

Family Newsletter

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In this issue:

- A message from Carolyn and Sharon
- Free Online Course on Dementia
- Concerns and Complaints: your gift to us
- The Symptoms of Dementia
- Influenza – keeping your loved one safe
- A message from Alison Hume

A message from Carolyn and Sharon

Happy new year to you all!

Time has passed so quickly, and we are already almost a quarter through the year.

I'm sitting in my office writing this and listening to the cicadas in the trees – a lovely sound of summer. We have been very lucky here on the Kapiti coast to be enjoying some beautiful weather although some rain would be welcome for our parched gardens I'm sure.

We had a busy lead up to Christmas, continuing to celebrate various cultures. For Diwali, an Indian festival, salt dough lamps were made and painted, an activity enjoyed by some family members as well as residents.

We all enjoyed a visit from a family member who came to visit in her traditional German costume and shared salad and German sausages.

Then of course we had our Christmas family gatherings. It was nice to see so many families come and enjoy the lovely food and entertainment provided. Prior to Christmas the residents were also treated to carol singing by a group from the Filipino community.

Christmas Day began with a visit from Santa "Joe" along with his helper Angela. They moved around the facility to give out presents and were delighted to see the wonderful responses they got from the residents. Many enjoyed singing along with some traditional Christmas songs.

A special mention should be made for our cook Barbara, who spent extra time in making and decorating the beautiful Christmas cakes for each of the homes.



Magic moments

On Christmas Day when 'Father Christmas' and his helper were handing out the presents in Nikau, they had a lovely response from a resident who has very little speech.

They began singing "Jingle Bells" to her and she sang along with them singing every word.

A very special moment indeed!

In February, we had entertainment with Rewa, who plays the guitar and sings with background soundtracks. Many of his songs are slow-dance tunes. The music was great, and a few of us were dancing. In a moment of true beauty, one of our male residents got up and danced a slow-dance with his wife. It was VERY romantic!

Please note: From Hairdresser Madeline Austin:

As of 1st of March 2016, the prices of hairdressing services will be increased by an extra \$5.

Free online course on dementia



Residents recently enjoyed making handmade pot pourri

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 staging, palliation, behaviours, management 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



Celebrating Waitangi Day

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 Carolyn or Sharon. 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.

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.



The giant bowling set kindly donated by a generous family

Influenza – keeping your loved one safe

We urge you and your loved ones 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.

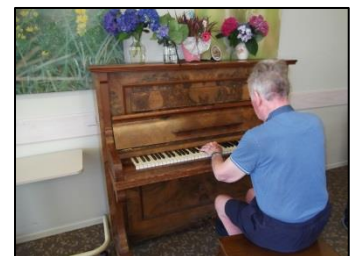
Few people are aware that if you become infected with the influenza virus you can spread the virus 24hrs before symptoms appear.

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 ones. 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.



Piano playing is a pleasure many associate with home

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.



Jigsaw puzzles are a popular activity

Welfare Guardian Survey results

These were recently sent out with a response from just under half of the recipients. We would like to thank those of you who responded. Your feedback, both positive and negative, is greatly valued.

It was good to see that most people are aware of our monthly support group meetings which began in July. These continue to be held at the end of each month for those who wish to attend.

There were a few concerns raised around our Diversional Therapy (DT) team and activities provided.

It is very important that families feel they can approach the DTs at any time. However, a good starting point is when your loved one comes into care. The DTs will arrange to meet with you to talk about completing a profile for your loved one. This enables them to establish an individual activities care plan for them, which can then be incorporated into the monthly programme.

Another point of contact would be in the 3-6 monthly meeting between the EPOAs, the nurses and the DTs to discuss how things are going. A very important part of that is discussion with the DTs about your loved one's involvement in activities and is a good time for you to raise any concerns you have.

We have noted there are times when the DTs have been unable to attend these meetings for various reasons and we have raised a quality

improvement around that to ensure their attendance in the future.

At times it may appear that there is no activity occurring in the homes. This in part is due to paperwork requirements, as an important part of a DT's role is to plan activities, compile the monthly activities calendar, and record which activities residents have participated in and found most enjoyable. We have worked hard to establish the best time for this to occur within their shift that works for the residents, the DTs and the Caregivers.

Our laundry service has also been raised as a concern. We are aware that clothing does occasionally go missing and can't emphasize enough the importance of using good name tags for clothing. We apologise for those times when things do not go according to plan. This issue is discussed monthly at our key staff and night staff meetings and we have raised a quality improvement with the intention of holding regular ongoing laundry in service training. The recent reconfiguration of the facility brought about many changes particularly in Nikau. There was a settling in period for all the families and the staff which took some time to work through. Some adjustments to care giving shifts have allowed a better work balance and things are flowing a lot more smoothly.

Please remember that you are always most welcome to pop in and chat with us if you have any concerns or suggestions.

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



Pukekos are among the many natural beauties of the Lindale valley



A delicious Christmas cake made by our cook Barbara