



OMNIway

Vaccines Offer Hope for
Pandemic's End, But It's Staff
Who Will Get Us There. . . pg. 3

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Streamway Villa resident Mary Gautreau and Frost Manor resident Ala Kruszynska (inset) are seen here receiving their COVID-19 immunizations. Below, Almonte Country Haven resident Gertie Hodges smiles after being vaccinated.

Vaccination Clinics Begin at OMNI Homes

By Deron Hamel

Since January, most of OMNI Health Care's 18 long-term care homes have hosted clinics to administer the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination to residents, and residents of some homes have now received the vaccine's required second dose.

The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Since then, people working in the long-term care sector have put tireless efforts into keeping residents and their co-workers safe, and infection, prevention and control protocols have been ramped up.

While the pandemic continues to be a major concern and safety protocols remain top of mind, the

vaccination clinics that have been held in OMNI homes have brought the first sign of life starting to return to normal, say staff members.



Although the vaccine is a major step forward in keeping residents safe from the highly contagious COVID-19 virus, homes will continue to exercise precautions for some time.

Located in Kanata, Ont.,

Forest Hill was one of the first OMNI long-term care homes to have residents receive a primary dose of the vaccine. Paramedics from the local public health unit administered the vaccine to residents on Jan. 14.

"We are still going to have months (of the pandemic) ahead of us, but at least you can see the light at the end of the tunnel," Forest Hill life enrichment co-ordinator Craig Forrest recently told The OMNIway.

All residents of Almonte Country Haven in Lanark County have also received the first dose of the Moderna vaccine. On Jan. 28, a team from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit was at the home to administer the vaccine

See 'Residents' page 2

Riverview Manor Ensures Resident Has a Happy Hanukkah

When Hanukkah began on Dec. 10, the Riverview Manor life enrichment team went to work to make sure a resident of the Jewish faith had everything he needed to celebrate the Festival of Lights.

Resident Ken Greenberg had a menorah to light

and, as part of the Hanukkah tradition, received a small gift every morning during the course of the eight-day holiday.

Ken happily educated residents and staff about some of Hanukkah's traditions, such as the dreidel, a spinning

See 'Ken Greenberg' page 2

Local Community Brings Christmas Cheer to Forest Hill

Although it was a different kind of Christmas at Forest Hill due to restrictions in place to keep residents and staff members safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, the local community helped make the holiday season brighter for the Ottawa-area long-term care home's residents.

St. Gabriel School, which

is located near Forest Hill in Kanata, encouraged students to design home-made Christmas cards for Forest Hill residents. Just before the Christmas break, the school dropped off a box full of cards, and there was one for each of Forest Hill's residents, says Craig Forrest, the home's life

See 'Letters, Cards' page 4

Front-line Team Surprises Burnbrae Managers With Christmas Gifts

When a personal support worker (PSW) approached April Faux on Dec. 21 to request a team huddle, the Burnbrae Gardens administrator and life enrichment co-ordinator wasn't surprised — after all, the number of daily huddles has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

But when April and her fellow managers at the

Campbellford, Ont. long-term care home arrived at the huddle, they were greeted by front-line team members bearing Christmas gifts they had pooled their money together to buy.

Each of the five managers received a Christmas plant as well as a personalized Christmas card and a Tim Hortons gift card.

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Maplewood Residents Treated to In-home Christmas Parade

Plans are in the works to host another parade next holiday season

Life enrichment aide Rosanne Blackburn and her colleagues at Maplewood are known for coming up with creative ideas to enhance the quality of life for residents at the Brighton, Ont. long-term care home, and just before Christmas they organized another engaging event that put smiles on lots of faces: an in-home Santa Claus parade.

On Dec. 23, Rosanne and the life enrichment team decorated an antique crib to look like a sleigh. Inside the sleigh was a Santa Claus figure with lights along with snowmen and wrapped gift boxes.

One resident, dressed in a Santa Claus outfit, walked behind the sleigh, while another resident, dressed as Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer, led the procession in a motorized scooter that was fitted with Christmas lights.

The parade went down a

hallway and into the dining room, just before lunch was served. Traditional Christmas band music was played as the parade made its way through the home. There were seven participants in the parade.

Rosanne says the sight of the Santa Claus parade drew lots of cheers from residents as they watched the procession.

