



Aberleigh
MARLBOROUGH

Our Home

December 2019

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A message from George and Maja

It is the Christmas season once again, and it gives us great pleasure to extend our special greetings to you all at this special time of year.

The last few months have been busy here at Aberleigh. A recent highlight for staff has been the Walking in Another's Shoes Graduation in August, with six staff graduating from the course and bringing their new skills and insights back to share with others in the staff team and benefit resident care. We also congratulate Rojee Khadgi who completed her Diversional Therapy qualification in October.

We were delighted to support our residents and families to be part of Alzheimers NZ's Cuppa for a Cause in October and the annual Alzheimer's Memory Walk in September.

In November we hosted a special afternoon tea to acknowledge the work of our wonderful volunteers. As we write this preparations are underway for our participation in the Blenheim Christmas Parade on 7th December. Our van will be decorated and both residents and staff will join in this fun pre-Christmas event.

The following in-house education sessions have taken place between July and October this year: Bi-Cultural Awareness; Fire Safety; Antibiotic Resistance; De-escalation & Disengagement; Civil Defence; Best Friends Approach To Care; Safe Manual Handling; Palliative Care; Continence. Thank you to those staff who attended the sessions.



Our activities programme is a source of fun, energy and enjoyment for us all. Among the many highlights was a darts tournament with guests from Alzheimer's Marlborough in July, repeated a few months later with guests from Ashwood Park. The following month a multicultural celebration was held with staff members, residents and entertainers showcasing their many different cultures.

In August and September Bethsaida Retirement Village and Waterlea Lifecare sent us an invitation to a quiz game and a game of housie respectively. These events were attended and greatly enjoyed by our rest home level residents.

In addition to the above special events, we continue to experience and share many magic moments with our residents each day.

We hope you will be able to join us for our Christmas gathering this year, and look forward to welcoming you on many other occasions during the summer months ahead.



*You are very warmly invited to join us for our
Christmas Gathering*

*Ngaio & Kowhai – December 11, 2019 2:30pm Rata &
Koromiko – December 10, 2019 2:30pm*

Education update from Simon Hamley



We are regularly visited by students from St. Mary's School. Recently they were unable to visit due an ill teacher, so we decided to visit them!

As I am based in Nelson, it's a relatively short trip across the hills to Aberleigh in Blenheim every couple of weeks. It is always a delight to visit Aberleigh, the staff and residents are always so friendly and welcoming. This year I have helped to provide a wide range of training for staff, including The Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care, which are sessions aimed at developing our empathy skills, We live in a country with many different cultures and lifestyles, so it's always great to provide some

training around diversity and how we can understand and be more accepting of each others differences. These sessions highlight the openness and accepting nature of the staff at Aberleigh, which is evident in the compassion they show for the residents they provide care for. I am looking forward to visiting regularly in 2020.

Summary of 2019 EPOA Survey Results

Every year we send out a survey to the Enduring Powers of Attorney for our residents requesting feedback on the service we provide. This is an important and valuable process for us, and enables us to identify areas in which the service we provide to your loved ones may be improved.

We would like to thank those who were able to complete and return their surveys. This is much appreciated.

For the first time this year we send surveys out via email where possible, offering the option on completing the surveys online. We include the comparative response rate for your interest. Using Facebook to promote and remind EPOAs to return the survey was useful and boosted the return rate.

Please let us know if you would prefer to receive the survey electronically in future.

Specific feedback received included the following:

No one used Family support service, 80% don't use Facebook

There was some dissatisfaction expressed re our laundry service 100% offered hospitality when visited

Comments of concern:

- Phones not answered after 3.30pm
- Clothes shrunk in dryer
- Prevalence of flies in summer

Quality Improvements have been raised in respect of negative comments received.

We thank you for the many positive comments and compliments received, especially in regard to the quality of care, the unfailing gentleness and patience of all staff, the warm welcome, offer of refreshments and inclusion in activities when visiting.

We welcome further feedback in respect of these or any other concerns you may have, now or at any stage in the future.



