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*Karen Coulter Will Be Remembered
for her Sense of Humour,
Passion for her Work. . . pg. 3*

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A Comforting Canine

Forest Hill resident Shirley Grant pets Vezna, a schnauzer mix, who has been visiting residents with her owner, Sharon MacDonald, for the past three years. Sharon and Vezna volunteer at Forest Hill through Ottawa Therapy Dogs. See story at right.

Almonte Country Haven Residents Want From-scratch Cooking, So That's What They Get

By Deron Hamel

ALMONTE, Ont. – Whether Almonte Country Haven residents are tucking into a traditional Sunday dinner of roasted prime rib with Yorkshire pudding, enjoying crème brûlée for dessert or snacking on a chocolate éclair with a cup of tea, they can count on the food being made from scratch.

Dave Benn, the Lanark County long-term care home's nutritional care manager, says residents expect no less, and he and his team aim to please.

"At this home we have

a lot of farmers and they expect their food to be homemade; they don't (want) food from a box or from a can, so we try to do as much homemade (cooking and baking) as possible because we think it's better for the residents because we know what's going into their food," he tells The OMNIway.

Dave and the rest of the Almonte Country Haven nutritional care team clearly have a passion for their work. The OMNIway recently spent a day in the home's kitchen, observing team members lovingly

make everything from homemade pizza to crème brûlée to meatballs to turkey sandwiches from meat carved straight from a roast.

Nearly everything made in the Almonte Country Haven kitchen is created from scratch. Pies, both fruit-filled and savoury, are a particular favourite among residents. Of course, residents can rest assured the shells and crusts on their apple pies and tourtières are made fresh and rolled out in the kitchen.

"We did over 800 pies last year," Dave says, adding one team member is so

See 'Serving' page 3

War Hero and Resident Advocate Alex Classen Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Forest Hill resident Alex Classen served Canada in the Second World War and today serves as an advocate for his fellow residents at the Kanata, Ont. long-term care home by being active in its residents' council. For his commitment to Canada and to his fellow residents,

Alex was recently presented with the home's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Alex has a colourful military background. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War when he was only 19. He served on the

See 'I Can' page 2

Therapy Dog Vezna is Putting Smiles on Faces, One Resident at a Time

For three years, a miniature schnauzer mix named Vezna has been volunteering at Forest Hill with her owner Sharon MacDonald. Sharon and Vezna, who are with Ottawa Therapy Dogs, leave residents smiling after each visit.

Sharon and Vezna visit at least two floors every

time they're at Forest Hill. Vezna also spends time with residents during exercise programs, where she will go from resident to resident, stopping for short visits.

Vezna doesn't have to do much to get residents' attention. Sometimes residents simply want to

See 'She is' page 4

Woodland Villa Team 'Excited' About the Home's New Design

The Woodland Villa team is "excited" about the new design for the Long Sault, Ont. long-term care home that was recently unveiled, says administrator Janna Sabourin.

Residents, staff members and families recently checked out the new design for the home during a presentation from G architects, the Toronto-based firm designing the renovations,

and everyone liked what they saw, Janna says.

Woodland Villa is one of four OMNI homes to receive approval from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for redevelopment funding. The home received approval for funding last spring to renovate the home to add 17 more beds. Woodland Villa currently has 111 beds.

See 'New Design' page 4



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Riverview Manor residents enjoying homemade spaghetti and meatballs they prepared at a Feb. 14 luncheon.

Riverview Residents Enjoy Pasta Lunch they Created with Fleming Students

Being able to eat a meal they made was a mark of independence for residents, says NCM

Riverview Manor residents got to reap the fruits of their labour at a Feb. 14 luncheon where meatballs and tomato sauce they previously made in cooking classes with Fleming College students were served up with pasta.

"[T]he residents really enjoyed (the meal) and they were talking about what it was like making the food,"

— Neil MacDonald, NCM, Riverview Manor

For residents involved with the class, this was a big event because it was a chance to eat a full meal they had created, something many may not have done since moving into the Peterborough long-term care home, says nutritional care manager (NCM) Neil MacDonald.

In the weeks leading up to the luncheon, a group of 12 to 15 residents worked with the four students from Fleming College's occupational therapy assistant/physiotherapy assistant program to prep the food.

Meatballs were made during one session, the pasta sauce at another, and everything was then frozen until the event. Banana cake was served for dessert.

"It was good to see because the residents really enjoyed (the meal) and they were talking about what it was like making the food," Neil tells The OMNIway.

"It was really nice to see because it was the first meal they had cooked for themselves in a little while, and that made some of the residents really excited."

The luncheon was the "grand finale" of the resident-student cooking classes.

The Fleming students — Peterann Gray, Holland Jans, Mina Tran and Rosie Do — started their seven-week placement at Riverview Manor on Jan. 8 and finished Feb. 21. The students were at the home every Tuesday and Thursday as part of the occupational therapy component of their studies.

