



OMNIway

Embedding Quality Throughout
OMNI is Mission Accomplished —
Not Mission Completed . . . pg. 3

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OMNI Health Care managers are seen here at Fort Henry in Kingston, Ont., on May 18, during the organization's leadership forum. Everyone donned their favourite glitzy outfit for the evening's All That Glitters dinner.

Leadership Forum Brings Together OMNI Core Values and Focuses them on Quality

Forum shows the importance of quality is 'embedded' in team members

By Deron Hamel

KINGSTON, Ont. — OMNI Health Care's 2016 leadership forum brought together the organization's core values of leadership,

opportunity to bring so many people together, so many of our homes together ... to engage in that conversation around the quality issue that we're all dealing with," says

a particular point of quality. The managers acted out their skits in front of their peers.

McCarthy says watching teams perform their skits was his favourite part of the forum. The skits, he says, demonstrate how well OMNI team members understand quality points and their importance to enhancing the residents' experience.

"(T)he message and understanding of quality is really getting embedded and that was one of our goals for this year," McCarthy says.

OMNI home managers also participated in a version of the game show Jeopardy, which tested people's knowledge of quality issues.

The forum also featured presentations from experts that addressed issues such as nonviolent confrontation management and resident incident investigations.

There was a social aspect to the forum, too. Each evening featured a theme — a western theme on May 17 and an "all that glitters" theme on May 18 — for people to enjoy themselves, meet new team members and spend time with their friends working at other homes.

At a dinner held at historic Fort Henry, the recipients of this year's Everyday Hero and Inspired Leader awards were announced. The Everyday Hero initiative began more than a decade ago to recognize employees' hard work and dedication to residents. The Inspired Leader award recognizes people who demonstrate outstanding leadership and dedication to their work.

The OMNIway will be featuring stories on many of these outstanding team members in the coming months.



Pictured above, Woodland Villa managers perform their skit during the leadership forum.

creativity, knowledge, and fun and laughter to emphasize the importance of creating high-quality experiences for the more than 1,400 residents living in OMNI's 18 long-term care homes.

"It was a fabulous forum — it is always a great

OMNI president and CEO Patrick McCarthy.

To underscore the importance of quality at this year's forum, which was held in Kingston May 17-19, managers from each OMNI home were tasked to create a short skit that highlighted

Volunteer's Guitar Working Wonders for Residents with Dementia

By Deron Hamel

Music is a huge part of Gerry and Becky Armstrong's lives. The couple performed in a six-piece musical combo for many years. When Becky, who is living with Alzheimer's disease, moved into Forest Hill in 2013, Gerry started bringing his guitar in for her

See 'Resident' page 4

Sarah Wilson Receives Elisabeth Hinton Award for Enhancing Residents' Quality of Life

COBOURG, Ont. — Streamway Villa Behavioural Supports Ontario registered practical nurse (BSO-RPN) Sarah Wilson is the recipient of the 2016 Elisabeth Hinton Memorial Award.

The award was presented to Wilson during a ceremony See 'RPN's' page 2

Music Therapy Program Engaging Residents Who Seldom Attend Activities

Since Village Green began a music therapy program nearly a year ago, residents who seldom attend programming — including many affected by cognitive impairment and depression — have been

See 'Program' page 4



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Streamway Villa BSO-RPN Sarah Wilson (left) is seen here holding the Elisabeth Hinton Memorial Award, alongside the home's administrator and DOC Kylie Szczebonski.

RPN's Work Put Streamway 'on The Map'

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at the Cobourg long-term care home June 9.

Wilson began her career at Streamway Villa in 2011, shortly after completing her nursing education. When Streamway Villa received funding for BSO education through the Central East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), Wilson was “eager” to pursue an opportunity to learn about BSO and apply its techniques at the home, says Aimee Merkle, OMNI Health Care’s western director of operations.

