



Millvale House  
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# Family Newsletter

## Warm greetings from Teesha and Jan

Greetings family, relatives and friends.

We can't help but admire how beautiful our home is looking now and how much the space has widened for residents to walk around. How things have changed over the last 6 months! Whew! The long journey of the alteration has come to an end and we now have 3 beautiful new lounges and a new nurses station. This has been a long and difficult process and we would like to thank you once again for your patience and understanding.

We recently enjoyed our mid-winter solstice afternoon tea with families, perfect timing with the cold winter weather. An entertainer was here who made the gathering livelier and everyone enjoyed the event. We are all looking forward to other family gatherings in the future.

We are very proud and happy to see how staff take care of residents with such passion and dedication. We all enjoy each and every moment working here at Millvale, Miramar.

Van trips are an activity that are very popular with our residents and we have increased our van outings to twice weekly.

We are finding that the two new Kitchenettes make a huge difference to us here at Millvale with many of the residents enjoying taking part in the simple homely activities they would do in their own kitchens. Baking with residents has been especially successful and enjoyable. It is heart-warming to see the residents actively participating in activities like baking; enjoying every step of the process from mixing the ingredients, pouring into



the tray, enjoying the smell of baking and waiting eagerly to see the cake!

As spring approaches our gardens have been replanted and we can't wait for the flowers to bloom. We know that our residents will enjoy the garden when summer comes. Raised beds will make it easier for the residents to tend the flowers if they wish to.

Our course for families, Sharing the Journey, was recently held and much enjoyed by those who attended. It is wonderful to see the positive difference this makes in people's understanding of the dementia journey as it impacts on their relationship with their loved one.

In closing, we would like to remind you that our door is always open. We are glad to answer any concerns that you may have or happy to see you if you just want to say hello and have a chat.

Best regards

Jan and Teesha

## Magic and Healing Moments

*Every day we are privileged to experience special moments with the people we care for, moments which remind us of the power of living 'in the present moment'. There may be no 'cure' for dementia, but these moments affirm that there is definitely joy, empowerment and healing. We keep a 'magic moment book' to record these in, which you are also welcome to use. We would like to share some of these special moments with you.*



A sunny kitchenette



Washing the dishes helps people connect with valued activities they enjoyed in their own home

A resident was starting to look and feel anxious, so I wanted to divert her attention to something positive. I opened a magazine, turning to a page showing a model wearing a black top and skirt. She said, "Oh, I don't like that, it's awful!" Then as I was pointing to the opposite page, she touched my arm and said, "I like your skin ... smooth!" I replied, "Thank you," and she responded, "Mine doesn't look as good as yours." I said, "It looks good too. It's just that I am younger than you." She said, "Oh, yes, like my daughter C ..."

It was a precious moment of association with family and friends.

As dinner was about to be served and one resident was about to go to her 'permanent' seat near the kitchenette, she looked out of the window and said, "The gardens are nice!"

A lovely moment I'd like to share is playing a game of balloon tapping with two female residents. It was a very gentle game and one resident in particular seemed to shine. The Sound of Music was playing and she sang Eidelweiss to me. It was a really wonderful moment.

A few days back, I was going to the lounge to fetch something. I had eye contact with a male resident who was sitting in the lounge. He called me over with hand gestures and smiles. When I went to him he stood

up and asked me, "Can you please hold that?", pointing to a drink on the table. I asked him where he was going. He said "I am going there," pointing to paper towels on the wall. "I will blow my nose and then come back." I said "Sure, away you go." He did what he needed to and I kept an eye on his drink for him. He came back, settled down and had a drink. I asked him, "All good?" He smiled and said, "Good, thank you." I felt so good because he trusted me.

While I was replacing light bulbs on the lounge one of our male residents came up to me and held the chair I was standing on. He did not leave until I had finished all the bulbs. At one point he tried to hold me steady, as if he was afraid I might fall.

A heartwarming moment of bonding when two male residents were seated together in conversation, one holding the hand of the other.

Smiles of delight from a female resident when she was playing ten pin bowling, saying "I'm lucky!" as she hit down the pins.

