



OMNIway

Team Members Continue to
Champion the Balance of Safety
and Quality of Life . . . pg. 3

Bringing Hope & Humanity to health care

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Students from Almonte District High School are pictured here with one of the garden boxes they built for Almonte Country Haven residents June 8 as part of a community project.

Community Kindness: Local Students Build Garden Boxes for Country Haven Residents

The students also planted vegetables and herbs that residents will tend to throughout summer

By Deron Hamel
Almonte Country Haven residents were on the receiving end of an act of community kindness June 8 when a group of students from Almonte District High School (ADHS) turned up to build two raised garden boxes for them.

The eight students also filled the garden boxes with soil and planted a variety of vegetables and herbs that residents will care for throughout summer.

At the end of summer, the veggies and herbs will be harvested and used as ingredients in meals.

The project was spearheaded by two ADHS teachers, mathematics teacher Mrs. Megan

Masterson and English teacher Mrs. Caitlin Coffin.

Students in Mrs. Masterson's math class researched and designed the garden boxes, and students in Mrs. Coffin's class wrote the project proposal.

After the proposal was accepted, students secured the funds needed to make the project a reality and then brought the materials to Almonte Country Haven to get to work.

The students spent the day putting the garden boxes together. During breaks, the students chatted with the Lanark County long-term care home's residents and staff members.

Almonte Country Haven residents enjoy spending

time in the home's garden, and the new garden boxes will make that time even more enjoyable, Almonte Country Haven says in a post on the home's Facebook page.

"Whether spending time out in the garden or looking at it from their windows, our residents are so happy to know that they will soon be reaping the fruits of your labour," the post says, adding a thank-you to the students and teachers for their hard work and community spirit.

"Each one of you should be very proud of your work and your kindness. Well done — we know and hope good things will come back to you."

In-house Social Workers Add a New Dynamic to OMNI Homes

Social worker Alicia Niewiatowska says she has a unique but clearly defined role to play in the lives of residents living at the five OMNI Health Care long-term care homes she serves — and that's to "enhance their quality of life from a psycho-social

perspective, because the medical one is well covered."

Alicia is one of the social workers who have joined the OMNI team this year to add a new dynamic to the organization and take the high level of care OMNI prides itself on up another notch.

See 'OMNI Doing' page 4

Montessori Interventions Spark New Optimism for Riverview Resident

A resident who recently moved into Riverview Manor was having a challenging time adjusting to their new home and was convinced they were at Riverview "by accident." But after being assessed by the Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) team and receiving appropriate

interventions, the resident's outlook on life at the Peterborough long-term care home has become more optimistic, team members say.

When the resident first moved into the home they complained of boredom, said they "hated" being at Riverview, and didn't "know

See 'Quick Action' page 2

Springdale Turns Into the 'Home on the Range' for an Afternoon

SPRINGVILLE, Ont. — Red, a miniature horse, made an appearance at Springdale Country Manor on June 14 to spend time with residents and wander through the courtyard of the Peterborough-area long-term care home.

When Red and her owner, Patricia Sheppard, made their entry into the courtyard, about 20

residents who were sitting in the shade greeted them with big smiles and lots of curiosity.

The first thing Red did was head straight to the lush, manicured grass in the courtyard for a quick afternoon snack, which brought an immediate round of laughter from residents.

Red, who is 22 years old, See 'Miniature' page 2



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Resident Lillian Smith shares a moment with miniature horse Red in the Springdale Country Manor courtyard.

Miniature Horse Visits Springdale's Courtyard Where she Was Greeted by Curious Residents

Continued from page 1 went from resident to resident to spend a few moments getting pets and cuddles. Patricia answered any questions residents had about Red, and some residents even shared stories of their own experiences with horses.

“(P)retty much everyone has some kind of connection to a horse, no matter where they’re from in the world, so bringing a horse (to homes) really starts those conversations.”

— Patricia Sheppard, owner of miniature horse, Red

Several residents asked to have their photo taken with Red, who happily obliged.

Patricia, who owns a horse farm in Omeme called Small Hooves, Big Hearts, says she brings Red and the other horses she owns to many long-term

care homes in the area.

No matter which home they’re at, there is always a similar reaction, Patricia says, noting she has been to Springdale Country Manor two other times with her horses.

“It really opens up a lot of dialogue; I’ve heard some really interesting things,” she tells The OMNIway.

