanae's Facebook page

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

Find us by Googling: *Millvale Waikanae 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.



Creating themed decorations for our Winter Family Gathering

## 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.



Engaging in the familiar task of folding laundry

**If you would like to receive our newsletter via email, please email your name and email address to [amyd@dementiacarenz.co.nz](mailto: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](mailto:vicky@dementiacarenz.co.nz)