



Avonlea
CHRISTCHURCH

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Family Newsletter

A message from Charisma and Sue

A warm “Hello” from the Avonlea family!

Winter has arrived in a hurry, after having lovely warm days and little rain through to the beginning of May. Watching the leaves on the trees change colour and fall in a couple of weeks rather than a couple of months was amazing to see, and the cold weather has come as a shock to us all.

Now winter is here we remind you that the cold and flu season has also arrived. We ask that you and your family refrain from visiting if you have any symptoms. An infection can spread rapidly through our frail elderly residents and make them very ill, and even lead to death.

A large percentage of residents and staff have had the flu vaccine this year. It makes a real difference over the winter months.

Thank you to families who joined us in celebrating Easter, Anzac days and our theme weeks. We hope you had as much fun as we did, and enjoyed sharing these precious times with your loved one.

To family members who attended our recent Orientation for Families/Sharing the Journey courses, we hope you gained some helpful information and enjoyed getting to know what goes on behind the scenes. We will be holding another session towards the end of this year, which will be advised in advance. All will be welcome to attend.



We are pleased to announce the appointment of Kim Prasad as our Lead Diversional Therapist at Avonlea. Kim is a fully qualified Diversional Therapist with six years of experience from Admatha Dementia Care. Her passion, enthusiasm and knowledge will be invaluable in supporting our activity team and further improving the programme we offer our residents.

We continue to work on providing new and interesting additions to our activities. Its been wonderful to see family and residents enjoying our memory folders, surprise suitcases, bookcase items and sand art to name but a few. Your ideas are always welcome, so please share your thoughts with us. We are also so appreciative of the contributions you have made to the above projects in practical terms.

We look forward to welcoming you often and sharing many happy times together over the coming months.

You are warmly invited to join us for our

Winter Gatherings

Aroha, Rudo , Ofa - Tuesday 19th July - 2.30pm

Mahal, Awhi Whanai, Hoa Pumau - Wednesday 20th July - 2.30pm

“Magic Moments” to share with you



'Sensory balls' provide tactile and visual therapy

A resident's grandson recently sang at the Sydney Opera House in "The Messiah". He sang a couple of songs for us in the lounge, an amazing experience for everyone. Residents emerged one by one from their rooms to listen. I left the knitting we were doing as an activity on the table to get the camera to capture this special moment. I looked over at the table and a resident had picked up the knitting and done a couple of rows! Two magic moments simultaneously.

A resident's daughter walked in to the lounge today. The resident broke out in to a big smile and said "That's my daughter!" Everyone was uplifted by this moment of recognition. Then the resident added "Yes ..." and called her by name. Her daughter was so happy.

It was lunchtime and a resident was a little confused and standing by one of our caregivers asking him questions. He put his arm around her and started singing. She joined in at the appropriate time with the correct words to the song.

Three residents and I were seated around a table together. Another resident was struggling with her zipper not far away from us. One of the ladies called over to her "Can I help you with that?" She brought her top over and the helpful resident spent several minutes very patiently showing her how to engage the zipper. It was a lovely interaction.

A resident was unsettled on return from an outing. His daughter brought him out to the lounge and got out her guitar. The music worked wonders. He sang several songs, often solo, and gave historical background to them. It was so good to see him fully involved with his musical/spiritual self.

I was taking a resident to the lounge when the RN asked if she could give medication to him. He took his medication and asked me, "Is she a doctor, hope it's not too late to ask that?" That moment made us both laugh.

Falls prevention programme



"Happy Hour" takes place in all our small homes each Friday

A major project in our current business plan has been a falls prevention programme which we have implemented at Avonlea.

A number of minimization interventions have been put in place as part of this project, which was launched in 2015 and has now been running for a year. These include the appointment of a Falls Coordinator, 'falls mapping' implementation, increasing staff awareness around falls minimisation through education, and maintaining a Vitamin D supplement register.

Falls Mapping is a graphic representation of the floorplan of Avonlea, with colour coded 'mapping' indicating precisely where and when each fall occurs, as well as the identity

of the resident concerned. This enables us to identify the areas, times of day and people at greatest risk, and implement preventative strategies such as environmental improvements, closer monitoring and diversion.

The Avonlea team has been working closely under the guidance of the Falls Coordinator to achieve the goal of preventing major falls while minimizing minor ones. Reductions of over 50% in both categories of falls has been noted, and we hope to continue to see improvement in this important area of care.

Using my time wisely

It gives Jim and me great pleasure to provide the resources enabling our managers to provide an excellent service to our residents and their families. We love to meet with our managers frequently and to see their growth and development. They are very well supported by our organisational team who are always just a phone call away, if there is any problem at all. We have delegated the day to day running of Avonlea to Charisma and Sue. They are the front face of Avonlea. They are the people residents and their families love to meet often, have a chat to, and talk with if there is a problem or information to be sought.

I would love to know all residents and their families as I used to when our organisation was smaller. Now this is not possible logistically, and neither would it be helpful to the managers we have so carefully chosen. They need the trust and freedom to 'own' the home they run.