Since many of the homes Patricia and her horses visit are in rural areas, most residents will have had some experience with horses, so these visits bring positive reminiscing for residents, Patricia says.

“In a lot of the homes (the horses) start the farmers talking,” she says.

“But pretty much everyone has some kind of connection to a horse, no matter where they’re from in the world, so bringing a horse (to homes) really starts those conversations.” — DH

You can learn more about Small Hooves, Big Hearts by visiting the farm’s website at www.shbhs.org.



Garden Terrace LEC Returns to Post After 14 Years

‘People were genuinely really happy to see me,’ says Shannon Boisvenue

When Shannon Boisvenue came to Garden Terrace July 13 to start her first day on the job as the Kanata, Ont. long-term care home’s life enrichment co-ordinator (LEC), it was a new beginning — and a fond reminder of the past.

“I went to school for recreation and that’s what I feel most passionate about, so I’m really glad to have the opportunity to come back here.”

— Shannon Boisvenue, life enrichment co-ordinator, Garden Terrace

Shannon had been the Garden Terrace LEC from 2003 to 2008, and, after more than 10 years, she’s happy to be back.

“Obviously, there are lots of new faces, so I’m trying to meet as many people as I can, but my office is still in the same place and there’s still a great team of people,”

she tells The OMNIway.

“It’s definitely great to be back.”

Shannon began her career with OMNI Health Care as a life enrichment aide at Garden Terrace’s sister home, Forest Hill, 20 years ago when it opened, eventually becoming assistant LEC.

When Garden Terrace opened in 2003, Shannon began her first stint as the home’s LEC. She worked as Garden Terrace’s LEC until 2008, when she briefly moved to the office before leaving in summer 2009 to dedicate the next 10 years to raising her four children.

By 2019, Shannon was ready to restart her long-term care career. She had always enjoyed working for OMNI, so when the resident services co-ordinator position opened at Almonte Country Haven that autumn, she applied for and was awarded the job.

Shannon says she “loved” her position at Country Haven, but her “true calling,” she notes, has always been creating programming for seniors.

“I went to school for recreation and that’s what I feel most passionate about, so I’m really glad to have the opportunity to come back here,” she says.

“I’m looking forward to doing what I feel most passionate about, and that’s providing recreation programs for older adults and offering meaningful programs to them.”

While there are some things that have changed since Shannon last worked at Garden Terrace in 2009 — for example, she points out the home now has two rabbits — there are still familiar faces, and the friendly camaraderie she remembers is firmly intact.

“One thing that I find quite nice is that a lot of the staff who were here at the time recognize me, and I was really touched by how appreciative they were to have me back and how the welcoming I got was really nice,” she says.

“People were genuinely really happy to see me and have me back. It almost feels like I never left.” — DH

Quick Action From the BSO Team Helps Enhance Resident’s Quality of Life

Continued from page 1 how to live” at the home, says personal support worker and BSO team member Karlie Phillips.

Karlie discovered that what was making the resident unhappy was a lack of programs that suited their interests, so she completed a Montessori assessment with the resident to explore ideas for activities that fit with the resident’s interests.

Montessori programs in long-term care homes are done individually or in small groups and include activities that build upon residents’ strengths and interests.

Karlie created several activities that met the resident’s needs and interests. These included button sorting, sock sorting, and cutlery matching, where the resident wraps knives

and forks into napkins to help the dietary team.

The resident is also helping others, Karlie notes.

There is one resident who believes they need to pay for the food they eat at the home. Karlie has given the resident she’s working with a payroll stamp that says “paid.”

When the second resident wants to pay for their food, the first resident stamps a piece of paper with the “paid” stamp for them.

Karlie says these activities have made the resident much happier with life at Riverview Manor.

“The resident is very pleased with these activities and just wants to (keep their) hands busy and keep going; (the resident) doesn’t want to be in one spot,” she tells The OMNIway.

The resident was also interested in the smartwatches staff members wore. The resident wanted to learn more about the watches, which perform a variety of functions.

One of the staff members explained what the watches were and showed the resident that the watch can be used to count the number of steps people take in a day.

The resident, who is an active walker, was interested in keeping track of their steps, so Karlie gave the resident an extra smartwatch she had and showed the resident how to use it.

Karlie then provided the resident with daily walking goals.

“Now the resident is walking up and down in our service hallway trying to reach those goals,” she says. — DH

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EDITORIAL



Pictured above, Riverview Manor residents got to watch a live performance from Charlie Horse, a band featuring Riverview team member Trevor Davis, on July 14. This was the first live entertainment the home hosted in 2022.

