



OMNIway

Finding the Leader
in Us All . . . pg. 3

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JUNE 2013 • www.omniway.ca



Summer's Here!

Springdale Country Manor residents (left to right) Mabel Lemere, Marjorie Fraser and Liz Burton pose with a flower urn they planted as part of a program with students from Thomas A. Stewart Secondary School.

Assurance of Safety Must be the Priority: OMNI CEO

Long-term care sector responds to allegations of abuse against Peterborough resident

By Jeanne Pengelly

PETERBOROUGH, Ont. - Recent media reports outlining what OMNI Health Care president and CEO Patrick McCarthy calls "very disturbing" acts at a Peterborough long-term care home are highlighting the opportunity for more intentional collaboration in sector processes, he says.

Broadcast, print and web media ran reports of a covert video taken in a room at St. Joseph's at Fleming. The video appears to show abuse and inappropriate care given to a resident on several occasions.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and police are currently investigating.

The morning after the video aired, McCarthy's team sent the link to each of the 17 OMNI homes as a "reminder that we must always be vigilant about resident safety."

"Abuse and neglect is not acceptable and there can be zero tolerance for it," he said. "We work with vulnerable seniors and they need and deserve safety and security."

Then, generalizing to all workers in the long-term care sector, he said, "(Abuse) hurts all of us."

The vast majority of people who work in long-term care are dedicated to their work and are appalled by the allegations, he added.

Safety and respect for residents must be the first priority. A home's culture must centre on that.

"It's the residents' home," he says.

OMNI's Supportive Measures programs, together with its commitment to Behavioural Supports Ontario programs and training and Residents First quality programs are designed

See 'Possibilities' page 2

Focus on Prevention Helps Reduce Pressure Ulcer Rate

Woodland Villa residents more comfortable

By Jeanne Pengelly

Putting bedsores in the spotlight at Woodland Villa helped cut the incidence of first-stage ulcers in half.

Staff at the OMNI Health Car home in Long Sault noticed their ulcer rate was high. In

January 2012, 20 residents were diagnosed with the onset of an ulcer. Three months later, 10 residents were on the same list.

That's significant improvement, says director of care Janna Sabourin,

See 'Stage' page 2

Family Member Applauds Burnbrae Care in Newspaper

Letter to editor in response to widespread negative long-term care press

By Deron Hamel

Sandra Graham recently had a message for media: despite the negative press long-term care has been getting lately, there are lots of good things that happen every day in homes.

In a letter to the editor published in the May 30

edition of the *Trent Hills Independent*, Graham, whose mother was a resident at Burnbrae Gardens until she passed away in February, commended staff at the Campbellford long-term care home for the care and quality of life they provided

See 'Mom' page 2

West Lake Cuts UTI Rate

Residents also experience fewer incidents of incontinence

By Jeanne Pengelly

There's something encouraging and inspiring about simple solutions, says West Lake Terrace's clinical care co-ordinator.

For example, the solution the Prince Edward County long-term care home's team found to help significantly reduce urinary tract infections

in residents was as simple as a new cleaning cloth.

Neil Peterson hadn't been long at the 47-bed OMNI Health Care home when he did a little research on products that might help reduce the high rate of infection among residents.

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OMNI Health Care
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Postage paid
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Hugs All Around

Maplewood residents' council president Ena Clews hugs her friend and fellow resident Janet Hayden. Clews, a trained singer, was at one time an entertainer at the Brighton long-term care home.

'Third-hand Smoke' May Become LTC Issue: Administrator

It's a touchy subject, but one that needs discussion

By Deron Hamel

The risks associated with first- and second-hand tobacco smoke are well documented, but the issue of “third-hand smoke” is not something a lot of people are familiar with — however, it’s a subject that’s likely on the horizon, given the attention it’s receiving in the U.S., says Maureen King.

King, the administrator at Springdale Country Manor, says the issue of third-hand smoke caught her eye while reading news websites recently. While third-hand smoke may not be getting a lot of attention in Canada, it is something long-term care home management may want to consider discussing with staff members, she says.

Third-hand smoke refers to the chemical residue and smell that’s left behind on people who have recently smoked. Third-hand smoke gets into hair, clothing and objects touched by people who’ve recently smoked.

King says third-hand smoke is largely a quality of life issue in a long-term care environment. She notes that many people working in the long-term care sector are smokers. Throughout the work day, those who smoke take cigarette breaks — returning to work smelling of smoke.

Some residents are

sensitive to the smell of tobacco smoke, King notes. In other cases, she adds, there are residents who were smokers but had to kick the habit upon moving into long-term care. Having to be around people smelling of cigarettes can create urges for them to light up, King says.

“Residents have a choice, and if they choose not to have somebody who smells of cigarette smoke near them, then that has to be abided by in long-term care,” King tells the *OMNIway*.

