



OMNIway

Quality Focus Shines
in 2014 . . . pg. 3

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Bird's-eye View

Country Terrace resident Leonard Tibensky spends time with a lorikeet during a Nov. 4 animal therapy program. The program was held at Wildwood Care Centre and was hosted by Hands On Exotics, a Toronto-based exotic animal handler. See story on page 2.

Data Showing OMNI's Strengths in Many Areas of Quality

Low restraint use, falls prevention and reduced agitation are some of the strong points

By Deron Hamel

Recent data shows OMNI Health Care long-term care homes are exceeding ministry benchmarks in many areas of care, a positive reflection on the organization's focus on quality.

Some of these areas include minimizing restraint usage, falls prevention and reduction of agitation and aggressive behaviours without resorting to medications.

Village Green has no residents using restraints, a success director of care (DOC) Debbie McTaggart attributes to stringent assessments coupled with educating family members and staff.

In fact, eliminating restraints at the Greater Napanee home was one of McTaggart's goals when she became DOC in 2013.

Education, she says,

has played a key role in this success.

"We have done education with the families, we have done education with the residents who have lap belts on, and we have also done consulting with our physiotherapist and our wheelchair provider because the chairs come with (lap belts) — and because they are on the chairs, people

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Resident Sculptor Sparks Journey of Discovery for College Student

OMNIway adds to quest to grow awareness of Frances Gage's work

By Lisa Bailey

For several seasons now, David Dimitrie has waited in an alcove at London's Fanshawe College to take the bus home after class.

There's a U-shaped perennial garden in the area

called the Hull Family Gardens, and in the middle of it sits a white plaster statue of a woman looking down, seemingly at peace. Dimitrie, who is a mature student, always finds serenity

See 'Gage's' page 4

West Lake Terrace Working to Minimize Restraints

Home aims to reduce numbers by 50%

By Deron Hamel

Continuous quality improvement is important to caregivers at West Lake Terrace, and this focus is helping the Prince Edward County long-term care home in its mission to reduce restraints.

Administrator Neil

Peterson notes the home is trying to reduce the number of residents who have restraints by 50 per cent. In the last quarter, the team's efforts paid off. Four residents — comprising 8.5 per cent of the 47-bed home's resident population

See 'Assessment' page 3

Preparedness, Technology Ensure Successful Fire-safety Drill at Country Terrace

Supervising fire marshals 'impressed' with team's ability to clear area quickly

By Deron Hamel

Country Terrace recently held an evacuation drill that was so successful even the fire marshals from Middlesex Fire Department who supervised the exercise were impressed.

As part of the drill, the Komoka long-term care home's fire safety team

members took on the roles of residents lying in bed, while others were tasked to move them to safety once the exercise began.

The team successfully cleared the area where the drill took place in only one minute and 32 seconds — 13 seconds faster than their

See 'Evacuated' page 3



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Wildwood Care Centre resident Karen Hopkins is seen here with a rabbit during an animal therapy program at the home Nov. 4.

Two OMNI Homes Partner to Bring Residents Exotic Animal Show

Wildwood Care Centre and Country Terrace building on 'positive relationship'

By Deron Hamel

Wildwood Care Centre and Country Terrace recently partnered to bring residents an animal therapy program that successfully engaged residents.

Thirteen residents from Country Terrace along with staff members visited Wildwood Care Centre in St. Marys, Ont. Nov. 4 for the program. Staff from Hands On Exotics, a Toronto-based exotic animal handler, stopped by with several of their animals, including lionhead rabbits, a lemur, an ibis, a lorikeet, a bearded dragon and a Burmese python.

Staff members from Hands On Exotics spent a lot of one-to-one time with residents and answered any questions afterwards. The program was well received by residents from both homes, says Wildwood Care Centre life enrichment assistant Sarah Jeffrey.

This is not the first time the two homes have collaborated on a resident program. In the spring, residents and staff members from the homes enjoyed a picnic together.

Jeffrey says staff members from the two homes did some training together earlier this

year, and have since formed a working relationship. Often, Jeffrey says, she will call the Komoka long-term care home to share ideas or ask questions.

Wildwood Care Centre has been managed by OMNI Health Care since 2013. The two homes, which are about an hour's drive apart, are the only two OMNI homes west of Toronto, so geography has made them close friends, Jeffrey says.

Jeffrey adds that since Wildwood Care Centre has its own bus, the home's staff went to Country Terrace to pick up their residents and staff members.

"It has been really positive relationship, (and) I think (more shared activities) is something we are going to work towards in the future," she says.

This is not the first time Hands On Exotics has worked with OMNI homes. In July 2012, the company brought several exotic animals to Willows Estate in Aurora for a program that life enrichment co-ordinator Teddy Mazzuca characterized as "probably one of the best programs" the home had hosted.