Riverview LEA's Band Gives Residents their First Outdoor Entertainment of 2022

Residents' council chose Trevor Davis's band, Charlie Horse, to perform on July 14

Riverview Manor residents enjoyed their first outdoor entertainment of 2022 in style on July 14, when a local band featuring one of the Peterborough long-term care home's team members played a show in the back garden.

The band — called Charlie Horse — includes life enrichment aide (LEA) Trevor Davis on guitar, and the combo played a wide range of tunes for residents that day.

Charlie Horse's playlist includes songs from many genres, such as country, western swing, country-blues and ragtime.

The Riverview Manor residents' council chose the

band, whose name is, in part, a tribute to Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts, who passed away in 2021 at age 80.

"Plus, we're kind of country and western, so that's where the 'horse' (in Charlie Horse) came from," Trevor explains.

With the arrival of summer, many OMNI Health Care homes have been taking advantage of the warm, sunny weather to host outdoor entertainment for residents.

Outdoor entertainment is a big crowd-pleaser at long-term care homes, and live music encourages lots of resident engagement.

Riverview Manor is

no exception.

LEA Adam Wicklum says there were many residents from both the north- and south-side neighbourhoods who attended the performance that day.

Most residents chose to gather in the garden under the large gazebo, while others found spots along the walking path under one of the shady trees.

And, of course, there were refreshments available to keep everyone cool and hydrated.

"(The residents) also enjoyed a refreshing treat of Popsicles on a beautiful summer day," Adam says.

— DH

Team Members Continue to Champion the Balance of Safety and Quality of Life

For the first summer in two years, the residents of OMNI Health Care seniors' homes are enjoying many of the activities and events they were attending before the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020.

Since provincial pandemic restrictions began to ease earlier this year, we have been hearing how residents have once again been joyfully participating in mainstays of life at OMNI homes, such as barbecues, outings and live entertainment.

While the pandemic has posed challenges for everyone in the seniors living sector, it has also shown how resilient and resourceful OMNI team members are and how they come together to persevere during the most trying times.

With the arrival of warmer weather, of course, there have also been more opportunities for residents to enjoy outdoor activities and to spend time outside with family and friends.

Indeed, this has been wonderful to see, and we have been sharing many stories in The OMNIway this summer that have centred on how residents are experiencing a huge uptick

in their quality of life.

So far this summer, we have seen how residents have gone on trips to beaches, attended cookouts on home patios and enjoyed lots of live entertainment, just to name a few things.

Even though restrictions have eased, we have not lost sight of the fact that we are still in a pandemic. COVID-19 remains a serious issue for the greater health-care sector and keeping everyone safe from the virus is top priority.

What has truly shone through is the importance of balance — and how the team members working in our seniors' homes have managed to strike that important balance between maintaining safety and providing a high quality of life for the residents they serve.

The people working in OMNI seniors' homes work hard to support residents so they can enjoy life to its fullest and ensure OMNI is the seniors' home provider of choice.

While the pandemic has posed challenges for everyone in the seniors living sector, it has also shown how resilient and resourceful OMNI team members are and how they come together to persevere during the most trying times.

A huge thank-you is due to all OMNI team members for the value they deliver every day.

Did you know...
September is World Alzheimer's Month?

The month is aimed at raising awareness of Alzheimer's disease across the globe as well as ending the stigma associated with the condition.

Learn more by visiting www.alzint.org



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Laughter is Proving to be the Best Medicine at Pleasant Meadow Manor

New laughter yoga program is having emotional benefits for residents

Pleasant Meadow Manor residents are discovering that laughter truly is the best medicine.

Residents were recently introduced to laughter yoga sessions led by Kim Williams, the Norwood long-term care home's life enrichment co-ordinator, and they're seeing first-hand the emotional benefits the program delivers.

Laughter yoga is an exercise that marries voluntary laughter with breathing exercises. During laughter yoga sessions, participants maintain eye contact with one another which leads to contagious laughter.

"We have found that our residents' spirits are lifted, and you can see them smiling throughout the day."

— Kim Williams, life enrichment co-ordinator, Pleasant Meadow Manor

Kim starts the sessions with a brief history and description of what laughter yoga is to help residents understand how the exercises may help them and to explain that it's an activity that has been used in the medical profession.