BSO is a provincial initiative to help enhance quality of life for seniors affected by dementia and other conditions that cause agitation. The funding, which is provided to long-term care homes through Ontario’s 14 LHINs, is largely put towards staff education.

A highlight of Wilson’s career has been her work to reduce antipsychotic medication administration to residents with responsive behaviours. After Wilson and administrator Kylie Szczebonski assessed antipsychotic usage at Streamway Villa in 2011, Wilson, by applying her BSO knowledge, helped reduce antipsychotic administration from 55 per cent to one per cent.

“Her dedicated work has put Streamway Villa on the map in the Central East LHIN as a (long-term care home) that manages responsive behaviours very well,” Merkle says.

Additionally, Wilson has shared knowledge from her

BSO training with her colleagues at Streamway Villa and with other long-term care homes in the region.

The Elisabeth Hinton Memorial Award is presented to a registered nurse or registered practical nurse working in an OMNI long-term care home who demonstrates excellence in nursing and exhibits kindness and caring in everything he or she does.

The award is named after Elisabeth Hinton, the first director of nursing at Garden Terrace, an OMNI long-term care home in Kanata. A highly skilled, patient and calm nurse leader who carried herself with tremendous class and professionalism, Hinton passed away in 2007.

“Sarah deserves this award because she represents what Elisabeth Hinton was,” Merkle says. “The nursing managers nominated Sarah for the Elisabeth Hinton Memorial Award because she goes above and beyond the call of duty for OMNI, Streamway Villa and the residents.”

Looking ahead, Wilson says she plans to continue training others in the methodologies she has learned, such as the Gentle Persuasive Approach and P.I.E.C.E.S. (physical, intellectual, emotional, capabilities, environment and social). While happy to receive the Elisabeth Hinton Memorial Award, Wilson says she was surprised by the honour.

“This is absolutely incredible and emotionally overwhelming,” she says. — DH

Garden Terrace RN Spearheading Campaign to Help People Affected by Alberta Wildfire

Meredith Tomas is even using vacation days to help with relief effort

If helping others facing a major crisis became an Olympic event, Garden Terrace registered nurse Meredith Tomas would surely win gold.

“We’re especially trying to (help) the elderly, but it’s everybody we want to help at this point.”

— Meredith Tomas, registered nurse, Garden Terrace

When the devastating and still-burning wildfire broke out in Fort McMurray, Alta., May 1, Tomas immediately began collecting donations to help people displaced by the calamity.

When she heard about soon-to-be-married couple Carlos and Carol Moran having to leave their wedding rings behind when they fled

their Fort McMurray home, Tomas paid for new jewelry.

Tomas, who is the head of the Kanata, Ont., long-term care home’s social committee, has also been collecting monetary donations that will be sent to the Canadian Red Cross to help with the relief effort. The Canadian government is matching Red Cross donations.

The campaign is also collecting toiletries, blankets and clothing — especially socks and underwear — that will be sent to the northern Alberta community.

The son of a friend of Tomas’s has a moving company and has offered to transport the goods collected at Garden Terrace to Fort McMurray in his cube van.

Tomas is even using her vacation days to travel to Alberta with supplies and to volunteer.

This isn’t the first time Tomas has volunteered

during a major crisis. In November 2012, she and another Garden Terrace staff member, Kevin Montero, drove a vanload of supplies to a shelter in Brooklyn, New York that was housing seniors displaced by Hurricane Sandy.

OMNI Health Care is donating 25 gift cards for Loblaws which Tomas will hand out when she arrives at the emergency shelters.

Tomas says any money or toiletries people want to donate will be helpful — and it doesn’t have to be much.

“Even coffee money would be great,” she says. “We’re especially trying to (help) the elderly, but it’s everybody we want to help at this point.” — DH

To donate to the campaign, contact Tomas at gardenterracesocialcommittee@gmail.com.