## Planning for excellence

As we move towards the end of the year a number of significant projects forming part of our annual business plan are now well underway.

These include important initiatives such as falls prevention and a reduction in staff and resident incidents and injuries.

We have a significant focus on medication, comparing the use of antipsychotics both within our facilities and hopefully with comparable external agencies. Our aim is to continually strive to achieve the best balance for each resident, with the least possible medication our constant objective.

As always, our activities programme is high on our list of priorities, with a renewed focus on familiar, homely activities which are age-appropriate

and lead to a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Staff education has taken place recently in falls prevention, protection and prevention of pressure areas, and abuse and neglect.

In addition, a new role of BPSD (Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia) Advisor has been created to provide a specialised 'go-to' person for any concerns or challenges relating to residents. Rhea Labagala is our BPSD Advisor at Millvale.

An organisational continence specialist is also soon to be appointed to assist our staff team in the continuing quest to maintain continence and enhance the personal dignity and quality of life of our residents.



Raised planters make it easier for residents to take part in gardening activities

## Summer's on the menu!

With daylight saving comes summer and the re-introduction of our summer menu.

As well as taking the dietary requirements of our residents into account, the menu devised by our dietician changes with the seasons. The hearty soups, stews and hot puddings that provide warmth and comfort in winter give way to lighter, more summery seasonal fare featuring fish, pasta, chicken, cold meats and salads, sandwiches, savouries and quiches.

Desserts remain a highlight of every meal, with ice cream and fresh fruit

salads, mousses, jelly whip and crumbles being among the favourites.

Fresh home baking is always on offer for morning and afternoon tea.

Please remember that there is an open invitation for you to join your loved one for a meal.



Our beautiful new perimeter fence and signboard

## Courses for families

If you are new to Millvale you may not be aware of the two short courses we run for family members, Orientation for Families and Sharing the Journey.

These courses are a free, fun and supportive way of introducing you to many of the practical aspects of having a family member in residential care, and of understanding more about the dementia journey. People who attend the courses find them both enjoyable and enriching.

Please pop in and speak with Jan to find out more about the courses and register your interest!



The homely activity of folding towels

## A special request

Our organizational accounts team in Nelson has asked us to bring your attention to the importance of giving the resident's name as a reference for any payment, whether on an account or an Automatic Payment.

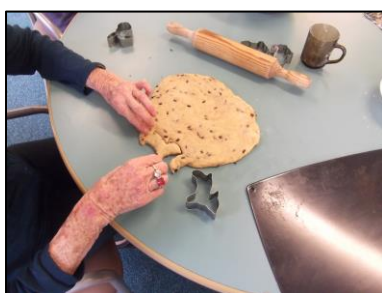
If any other name is given, such as the person making the payment or the EPOA, for example, it can take time to identify which resident the payment applies to, and there is greater potential for confusion and mistakes.

Thank you for your assistance with this.

## Heading away?

Please remember that if for any reason you are heading away, it is essential to leave our RN with contact details (whether a cell phone, close family member or email address) so that we can reach you if we need to for any reason.

It will also give you peace of mind while you are away, knowing that we are able to notify you immediately if anything unexpected should occur.



Baking chocolate chip cookies

## Our Thanks to You

A poem for our volunteers

by Diversional Therapy Team Leader  
Helen McLeane and residents of  
Millvale House, Levin

Thank you for the gift of time,  
You've given us so often,  
The kindness of your voice and care  
Has helped our journey soften.

Your smiling face, the words you share,  
Can touch our hearts and minds,  
And while we may not often say,  
We love that you are kind.

You share your joy, your song, or words,  
Or maybe just a smile,  
And on a day when life seems hard  
You stop and stay awhile

There are no words to capture  
and value what you do.  
Today is just a little chance  
To show our thanks to you.

At times our lives are busy,  
Or we seem far away,  
But always know you've left a mark  
And on our heart it stays.

Please know how much you mean to us,  
And trust these words we say,  
You've made a difference in our lives.  
A gift we can't repay.

We wish you love and happiness,  
And joy in all you do,  
Our world has been a better place  
Because it's shared with you.

