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The province has announced that funding has been approved for OMNI Health Care to build a new long-term care home in Cobourg that will provide 133 new and 59 upgraded beds to the region. On March 22, Streamway Villa residents, along with representatives from OMNI and the provincial and local governments, gathered outside Streamway Villa to make the announcement.

Province Approves Development of 192-bed Streamway Villa Long-Term Care Home

By Deron Hamel

COBOURG, Ont. – Streamway Villa residents and staff members are looking forward to living and working in a new, spacious 192-bed long-term care home with modern conveniences that will be built in Cobourg to replace the present home within the next three and a half years.

Representatives from OMNI Health Care, the Ontario government, Northumberland County and the Town of Cobourg held a press conference in the Streamway Villa courtyard March 22 to make the blockbuster announcement.

The project, which will likely begin next spring, will upgrade the current 59 long-term care beds Streamway Villa offers and add 133 new beds in Cobourg.

Construction is expected to take up to 36 months to complete, including the design and approval stages.

“We have a proud history of providing great care to this community, and we’re happy to see the Ontario government recognize the need for more long-term care beds right here in Cobourg,” said Patrick McCarthy, OMNI’s president and CEO.

Once completed, the new Streamway Villa will be a Class A long-term care home with modern amenities, such as wider hallways and more home-like dining areas, and privacy will be enhanced by limiting all rooms to no more than two beds.

The new home will be divided into six neighbourhoods, with 32 beds in each home area, to provide

residents with a quieter, more enjoyable living experience.

Streamway Villa administrator Kylie Szczebonski said the new, state-of-the-art home with all its amenities will help enhance quality of life for residents and enable staff members to provide an even higher level of care.

“The new, modern facility will have a significant impact and a positive impact on our residents, families and staff,” she said.

“The new home will allow us to provide the highest standard of care that we are known for in the community while also allowing us to easily incorporate new technologies and innovations into our practices.

“We cannot wait to have this new home, and we

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Community Kindness: A/C Donation to Home Leads to Much More

Paul and Lee Brennae were at home in Almonte, Ont. last year watching a TV news story about how many older long-term care homes in the province do not have air conditioning, and this gave the couple an idea.

One of those homes without air conditioning was

Almonte Country Haven, which had also been affected by a three-month COVID-19 outbreak, and the couple decided right then to help.

Knowing the hot, humid days of summer were just around the corner, the Brennaes decided to buy

See ‘They Were’ page 3

OMNI Joins CaRES Fund to Help Families of Senior Living Workers Financially Impacted by COVID-19

OMNI Health Care recently joined a partnership launched last year by four other long-term care providers to offer one-time financial relief to those working in senior living residences across Canada who require assistance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Senior Living CaRES Fund was created by long-term care and retirement home providers Chartwell, Revera, Extencicare and Sienna (CaRES) in May 2020 to help people working for any provider of long-term care or retirement homes in Canada whose families have

See ‘CaRES Fund’ page 4

Willows Outbreak Ends, Team Members Recognized with Staff Appreciation Day

After a two-month COVID-19 outbreak ended at Willows Estate in late February, team members at the Aurora, Ont. long-term care home were recognized for their hard work and commitment to residents and each other with a staff appreciation day on Feb. 25.

During the outbreak, Aimee Merkley, OMNI

Health Care’s director of western operations, was the acting administrator at the Willows. From the day York Region Public Health declared the outbreak on Dec. 23, Aimee says Willows Estate team members worked hard to care for residents, ramp up infection, prevention and control measures, and

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Pictured above, West Lake Terrace resident Elwood Lewis put on a leather jacket and a pair of shades to do his impersonation of Fonzie from *Happy Days* during the home's Beat the Winter Blahs Week in February.

1950s Diner and a Visit From the Fonz Highlight West Lake Terrace Activity Week

The home's Beat the Winter Blahs Week succeeded in its mission, says LEC

The West Lake Terrace dining room recently looked like Arnold's Drive-In, the famed diner where characters from the 1950s-themed sitcom *Happy Days* would hang out.