As part of their placement, the students worked with residents who have varying combinations of physical, social and cognitive needs.

For more than 10 years, students from Fleming's occupational therapist assistant and physiotherapist assistant program have been working with residents and physiotherapists and physiotherapist assistants to build their skill sets.

Another group of students started a placement at the home on March 5. — DH

Frost Manor Hosts Retirement Party for Sandi Allison

Team members send much-loved office manager their best wishes and reflect on the value she brought to the home

LINDSAY, Ont. — There were tears and laughter at Frost Manor on March 13 as staff members shared their memories of working with office manager Sandi Allison who recently retired after serving the Lindsay long-term care home for 14 years.

About 40 people, including residents, family members and staff, gathered in the home's activity room during Sandi's party. Frost Manor team members stepped up to the podium to wish Sandi well in her retirement and to share some of their favourite moments working with her.

As Frost Manor's office manager, Sandi played a crucial role making sure the home's trains were always running on time. She also worked closely with the home's personal support workers (PSWs) when it came to scheduling.



Sandi Allison gets ready to cut the cake at her March 13 retirement party at Frost Manor. Sandi recently retired after serving as the Lindsay long-term care home's office manager for 14 years.

PSW Wanda Junkin characterized Sandi as being a patient team member who worked well with front-line staff members.

"I know the PSWs here really appreciate you for all your hard work, and I am personally going to miss all your smiles and giggles,"

Wanda told Sandi.

Phyllis Smith, who works in Frost Manor's laundry department, told Sandi her presence at Frost Manor has already been missed since her last day on the job.

"We thank you very much for all your patience and your expertise, and we are all going to miss you and we wish you the very best," said Phyllis, who has worked at Frost Manor for 38 years.

Of course, there were gifts for Sandi from her colleagues and OMNI Health Care head office, as well as a "retirement cake" for Sandi to cut.

There were also some familiar faces who dropped by Frost Manor to send Sandi their wishes. Former administrator Connie Abrams and former life enrichment co-ordinator Vi O'Leary, who both retired in 2018, stopped by to pay tribute to Sandi. — DH

'I Can Think of No One Who is More Deserving of This Award,' says LEC

Continued from page 1
Liberator, a B-24 bomber, and was stationed in India, as well as the Cocos Islands, where he and his crew flew missions over Burma (today called Myanmar) and Thailand for the Allied forces, explains Forest Hill life enrichment co-ordinator (LEC) Craig Forrest, who nominated Alex for the award.

After VE Day (May 8, 1945), Alex helped air-drop medical supplies to POWs in Sumatra. Following the war, he returned to university where he met his wife, Melita. The couple raised two daughters, and Alex now has four grandchildren.

Following university, Alex re-enlisted in the air force, working for more than 30 years as a telecommunications officer. He was posted in France to the NATO Allied Air Command communication centre for several years.

After returning to Ottawa, he enrolled at the



Forest Hill resident Alex Classen is pictured here receiving his Lifetime Achievement Award from administrator Susan Bell.

University of Michigan, where he graduated with a degree in aeronautical and astronautical engineering.

Some of his duties while working in the air force included evaluating the effectiveness of air-defence radar stations; developing equipment for the detection of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; and attending many meetings with NATO

and NORAD councils.

At Forest Hill, Alex is active in the residents' council, often advocating for his fellow residents, Craig says, adding Alex enjoys sharing his stories from the war with residents and staff members.

"Alex is very independent and is always happy to talk with fellow residents and staff about his interesting past," Craig says.

"He always treats staff and fellow residents with dignity and respect. Alex has done so much for this nation and the western world in his lifetime and is a true hero. I can think of no one who is more deserving of this award."

Lifetime Achievement Awards are presented to people living in OMNI Health Care long-term care homes who have demonstrated commitment to other residents, their home and country. — DH

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Village Green's New Menu Gets Thumbs-up From Residents and Their Families

Following new Canada's Food Guide has helped introduce new flavours and ideas, says NCM

Village Green residents and their families were invited to sample items from the Greater Napanee long-term care home's latest menu March 19, and the main courses, salads and desserts were well-received, says nutritional care manager (NCM) Miranda Ray.

During Taste Test Tuesday, which was included in the home's Nutrition and Hydration Awareness Week activities, residents and families sampled dishes including Dijon pork chops, marinated steak, cornflake chicken, Greek salad, three-bean salad, macaroni salad and several varieties of cheesecake — a favourite dessert among residents.

"We had a dulce de leche cheesecake, a chocolate-swirl cheesecake and a raspberry-yogurt cheesecake, and I think our fancy cheesecakes were the biggest sellers with residents," Miranda says, adding all menu items featured were enjoyed.