Resident Sewing Group Presents Dignity Quilt to Frost Manor

Project to make quilt engaged a large group of people

By Deron Hamel

A group of residents along with life enrichment aide Eunice Howe recently presented a dignity quilt they made to Frost Manor.

Dignity quilts — sometimes called dignity blankets — have become commonplace in long-term care homes in recent years. The quilts are placed over residents who have passed away when they are leaving the home, and residents have the opportunity to say their goodbyes.

Before this method was adopted at Frost Manor, residents would be sheltered from seeing a person who passed away being removed from the home, often through a back door.

Allowing residents to say their goodbyes and placing a quilt over the person who has passed has made a difference, Howe says.

"Residents come in through the front door and this is their home," Howe says. "If they pass away while

living here, they should go out through the front door with dignity. This is also very important for closure."

For nine months, a sewing

and I do the sewing."

One unique aspect of the program is the large number of residents it engages when it's held



Frost Manor residents hold up the dignity quilt they recently completed and presented to the home.

group of approximately 15 residents helped Howe make the quilt. Residents chose the design and helped Howe with the process.

"They enjoyed going through the fabric swaths and choosing colours and we worked as a team," Howe says. "They decided on the patterns. I showed them samples and we picked from that. Then we blended colours. They did the pinning

every two weeks at the Lindsay long-term care home. Howe attributes the large turnout to the fact that many of the residents have a lifelong interest in sewing. The program also relies heavily on residents' opinions, which is important to them, she adds.

The sewing group is currently making a butterfly quilt that will be raffled off once complete.

Indicators Exceeding Ministry Benchmarks

Continued from page 1

tend to use them," she says.

Falls prevention is another area where several OMNI homes exceeded ministry benchmarks. A fall can have a detrimental impact on a person's quality of life. Peterborough's Riverview Manor is reporting a fall rate of 3.64 per cent, well below the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's benchmark of 13.8 per cent.

Becky Dennie, a registered practical nurse and manager of resident quality at Riverview Manor, says protective assistive safety devices (PASDs) have played a major part in the home's success.

Riverview Manor offers therapeutic hip protectors developed by Synergy Medical Supply Inc. that have been helpful in preventing injury caused by falls at the home since they were introduced in 2010.

"If we know there's a resident who is at high risk of a fall, they get hip protectors and all the safety gear that is available," Dennie explains. "Physiotherapy is also very involved, and residents will be assessed (for falling risk). Any time there is a change in risk the physiotherapists assist them."

Data from Frost Manor indicates the Lindsay home has a rate of 22.41 per cent of residents with improved behavioural conditions. This compares favourably to the ministry's benchmark of 13.2 per cent.

DOC Debbie Maddison says interventions staff members have learned through the province's Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) initiative have been particularly fruitful in helping reduce agitation and aggressive behaviours. BSO is largely focused on interventions to

help enhance quality of life for seniors affected by dementia and other conditions that cause agitation.

One BSO intervention adopted at the home is a "folding box" that has clothes and blankets that residents can fold to keep them occupied. A box of dolls has also proven effective at calming residents affected by agitation, Maddison says. One resident living with dementia has a favourite doll that she believes is her baby, and she spends a lot of time caring for it, which has eliminated her agitation, the DOC says.

Maddison adds that staff members have played an important role in utilizing interventions.

"The staff members have over the years really gained some good insight into interventions, and providing interventions almost comes naturally," she says.

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EDITORIAL

Quality Focus Shines in 2014

At the start of this year, OMNI Health Care pledged to make quality care the main focus for the organization and its 18 long-term care homes. As we end 2014 and usher in 2015, we can proudly and confidently say OMNI has met its objective.

Perhaps the major highlight for OMNI as an organization in 2014 was recognition from the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) for OMNI's commitment to quality. In June, OMNI received the OLTCA's Innovation of the Year award for its comprehensive diabetes program.

The program, an excellent example of OMNI's quality focus, was launched in February 2013 and centres on evidence-based order sets addressing several aspects of diabetes care, including nursing assessment, dietary and foot care, and sick-day management.

The program was piloted in its maiden year at Riverview Manor and Pleasant Meadow Manor and established in each of OMNI's homes during the past 18 months.

By having better control of diabetes, residents can avoid hospital visits, which in turn improves quality of life while helping reduce the burden on the acute-care system.

In September, OMNI managers and the home office team met in Peterborough to unify the standards for data quality. Data sheets presented at the forum outlined strengths in quality care when compared to

ministry benchmarks.

Some of the areas showing strong data supporting OMNI's quality focus include minimizing restraint usage, falls prevention and reduction in agitation and aggressive behaviours without resorting to medications.