“All the residents enjoyed the parade as they waved with smiles,” Rosanne tells The OMNIway, adding the parade was planned for lunchtime to ensure most residents could watch.

Rosanne says the parade went over so well with residents she plans to make the event a Christmas tradition at Maplewood.

“This was our first Christmas parade, and it was such a success that we will continue it next year,” she says. — DH



Santa and his sleigh move through Maplewood during a special in-home parade for residents on Dec. 23.



Riverview Manor residents are pictured here celebrating Hanukkah. Ken Greenberg (top left), a resident of the Jewish faith, shared some Hanukkah traditions with residents, including lighting a menorah and spinning a dreidel.

Ken Greenberg Celebrated the Festival of Lights With Residents and Staff

Continued from page 1 wooden top that's played with during Hanukkah.

Ken and other residents spun a dreidel during Hanukkah, and Ken took the opportunity to explain its significance.

For example, each of the four sides of a dreidel has a letter from the Hebrew alphabet. The four letters — nun, gimel, hey and shin — stand for “nes gadol haya sham,” which translates to “a great miracle happened there.”

However, Ken explained, if a dreidel is made in Israel, the phrase is “nes gadol haya pho,” which means “a great miracle happened here.” On these dreidels, the letter shin is replaced with the letter peh.

“(The dreidel) was played because it is said that because Jewish people were outlawed from practising their religion and studying the Torah, they would use their dreidel to pretend that they were

playing games,” Riverview Manor life enrichment aide (LEA) Adam Wicklum tells The OMNIway.

During Hanukkah, Ken had his own electric menorah in his room. For Hanukkah 2019, the life enrichment department purchased a small battery-powered menorah after Ken moved to the Peterborough long-term care home.

This menorah was placed in the window near the table where Ken has his meals, and during Hanukkah Ken would light the menorah at dinnertime. Team members also decorated the two windows near Ken's table with a Hanukkah motif. Every morning before breakfast, an LEA would bring Ken a small gift.

Hanukkah began at sunset on Thursday, Dec. 10 and ended at sunset on Friday, Dec. 18. Hanukkah, which translates to the words “to dedicate,” is the eight-day

celebration commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple of Jerusalem in 165 BC.

Hanukkah, also called the Festival of Lights, begins on the 25th day of the month of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar.

People celebrate Hanukkah by eating traditional foods, playing games and exchanging gifts. The holiday is observed over eight days with the nightly lighting of the menorah candles and saying prayers.

Adam says it was important to celebrate Hanukkah at Riverview Manor because of the diversity of faith among residents and because it was an opportunity for residents to learn about one of Judaism's most important holidays.

“It shows we care for one individual's faith (and) special holiday, and (it was a chance) to educate and share culture with other residents,” he says. — DH

Residents of Most Homes Have Received First COVID-19 Vaccination

Continued from page 1 with the help of Almonte Country Haven staff.

After each resident received the vaccination, they were given a special badge to wear that read, “I Got My COVID-19 Vaccine,” and were then brought to the front of the

home where a public health unit nurse was standing by to ensure they were experiencing no side effects.

“It was all hands on deck and all of our staff were involved in supporting the recommended half-hour observation period to ensure that any possible reaction

was swiftly identified and dealt with,” Almonte Country Haven administrator Carolyn Della Foresta said in an e-mail sent the day of the vaccinations.

The Ontario government is aiming to immunize all long-term-care home residents who have given

consent as soon as possible. Initially, the province set a Feb. 5 deadline to have all long-term-care home residents vaccinated; however, that target could not be met due to delays in supply lines, so the deadline has been extended into February.

The Government of

Ontario says on its website that vaccinations will be crucial to curbing COVID-19 infection.

“(Vaccines) will be an important tool to help stop the spread of the virus and allow individuals, families and workers to safely resume normal life,” the website states.

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How a Special Name Badge Means 'Inclusion' to a Country Terrace Care Aide

Jennifer Hamblin says a Christmas-themed badge administrator Karen Dann made for her also helped her get a COVID vaccination

Country Terrace care aide Jennifer Hamblin says the Christmas-themed name badge administrator Karen Dann made for her in December not only made her feel part of a team it also helped ensure she received her COVID-19 vaccination recently.

Jennifer, who joined the Country Terrace team Oct. 1, says wearing an ID badge has always been important in her work life and that she was "elated" when she was handed her name tag and card shortly after being hired.

