



OMNIway

Resident Safety Remains Top Priority As We Enter Second COVID Wave. . . pg. 3

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OCTOBER 2020 • www.omniway.ca



Front Yard Fun

With Brighton's annual Applefest cancelled this year, Maplewood residents and staff created a fall front yard display of a nurse and a resident getting ready to make apple pies — while wearing face masks and social distancing. See 'Maplewood Residents' page 3.

Province Needs to Address LTC Staffing Issues to Better Face Second COVID Wave

By Deron Hamel

With health experts predicting a second wave of COVID-19 spread to begin within the coming months, the Ontario government needs to address staffing issues in the long-term care sector to help homes better prevent and manage infection, says OMNI Health Care president and CEO Patrick McCarthy.

Given that long-term-care home residents are among the most vulnerable population groups, it's crucial that additional

funding be earmarked to address staffing levels of front-line workers and provide staff training, both of which will be key to preparing for the second infection wave, he adds.

"(Staffing) is a big issue that's affecting health-care providers across the country, and it's seriously affecting long-term care homes," McCarthy says in an interview with The OMNIway.

While long-term-care home staff members have worked tirelessly to keep

residents safe from the highly contagious virus, the first wave of COVID-19 impacted homes across Ontario and Canada.

Long-term care homes having access to more front-line staff members will improve residents' safety, McCarthy says.

All long-term care homes in Ontario receive funding specifically earmarked to provide nursing, personal care, programs and support services with no element of profit or surplus retained

See 'The Need' page 4

Animal Balloon-making Talents Helped LEA Land a Position at Frost Manor

Back in the spring, Frost Manor life enrichment co-ordinator (LEC) Lyndsay Burton was going through resumés, looking to hire a new part-time life enrichment aide (LEA), when she came across a CV with an interesting skill listed: animal balloon maker.

The resumé belonged to Sarah Thayer, and Lyndsay immediately wanted to learn more about her.

"Her first job was making balloon animals for events and parties and things like that, and I really had to pick her

See 'LEA's' page 4

Working at Streamway This Summer Has Opened Student's Eyes to LTC

While Kiana Gammage says she's not sure what career path she will eventually choose, working at Streamway Villa this summer gave her valuable experience in long-term care that can help her make her decision someday.

Kiana, who will be entering Grade 10 this school year, still has lots of time to

make up her mind, but she says she's happy she's had two months to experience life at the Cobourg, Ont. long-term care home.

"That's part of the reason why I came here; to see if (long-term care) would be something I would be interested in pursuing,"

Kiana says.

See 'I've Really' page 2

How Ping Pong is Making a Difference to One Willows Estate Resident

If there's one thing Willows Estate resident Luis Martins enjoys, it's a good game of ping pong.

It's a game he picked up as a young soldier in the Portuguese army. He and his fellow troops would play ping pong to pass the time as well as to unwind from the stress that can come with a soldier's life.

Today, ping pong is a

game Luis loves to play at the Aurora, Ont. long-term care home. He and Willows Estate life enrichment aide (LEA) Azaria Kanda can sometimes be found playing a match or two.

While the Willows does not have a ping pong table, Azaria has fashioned one out of two tables and a portable net.

See 'Luis Martins' page 3



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Streamway Villa life enrichment aide Kiana Gammage and resident Diane Napper share a dance in the Cobourg long-term care home's courtyard.

'I've Really Been Able to Get Close with Each Person,' says Kiana Gammage

Continued from page 1

"It has been really interesting because it's so different from what most people my age are doing, so it was such a nice experience to gain knowledge in different areas like that."

Kiana worked in Streamway Villa's life enrichment department from late June to Sept. 2.

With indoor large-group programming currently on hold due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, Kiana spent much of her time doing one-to-one programming with residents and helping

with resident-family visits.

One of the things Kiana says she has liked best about working at Streamway Villa is that it's a small home, and that has allowed her to get to know the 59 residents on a personal level.

"What I love about Streamway is that there are not too many residents, so I've really been able to get close with each person and get to know them personally," she says.