I believe my time is better employed facilitating programmes that guide our staff in providing care that clearly reflects our vision and values. I spend time with every new staff member,

Conversations that count

Knowing what is important to each resident takes the guess work out of how best to care for each person as the end of life approaches. The Advanced Care Planning Cooperative of New Zealand has developed an Advance Care Plan (ACP) document for use by those who are cognitively able. A person with a diagnosis of dementia may not be able to complete this. Instead, a Medical Care Guidance Plan can be completed on their behalf by their GP. It is important that the family have input into this.

We have developed a "Thinking about your loved one's quality of life" questionnaire to encourage conversations with residents and their

Alison Hume

talking about our vision and values, our expectations of and our commitment to them. A little later on, after they have been working with us for a little while, I again spend time with them, running a programme (in conjunction with Simon, our education co-ordinator) called "Best Friends Approach to Care". This is a simple, practical and effective application of our vision and values in day to day interaction and care. This close formative engagement with each member of our staff is the way I can have the greatest impact not only on each staff member, but also indirectly on each resident and his/her family on a moment by moment basis.

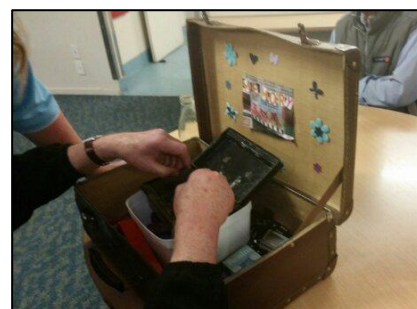
We very much want every resident to be loved and accepted as their true self. Avonlea is their home, and home is, as Maya Angelou says, "the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."

Our residents have a wonderful simplicity and compassion about them as they head towards the source of their being. If we pay attention, they offer us many moments of grace.

What lovely work we do! Thank you.



Wee gnomes tend the 'wheelbarrow garden' outside Mahal



A resident explores the treasure trove of our 'surprise suitcase'

loved ones about what matters most to them in terms of their care and treatment at the end of their life. This document will be offered for discussion at your next multi-disciplinary meeting. It is also helpful in providing clarity around the services the facility offers as well as access to GP or emergency services. Upon return of the document it is important that we have a conversation to ensure we interpret the choices as intended.

Our registered nurses give a gift of acceptance, understanding and reassurance by sitting quietly listening, empowering families to identify what really matters most to their loved one at the close of life.

Improving the service we provide



In early 2015 we launched a campaign focusing on caring for residents' personal belongings. This covered all items of value which are vulnerable to being lost, broken or damaged, especially during our laundry process.

A series of posters was displayed in the staff areas of the rest home as a reminder to caregivers that lost and damaged belongings can have serious consequences.

Over the past year we have been monitoring the occurrence of damaged belongings in each of our facilities, particularly with reference to the damage prevention poster campaign. We are delighted to report that the total number of lost or damaged items has dropped significantly due to the increased awareness. Damage in general has dropped 28% and damage to dentures in particular has plummeted by a massive 80%. Shrunken clothing is also less frequent, with staff taking more care with identifying woollens, sorting washing and ensuring special instructions relating to delicate garments are followed.

We have also responded to some suggestions put forward at a recent meeting with family members, as follows:

Suggestion: Caregivers sometimes write room numbers rather than names on clothes causing problems when residents move rooms.
Action: Place notice in staff bulletin and discuss at handovers.

Suggestion: Several maintenance suggestions and minor earthquake repairs still waiting to be done.
Action: Recheck all areas and complete maintenance log and list for builder.

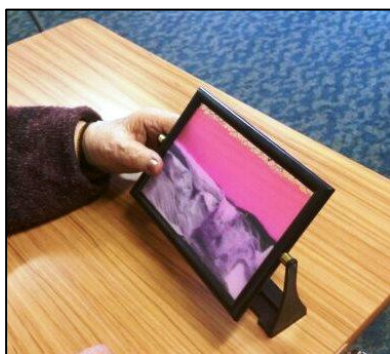
Suggestion: Consider placing a second entrance into the facility so visitors don't have to pass through other homes.
Action: Discuss risks versus benefits.

Suggestion: Family are unsure who is the home manager for the small homes.
Action: New name badges ordered with 'Home Manager' beneath staff member's name.

Please remember you are always welcome to pop in and share your suggestions or concerns.



'Memory folders' are a wonderful shared activity and opportunity for reminiscence



A sense of achievement and creative pleasure is enjoyed in this 'sand art' activity

Family Support Group

Having a family member with dementia can be hard, and it is often helpful to share your thoughts and feeling with others.

Every second Wednesday of the month, at 1pm, we hold a support group meeting for the families of residents at Avonlea. Family members who attend find these sessions very useful and enjoy having a safe, confidential environment where they can share experiences and support one

another on this challenging journey. The meetings are facilitated by Pam Barrett who has the training, experience and skill to run this group. Discussions are informal and confidential, and take place in a loving and supportive environment. Feedback we receive about the meetings is very positive. Come along and join us. Afternoon tea is provided.