"It was a personal touch that meant a big deal," she tells The OMNIway. "Back in 2012, I retired from a career in security. The hardest part was handing over the identity badge. It was as if I handed over a part of myself, never to return."

A few weeks ago, Jennifer's regular badge went through the laundry when she forgot to remove it from a gown. The housekeeping staff found it and returned it to her.

Shortly after, her badge fell out of its plastic sleeve while she was making beds and she was not able to find it, so she had to get a new one.

There was one other name tag Jennifer had: the Christmas-themed badge Karen made for her.

In early December, The OMNIway published a story about how Karen

made Christmas-themed name badges for everyone working at the Komoka, Ont. long-term care home.

The badges have team members' first names embossed on a Christmas-themed design. Jennifer's name tag is a red Santa stocking. Jennifer says receiving her Christmas badge brought her a feeling of inclusion at Country Terrace.



Jennifer Hamblin pictured with her special name badge.

"I realized a lot of work and love went into the preparation of the badge; I even laminated mine with protective clear film," she says.

"After years of experience and three degrees, what I have learned is what matters the most for me (in a workplace) is that I am included. I felt so blessed to be a part of a wonderful team, despite the challenging circumstances (of the pandemic)."

On Jan. 10, Jennifer went to the vaccination clinic in

London, Ont. to be immunized against COVID-19. Since people working in health-care settings are a top priority for the vaccine, she was asked for a work ID.

"I proudly displayed my Christmas badge because that is all I had," Jennifer says. "I forgot my real ID at home. Luckily for me, the police officer at the door chuckled, and the staff person at registration reassured me that everything would be fine."

Jennifer showed them a copy of her police reference check she submitted when she was hired at Country Terrace. With her vaccination form and information already completed, she was ushered forward.

"Nevertheless, I wondered what would I have done without my Christmas badge," Jennifer says.

Having experience teaching, Jennifer says she often finds herself looking for moral lessons to be learned from a given situation.

"In losing my title badge, gaining a Christmas badge (and) forgetting my real ID at home, I pondered what the next lesson in life would be for me," she says.

"In the meantime, I enjoyed the moment of how a Christmas badge made me feel better about myself and helped me to get ushered through the vaccination process." — DH

EDITORIAL

Vaccines Offer Hope for Pandemic's End, But It's Staff Who Will Get Us There

It has been 11 months since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization, but 2021 is starting with a sign of hope in the form of two vaccines that have become available in Ontario and are being introduced in phases.

Long-term-care home residents, staff members and essential caregivers are amongst the first in line to receive the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines, which are being administered in the province's 14 public health units.

Staff members and communities showed tremendous compassion for residents during the holidays...

People living and working at several of OMNI Health Care's 18 long-term care homes have now received the vaccine to help protect them from the highly contagious COVID-19 virus. In January, the Ontario government announced that due to delays in shipments of the Pfizer vaccine, all available doses are being directed to the province's long-term care and retirement communities in an effort to protect the most vulnerable segment of the population.

While the vaccines are the first step towards bringing normality back to OMNI long-term-care

home residents and their families, we still have a way to go before things are back to the way they were.

As it has been up to this point, it will be the people working in OMNI's long-term care homes who will be navigating each home's journey into post-pandemic times.

The vaccine helps protect immune systems, but it's the staff members who keep residents' emotional health strong and spirits high.

And they have done an outstanding job.

With safety precautions in effect, this past holiday season was especially challenging for residents and their loved ones to be separated during what is usually a time for families being together.

But staff members and communities showed tremendous compassion for residents during the holidays, as evidenced by the stories we have published in The OMNIway.

While the vaccine may be the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, it has been the passion OMNI long-term-care home staff members have for their work that has kept residents' quality of life as high as possible.

The value of their service to residents and families during what has been the most challenging year in recent memory cannot be understated.

Their dedication will continue to carry us forward.

Managers Thanked for Their Support

Continued from page 1

The gift packages were presented on behalf of all Burnbrae Gardens residents and staff members.

"It was just really nice because the managers are not always recognized like this, and the fact that they did this without us knowing and on their own accord (to thank us for) being supportive over the year during (the pandemic) was so kind," April tells The OMNIway.

"They thanked us for our



Burnbrae Gardens managers pose with gifts front-line team members brought them just before Christmas.

support during such a difficult year, which was really nice."