For example, Village Green has no residents using restraints, a success director of care (DOC) Debbie McTaggart attributes to stringent assessments coupled with educating family members and staff.

Falls prevention is another area where several OMNI homes exceeded ministry benchmarks. The Riverview Manor team attributes the low rate of injury from falls largely to protective assistive safety devices (PASDs).

Given the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and dementia in long-term care residents, preventing aggressive behaviours is of utmost importance in the sector. Frost Manor's high rate of improved resident behaviours has largely been attributed to OMNI's participation in the Behavioural Supports Ontario initiative.

Some of these interventions include a "folding box" that has clothes and blankets that residents can fold to keep them occupied as well as a box of dolls that has proven effective at calming residents affected by agitation.

While 2014 has been an excellent year for quality at OMNI, it will be ongoing focus for the organization.

Here's to an excellent 2014 and an even better 2015.



Making a Wish Come True

Almonte Country Haven resident Pat Taylor gets ready to go on a limo ride with Tom Toomey of TIP Limousine Service on Nov. 12. The trip was made possible through the home's Never Too Late to Realize Your Dreams initiative.

Assessment, Family Education Key to Reducing Restraints

Continued from page 1

— are now restraint-free.

One key factor to this success has been constant assessment, Peterson says.

"We found after evaluating them that they weren't as inclined to get up and (put themselves in a situation) where they would fall," he says of the four residents, who were using wheelchair lap belts. "Once they were assessed to be at low risk, the restraints were removed."

Most often, when a resident's wheelchair is equipped with a lap belt, it's at their family's insistence.

Families sometimes want their loved ones to be fitted with a restraint because they believe it keeps them safe from falling. However, these devices can also put people at risk of agitation which can lead to serious injury.

Peterson says the home's staff members educate families on an ongoing basis that restraints can carry risk and have a possible negative impact on quality of life.

Psychotropic medications are considered "chemical restraints," and reducing their administration is also top of mind at West Lake

Terrace, Peterson says.

He notes that West Lake Terrace is working with the home's doctor to try to reduce the number of residents receiving these medications. Side effects from psychotropic drugs can cause a person to fall.

"Once someone is stabilized in our environment, we start assessing whether or not that type of restraint is still necessary, and we do that on a quarterly basis," Peterson says. "As a result of (the doctor's) buy-in, we've been able to get some reductions happening.

Evacusleds 'An Excellent Help'

Continued from page 1

goal of one minute and 45 seconds. The rest of the wing was evacuated in just over four minutes.

Country Terrace maintenance manager and fire safety team lead Brian Vale says a mixture of preparedness and technology made the exercise successful.

"We had a couple of practice sessions to make sure we could do it in under one minute and 45 seconds," Vale says. "It went well; the staff communicated very well during the drill, which the fire department was impressed with."

The team also had some innovation that helped them — Evacusleds. About a year ago, Country Terrace

bought about 25 of the devices, which fit securely under bed mattresses and have tiny wheels and straps for mobility. In an emergency, staff members can rush into the rooms of residents who have Evacusleds, lift residents to the floor without getting them out of bed, and pull them across the floor to safety in short order.

"The fire marshals said this was the first time they had ever seen Evacusleds in action, and they were quite impressed," Vale says. "The Evacusleds were an excellent help."

All residents at the 120-bed home who require full lifts have Evacusleds fitted under their mattresses.

"Any resident who requires a full lift has (an Evacusled) under their mattress and we've had some extras that we've been putting under other mattresses. Hopefully, all mattresses will someday have Evacusleds under them."

Country Terrace is not the first home to receive kudos from a fire department for using Evacusleds. In February, Willows Estate held an evacuation drill where staff used the home's 12 Evacusleds for the first time. Marshals from Central York Fire Services who supervised the exercise were so impressed with the devices they borrowed one from the home to use in demonstrations.



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Almonte Country Haven resident Vi Larose sits in front of her birthday cake surrounded by loved ones who came to celebrate her 100th birthday on Nov. 5.

Almonte Celebrates Vi Larose's 100th Birthday

Large-scale effort makes resident's special day possible

By Deron Hamel

Almonte Country Haven recently celebrated the 100th birthday of lifelong local resident Vi Larose.

Sixteen of Vi's friends and family members stopped by Almonte Country Haven Nov. 5 for a special lunch to celebrate the most recent centenarian living in an OMNI Health Care home.

"Vi had a new outfit on and she looked beautiful. From the minute she got up to when she went to bed that night she had a perfect day."

— Naomi Redner, life enrichment co-ordinator, Almonte Country Haven

In the afternoon, staff members organized a birthday party for Vi that was attended by her fellow residents and staff members, as well as 30 more people from her extended family.