"It has been really nice to meet so many new people and hear so many stories." — DH

Kentwood Park Residents are Turning to YouTube for Much-loved Drumming Circle Program

The program, which is normally led at the home by Ruth Dwight, is a resident favourite

For two years, Ruth Dwight has led a much-loved drumming circle program at Kentwood Park, but since she cannot enter the long-term care homes she works with because of restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ruth is bringing the program to the Prince Edward County Public Library's YouTube channel. Long-term-care home residents — or anyone else interested in learning drumming techniques — can now follow Ruth while watching from their computer.

As part of the program Ruth leads at Kentwood Park and other long-term care homes in Prince Edward County, residents have a chance to experiment with a variety of percussion instruments, from hand-held drums to bongos.

But since she cannot visit Kentwood Park at the moment, Ruth has crafted drums out of coffee cans for residents to use. She's also made drumsticks by adding sponge balls to the ends of

wooden dowels.

Ruth has also taken plastic hollow Easter eggs and filled them with popcorn kernels to fashion an instrument that creates a sound similar to maracas.

Residents have been following Ruth's videos since August and drumming along to her rhythms. They've been watching Ruth on Kentwood Park's large TV and through an iPad outdoors when the weather has permitted.

other long-term care homes have been restricted from having large-group indoor programming, and regular entertainers have not been able to perform indoors.

The videos of Ruth leading drumming programs are filling a much-needed gap for Kentwood Park residents, says Lisa Mills, the home's life enrichment co-ordinator.

"She's just amazing; the residents just love this, I



Drum teacher Ruth Dwight puts down a beat on a bongo at the Prince Edward County Public Library in this screenshot from a YouTube video.

Since the pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization in March, Kentwood Park and

mean, if you want to talk about being engaged, this has been a really big thing," Lisa says. — DH

Wildwood Residents Tap Into Love of Gardening During the Pandemic

'The world continues to grow'

This Summer, the Wildwood Care Centre courtyard became the perfect place for residents to tap into their talents for gardening.

With restrictions in place on large-group indoor programming in long-term care homes due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, the courtyard and its gardens have provided residents with meaningful activities in a safe environment.

"Residents have been enjoying the gardens here; they have been watering the

gardens (and) they have enjoyed planting tomatoes, so they're enjoying being out there watching things grow," says Alison Hoskins, the St. Marys, Ont. long-term care and retirement home's life enrichment co-ordinator.

For many residents, gardening is an activity they have enjoyed their whole lives, so planting flowers, growing vegetables and watering is a way to not only latch on to their past but to continue doing something they love.

"They love coming out to

their courtyard and doing the gardening and watching everything grow — that's what they all talk about," Alison says.

While the pandemic has impacted all of our lives in some way, Alison notes the residents' work in the Wildwood Care Centre courtyard to help grow plants is a metaphor for perseverance during a challenging time.

"The world continues to grow," she says. "There are positives, and we have to keep looking at the bright side of things." — DH

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EDITORIAL



Willows Estate resident Luis Martins and life enrichment aide Azaria Kanda are pictured here playing a game of ping pong.



Resident Safety Remains Top Priority as We Enter Second COVID Wave

As we brace for the expected second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, many connected to OMNI Health Care long-term care homes, whether residents, family members or staff, may be wondering what the coming months will bring.

Indeed, the past six months have been trying for all of us in the long-term care sector. And while there have been hardships along the way, OMNI team members have stepped up to the challenge and worked diligently to keep residents and each other safe.

Safety will continue to be our No. 1 priority as we prepare to see increased COVID-19 cases in communities throughout Ontario.

OMNI's focus is keeping that spread from occurring in our long-term care homes.

Rigorous testing for the COVID-19 virus is, and will continue to be, the foundation for the prevention of spread. With the number of positive test results beginning to rise again across Ontario, community spread of the highly contagious virus remains the greatest risk long-term care homes face.

We are mitigating infection risk as much as we can by requiring regular testing for staff members and testing any residents who show symptoms of COVID-19 infection.

