



Aberleigh
MARLBOROUGH

Family Newsletter

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A message from Maja and Susan

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2014.

The past few months have been busy ones here at Aberleigh, with our home undergoing the final stages of its major transition. Our three new homes, Koromiko, Ngaio and Totara, have now been completed. Rata home has also had its fair share of reconstruction, and now has 6 bedrooms with en suites. Matai has also received some cosmetic upgrades.

Our call bell system throughout the home has also been improved.

We would like to thank our residents and their families for their understanding and cooperation during this challenging time. We are also grateful to our staff team for their extra vigilance during the renovations in working together to keep our residents safe and the environment hazard free.

Aberleigh has had two external audits in the past 6 months, a Verification Audit in October 2013 and a Surveillance Audit in January 2014. The verification audit was to obtain certification for the new levels of care we are providing, while the surveillance audit is a spot audit required following 4 year certification. Both audits received excellent results, with the auditors giving special mention to our wonderful staff team.

We are proud to announce that Aberleigh now provides four levels of care: rest home, dementia rest home, hospital and dementia hospital. We are currently the only facility in Marlborough offering hospital dementia care, and also the only one offering a complete continuum of care. This means that our residents will never need to move on if their care needs change. It is comforting for people to know that they can remain here in their home with the people who know them well.



With this transition, our staff have undergone additional training to equip them to deal positively and effectively with the challenges of these more specialised levels of care.

Our first course of our popular Orientation for Families course will be scheduled soon, with Sharing the Journey taking place later in the year.

The past few months have been busy ones for our activities team, with residents enjoying special afternoon teas outside in the garden using our special tea cups, gardening activities in the warm summer weather, trips to the swimming pool, visits to Seymour Square, Rarangi, Picton, Pataka, and a number of other van outings. Our residents have also enjoyed live entertainment from Liz Mitchell and Graham. This is of course in addition to our usual homely activities, quizzes, word games, housie, exercise programme and daily neighbourhood walks.

We would like to thank those families who returned our EPOA survey. Your comments are valuable in helping us identify areas in which we can improve, and are much appreciated. We will include a report-back on the survey in our next newsletter.

We wish you all a wonderful 2014 full of special moments with your loved one.

Representational Child Therapy



A woman with dementia interacting with a representational child

“Representational Child Therapy is introduced in close consultation with the family, with the dignity and respect of the client being paramount.”

Following the recent introduction of hospital dementia care we will be using Representational Child Therapy as an option for certain carefully selected residents.

Representational Child Therapy was first researched at Queen Elizabeth Psychiatric Hospital in Toronto by Isabel Milton and Judith McPhail in 1985. In 1983 Representational Child Therapy was established by Judy Cooper in the Dementia Unit of Parklands Hospital, Christchurch, with the dignity and respect of clients being paramount.

In some of our rest homes/hospitals the therapy is led by the diversional therapy team, with the support of the diversional therapy team leader, registered nurses and caregiving teams. All staff have a full understanding of and commitment to the therapy, and family members are consulted and give their consent prior to the therapy being made available to a resident.

The introduction of this recognised therapy for certain residents means that at times you may see residents

with dolls or soft toys. The use of these ‘representational children’ has significant potential benefits to the resident concerned. These benefits may include:

- A minimisation of distress, improvement in social interactions and raised self-esteem
- Isolated residents becoming involved in other activities and therapies
- Uncommunicative residents communicating more readily
- Reduction of repetitive speech and behaviours of concern
- Medication being reduced
- Wandering at night decreased
- Mobility encouraged
- Communication becoming easier for relatives, who visit more often as a result.

If you have any questions or concerns relating to Representational Child Therapy, or feel your loved one might benefit from this, please speak to our Diversional Therapy or RN team.

Visiting our website and Facebook page

Our recent EPOA Survey revealed that while many families visit our website when they are first investigating care options, few people are aware of our Facebook page or visit it on a regular basis

We have made some exciting changes to our website recently, and warmly invite you to hop online at www.dementiacarenz.co.nz and explore! It has been restructured, updated and made much more user-friendly, now including video clips of staff and a ‘live’ link to our Facebook page.

The Facebook page can be accessed by clicking on the link at the top right

of the website. Our Facebook page is current, topical and updated on an almost daily basis. By ‘liking’ our page you will ensure that our postings will come directly through to your own Facebook home page for you to enjoy.