Resident and Family Satisfaction Survey Results will Help Drive Quality

‘We hope what everyone sees is that this has been the best process we have ever had when it comes to measuring resident quality’

The results of a recent resident and family satisfaction survey issued by OMNI Health Care will help drive quality throughout the organization’s 18 long-term care homes, says OMNI president and CEO Patrick McCarthy.

Earlier this year, residents and family members were asked to complete the survey, which was created by organizational measurement and consulting firm Metrics@Work. Overall, OMNI homes averaged a satisfaction rate of 89.5 per cent in areas of resident care, life enrichment and home environment. The survey had a 55 per cent participation rate, much higher than past surveys.

The survey is providing OMNI with detailed information about every

home. Staff members can now look at the survey’s report and see they have both strong results and areas they can work to improve.

Homes are being encouraged to engage each other to learn how to duplicate successes. Managers can take the results to residents’ councils and family councils to have discussions about how key areas of quality can be further improved.

“This survey really works well with our quality program in terms of providing us with benchmark information and feedback from our residents,” McCarthy says. “When you look at the results, they are very strong.”

McCarthy says the survey results are aimed at achieving two goals:

assessing areas of quality improvement and showing staff members the favourable responses their work is receiving from residents and staff members.

The process was also important because it engaged residents and family members about their experiences with homes, says chief operating officer Shawn Riel. Now there is an opportunity for homes to learn from each other, she adds.

“We hope what everyone sees is that this has been the best process we have ever had when it comes to measuring resident quality,” Riel says. “It has been an extremely good process for us and we can only hope that we continue to raise the bar.” — DH

We would like to thank the following sponsors who make this publication possible:



EDITORIAL



Life enrichment aide Shannon Lynch (left) and resident Dawn Hamelin (right) join outreach worker France Jalbert (centre) as she plays her ukulele for residents at Forest Hill.

Ukulele Program Bringing Everyone Together at Forest Hill

'Music is such a wonderful, rewarding therapy for residents'

By Deron Hamel

One day last winter when France Jalbert was visiting Forest Hill, she decided to play a ukulele to see how the residents she works with would react. They loved it.

Jalbert is an outreach worker for Total Communication Environment (TCE), a nonprofit organization providing supports and services to people with multiple disabilities and special communication needs living in long-term care homes and other settings.

She is often at the Kanata long-term care home working with residents who have special needs. On this particular day, life enrichment aide Shannon Lynch heard Jalbert playing the ukulele and saw the positive impact it was having on residents.

Lynch decided to bring some of the residents she

works with to join Jalbert and the residents she works with to form a program, called Ukulele Sing Along with France.

Since then, Jalbert and Lynch have hosted the program twice per week.

"Music is such a wonderful, rewarding therapy for residents, so I asked France if she would consider teaming up to do a program and she said she would. It has really taken off from there," Lynch tells The OMNIway.

Lynch brought a collection of old instruments tucked away in a storage area at the home and handed them out to residents. Residents used tambourines and other instruments to follow the rhythm of Jalbert's ukulele.

Jalbert and Lynch say the music program benefits both residents with special needs and those who are living with

cognitive impairment. Being able to express themselves through music also helps ease anxiety and agitation for residents, they say.

"(The music) captivates residents' attention," Jalbert says. "It's a multisensory activity where everybody can participate. When (the residents) are playing along to music, they will be successful. The music will also sometimes bring out emotions they have that they can't express.

"Everything about this program is positive."

The program is even having a positive impact on staff members. Lynch says nurses and personal support workers sometimes stop by because they find the program is a stress reliever for them.

"People will often stop me in the hall and ask, 'Is it music day?'" They get a lot of joy from this, too," Lynch says.

Embedding Quality Throughout OMNI is Mission Accomplished — Not Mission Completed

One of OMNI Health Care's goals for 2016 was to embed the importance of quality throughout the organization. Recent successes illustrate this is happening.

Quality, as it relates to long-term care, encompasses every aspect of care people receive. OMNI wants to ensure that everything from nursing to meals to activities and programming is of the highest standard.