Recently a group of residents, families and staff participated in the Memory Walk in support of Alzheimer's Awareness Week

Visiting a person with dementia

As the Christmas season approaches, we remind you that although visiting a person with dementia can sometimes be a difficult experience, it doesn't have to be so hard. These strategies may help to ensure the best outcomes for your visit.

1. Be aware of common characteristics of the dementia type your loved one has

Being educated may help to relieve any feelings of anxiety that may exist for you.

Be prepared to 'go along' with stories positively, rather than arguing with the person if their story doesn't seem logical or relevant.

Remember that the person may be at another time and place in their mind, and confused about who you are. As hard as this can be to accept, remember that their 'happiness in the moment' is what is important. Keep in mind that their unusual or 'out of character' comments or actions are a symptom of their dementia.

2. Be self aware

What we are feeling and thinking is often more apparent to the person with dementia than any words we may use. Be in a positive frame of mind when visiting, and be prepared to laugh together!

3. Go at the person's pace

People with dementia often need more time to respond. Use slow and gentle motions and make sure you have the person's attention. Sit at eye level with the person, using good eye contact.

4. Communicate with staff

Try calling before your visit. This is a good way to gauge how the person is doing, what time they are most alert and to check they haven't gone out with staff.

5. Arm yourself with a 'visiting kit' of ideas and activities

6. **Reminiscing** is one of the most valuable and meaningful activities for a person with dementia, as often their long term memory remains intact. Bringing the family photographs can trigger memory, which in turn empowers and validates the individual.

7. Learn to be comfortable with silence and changes of mood

Dementia can cause abrupt changes of mood and difficulty in communicating. Allow time, and be patient.

8. Develop an 'end-of-visit routine'

Try to leave at meal times as the person is naturally interested in another activity. Ask a staff member or carer for help. They will be able to divert the person gently when you leave.

9. 'Look after you'

Ensure that you have support to help you process your feelings about the changes you are experiencing, and to arm you with knowledge about what to expect.

Join a dementia awareness group, or contact your local Alzheimer's organisation.



During a trip to Taylor Dam we were delighted to encounter a family of swans with four adorable fluffy cygnets



Enjoying some dancing during our multi-cultural themed day

Happy Christmas from Andrew Sheard

Christmas is a busy time for me, but also manages to be a time of reflection. As I share my time between my work and home 'families', I often find myself pausing and smiling as I consider the special magic of this time, highlighted by the joy and excitement I see reflected on the faces of those around me.

There is a special energy at Christmas time, and young and old look forward to its arrival. We have to remind our staff that October is really too soon to begin the traditional Christmas craft activities with our residents, and that the Christmas tree shouldn't be up and decorated until December is at least partly underway!

There is no doubt that Christmas means different things to different people, and that this changes as we journey through our lives. My littlest daughter is still caught up in the wonder and excitement without fully understanding why. To the older children, the magic of Santa is as much a reality as the deeper mysteries and true meaning of the day. As for my

eldest, there is a special pride in being old and wise enough to join the grownups in maintaining the belief in Santa and his reindeer for the little ones.

All of these 'evolutionary life stages' of Christmas time – as well as others yet to come – are contained within the life stories of our residents, and in the many past Christmases they have experienced over the years. There is a special light in their eyes as the first baubles go up on the tree, and as they accept their gift from an often very hot and uncomfortable Santa Claus on Christmas morning. Often we do not know what colourful and fragile fragments of Christmases past are surfacing for them, or where their particular joy in the season lies.

One thing is certain: for residents, staff and families alike, though detailed memories may no longer be accessible, the magic of Christmas will never be lost.

I wish each and every one of you a very happy Christmas.



Creating our own small indoor gardens

Naming gifts

Please remember that all new items need to be clearly marked with the owner's name before they arrive.

This is especially important at Christmas time, when many lovingly chosen new items are given as gifts by family members.

We discourage expensive woollen items, which are easily damaged in the wash. Please select easy care clothing wherever possible.

Outing reminder

If you intend to take your loved one home for the day or afternoon over the Christmas period please discuss this with a Registered Nurse so that medication and comfort requirements can be arranged.

For safety reasons outings of this nature first need to be discussed and approved by the EPOA.



We were delighted to attend an inter-rest home quiz at Springlands Lifestyle Village, where we received a certificate of participation

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