But having a discussion with staff members about third-hand smoke is not going to be easy; King herself says she does not know how she would approach the issue. There’s a balance that needs to be struck, she says — smokers have a right to smoke (outside, in designated areas, of course), but residents, if they choose, have the right to not be exposed to third-hand smoke.

“You can’t tell staff what to do on their break, but we do have some ability to say to them, ‘Your uniform has to be clean, and smelling of smoke is not clean — especially if it’s contrary to a person’s health,’” King says.

To learn more about third-hand smoke, visit the Canadian Lung Association’s website at www.lung.ca.

Possibilities for Proactive Change

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to enhance the safety and security of residents.

In addition, there has been an investment in education by both the ministry and OMNI to support this objective.

Homes must nurture both safety around whistleblowing culture, and the processes used for fair, unbiased investigations so that people raise concerns when they see issues that may constitute abuse or neglect, McCarthy says.

The investigative process itself is important and needs to be seen as fair and objective, he adds.

“It is not about seeking to lay blame, but rather to find out what happened, to assess the contributing factors, and

to take steps to ensure the actions taken are supported by the facts,” he says.

“Essentially we seek to dig deeper, pulling back the layers and looking not only from the surface, but to find out what really did happen, and doing so in a respectful, professional manner.”

There is yet another level where possibility for proactive change in long-term care exists, McCarthy says.

Collaboration between the unions, which represent workers, and the home management can grow, he says, with both parties agreeing to support a culture of zero tolerance for abuse. The government could look at changes in the

way arbitrators deal with grievances related to cases of abuse and neglect.

“There has to be assurance that we’re all doing the best we can to ensure safety.”

That job has become more complex as resident acuity and behaviours have changed. McCarthy agrees with the call for capital redevelopment of older homes to make them safer and more conducive to care needs, as well as the need to address staffing, training, education and resource levels.

“In the end, the long-term care sector is evolving,” he says. “There must be legislative and political support to manage the new face of the sector.”

Stage 1 Ulcers Drop by Half

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considering about one in 11 long-term care home residents in Canada has pressure ulcers.

Interest among proactive approaches to pressure-ulcer prevention is common among health-care professionals. In their most serious form, pressure ulcers can contribute to death, and can certainly be a financial burden on the health-care system.

Under the direction of registered practical nurse Deb Hannan, Woodland Villa staff began a deliberate prevention program that put bedsores at the front of patient care.

Not only did the Stage 1 ulcer rate drop by half, but the home has maintained that reduced bed sore rate for more than a year.

“This was a great success for us,” Sabourin says.

“The residents are certainly more comfortable.”

The team managed to achieve this by holding repeated in-services with staff about the risk factors for ulcers — factors such as diabetes, incontinence, immobility and nutrition.

They posted a pink dot above beds of residents fit the risk-factor profile, so that all staff providing care would be alert to the early signs of ulcers.

In-services also focused on those early signs, such as redness, so ulcers could be caught sooner.

This focus helped draw the health-care workers’ attention to the need for special mattresses and cushions in wheelchairs for residents apt

to develop bedsores.

“Focusing on prevention was the next step for us,” Sabourin says, adding the staff had focused on care for acute ulcers and more serious Stage 2 and 3 ulcers, the kind that can often be acquired in hospital, prior to the more recent prevention program.

The team also developed a skin-care prevention protocol that made simple interventions in preventative ulcer care second nature for care providers. They learned about things such as keeping the skin clean and dry, as well as using a pH-balanced skin cleanser, repositioning residents more often in bed and wheelchairs, and offering a thorough inspection of skin during regular hygiene care.

'Mom Was Always Treated with Loving Care ...'

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her mother.

“Mom was always treated with loving care, compassion, and tenderness as are all the residents there,” she wrote. “(The residents) are taken on various outings, enjoy musical entertainment, are served tasty meals and snacks, and the list goes on.”

In the letter, which was published under the headline “Grateful for

Sincere Caregivers,” Graham discusses the press the long-term care sector has received in recent months.

She cites media coverage of a covert video taken in a room at St. Joseph’s at Fleming in Peterborough. The video appears to show abuse and inappropriate care given to a resident on several occasions. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and police are currently investigating.

While Graham says the alleged incidents at St. Joseph’s at Fleming are disturbing, they are not indicative of everyday life in long-term care homes — and the Burnbrae Gardens team exemplifies the extraordinary people who work in the sector, she says.

“... Burnbrae Gardens shows that most of the caregivers really do care and for that my family and I are most grateful,” she writes.

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Frost Manor residents Phyllis De La Matter and Jean Bakogorge are seen here at the recent Victorian Tea they attended at Victoria Manor.