Our page has regular contributions from our team, ensuring that updates cover a variety of subjects including staff and facility news, activities, magic moments, and links to informative articles about dementia.

We would love you to leave us a message on our page, or comment on any posting you find of special interest!



The benefits of hip protectors

Hip protectors are a product designed to reduce the risk of serious hip injury as a result of a fall. They work by absorbing the impact as well as diverting impact away from the hip joint into the surrounding soft tissue. While there is no guarantee that wearing hip protectors will protect the wearer against sustaining a severe injury, research has shown that they can reduce the risk of sustaining a hip fracture by as much as 84%.

This is good news for our residents who, because of their age and dementia diagnosis, are at higher risk of falling. For this reason families are usually asked whether they would like to purchase Hip Saver hip protectors for their loved one. We encourage you to consider the benefits of providing hip protectors for your loved one as a means to reduce their risk of serious injury.



Enjoying afternoon tea under the new shade sails

A hand picked team

Occasionally family members and visitors express surprise at the age and multicultural makeup of our staff team.

Each member of our team has been hand-picked with great care. Many are registered nurses in their own country, with the courage and initiative to start a new life far from home and family. Every staff member is chosen because they have what we call 'knack' in working with people

with dementia. They know how to love and care for someone as if that person is their very best friend, and they are passionate about working in this way. Our staff are loving, capable and experienced. We are enormously proud to have such committed and professional people working with us. Their cultural diversity, energy and dedication enriches us all.

A word from Alison Hume

Howard Thurman once said: "Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

I regularly meet with members of our team talking about our vision and values and facilitating sessions on how to be with each person we care for as if each person is our best friend. At these sessions we share stories of rich moments we have seen residents have. We sit around the table and the staff I am with light up as they tell their stories.

We have a special book in the staff room that we use so that we can share these very special moments we

witness. When I look at this book I am blown away by the amazing things that just happen. At the end of each story the staff member who writes the story usually writes how they feel. The book is full of comments such as "it was an amazing moment for me", "seeing this made me cry", "Wow", "I was so touched when this happened", "we laughed together". This work that we do is very fulfilling and enriching for each one of us.

We are very fortunate to be doing such meaningful work. It is indeed a great privilege to be caring for the people who live here. We love what we do!



Our new entrance

Concerns and complaints: your gift to us



We are especially thrilled with the new landscaping, enhancing the outdoor environment for residents. We think our outside areas are really beautiful.

As we strive each day to provide the very best possible care to our residents, it can sometimes be hard to identify where changes are required to improve upon the service that we provide.

We would like to say a special thank you to each and every one of you for providing us with feedback, either positive or negative. We really appreciate your honesty and the time it takes to let us know when things have not gone quite the way you would wish. Your concerns and complaints provides the opportunity for us to pass on this feedback to all our staff and take corrective action when needed, as part of our ongoing quality improvement programme.

Please remember that our door is always open. You are welcome to pop in for a cup of tea and a chat.

Suggestions to improve our service should be made on a Quality Improvement Form. If you wish to make a complaint about something you are unhappy with, a Complaint Form should be used. The completed form can be given to any staff member, or put in our suggestions box.

Please ensure that any verbal complaint is made directly to either Maja or Susan. If they are not available then the complaint should be made in writing on a complaint form to ensure that it goes through the correct investigation and resolution process.

Advocacy Services (0800 555 050) is available to assist you if required.

We always welcome your ideas and concerns, and your loved one will never be disadvantaged by anything you may share with us.

Caring for possessions

Occasionally we have incidents of treasured jewellery, especially rings, going missing. We would like to remind you of the importance of taking residents' rings away home with you.

It is important to stress that we cannot be responsible for any loss of property, and that this is very likely to occur, especially in an environment where people with dementia are cared for.

If a resident has a strong sentimental attachment to a particular ring, we suggest that you consider substituting an inexpensive copy for the original,

which can then be kept safely by your family.

We require all clothing to be named upon admission, and any new items to be clearly marked before they arrive. Names or initials written with laundry pen onto existing clothing labels are not sufficient. Commercially printed labels either sewn on or ironed on will significantly reduce the likelihood of clothing being misplaced.

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



We promise we will give your loved one the very best of care.
We promise we will appreciate, respect and love your special person.
We will be honest, open and trustworthy.
This is the work we have chosen to do.

– Alison Hume and Jim Haines, Directors