Staff members in OMNI's

18 long-term care homes are being tested twice monthly, and fortunately, there is increased testing available since the pandemic was declared in March.

It's imperative the federal and provincial governments continue to support testing resources and ensure testing results are received without the delays and shortages of testing supplies that have occurred in the past.

And of course, social distancing protocols and the use of face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) will continue to be used by our staff members.

OMNI has maintained a robust supply of PPEs, which include masks, gloves and gowns, throughout the pandemic, and we can report the supply stocks have been increased in recent months.

Still, we need to keep PPE supplies readily available, and we are calling on the province to continue promoting greater availability of PPE supply chains as well as forecasting shortages and taking steps to address potential kinks in the supply chain before they happen.

While there may be concerns about what the coming months will bring, what is certain is that OMNI Health Care is prepared to meet challenges and is intensely focused on the safety and security of the residents living in our homes.

Luis Martins Often Reminisces About Playing Ping Pong While a Soldier in the Portuguese Army

Continued from page 1

Azaria says he and Luis will have interesting

"It allows him to be active in both physical and mental ways."

— Azaria Kand, life enrichment aide, Willows Estate

conversations in between sets, often about Luis's life

growing up in Portugal.

"He recounts why he decided to join the army as a young chap, where in the world those mandatory training camps took him, including Angola, Brazil and other formerly owned Portuguese colonies," Azaria tells The OMNIway.

While Luis is, by nature, a quiet man, a game of ping pong can be a vehicle that prompts him to open up and

start talking, Azaria notes.

Lately, Luis and Azaria have been playing ping pong about once a week, and the time the two spend together playing the game has a positive impact on Luis, the LEA adds.

"It allows him to be active in both physical and mental ways," Azaria says. "He's able to, I find, express who he is and used to be." — DH

Maplewood Residents Help Make Realistic Front Yard Fall Display

'We have had quite a few people walk by and stop to look at the display, so the residents are proud'

Applefest may have been cancelled in the town of Brighton due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but that didn't stop Maplewood residents and staff from pitching in to keep the spirit of the annual celebration of all things apple alive.

Applefest is a flagship event held every September in Brighton that features a street fair, a parade and a variety of entertainment, and Maplewood residents and staff members always attend.

To keep things safe during the pandemic, the municipality encouraged local businesses to create festive autumn displays on their property, so the folks at Maplewood decided to

get in on the action.

Residents and life enrichment aide Rosanne Blackburn created a front yard scene that features a very lifelike display of a Maplewood nurse and a resident — both wearing face masks to promote safety — surrounding a table covered with apples and a bag of flour to make apple pies.

Residents were involved with creating the display by helping with crafts, such as colouring foam balls red and green to make the apples.

They also glued the foam apples to a cupcake stand Rosanne gave them so the replica fruit wouldn't blow away.

There's even a homemade apple tree with laminated

apples dangling from it the residents made, and the flour bag included in the display was crafted by residents from a potato sack.

With social distancing protocols in effect, Rosanne brought a few residents outside to stuff the display nurse with garbage bags, and residents decided on how everything was arranged.

Rosanne says the display is so realistic some pedestrians have had to look twice when passing by.

"We have had quite a few people walk by and stop to look at the display, so the residents are proud," she says.

The display was completed Sept. 18 and will remain on Maplewood's front lawn for the next few days. — DH

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 OMNIway news is published daily at www.omniway.ca and distributed bimonthly in print to the long-term care community.
 OMNI Health Care 2020 Fisher Drive, Suite 1 Peterborough ON K9J 6X6 Tel: 705-748-6631, Fax: 705-742-9197
 News Team Editor & Writer: Deron Hamel Production Art: Yvonne Hollandy



Frost Manor resident Dorothy Burrows and LEA Sarah Thayer are shown here with two animal balloons Sarah created.

LEA's Balloon-making Skills Put to Use

Continued from page 1
brain about that," Lyndsay tells The OMNIway.

Lyndsay contacted Sarah and asked her to come to the Lindsay long-term care home for an interview.