Homes Collaborate to Host Resident Tea

Event another example of how local homes can work together, says Frost Manor LEC

By Deron Hamel

Approximately 100 residents from five Lindsay long-term care homes, including OMNI Health Care's Frost Manor, used Queen Victoria's 194th birthday celebrations as an opportunity to build the homes' community partnership.

The "Victorian Tea" was held at Victoria Manor on May 23.

The event brought residents from Frost Manor, Victoria Manor, Extendicare Kawartha Lakes, Caressant Care McLaughlin Road and Caressant Care Mary Street together for an afternoon of good food and conversation.

The afternoon also featured entertainment from a harpist and pianist.

The ladies from Frost Manor who attended the event brought Victorian bouquets, they had created for the event, and everyone went to the home's hairdresser that morning to get made up for the afternoon.

"This is another example of networking in the community," says Frost Manor life enrichment coordinator (LEC) Vi O'Leary.

For many years the five homes have collaborated on events, which has created a close-knit bond between the homes and serves

residents well — after all, many residents at any given Lindsay home will have friends at other homes, and these events provide a forum for people to reconnect and reminisce.

"One resident even found someone who she had gone to school with," O'Leary notes.

O'Leary and the five homes' program managers regularly connect — usually about once a month — to plan these activities. Other examples of activities the homes have created together include a residents' Olympics last August, outings to the Lindsay Fair and casino trips.

New Cloths Have Enhanced Residents' Quality of Live

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"I was surprised, myself, that there was something as readily available as a disposable cloth that would make such an impact," Peterson says.

In conjunction with the home's toileting program, the new cloths are credited with dropping the rate of UTIs at West Lake Terrace from 88 to 62 per cent in three months.

The new cloths are small so they can be carried at all times. They're a dry cloth that expands when soaked

in water. By having them available at all times, Peterson says full perineal care was done more often, and more proactively. In essence, it became a simpler care routine that could be done as the opportunity, rather than the need, arose.

Furthermore, not only did UTI incidence decrease, but episodes of incontinence also dropped.

"The residents were feeling clean and more secure," Peterson says. "The PSWs using these cloths have really enhanced the quality

of lives of our residents."

Urinary tract infection is considered the most frequent bacterial infection in long-term care residents, and one that health-care workers constantly try to head off. UTIs are particularly difficult to diagnose as the symptoms vary and can be hard to pinpoint.

West Lake Terrace was recognized with an award at the recent retreat at Fern Resort in Orillia for its work implementing the change to disposable cloths for perineal care.

Finding the Leader in Us All

In May, several OMNI Health Care team members who have demonstrated leadership were honoured with Inspired Leadership awards during the managers' forum at Fern Resort.

The awards recognize front-line staff members and managers for their leadership. People from each of OMNI's 17 long-term care homes were nominated and voted on by their colleagues for taking ownership of programs and showing leadership on a day-to-day basis.

In a long-term care home, there's not one quality that makes a great leader; even the seemingly smallest thing can have a large impact on others. What really counts is the resident-focus and dedication people bring to the table.

Inspired Leaders earned their awards for demonstrating their strengths in many ways. Some people were recognized for being great communicators, while others were honoured for their work with others.

Leadership is an OMNI core value. We define leadership as follows: "To be leaders we must build leadership from within.

"How we do that is to motivate, inspire, challenge and equip our people with

those skills that directly benefit our residents in all aspects of their lives.

"By enabling our people, we entrust them with the responsibility of carrying out our mission, vision and values as they are intended."

In a long-term care home, there's not one quality that makes a great leader; even the seemingly smallest thing can have a large impact on others. What really counts is the resident-focus and dedication people bring to the table.

A large part of leadership in a long-term care community is identifying others' strengths and encouraging them to harness those attributes for the betterment of residents and their co-workers.

We're all leaders in our own way. We each have unique strengths we bring to the residents we serve and to the people we work with. While each of those strengths may be different, they all serve the common goal of enhancing quality of life for people.

By identifying others' strengths we are empowering them to be the best they can be. You do not need to be a manager to do this — it's something people working in all positions can do.

The result of encouraging people to be leaders by harnessing their strengths is that people feel empowered and energized to take on challenges and feel confident to think outside the box.

And encouraging others makes leaders of us all.



OMNIway news is published daily at www.omniway.ca and distributed bimonthly in print to the long-term care community.

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Inspired Leader Takes it 'Day by Day'

Anna Penny identifies trust, communication as keys to future of long-term care

By Jeanne Pengelly

There's no doubt the long-term care sector will face increasingly challenging times, especially as funding and resources wane, but a nursing manager at Garden Terrace says she has no doubt the future for OMNI Health Care will be bright.

