



Millvale House
LEVIN

December 2019

42 Mako Mako Road
P.O. Box 1131
Levin
5540

Phone:
06 367 2027

e-mail:
omlevin@millvale.co.nz

Web:
www.millvalelevin.co.nz

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Our Home

Merry Christmas from the team at Millvale

Time flies so fast that it is hard to believe another year is almost finished. Before the year ends, however, we have the joy of the Christmas season to look forward to.

This is the time of year when we fire up the Barbie, dust off the garden tools and find the sunhats from the bottom of our cupboards! Residents love to spend time outside feeling the warmth of the sun on their backs and the freshness of the warm breeze. Fresh veggies will soon be harvested from our garden, and those who are able to will help staff weed the raised beds and water the thirsty plants. We have the pleasure of our giant sun umbrella to shelter under while we enjoy the fresh air and birdsong.

Our facility has seen many changes during 2019, from the renovation of our building, to the installation of new furniture. New residents are also welcomed as part of our family, together with their own family and friends. It is always sad to see members of our staff team move on, but experience has shown us that those who take their place are equally valued and quickly settle into our routines and get to know us all well.

Here at Millvale House Levin December is a busy month of preparation for residents and staff, who enjoy working together to prepare for this special occasion.

Our goal at Christmas time is to make everybody feel happy and at home, just like a family during this season. Activities are based on residents' preferences and



abilities, both as a group and as individuals. A highlight of this year's plans will be Christmas carols, with residents encouraged to sing along. For some residents, tapping a foot or nodding their head in time to the music becomes what we call a 'magic moment' in terms of their active engagement.

Decorating the Christmas tree, making home made lanterns, and helping the residents make Christmas cards for their family and friends are all traditional activities we enjoy together at this time of year. Baking with a Christmas theme is also popular, bringing back memories of times gone by.

We warmly invite family and friends to visit us often during the summer months, especially around Christmas time. Residents respond especially warmly to the presence of children in their home at Christmas time, with the special energy and joy they bring.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.



You are very warmly invited to join us for our

Christmas Gathering

Friday 7th December at 2.00pm

Education update from Simon Hamley

Every month I have the pleasure of making the trip from Nelson to Levin to visit the staff and residents at Millvale House Levin.

They are always so friendly, welcoming and hospitable. The location at Levin is very tranquil, and the new garden area is a great place to sit and relax. In this past year I have helped to provide a wide range of training for staff, including The Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care, which is a course where we develop our empathy skills, and also training in De-escalation, to

help staff respond effectively to a resident who is becoming anxious and unsettled. Caring for residents with dementia is not always easy, though when I meet with staff during these sessions, their compassion and caring nature shines through, and I enjoy listening to them talk about special moments they have experienced with residents.

I am looking forward to visiting Millvale House Levin again 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 sent surveys out via email where possible, offering the option on completing the surveys online. 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.

One respondent was not satisfied with the services, and in the medical questions 2-3 persons did not respond favourably to the following questions:

- Are you informed promptly of any changes in the health of your relative?
- Do you feel you have the appropriate level of input into the

health related decision regarding your relative?

- Are you informed about doctors visits and the outcome of these?

No one had used the Family support service

50% do not use Facebook

25% said they did enjoy the Facebook page

100% said they were offered hospitality when they visited

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

Please remember that we strongly encourage you to approach us personally at the time of any issue of concern arising. We genuinely welcome feedback, whether positive or in the form of a complaint. We are able to engage with you in the resolution process and ensure you are happy with the outcome.



It was lovely to have fresh daffodils in the homes while we celebrated Daffodil Day



We are enjoying having lovely spring flowers to admire

Visiting a person with dementia

As the Christmas season approaches, we would like to 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 in the moment

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 disagreeing 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 part of their dementia experience.

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 fond memories 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 for help if needed. 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.



Enjoying the challenge of a word search



As we get closer to Christmas we look forward to seeing what the decorations in our homes will look this year

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.



We love spending time on the piano together here at Millvale House Levin

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.

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