Life enrichment co-ordinator (LEC) Naomi

Redner says the day was full of fanfare for Vi, adding that scores of balloons dropped from the ceiling when everyone was singing Happy Birthday to her.

"Vi had a new outfit on and she looked beautiful," Naomi says. "From the minute she got up to when she went to bed that night she had a perfect day."

Naomi says it was a "team effort" at the home that made the event possible — everyone from the home's hairdresser to personal support workers to life enrichment staff to the dietary team played a part in organizing the event.

"Vi's niece, Sharon (Pottle), also helped out a lot," she adds.

Naomi says Vi is the first centenarian she has known at Almonte Country Haven since she became LEC four years ago. According to the 2011 census, there were 5,825 people aged 100 or older in Canada — about .02 per cent of the population.

"This is why it was such a big deal to celebrate," Naomi says.



Gage's Independence Admired

Continued from page 1

in this space after a hectic day of study and became intrigued with the statue, which carries an aura of mystery because it bears no identification or description.

Now, with the help of an OMNIway story, other articles, an autobiographical book and research, Dimitrie is learning about the sculpture, called Discovery of the Hands, and its creator, Frances Gage, who lives at Streamway Villa in Cobourg.

"It was always in the back of my mind to find out who made this (statue) and how did it get there," says Dimitrie, who's connected with Gage indirectly through The OMNIway and Streamway Villa life enrichment co-ordinator Christina Verleysen.

The more he's discovering, the more he's come to admire Gage for her adventurous and independent spirit.

"I've read quite a bit in the book and stories about her and she's actually had more hardships than privileges," Dimitrie says, adding this contrasts with the general perception that artists and patrons are somewhat privileged.

From a difficult childhood to financial challenges, physical pain and some self-doubt, Gage persevered to become a classically-trained artist in a range of media and techniques. The 90-year-old is regarded as one of Canada's most prolific sculptors, creating hundreds of pieces — a number of them commissioned works gracing public spaces.

"It just seems to me she found her way," Dimitrie says. "She didn't do (sculpting) as a pioneer. She did it because this is what she wanted to do and this is what she needed to do."

"She seems to have been the kind of person to go ahead and take the chance and say, 'This is what I want to do.' I truly admire that," he says.

"She worked very hard at it; it wasn't given to her," he says.

The people that Gage has met or worked with "reads like a who's who of Canada," such as the Group of Seven's A.Y. Jackson and former prime minister Pierre Trudeau.

Dimitrie relates to Gage in a number of ways. Both Windsor natives, they have naval experience and share a strong love of animals.

One of Gage's favourite sculptures — as she related to The OMNIway — is Woman at the Women's College Hospital in Toronto.

"My wife was born there so that really touched me," says Dimitrie, who can't wait to see the sculpture on his next visit to Toronto.

An experienced community journalist of 20 years, Dimitrie's affinity for Gage and her work is leading

him to write a story for Fanshawe College's student paper. His research is revealing the lengthy ties of Discovery of the Hands to Fanshawe College, as well as another Gage creation commissioned for the college, a four-panel bas-relief in walnut.

Dimitrie hopes to be able to generate awareness of Gage's connection to the college and some form of public acknowledgement, such as a plaque for Discovery of the Hands, which originally stood outside of the president's office. Dimitrie's found information about a rededication ceremony Gage attended at some point, but there is no marker with the sculpture now.

As the college undergoes significant expansion, Dimitrie believes it is important to remember its roots. "Frances Gage has a prominent part in the roots and founding of this college, and I hope that I can do a little bit to make that known."

In his initial contact with The OMNIway, Dimitrie stated in an e-mail that he wished Gage "could know how much her work of art has brought (peace) to me" in stressful times. He also sent a photo he'd taken of Discovery



Discovery of the Hands, sculpted by Streamway Villa resident Frances Gage.

of the Hands — Dimitrie has photographed the sculpture in different seasons as its appearance changes with the surrounding foliage and the positions of the sun.

"I have to say this is the first time that I have ever really



Sculptor Frances Gage looks at a book written about her life and times.

fell in love with a sculpture," he wrote. "It has a special home at Fanshawe College."

The OMNIway shared Dimitrie's correspondence with Verleysen who, in turn, brought it to Gage. As soon as Verleysen hung the Discovery of the Hands photo on Gage's wall, Gage "had so many stories to go with it," Verleysen says.

Verleysen says Gage's talent and contributions to Canada's artistic community are well known and she has many admirers. "She is truly an inspiration," Verleysen says.

Dimitrie, who says he became "choked up" when he learned his words had been shared with Gage, hopes to be able to grow interest in Gage's life and work.

"This whole story has been a journey and it's not done yet," he says.

He adds that Gage "has had a remarkable life and she should be proud of it."

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