



retirement living Issue 4

Spring Newsletter

The Promise of Spring

By Lynn Fearn, Managing Director

Since our last full newsletter in the Autumn, it has been wonderful to see some significant steps forward in the fight against this pandemic we have been facing for the past year. With a roadmap out of lockdown and the lighter and warmer days of Spring just around the corner, there is a great deal of promise on the horizon. Firstly, lateral flow testing has become fully integrated into the weekly testing programme for our staff. Our teams now have two lateral flow tests a week in addition to the more longstanding weekly PCR test. With dedicated team members who have completed the necessary training and competency assessments, and who have put lateral flow testing into practice for staff in the last few months, we have been able to easily extend this to the new nominated visiting programme.

I am pleased to say that the first nominated indoor visitors have now been reunited with loved ones at the majority of our care homes. While some may have to wait a little longer, we are working with our teams at these homes to ensure they are ready to start welcoming nominated

visitors as soon as it is safe to do so. As always, for the most up-to-date visiting arrangements for your local care home, please contact your home manager.

In another considerable leap forward, the national COVID-19 vaccination programme is gathering great speed. As you will read later in this newsletter, the uptake of the vaccination has been excellent amongst both residents and staff in our care homes. There are, of course, circumstances meaning that not everyone will be able to have the vaccine, but I would like to extend my sincere thanks to those who have taken up the offer of a vaccination. I believe it is a considerable step towards the return to normality we would all like to see. I have been heartened to see some delightful feedback for our staff on Carehome.co.uk and on Google reviews over the past few months. These kind words of encouragement are always shared with our teams and really do mean a lot in these difficult circumstances. Once again, a huge thank you to our residents and their relatives for their unwavering patience and understanding, and to our staff for continuing to go above and beyond every single day.



A Picture Paints a Thousand Words

Decorating our homes' walls with beautiful paintings is very important to us, as it helps to create a homely atmosphere. At Westerham Place, one painting has caused quite a stir!

The home has a beautiful hand painted piece of art hung in the entrance hall. It features a scene from the local town, Westerham, however the artist is something of a mystery. The painting was signed 'Wigs74' so Westerham Place launched a plea on its Facebook page to find the mystery painter, in the hope it was a local artist.

The post was shared several times, but the hunt is still on! Liz Wilson, home administrator at Westerham Place, said: "Trying to find the artist has been quite exciting, we all hope it was someone local so we can share our thoughts of their painting with them. It's a lovely piece of art! I quite enjoy arts and crafts and whenever we do them here at Westerham Place, we always have a good time. Art is a way to bring people together and the residents have been fully invested in finding the painter!"

Claire Davis, home manager at Westerham Place, said: "Social media is a very powerful thing, which is why we decided to launch a plea on our Facebook page to help us find the mystery painter. The painting has become quite a feature in the home and we would love to find the original artist!"



Positive News . . .



This past year has been very difficult for everyone, and we are so pleased that there is now a light at the end of what has been a very long tunnel. Care home residents and key workers were included in the first wave of vaccinations, which was wonderful news for our organisation.

The health and wellbeing of those in our care is paramount, and by starting the vaccination programme, we're another step closer to normality.

Across the portfolio of Wren Retirement Living homes, 95 residents and 130

members of staff have received their first vaccine dose.

That equates to 93 per cent of residents and 93 per cent of staff members.

While there are circumstances that mean not all residents or members of staff will be able to have the vaccine, we are delighted with the take up rate, and are confident that the vaccination programme is going to have a considerable impact on relaxing visiting restrictions.

Lynn Fearn, managing director of HCMS which operates the home on behalf of Wren Retirement Living, said: "Vaccination day was a wonderful day for our residents and their families, and we are truly grateful to everyone who made this possible.

"It has been a difficult time, and we still have some way to go, but we have celebrated this wonderful milestone because it means that at last, we can see a light at the end of the tunnel.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank our fantastic staff members, our wonderful residents and their family and friends".

We're So Glad To See You!

There have been some heart-warming reunions at Wren Retirement Living Care Homes recently! We have been delighted to welcome our first designated visitors into many of our homes for their pre-booked visits. We're looking forward to welcoming more of you throughout the coming weeks. Please remember to call your local home to book your visit.



Many Happy Returns

Birthdays are a time to celebrate, and though family and friends are not able to visit as freely as in usual times, our homes are still ensuring residents have a fabulous day.

One of Wren House care home's residents, Barbara Elliott, recently celebrated her 98th birthday with us! Barbara was treated to a delicious cake and some beautiful flowers, as well as having a lovely virtual catch up with her family.

Barbara spent many years in The Women's Royal Naval Service, known as the Wrens, before marrying a Naval officer, who she was married to for a long time. Barbara has four children and nine grandchildren and also enjoyed spending time as a drum major in a marching band.

Lynn Boon, home manager at Wren House care home, said: "Barbara has a big personality, and is always making the staff and residents here at Wren House smile.

"I'm glad we could help Barbara celebrate her 98th birthday and I hope she enjoyed her cake and flowers!"



The Year of the Ox

Exploring other countries and cultures remains an integral part of our homes' activity plans. Many of the residents at Featherton House are well travelled and love to share stories of their adventures with one another.

Celebrations like Chinese New Year provide a perfect opportunity to discover new cultures, particularly different cuisines! To celebrate the year of the ox, the Featherton House residents were treated to a special Chinese meal. The banquet included a variety of tasty dishes including beef and black bean sauce, soy sauce noodles and of course, some crispy spring rolls.

As part of their celebrations, the home also did a quiz about China and one of the residents who used to teach French and understands languages taught everyone how to say 'Happy New Year' in Chinese. The home also had Chinese music playing on Alexa while they ate lunch to really set the scene.

The delicacies were a firm favourite amongst the residents, there were lots of empty plates!

Gemma Hill, activities coordinator at Featherton House, said: "Chinese New Year seemed like a fab occasion to celebrate and enjoy, any excuse here to get crafty and celebrate. The residents particularly enjoyed trying all the different dishes prepared by our wonderful chef, it was a chance to try and enjoy something a little different."



Giving it some Oomph!



We have partnered with Oomph! On Demand to enhance the activities offering across all Wren Retirement Living care homes and inspire our activity teams during this time when we're not able to fulfil our entire activity programme due to lockdown periods. Oomph! is an on-demand digital platform that incorporates everything from video content tailored to care home residents, to virtual exercise classes, history documentaries and a wealth of resources and training for staff. The platform can be accessed through activity tablets or interactive tables in our homes for group activities, and residents will also be able to access the content on their own devices or a home's devices at a time that suits them. The activity teams across our portfolio of homes have received specialist training to ensure they are able to maximise the potential of the technology.

Ilze Careless, regional manager of Wren Retirement Living, said: "This platform is an exciting introduction to our extensive activity plans for our homes, and it helps us to encourage residents to engage with technology more effectively.

"At a time when inviting people into our homes, such as intergenerational groups, dance teachers or entertainers is not possible, these on-demand activities will help in

keeping our residents stimulated and active. Our homes are usually a hive of activity so it is important that we look at every way we can to continue to enrich the lives of our residents at this time.

"We are looking forward to checking in with our staff and residents once they've had time to get to grips with the platform so we can find out just how much they're enjoying it."