This, she says, is to prevent participants from feeling "silly or foolish" during the exercises.

Kim and the residents then do warm-up exercises which consist of clapping and gently moving their bodies and legs. They then do deep breathing exercises.

They move on to the laughter exercises intermixed with "child-like playfulness," and some singing. Sessions always include an affirmation which they say as loudly as they can: "I'm awesome, you're awesome, we're all awesome."

Some of the laughter

exercises Kim and the residents do include:

- Gradient laughter: Every one starts laughing quietly, gradually becoming louder
- Roller-coaster laughter: Residents bring their arms up over their heads while saying "awww." They then bring their arms down while saying "weee" or laughing
- Full-moon laughter: The "favourite" laughter exercise where everyone howls like a wolf

"And of course, Rick (Riel), our maintenance manager, joins us for our Santa Claus laughter and our monkey laughter, which really gets everyone laughing for real and at times can cause tears of laughter," Kim tells The OMNIway.

Kim learned about laughter yoga when she was a student in the recreation and leisure program at Fleming College and a laughter yoga instructor visited her class.

While admittedly skeptical at first, Kim says she noticed physical benefits after her initial laughter yoga session and even says she slept better that night.

Eventually, she took classes to become a certified laughter yoga instructor.

She first used laughter yoga with residents while working as a life enrichment aide at Frost Manor, where the sessions went over well. In fact, one Frost Manor resident said laughter yoga helped ease the severe anxiety she lived with, Kim notes.

Kim is noticing similar benefits at Pleasant Meadow Manor.

"We have found that our residents' spirits are lifted, and you can see them smiling throughout the day," she says.

"The way that I measure the benefits to the residents is that they returned for the next session and ask when the next one will be scheduled." — DH



Streamway Residents Attend First Canada Day Parade in Two Years

Volunteer family members and staff made it possible for a large group of residents to attend

Streamway Villa residents were dressed up in their favourite red-and-white apparel and lined the streets of downtown Cobourg July 1 to help the town and the rest of Canada celebrate the nation's 155th birthday.

For the first time in two years, residents were able to attend Cobourg's Canada Day parade, which kicks off the town's annual three-day Waterfront Festival at Victoria Park.

Along with their family members and Streamway staff who volunteered to accompany them the two blocks to King Street,

residents spent part of the late morning and early afternoon watching the colourful floats, cheering and waving small Canadian flags as they passed.

The parade and festival were cancelled in 2020 and 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To keep everyone safe during their time downtown, attending residents, families and staff members wore face masks while attending the parade.

Since everyone was already downtown, residents were treated to lunch after the parade finished.

Streamway Villa posted a

note at the home before the event, asking for staff and family volunteers, and many answered the call, which ensured that residents who wanted to attend the parade could do so.

Residents and staff members were grateful for the help.

"(A) huge shout-out goes out to the family members and staff that volunteered to help bring residents down," the Streamway Villa life enrichment team said in a Facebook post.

"Without you guys, it wouldn't have been possible to take as many residents down." — DH

OMNI Doing 'What is Best for Residents'

Continued from page 1

Since March, she has served the residents of Kentwood Park, Rosebridge Manor, Village Green, West Lake Terrace and Woodland Villa as an in-house advocate when they need someone to talk with or if they require mental-health support.

Alicia says the role OMNI has created for social workers is unique.

"Social workers (in long-term care homes) are usually relegated to the admissions process or doing community liaison work with other agencies, but (OMNI's) program is really looking to be much more in-depth and focused on psycho-social needs," she tells The OMNIway.

Alicia is also at the ready to help family members navigate the system when needed as well as to connect residents with valuable services they may want outside the home, such as library programs.

Alicia worked in the long-term care sector before joining the OMNI team, and she brings a wealth of experience working with residents and family members to her role.

One of the aspects of her job Alicia says she likes best is that she's a "mobile social worker," serving many residents at different homes, which broadens the positive impact she can make.

OMNI has rolled out a social worker program

across many of its seniors' homes this year, and Alicia is crediting the organization for positioning itself ahead of the curve by recognizing the need for social work in the seniors' home sector and understanding the important part social workers can play enhancing quality of life for long-term-care home residents.

Ontario long-term care homes are not mandated to have social workers on staff. The addition of social workers to the organization shows OMNI's commitment to residents, Alicia says.

"OMNI is going ahead and doing what they think is best for residents, which I wholeheartedly agree with," she says. — DH