During OMNI's leadership forum in Kingston May 17-19, managers were each tasked to create and perform a skit underscoring quality. The skits were educational, relevant to long-term care and entertaining.

Most importantly, they demonstrated that people working in OMNI's 18 long-term care homes are thinking about quality — and how to continuously improve quality for the more than 1,400 people living in OMNI's homes.

"Seeing how much the understanding is embedded in those skits and how much the message and the understanding of quality is really getting embedded was one of our goals for this year — and (quality) really is getting embedded," OMNI president and CEO Patrick McCarthy

said at the time.

Quality, as it relates to long-term care, encompasses every aspect of care people receive. OMNI wants to ensure that everything from nursing to meals to activities and programming is of the highest standard.

Earlier this year, OMNI turned to residents and their families in an effort to gauge how well homes were doing providing top-notch quality experiences.

The results of the resident and family satisfaction survey were outstanding and further emphasize the fact that quality is embedded throughout the organization. While this was not the first resident and family satisfaction survey OMNI has conducted, this year's survey did have the highest engagement level.

OMNI homes consistently had favourable scores from residents and family members in key areas of quality. OMNI's overall satisfaction rate was an impressive 89.5 per cent.

The survey's results will now help OMNI homes build upon successes and fix those areas that need improvement. It's also a chance for homes to learn from each other and engage peers in how they can enhance the quality experience for residents. The survey is helping keep quality at the forefront. This is very promising.

Yes, quality has become embedded throughout OMNI. It is mission accomplished but not mission completed.

Almonte Country Haven Residents Help Organize Volunteer Appreciation Event

Residents bake array of goodies to thank volunteers for their work

Almonte Country Haven residents played a large role organizing a volunteer appreciation barbecue at the Lanark County long-term care home on April 20.

A group of six residents spent two days making fresh baked goods including cookies, squares, toffee and other sweets which were packed into gift bags for volunteers in recognition of National Volunteer Week. The gift bags also contained thank-you cards and jars of locally produced honey.

"The residents baked and gave up their time (and helped) set up a huge dessert table for all the goodies that were made," says administrator Carolyn Della Foresta. "The residents enjoyed doing the work and the volunteers really enjoyed the afternoon."

One lady who volunteers at Almonte Country Haven also donates her time to other groups in the region. She told Della Foresta she had attended three volunteer appreciation events that week and Almonte Country

Haven's had been "the warmest one."

April 10-16 was National Volunteer Week. The week is marked by events nationwide that celebrate volunteers and all they do to enrich the lives of others. This year marked the 75th National Volunteer Week. — DH

Anyone interested in volunteering in an OMNI Health Care long-term care home can call 705-748-6631 for more information.



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Residents Following Sound of Guitar

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because she always loved listening to him play.

“Every day I would play my guitar and sing for her,” Gerry tells The OMNIway. “I noticed that when I did, she would perk up and smile. Some songs she could remember the words to and she would start moving her lips. And I noticed the positive benefit of me continuing to play music for her.”

Even Gerry is surprised at what happened next.

“I gradually noticed that some of the other residents with Alzheimer’s and dementia were either wheeling their wheelchairs into her room or walking in — they loved the music,” he says.

Gerry continued to play for Becky and other residents, many with cognitive impairment, continued to come into the room to listen. Seeing how happy his guitar playing and soft singing was making residents feel, Gerry decided to “expand.”

First, Gerry and Becky went into a common area on the floor where Becky lived. They picked a spot and Gerry started playing.

The residents came.

“As people heard the music, more and more of them started to gather around,” Gerry says.

In late 2014, Gerry began going to different floors in the five-storey home, sitting with Becky in common areas and playing his guitar softly. As always, the residents came to listen.

“I started getting the same reaction — people were gathering around and asking if I knew different songs,” Gerry says. “I was getting an amazing feeling in my own heart because they were craving (the music).”