"Everything we did went very, very well. And the families also said it was nice to be able to sit down and have a taste of everything, and they enjoyed getting to see what their loved ones are eating."

The foods served were from the home's new menu which was launched in February.

"Once we go through the

first rotation of the new menu, we like to do a taste-test for the families to come in and try the food, and the staff members also get a chance to sample what residents are eating," Miranda says.



Pictured above, the Village Green nutritional care team.

There was also a survey for people to take to see if there is anything that can be improved on.

The Ontario Long-Term Care Homes Act states that long-term-care home menus "must provide for adequate nutrients, fibre and energy based on the current Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) and a variety of foods each day from all food groups, including fresh seasonal foods, in keeping with the current Canada's Food Guide."

The revised Canada's Food Guide was released Jan. 22. This is the first time it has been updated since 2007. While previous food

guides have focused on four food groups — meat and fish, fruits and vegetables, breads and cereals, and dairy — the newest version focuses on three groups: proteins, vegetables and

fruits, and whole grains.

The updated guide also recommends Canadians substitute animal products more often in favour of plant-based proteins, such as legumes, nuts and beans.

Miranda notes Village Green's new menu incorporates the changes made to the food guide.

"With the new Canada's Food Guide coming out, we are focusing more on beans and legumes and plant-based proteins, so that's kind of an interesting way to incorporate (different ingredients) into the meals and have different flavours and ideas for meals as well." — DH

Serving Homemade Food Results in High Intake and Happy Residents

Continued from page 1

gifted at rolling pie-crust dough she can make up to 40 shells an hour.

Because residents enjoy made-from-scratch cooking and baking, their food intake is high, Dave notes.

Dave regularly attends residents' council meetings to get feedback on the food he and his team serve. The comments are overwhelmingly positive, and complaints are as rare as a loaf of store-bought banana



Almonte Country Haven nutritional care manager Dave Benn holds a tray of made-from-scratch chocolate eclairs his team prepared.

bread in the Almonte Country Haven kitchen.

"We have not had an issue on food in over a year," he says.

EDITORIAL

Karen Coulter Will Be Remembered for Her Sense of Humour, Passion for Her Work

We have lost a much-loved, valuable member of the OMNI Health Care family.

Karen Coulter, who served as life enrichment co-ordinator at Village Green for 11 years, passed away March 14 after a short illness. Karen was well-known for the sense of humour, love of life and positive attitude she brought to everyone she touched.

To be a life enrichment co-ordinator in a long-term care home you need to be a people person. That was Karen. She loved the residents and people she worked with. She took pride in everything those around her accomplished, and she would often help others share their stories with The OMNIway.

Karen, whose career also included stints at Pleasant Meadow Manor and Burnbrae Gardens, was a master of cultivating relationships between Village Green and others. She was resident-focused and would ensure those who lived at Village Green always had their needs met.

As a testament to her dedication to residents, Karen would try to engage all residents in programming. She created strategies to ensure those who did not wish to participate in regular activities would still have their needs met. Sometimes this meant taking residents on shopping excursions or to the local Dairy Queen to put smiles on their faces.

And then there was one



Karen Coulter

of Karen's favourite ways of bringing residents together: the Village Green annual Thousand Islands boat cruise. Some memorable moments happened on these cruises. For instance, one resident, Fred Pym, recalled in 2016 how it had been always been a dream of his to take a cruise, and Karen and Village Green made that happen. On another cruise many years ago, a resident who was a retired ship's captain got to steer the vessel for part of its journey, bringing back fond memories.

Village Green administrator Linda Pierce recalls how Karen was particularly talented at forging long-lasting, strong relationships with family members, adding that when Karen became ill one family member spent time with her and was "very supportive" of her through her illness.

While Village Green and OMNI will keep going, life won't be the same without Karen. She was truly a unique and special person who touched many lives in many ways.



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OMNI Starts First Phase of IDDSI Rollout in its Homes

Adopting the IDDSI framework will help OMNI homes enhance safety for residents with swallowing difficulty

PETERBOROUGH, Ont. – OMNI Health Care has started the first of three phases of its rollout of the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) to enhance safety for residents with dysphagia, the medical term for swallowing difficulty, which is often caused by neurological conditions including dementia or stroke.

On Jan. 1, IDDSI was officially launched in Canada to help create a standardized language for food and beverage textures. OMNI is adopting the IDDSI framework in its 18 long-term care homes.

The first phase of the implementation is now in effect, with some of OMNI's main suppliers that are involved with IDDSI committing to dual labelling on beverage packaging and reformulating products when needed to meet the new IDDSI levels, explains Chris Weber, OMNI's operations manager of nutrition and food service.

In February, OMNI will be launching IDDSI-labelled beverages. Team members in each home will be using the new IDDSI terminology and texture testing methods as part of Phase 1, Weber says.

