



Aberleigh
MARLBOROUGH

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Family Newsletter

A message from Susan and Maja

We are looking forward to a fantastic and productive 2016. We hope you had a wonderful holiday period and look forward to sharing more with you over the coming months.

We start this year by reflecting on our delightful Christmas gathering. Our rest home and hospital level residents were entertained by singer Philip Steins who played and sang country music, encouraging everyone to dance and sing along. As always, our cooks surpassed themselves with the lovingly prepared Christmas food provided.

The following day was extra special for our residents of Koromiko, Totara & Kowhai with entertainment from the Country Girls Singers. Another highlight of the month was the visit of volunteer groups to serenade our residents with Christmas carols. Happy Faces Kids and a group of teenage singers led by the Panoho sisters also shared their talents with us all. Our residents thoroughly enjoyed their performances and once again the power of music to bring joy was felt by us all.

We had a special volunteers' afternoon tea on 11 December which had a great turn out with more than 20 people attending. This was our chance to thank all those who selflessly give up their time to volunteer with us; we truly appreciate all you do for us here at Aberleigh.

Our Orientation for Families course was held on 2 December, and was much appreciated by the families of new residents who attended. This is a valuable opportunity for those new to residential care to learn more about many of the practical aspects of the service we provide.

Our other popular course for families, Sharing the Journey, was held on 5 February and attended by 10 family members. Everybody agreed it was an



enjoyable, informative and enlightening session.

Both courses will be held again later this year.

Many thanks to those who returned our EPOA Survey. Among the issues raised and actions taken in the form of Quality Improvements were:

1. More variety in television programmes and activities. The DT activity calendar includes 'Movie Afternoon' at least once a month. All activities are based on the level of care and the capabilities of the residents. Though we have planned activities for the whole month, it will still depend on the preferences of the residents that particular day and the weather.
2. Glasses, mugs & cups are sometimes in short supply. A stock take has shown that current stocks are sufficient. However, we will remind staff to ensure that they are evenly distributed between the homes.
3. Variety and temperature of food – our cooks are working together on rectifying these issues.

We are always delighted to receive any feedback which enables us to improve the service we provide. Please remember you are always welcome to pop in and chat with us about any suggestions you may have.

Free online course on dementia



Enjoying baking with friends

Have you ever wanted to go on a tour through the brain? See how everything works? Learn the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia? The University of Tasmania offers a free on-line course on Understanding Dementia. The course content is easy to understand and is open to anybody and everybody from family members to care staff, registered nurses and managers.

The 9 week course is broken down into 3 sections with no exams or assignments.

- The Brain – how it works and what causes dementia (including an interactive tour of the brain)
- The Diseases – exploring the differences between normal

aging and dementia, issues surrounding diagnosis, and medical management

- The Person – addresses living with dementia, progression and stages, palliation, changes in behaviour and alternative therapies.

If you are interested in finding out more about this fascinating course, please visit

<https://mooc.utas.edu.au/courses/understanding-dementia> and register your expression of interest. A Facebook page is also available at <https://www.facebook.com/UnderstandingDementia>

Concerns and complaints: your gift to us

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 provide 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 Susan or Maja. 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.



Festive fare at Christmas time

The symptoms of dementia

Dementia is a condition that affects the way we think. It can affect our memory, our language and our perception of the world around us. These changes can affect the way we behave as we try to make sense of our experiences. Imagine waking up in a strange room every day. Our brain will try to understand what is happening, and will use our life experiences to do so. It is not uncommon for the people we care for to think that they are in a hotel, a restaurant, a doctor's waiting room or a bus station. We know this because they may ask us how to pay for the meal they are served.

Changes in behaviour are symptoms of the dementia they are experiencing, just as a fever, runny nose and cough are symptoms of a bad cold. The changes to the way we see the world can make us anxious, frightened and frustrated. This in turn can make us restless, agitated, repetitive and sometimes aggressive. We teach our staff to think of these changes in behaviour as symptoms of a disease, rather than part of the person themselves. This helps our staff to care for people with dementia with empathy and respect.

Our staff offer reassurance and calm to those they are caring for. Alleviating fear and frustration will often prevent

changes in behaviour occurring.