Residents and staff could tuck into burgers, hot dogs, fries and onion rings served in baskets lined with checkered paper. There were ice-cream sundaes for dessert and cherry cola to wash everything down.

People were dancing to the 1950s rock 'n' roll that was playing, and there was even a visit from Arthur Fonzarelli — AKA, Fonzie — himself.

Resident Elwood Lewis donned a black leather jacket and sunglasses to play the part of Fonzie perfectly, right down to giving the thumbs-up, and his "aaayyy!" was spot-on, says West Lake Terrace life enrichment co-ordinator (LEC) Janie Denard.

For Janie, the 1950s theme day, which was held at the Prince Edward County long-term care home on Feb. 18, was the pinnacle of a week of fun events that aimed to blow away the winter blues.

"We really wanted to be creative this year to come up with activities that would help both the residents and the staff beat the blahs," she tells The OMNIway.

Every February, West Lake Terrace hosts a Beat the Winter Blahs Week,

seven days dedicated to themed activities to help residents and staff members through the often cold and dreary winter month.

The ongoing pandemic made year's activity week even more important for everyone, given the restrictions that have been in place since the pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization in 2020, Janie says.

Other events held the week of Feb. 12 to Feb. 19 included:

- Chinese food for lunch on Feb. 12
- On Feb. 14 there were Valentine's Day photos taken, and a steak dinner served in the evening
- Feb. 15 was Pyjama Day, so residents and team members stayed in their PJs for the day
- On Shrove Tuesday, pancakes were on the menu and there was a special Mardi Gras event for everyone that included games
- A sports day for staff members and the West Lake Terrace Winter Games for residents on Feb. 17
- A special breakfast capped off the week on Feb. 19

Janie says residents and staff members had a lot of fun during this year's Beat the Winter Blahs Week

"They had a blast, they're already asking when we can do it again." — DH

Let's Dance: Burnbrae Music Program Gets Residents Moving

The Music Appreciation program is providing residents with exercise, reminiscing and lots of fun and laughter

Since Burnbrae Gardens started a multifaceted music program six months ago, residents of the Campbellford, Ont. long-term care home have been benefiting from the joys music brings as well as from more exercise, increased happiness and lots of reminiscing.

The Music Appreciation program is the brainchild of life enrichment aide Shawna Booth, who started the program in September to provide residents with activities they enjoy while adhering to safety protocols in effect due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Music brings a lot of joy into people's lives, and I was thinking this was something that was lacking because of (the pandemic), so that was the main inspiration," Shawna says.

The program, which Shawna hosts every Thursday, varies from week to week. Each week there's a different musical theme, from golden oldies to country classics to jazz.

Residents gather in small, physically distanced groups



Burnbrae Gardens residents are seen here participating in the home's Music Appreciation program. Developed by life enrichment aide Shawna Booth, the program encourages residents to exercise and reminisce while enjoying their favourite music.

while music is played. Often, Shawna leads residents in exercises they can do standing or sitting.

"Sometimes we do activities where residents can dance in their chair for exercise where there are movements to go along with the songs, (and) sometimes we will play songs that will get residents reminiscing," Shawna says, adding residents recently enjoyed reminiscing about songs they remembered hearing at weddings and other events.

Shawna says she has also played relaxing music while leading residents in chair yoga exercises.

A major benefit Shawna says she has seen from

the Music Appreciation program is increased participation. While some residents are not interested in games or bingo, virtually everyone loves music.

As a result, several residents who normally don't participate in programs are attending this activity every week, she says.

But perhaps the greatest benefit Shawna is seeing from residents is an elevated mood accompanied by lots of laughter.

"That's always good because laughter is the best medicine, and of course reminiscing is helpful with memory and cognition, and we do a lot of reminiscing," she says. — DH

Development Expected to Begin Next Spring

Continued from page 1
cannot wait to be one of the top (long-term care homes) in this province."

Northumberland-Peterborough South MPP David Piccini underscored the impact the new home will have on the local community.

"Our loved ones in long-term care deserve a comfortable, modern place to live that is near family and friends and has the built-in supports they need when and where they need it," Piccini said.