"I do feel there will be challenges," says nursing services administrative manager (NASM) Anna Penny. "Do I think OMNI can conquer them? Absolutely."

"I do feel there will be challenges. . . . Do I think OMNI can conquer them? Absolutely."

— Anna Penny, nursing services administrative manager, Forest Hill

Penny has seen more than one side of the coin when it comes to the difficulties around resource management. She began as a personal support worker (PSW) at OMNI's other Kanata home, Forest Hill, where she also became union shop steward.

Today, a month after being named her home's Inspired Leader for this year, Penny says part of her insight comes from those years as shop steward.

"Sometimes I can relate to them (the PSWs) a little differently," she says. "I've been in their shoes."

"There are ways to be their cheerleaders, ways to be supportive. They often say to me 'it's nice to talk to you because we know you listen,'" she adds.

"I do listen and try to communicate their needs to higher management."

Penny's role involves scheduling both human and other resources to staff the home, a job that takes particularly strong communication skills as well as the trust of her peers.

It's often a thankless role, says administrator Carolyn Della Foresta.

"It's one of the most difficult roles in the home," she says. "But Anna doesn't believe that she is just doing staffing or just delivering nursing supplies. Anna is an integral part of this home in so many ways."

Della Foresta, who approached Penny to apply for the NASM position when it became available several years ago, says her choice for the position has a special way with colleagues.

"She doesn't just speak at a meeting when it's about staffing. Anna has ideas, and she offers them so freely and in such a respectful way."

Penny is clearly an asset to Garden Terrace, but not just with her colleagues, Della Foresta says.

"Especially with residents with responsive behaviours, she has an approach that is so genuine and so specific to each resident."

She will eagerly roll up her sleeves and fill in on a short-staffed unit or a dining room, and she has a "way" with residents that is particularly unique.

In her own words, Penny is "intrigued" by seniors.

"I like to try to understand the way the mind works," she says, adding that her years on the dementia unit at Forest Hill were possibly her best years.

In fact, looking ahead, Penny doesn't look to climb the ladder to the top; for her, the future could just as well hold a move back onto a unit, where she would be side by side with residents all the time.

"These residents are here for a reason. They're here for us to look after, and their families put a lot of trust in us. So, if the staff are having trouble getting someone in the tub, I'm a different face. I can go down, and they may do it for me or they may not, but if they do, you go home feeling like you made life better for someone today," she says.

"I just take it day by day. If I wasn't doing this job, I'd probably be back out on the floor with the residents."



Residents at Almonte Country Haven lit candles in memory of those they lost this year during the first annual Celebration of Life.

Dozens Attend Almonte Country Haven's First Celebration of Life

Community partnerships make memorial possible

By Jeanne Pengelly

A resident at Almonte Country Haven slowly makes her way to an altar of candles, as a community pastor reads a Bible passage. About 50 other residents, staff and family members watch quietly, remembering those lost in the last year. All are moved by the Celebration of Life service in the dining hall, complete with the home's new digital piano, and two local musicians.

The mood is uplifting. In celebrating those we have known, we find meaning. In witnessing the celebration, we find peace.

That was Almonte Country Haven administrator Marilyn Colton's idea behind instituting the first annual Celebration of Life service May 8.

In her welcome to the guests, Colton invited them to share in the celebration of 36 residents and one staff member who passed away this year.

"As we journey through life, each person with whom we meet and interact leaves a permanent imprint on the

fabric of our lives," she said. "Today is just one day we can remember them."

Almonte Country Haven lost an unusual number of residents this year, and also one staff member, personal support worker Carolyn Hughes.

Taking that potentially difficult situation and transforming it into an opportunity to not only support her staff, but also institutionalize the ceremony so that it will become part of the home's culture for years to come.

"Our celebration helps us to feel closer to those people who have gone to their heavenly homes," Colton says.

"To remember how they touched us and to learn how they touched the lives (of others) as well. It may simply be a time to have conversation about a loved one, a resident, or one of our co-workers."

Almonte Baptist Church pastor Paul Benson says it's particularly difficult for those who work in long-term care to deal with the loss of residents and staff. At Almonte Country Haven, it

was an even more difficult year than most face.

"We like to encourage the staff when they have a season like they did this year in February and March," he says. "We like to keep our fingers on the pulse of the home and how staff are managing through their difficult seasons."

Residents lit three candles, sang three hymns, heard three verses, and then enjoyed pie, punch and hugs from their caregivers, the pastors and their friends.

While many would have conditions preventing them from remembering their friends who passed this year, others are cognitive and able to remember, says director of care Kim Trombley.

"Maybe it is mainly for the staff," she says, adding that those who work at Almonte Country Haven have found a way to embed remembrance and celebration into their culture.

"It's part of our own healing, and an important piece in honouring the impact each resident has on our lives," she says.