April says the kind gesture from Burnbrae Gardens staff

members solidified the environment of camaraderie and teamwork that is central to the home's culture. — DH



Dressed as deer, West Lake Terrace staff members get ready for "hunting season" to begin at the Prince Edward County home.

West Lake Team Hosts a 'Deer Hunt' for Residents With Great Success

'We haven't had this much fun and laughter in our home since this pandemic started'

The West Lake Terrace team recently hosted a "deer hunt" that brought residents and staff members together for an engaging activity that resulted in lots of fun and laughter for all.

woods" as residents patiently sat looking through the sights of the Nerf guns they'd been given.

When a "deer" came into view, residents pulled their triggers, sending a volley of Nerf darts at them. Residents then tagged their "deer".

Life enrichment co-ordinator Janie Denard says she and other team members at the Prince Edward County long-term care home were inspired to create the activity after reading an article about a home on Manitoulin Island that organized a similar activity with great success.

With the holiday season over and restrictions in place due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Janie says this activity was exactly what residents and staff members needed to fend off the winter blues.

"We haven't had this much fun and laughter in our home since this pandemic started," Janie tells The OMNIway, adding that even residents who often don't participate in activities joined in on the fun.

"This was just what residents and staff needed; it was an eruption of laughter for a good 20 minutes. Some of the residents were asking when we could do this again."

To accommodate the residents' wishes, the life enrichment team is planning to host another similar activity in the near future, Janie says.

"We're going to have the residents shoot at tin cans and have more games with the Nerf guns," she says.

"This was a great activity and it was much needed for everybody in the home."



Team members gathered the Christmas trees that were set up around West Lake Terrace during the holidays and brought them to the dining room to create a makeshift forest.

Donning reindeer hats, team members began milling about through "the

Letters, Cards and Video Sent to Residents During the Holidays

Continued from page 1
enrichment co-ordinator.

Students from another school, M.F. McHugh Education Centre in Ottawa, also made Christmas cards that were sent to Forest Hill residents.

"It really meant a lot to all the residents to get these homemade cards from the kids."

— Craig Forrest, life enrichment co-ordinator, Forest Hill

"It really meant a lot to all the residents to get these homemade cards from the kids," Craig tells The OMNIway.

A group of nursing students from the University of Ottawa took time to

write letters to Forest Hill residents and send some Christmas cheer, and this gesture was also well-received, Craig says.

"(The nursing students) knew that our residents were going through a very difficult time, and they wanted to write Christmas greetings to them," Craig says.

Every Christmas, a troop from the Girl Guides of Canada visits Forest Hill to sing carols for residents. With safety protocols in place, the Girl Guides were not able to visit this past holiday season, so instead members of the troop made videos of them singing.

The videos were compiled into a single video that was sent to Forest Hill. Staff members visited residents individually with a laptop



Forest Hill resident Nancy Garmaise is pictured with a Christmas card she received during the holidays.

computer to play the video for residents.

"It wasn't the same (as a live performance), but at least the residents still got to experience the carolling, and they enjoyed that," he says. — DH



Pictured above, Streamway Villa residents share their new year's resolutions for 2021.

Streamway Villa Residents Share Their New Year's Resolutions

Streamway Villa residents rang in 2021 by sharing their new year's resolutions on the Cobourg long-term care home's Facebook page.

The idea to encourage residents to make new year's resolutions came from Chelsea Tinney, one of Streamway Villa's life enrichment aides.

Life enrichment co-ordinator Laurie Kracht says team members visited residents individually and asked them to share their new year's resolutions.

Residents' names, ages and new year's resolutions were

written on a whiteboard, and their photos were taken and put on the Streamway Villa Facebook page.

Some of the resolutions include "travel more", "eat more chocolate", "go to the beach", "to be very wealthy" and "eat more Cheezies and drink more beer".

Residents also gave humorous responses when asked to supply their age, and there were a few who simply said "guess."

The residents' answers were off the cuff and unrehearsed, Laurie tells The OMNIway.

"We didn't guide them in

any way," she says.

The Streamway Villa life enrichment team created the home's Facebook page in 2020 as a way to engage with family members during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Team members regularly take photos of residents who have given consent and post them on the page to help keep families and friends updated on life at Streamway Villa.

Laurie credits Chelsea for coming up with ideas like this to share residents' stories.

"Chelsea is really running with this," she says. — DH



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