"The number of people in Cobourg who will need long-term care is expected to rise over the next decade. These new and upgraded spaces, built to modern design standards, will help ensure residents have access to the care they need in a safe

and secure environment."

With a growing aging population and a greater need for long-term care beds in the region, Northumberland County Warden Bob Crate said the project will help shorten wait times for people in the county seeking long-term care.

"An expanded 192-bed home will increase access to long-term care and address some of the associated pressures in our local health-care system," he said.

Cobourg Mayor John Henderson also welcomed the announcement as a "historic long-term care investment" in the community.

"We are proud and supportive of our aging demographic and recognize that this is a huge step in

the right direction towards continuing to serve our senior population."

The province has now approved redevelopment projects for seven OMNI long-term care homes since 2018.

In addition to the Streamway Villa announcement, approval has been given for a new 192-bed Riverview Manor in Peterborough, a new 128-bed Village Green in Greater Napanee, and a redeveloped and expanded 128-bed Country Terrace in Komoka, Ont., all of which are currently in the design phase.

Construction is well underway on the renovation and expansion of Almonte Country Haven, Pleasant Meadow Manor and Woodland Villa.

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Staff Was Honoured for Their Hard Work and Support for Residents and Each Other

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support each other.

During the outbreak, Aimee worked closely with Doneath Stewart, acting director of care at the Willows, and Neil MacDonald, formally the nutritional care manager at Riverview Manor, who was called in for assistance.

The efforts put forth by Doneath and Neil, as well as support from OMNI Health Care home office team members, helped residents and staff during this challenging time, Aimee says.

"There were many tough and emotional days during the outbreak, (but) staff pulled together and committed to the hard work required to ensure infection, prevention and control practices were observed and residents received the care and support they needed," Aimee says.

Every time a resident case of COVID-19 was resolved, team members rang a bell on the unit, and "staff looked so forward to ringing the bell," Aimee says.



Members of the Willows Estate team pose for a group photo in late February. Staff members were honoured with an appreciation day to acknowledge their hard work and commitment to residents and each other during a two-month outbreak at the home.

When the outbreak officially ended Feb. 23, Silver Fox Pharmacy, an OMNI provider, supplied the Willows team with 100 cowbells to ensure everyone at the home had a bell to ring to signify the outbreak's end.

Two days later, Aimee organized the staff appreciation day for team members working on all three shifts.

Staff members were treated to coffee and doughnuts from Tim Hortons as well as pizza and cupcakes. Everyone received T-shirts displaying

the OMNI logo on the front and the words "tough times don't last — tough teams do" on the back.

Community donations of Tim Hortons gift cards and gift bags were awarded for prizes during trivia games, and OMNI logo wear was also provided to draw winners.

Aimee says the appreciation day was well received by the Willows Estate team.

"They loved the day and were so appreciative of the recognition, which they truly deserved," she says. — DH

'They Were Touched By Our Story'

Continued from page 1
two air-conditioning units and two large fans for Almonte Country Haven to help keep residents cool and comfortable when temperatures began to rise.

Paul contacted Almonte Country Haven administrator Carolyn Della Foresta to let her know of the couple's intentions.

Carolyn thanked the Brennaes for their kind offer, and Paul went ahead and ordered the air-conditioning units and fans through the Lowe's Canada website.

But when the items arrived there was only one fan, so Paul made some phone calls letting Lowe's know they were one fan short on their delivery.

Eventually, Paul talked with a representative from Lowe's executive customer service department who said the fan was misplaced, which explained the delay,

so to make up for the error Lowe's offered to ship an extra fan at no cost.

In the end, Almonte Country Haven received two air-conditioning units and three fans, and Carolyn and the residents were grateful to the Brennaes and Lowe's for their kind gestures.

"Paul and Lee reached out in this incredibly kind and tangible way, and these air conditioners and fans are just amazing," Carolyn tells The OMNIway.

"What was so amazing to me is that this couple in the community had no personal connection with the home, (but) they knew about what we were going through (with the outbreak) and they were touched by our story and they wanted to reach out with an act of kindness."