Dysphagia is a common condition among residents living in long-term care homes. The condition affects an estimated eight per cent of the general population, according to IDDSI.

At the core of the IDDSI framework is an eight-level scale, numbered zero to seven, measuring the thickness of meals. Zero refers to thin liquids, like water or fruit juices; Level 7 is regular food.

OMNI homes began preparing for the IDDSI implementation in January 2018.

The second phase of the

IDDSI rollout for OMNI will be when the summer/fall menu is created. This will be the first menu that has texture-modified foods available that meet IDDSI standards. Weber says the plan is to trial this at one home to stem any growing pains that might come with the implementation process.

The third phase of the IDDSI implementation will begin in January 2020 when there is full deployment of texture-modified foods in the 18 homes that meet IDDSI standards with IDDSI labelling.

As part of OMNI's commitment to implementing the IDDSI framework, Weber has joined the Canadian IDDSI Expert Reference Group (CIERG), a collaboration of professionals including speech-language pathologists, dietitians, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, doctors, mechanical engineers and food scientists. The CIERG website states the group is working collaboratively to "promote, monitor, support, advocate and communicate recommendations for implementation of the IDDSI framework within Canadian organizations and industry."

Weber says 2019 will be a "big year for IDDSI," with a lot of focus on implementing the framework.

"By adopting the IDDSI framework, we are endeavouring to provide the highest level of quality and safety for residents with swallowing difficulties," he says.

"By providing safe, nutritious and consistent textures, evidence has shown a substantial increase of food intake is possible. Safety, increased intake and consistency are the ultimate goals of the IDDSI framework. OMNI is taking a front-seat approach to this initiative." — DH



Pictured above, the redevelopment design for Woodland Villa which will be complete by December 2022.

New Design Will Create a Greater Sense of Community

Continued from page 1

The renovations will result in four spacious neighbourhoods where residents will live. There will also be wider hallways, more home-like dining and lounge spaces, and privacy for residents will be improved by eliminating three- and four-bed wards and having only one- and two-bed rooms. The new design will also surround two courtyards, and there will be a large common area in the centre.

"The staff are quite excited because we are doubling in size and our home areas are going to be easier to staff, and I think everybody is really looking forward to the big change," Janna tells The OMNIway.

"This new model is really going to be beneficial for us. Having more room is really

going to allow everyone to have more privacy and I think that will be helpful for a lot of reasons."

For instance, Janna says more space will help decrease responsive behaviours in residents with cognitive impairment. Responsive behaviours often stem from residents living in close quarters, Janna notes.

The new design for Woodland Villa features two courtyards that will be easily accessible and much safer for residents to walk in a safe environment, which is another exciting part of the design, Janna says.

The administrator adds that people from the local community will be encouraged to go for walks around the home and explore the new design, and there is also talk of adding children's

sandboxes in the courtyards to encourage a more intergenerational community.

Janna says one of her favourite features of the new design is the common area that will be in the centre of the home.

"The centre of the home is going to be a destination place for the hairdresser (and) the physio room, so it will be like an outing inside the home for those residents who have mobility issues, so I am really looking forward to that."

Woodland Villa's renovations are expected to begin in the fall and be complete by December 2022. — DH

Search for this story online at omniway.ca to find links to more information on Woodland Villa's new design.

'She is the Perfect Little Therapy Dog'

Continued from page 1

pet her, scratch her or get her to shake a paw.

"She is the perfect little therapy dog," Sharon says of eight-year-old Vezna.

Sharon and Vezna also spend time with residents affected by Alzheimer's disease and dementia, which Craig Forrest, the Kanata, Ont. long-term care home's life enrichment co-ordinator, says has a "positive outcome."

"Some residents with dementia can become agitated, but after a visit (with Vezna), you can see what a calming effect she has on them," he says.

"She is one of the most laid-back dogs I have ever

met. She is so calm and she's just fantastic with the residents."

Sharon says her favourite aspect of being a Forest Hill volunteer is that it's an opportunity to give back to the community. Her visits with Vezna also make a difference to people, evidenced by the smiles and laughter Vezna will draw from residents during her visits.

And of course, Vezna brings back memories for many residents.

"A lot of them are used to having pets and can't now, so the visits, no matter how brief, bring back a piece of happiness they had for so long," Sharon says.

Sharon recalls one telling moment when Forest Hill's physician was visiting residents with an intern. They were in one resident's room while Sharon and Vezna were visiting.

"The doctor turned to the intern and said, 'You see that? That dog will do more for these residents here today than any medication I could prescribe,'" she says.

April 7-13 was National Volunteer Week 2019. The week is marked by events nationwide that celebrate volunteers and all they do to enrich the lives of others. This year marked the 78th National Volunteer Week. — DH

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