It turned out Sarah is a self-taught animal balloon maker, learning the tricks of the trade by watching online videos.

Lyndsay knew Sarah would fit into the Frost Manor team and hired her in May.

Sarah's balloon-making skills have been put to good use at Frost Manor. The

home hosted a carnival-themed month throughout August and Sarah got to show her talent. Her animal balloons were a hit with residents and staff alike.

Balloon making is one of many avenues where Sarah has shown her creative flair, Lyndsay says, adding Sarah has also wowed the folks at Frost Manor by making flowers out of napkins.

"She has come to the team with so many ideas ... (and) having Sarah here has created a really well-rounded team for us," she says. — DH

Forest Hill 'Gatekeeper' Keeps Everyone Safe While Bringing Positivity to Work

Ken Gagnon screens all who enter the home to keep residents and staff safe during the pandemic, and does so with humour and kindness

Ken Gagnon has a serious job to do at Forest Hill but he does his work every day with a sense of humour and positivity that's noticed and appreciated by staff members at the Kanata, Ont. long-term care home.

Standing at Forest Hill's front entrance, Ken screens everyone who enters the home to keep residents and staff members safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ken, who is the husband of Forest Hill nursing administrative service manager (NASM) Anna Gagnon, was hired by the home to help during the ongoing global pandemic.

"He does an amazing job; he's very thorough and we know we're in good hands when Ken is working," says Forest Hill life enrichment co-ordinator Craig Forest.

Craig says Ken is "meticulous" in the work he does screening people at the

front door to make sure it's safe for them to enter the home, and he always takes special care to ensure his work is done correctly.

Craig says Ken brings a lot of humour to his job.

"He is really funny and he has endeared himself to our staff, and he is always



Ken Gagnon at the Forest Hill screening station on Canada Day.

But at the same time, Ken is always friendly and welcoming to everyone, Craig notes, adding staff members have shown their appreciation for Ken by bringing him food or gifts they've made.

positive and joking with people," the LEC says.

"Ken is absolutely loved by the staff. During these times things can be awfully stressful, but he always brings positivity to the staff as they come in." — DH

The Need for More Staff 'is a Big Issue that's Affecting Health-care Providers Across the Country': Patrick McCarthy

Continued from page 1
from the provision of those health services. As a result, funding for additional care staff needs to come from the province.

Private long-term care providers across Ontario have asked the Ford government to increase the supply of personal support workers (PSWs)

by supporting innovative training programs, including on-the-job training and remote training.

McCarthy adds that the COVID-19 pandemic affects long-term-care home staff members beyond their work inside the homes.

For example, there may be instances where people cannot come to work due

to outbreaks in the community or in schools, and there needs to be staffing levels in place to ensure there's always a ready supply of front-line care workers.

"It's all a package that affects the availability of staff and the homes' ability to staff during the pandemic," he says.

Flowers Blooming in September at Pleasant Meadow Manor

The home's 61 residents receive potted azaleas courtesy of Jim Barry Breakfast Club

Even in autumn, the flowers are blooming at Pleasant Meadow Manor.

The Norwood, Ont. long-term care home was recently on the receiving end of an act of kindness when Dawn Barry, the daughter

of Pleasant Meadow Manor resident Mary Barry, delivered 61 potted azaleas, one for each resident.

The flowers were donated by the Children's Breakfast Club of Canada through the Jim Barry Breakfast Club at

Roger Neilson Public School in Peterborough, which Dawn is involved with.

This isn't the first time Pleasant Meadow Manor residents have received flowers from the organization.

In early March, Dawn delivered spring flowers for each resident. The flowers were planted in the home's perennial garden so residents can enjoy them every year in spring.

Kim Williams, the life

enrichment co-ordinator at Pleasant Meadow Manor, says kind acts like this have a positive impact on residents.

"The residents really enjoy them, and they add a splash of colour to their rooms," she says. — DH

Funding for this OMNI publication has been provided in part by the following Local Health Integration Networks:
Central LHIN, South East LHIN, Champlain LHIN, South West LHIN, Central East LHIN

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