But the story doesn't end here.

When Lowe's learned

from Paul the items were for Almonte Country Haven, the company wanted to do something extra for residents.

"They said they really liked what we were doing, so we were contacted by the company president's executive assistant who said (Lowe's) wanted to do more, so they asked what else (Almonte Country Haven) needed," Paul says.

Paul let Carolyn know about Lowe's offer, and Carolyn asked members of the home's residents' council what they would like from the company catalogue.

Looking ahead to the summer of 2021, the residents said new outdoor furniture to replace the older furniture would be great for outdoor visits and summer picnics.

In October, Carolyn was invited by Lowe's to send an e-mail outlining residents'

See 'An Incredible' page 4

EDITORIAL

Despite Pandemic, Things are Looking Up in 2021

Although we have entered the third wave of COVID-19, and despite the challenges we continue to face as health-care providers in the midst of a pandemic, there are many positive things to report in the first quarter of 2021.

The best news for OMNI Health Care so far this year has been the arrival of vaccines to help protect our long-term-care home residents and staff members against the highly contagious COVID-19 virus.

Most residents living in OMNI's 18 long-term care homes have now received both required doses of the vaccines, and staff vaccinations are also well underway.

Since January, when the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines became available, OMNI homes and local public health units have shown outstanding collaboration to ensure every resident wishing to be immunized received the vaccine.

While vigilance will continue to be required, with the vast majority of OMNI residents now vaccinated we have taken a huge step forward on the path back to normality.

There has also been some great news this year with respect to the redevelopment of OMNI homes.

Most recently, the Ontario government announced that funding has been approved to build a new 192-bed long-term care home in Cobourg to replace Streamway Villa.

Streamway Villa is the latest OMNI long-term

care home to receive approval for redevelopment. There are six other homes that have now been approved for redevelopment, and construction is well underway at three of these homes: Almonte Country Haven, Pleasant Meadow Manor and Woodland Villa.

Redevelopment projects to renovate Country Terrace and build a new Riverview Manor in Peterborough will also begin this year, while the first phase of planning for the construction of a new Village Green in Greater Napanee will also begin.

Through all the ups and downs the past year has brought, the people working in our long-term care homes continue to be stalwart supporters of residents.

With changing circumstances throughout the pandemic, residents have had to adapt to the challenges that come with safety restrictions, but they have been supported along the way by staff members who have shown their love and kindness at every turn.

Through the creative programs they design that meet safety requirements, to organizing safe visits with families, to one-to-one time they spend with residents who need someone to talk with, the people working in our homes have, perhaps more than ever, been living OMNI's mission of bringing hope, purpose and belonging to health care.

While these may be challenging times, there's a lot to be thankful for.



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Forest Hill resident Barbara Brownhill is seen here having a Zoom call with Grade 8 student Ethan Fletcher. The two have been enjoying books together through conferencing calls since February.

Forest Hill Resident and Grade 8 Student Connect Through Love of Reading

Retired teacher Barbara Brownhill and student Ethan Fletcher have been enjoying books together over Zoom calls

Forest Hill resident Barbara Brownhill has been having video conferencing sessions with a local student that provides a forum for the two to share their love of reading.

For the past two months, Barbara will sit at a desk, open a tablet the Ottawa-area long-term care home's staff members provide and join Grade 8 student Ethan Fletcher for Zoom calls on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Craig Forrest, the home's life enrichment co-ordinator, says he received an e-mail from Ethan in early February. The student explained he wanted to have Zoom calls with a resident who enjoyed literature, and Craig immediately thought of Barbara.

The two are a perfect fit for this one-to-one inter-generational program, Craig says. Ethan is a student who enjoys reading, and Barbara,

who also enjoys books, is a retired teacher.

"He's really good with Barbara," he says of Ethan, adding the student is currently reading Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone to Barbara.

When new characters are introduced in the book, Ethan will stop and explain who they are, and he and Barbara will chat about how they fit into the plot.

Forest Hill, like OMNI Health Care's other long-term care homes, has been working to build stronger community connections in recent years.