We also work closely with our staff teams to try and understand the meaning and reason for changes in behaviour, as sometimes changes in the environment or the way we relate to the person with dementia can be helpful. These will often help the person to relax and feel more at home.

We have a diversional therapy team to help us provide meaningful activities for those we care for. Our activity programme provides opportunity for social interaction, occupies and stimulates the mind, and helps people to feel useful through engaging in familiar homely activities which provide a sense of familiarity and belonging.

Living with dementia is not always a distressing, negative experience, although the changed perception of reality can be disorienting. Dementia may appear more distressing to the observer than it is to the person directly affected. Caring for someone with dementia is frequently a joyful and rewarding experience, and sharing those moments is a privilege for each of us. If you have any concerns regarding any event or interaction you may see while at our facility, please speak directly with our Clinical Manager.



A group of ladies enjoy our Valentine's Day celebration

Influenza – keeping your loved one safe

We urge you and your loved one to get immunised against influenza this winter to give everyone the best chance of being protected. The more vulnerable elderly do not gain as much immunity from influenza vaccination as healthy people do. Family that visit may unknowingly become the spreader of infection.

Few people are aware that if you become infected with the influenza virus you can spread the virus 24hrs before symptoms appear.

Symptoms of influenza come on suddenly and can include fever, chills, muscle aches, runny nose, cough and stomach upsets. The flu is worse than a cold, with the influenza virus infecting the nose, throat and lungs.

Older people, young children, pregnant women, and people with certain medical conditions are at a higher risk of developing serious complications from influenza, such as pneumonia.

If you are unwell, we ask you to stay at home and postpone visits to your loved one. We also encourage our staff to be immunised to protect our residents.

Please ask the RN about our influenza consent form on your next visit to the facility. If you have received the consent form already, please sign and return it to the facility as soon as possible. If you are in doubt about the flu vaccination and the benefit of this to your loved one, please do not hesitate to see the Clinical Manager for further information.



Christmas entertainment from Philip Steins

Spending time with loved ones

Alison Hume



I have personally experienced taking care of a number of family members in rest homes and continuing care hospitals in the last few years. This has not always been easy. Every now and again, the time spent with my loved one has been a time of closeness, love and tenderness. Other times, I have found the time together quite difficult. A number of situations have occurred. Sometimes my family member would cry for the whole visit (and many times I would cry along too). Other times we felt awkward because we couldn't find anything to talk about. I have experienced my special family member wanting to go home and struggling to settle and I have felt guilty that this is not possible. At times, leaving and ending the visit has been heart breaking. There have been instances when I have not been at all sure that the wonderful people who have loved and cared for me in the past actually recognise me. Sitting with a family member, knowing that the end is getting near is a particularly poignant experience.

I have found that a little thought and preparation before a visit increases my chances of a meaningful time with my loved family member. Many times I have resorted to the ideas of Virginia Bell and David Troxel in their book "Best Friends Approach to Care" and to ideas that our team have suggested. I would like to share some of their ideas with you. It is my wish that you will have wonderful touching moments with your loved ones.

- Share hand cream and admire the perfume
- Read a book aloud
- Brush hair

- Watch birds outside the window
- Polish nails
- Walk in the garden
- Provide an update on a favourite sports team
- Listen to music
- Visit with pets
- Watch the sky at sunset
- Tidy drawers
- Visit with a baby
- Look at family photographs
- Sing together
- Arrange flowers
- Go out for a drive – to feed the ducks or see the sea
- Smell the roses
- Play the piano
- Have an ice cream together
- Weed some garden
- Enjoy the silence
- Have a beer together
- Whistle a tune
- Make a cup of tea
- Share something to eat
- Look at a picture book
- Bring fish and chips to eat together
- Talk about grandchildren

It is important to be flexible. What has worked in the past may not be so effective today. Not easily done, but I have noticed that when I am accepting of the reality of where my loved one is at the time, then the visit goes a whole lot better. Remember to tell stories of the past. Reminiscing can be a winner. Stay in the moment with your loved one. Focus on what your loved one can still do. Smile, hold hands. Just be together.

Your time together is short. I hope this time together is precious, tender and full of love.



Pampering - one of life's little luxuries

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