Gerry plays a variety of music for residents. Residents particularly enjoy pop music from the 1960s and 1970s, Gerry says. Creedence Clearwater Revival and the Eagles are fan favourites, he adds.

And the music seems to bring those with cognitive impairment back to a different time.

“I have even seen people who I thought were nonverbal start singing the chorus when I start playing Peaceful Easy Feeling.”

Program Enticing Residents with Cognitive Impairment

Continued from page 1

participating in activities led by Elizabeth Heslinga and Nicole Landry.

Many of the activities run by the two therapists involve playing music that residents are familiar with, such as hymns and old country songs. An important aspect of the program is that residents get to choose the music they want to hear, says Heslinga, who has been leading the program for eight months.

“We give them instruments to play, such as ocean drums, rain sticks and chimes, and we perform hand-over-hand work with them if they’re not able to engage by themselves,” Heslinga says. “We also encourage residents to clap their hands and stomp their feet.”

About eight residents attend each program at a time, Heslinga says. By

keeping the activity small, there is more time for one-on-one programming with each person, which keeps many residents engaged, she adds.

Heslinga says music often triggers memories for people with cognitive impairment that can be “unlocked” when songs they used to enjoy are played.

“People just seem to respond to music very well,” Heslinga says. “We played Take Me Out to the Ball Game, and one fellow started talking about how he used to play baseball.”

The program has also been beneficial to residents affected by depression who seldom leave their rooms, Heslinga says.

“Once these residents come out to the program, they are often interested in coming back,” she says. —DH



Gentle as a Lamb

Almonte Country Haven resident Frances Savard cuddles with Dan, one of the two lambs recently brought to the Lanark County long-term care home, courtesy of a local farmer. Administrator Carolyn Della Foresta says the animals bring lots of joy to residents when they visit.

Family Member Enlivens Kentwood Park with her Go-getter Spirit

‘I just enjoy the interaction and seeing everyone have fun,’ Barb Hogan

By Michelle Strutzenberger

One evening, Barb Hogan was visiting her mother who lives at Kentwood Park long-term care home in Picton. Nothing much was happening and there was nothing on TV, so she decided to “nab,” as she says, a few residents for a simple game of ring-toss.

“We’ll sit around and nobody will be in the same book, let alone on the same page, but we’ll all be carrying on a conversation and everyone will be having a good time.”

— Barb Hogan, family member, Kentwood Park

No points were kept, and the game only lasted about an hour. But it was an activity that brought people together and got them laughing for a time.

On other days, Hogan takes time just to be together

with her mother and whoever else shows up in one of the home’s gathering places.

“We’ll sit around and nobody will be in the same book, let alone on the same page, but we’ll all be carrying on a conversation and everyone will be having a good time,” she says with a chuckle.

This past spring, Hogan was out shopping and some simple Easter crafts caught her eye. She purchased them and brought them in for her mother to glue together as festive centrepieces for the home’s dining room tables.

These are just a few ways that Hogan brings simple, spontaneous fun and activity to Kentwood Park, an OMNI Health Care home.

Though Hogan declares she did not inherit her mother’s brilliant gift for making crafts, she clearly has a knack for coming up with doable activities that her mother and others will enjoy.

“I’m always looking for simple crafts that we can do,” she says.

One winter, for instance, Hogan found a pattern for iron-together table runners that her mother — who loves to iron — could make. Together, they created enough table runners for everyone in the home.

Hogan and her mother, with the occasional help of a few other residents, also cut and tied 60 no-sew fleece blankets over a period of a few weeks.

Hogan says she just does what she does because she likes people.

She’s also thankful for the time she gets to spend with her mother, Irene, aged 91, who at one point was given only days to live after a heart attack. “We’ve had an almost six year bonus with her,” Hogan says.

Life enrichment co-ordinator Lisa Mills expresses deep gratitude for all that Hogan does at the home, which also includes helping out on bingo nights and bringing in baked goods. “She’s a real go-getter,” Mills says.

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