The connection between Barbara and Ethan is an example of a "win-win" success that intergenerational programming can bring, Craig says.

"For Ethan, he's helping Barbara, and Barbara gets to go back to being in a teacher role where she helps him with his reading, so it's a big success," he says. — DH

'An Incredible Ripple Effect'

Continued from page 3 request, which she did, along with an accompanying thank-you letter.

She relayed residents' request for new outdoor furniture, and Lowe's responded by sending a \$2,000 gift card.

The Almonte Country Haven team will be using the card soon to buy residents their new outdoor furniture.

Looking back, Paul notes how the chain of events leading up to Almonte

Country Haven receiving an extra fan and then a \$2,000 Lowe's gift card was unexpected.

"Initially, I just wanted to know where the fan was," he chuckles.

Carolyn says she's touched by the kindness and generosity the Brennaes and Lowe's have shown for Almonte Country Haven residents.

"This is a story of one raindrop falling but having an incredible ripple effect," she says. — DH

Annual Tropical Day Brings Sunshine to Frost Manor

A Hawaiian dance from staff members was the highlight of the day

Frost Manor hosted its annual Tropical Day on March 25, and in keeping with the spirit of the occasion, team members were inspired to bring a little bit of Hawaii to residents of the Lindsay, Ont. long-term care home.

The environmental services team dressed in seashell-top bikinis, grass skirts and leis and did a Hawaiian dance through the dining rooms during breakfast, a gesture that received a round of applause from residents and their fellow staff members.

With restrictions in place to keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, the team wanted to bring some extra fun and laughter to everyone to keep spirits up, says Frost Manor environmental services and maintenance manager Rick Riel.

"There was much-needed laughter and funny comments," he tells The OMNIway.

Tropical Day was part of Spirit Days, a string of themed days where residents and staff members participate in activities centred on fun ideas.

After their dance,



Frost Manor staff members, dressed in grass skirts and wearing leis, pose for a photo during the Lindsay, Ont. long-term care home's annual Tropical Day on March 25.

environmental services team members continued their high-intensity cleaning as part of Frost Manor's infection control practices.

"Environmental services aides Robert Reynolds, Tanya Smith and Nathan Durham remained happy and upbeat about performing these tasks daily," Rick says, adding his staff has done a "great job ... keeping the home clean, safe and fun for all our residents." The life enrichment department ensured every resident was in the spirit of the day by offering pina colodas, and there was also a tropical-themed painting

class where residents painted hibiscus flowers.

Lyndsay Burton, Frost Manor's life enrichment co-ordinator, says events like this are crucial during this challenging time when large-group activities and outside entertainment are not possible.

"Spirit Days such as these are so important during the pandemic; it is a time for us to have fun, let loose and be creative," she says.

"We had so much fun bringing in the warm weather; since we can't travel, we brought the vacation to Frost Manor this year." — DH

CaRES Fund has Provided More Than \$2.3 Million to Help Support 679 Canadian Caregivers and Their Families

Continued from page 1 been financially impacted by the pandemic.

Southbridge Care Homes, a Cambridge, Ont.-based provider of long-term care and retirement homes, also joined the partnership.

Patrick McCarthy, OMNI Health Care's president and CEO, says OMNI understands the financial impact the pandemic has had on many Canadian families, including the families of people working in the long-term care sector.

OMNI wanted to join the partnership to help support those families and the

employees who have dedicated themselves to caring for long-term care and retirement home residents during a challenging and uncertain time, he says.

"The CaRES Fund has supported hundreds of dedicated senior living employees from across the country," McCarthy says. "We look forward to joining the founding partners in supporting hundreds more in 2021."

Applicants are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 through the fund. To date, more than \$2.3 million has been awarded to

679 people working in Canadian long-term care and retirement homes.

The CaRES Fund offers grants, not loans, so monies awarded do not need to be repaid.

The CaRES Fund will continue offering financial assistance to senior living residence employees facing financial challenges throughout 2021 by reviewing applications every quarter. — DH

For more information on the CaRES Fund, visit www.seniorlivingcares.ca.