

Larchwood Life

December Edition

Safeguarding the Magic of Christmas

By Lynn Fearn,
Managing Director

As Christmas approaches, more than ever, many of us will be looking ahead to the promise of a much better 2021. This year has been marked by the many sacrifices our residents, their relatives and our teams have made in the face of this pandemic. That is why we are determined to make Christmas as special as ever for those in our care.

It goes without saying that this Christmas will be different, but we believe that the celebration is vital to our residents' wellbeing. Despite the debates you may have seen in the media around whether care homes will be allowed to have Christmas decorations, we have risk assessed all of the aspects that make Christmas special for many of us. Following this, I can confirm that Christmas will be coming to our care homes in all its glory! Although we will avoid decorations that cannot be easily cleaned, such as fake snow and tinsel, the trees will be up, the lights will be on and our homes will be full of festive cheer.

While we have issued detailed guidance on the use of Christmas decorations, it is wonderful to see the creativity that has defined our teams this year shine through once again. I have already heard of homes that have engaged with their communities to secure Christmas trees, lights, and decorations for outside areas so that residents have a glittering display to view from their windows. Others are putting plans in place for live-streamed pantomimes and socially distanced outdoor carol singers (where tiers allow). Visiting has been an issue that has troubled us all this year, but with government guidance now bearing more consideration to the wellbeing of care home residents, and thanks to the creativity of our group estates and in-home maintenance teams, we have



Tony Stein - Carol Higgins - Lynn Fearn - Kevin Groombridge

more options available for safe and comfortable visiting through the coming winter months. While we await testing programmes for relatives and the newly approved vaccination for residents, we are working hard to offer visiting in dedicated safe indoor visiting rooms and outdoor pods where this is possible. These will work alongside outdoor and window visits where necessary.

We understand how important visiting is to families at Christmas and our aim is that every resident will have a visit from a relative or friend during December. As always, local tier systems, local public health guidance and the layout of each home influence all visiting arrangements. Please contact your care home manager for the most up-to-date visiting arrangements for your loved one's home. Once again, I thank you for your patience and understanding during this very difficult year and for the support you have given our fantastic staff. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our teams for continually going above and beyond to keep our residents safe and for continuing to deliver the excellent care they are known for. On behalf of the senior team here at Larchwood Care, I would like to wish you and your families a very safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Star-Studded Line-up Announced for Taunton Care Home Poetry Book Project

Oake Meadows care home in Taunton has created its very own poetry book, including pieces from staff, residents and several of the UK's leading poets and writers.

The book, named 'We Are Family: Poems from a Care Home', features a range of poems written by a variety of special contributors, including members of staff and residents. The book is currently available to purchase via Amazon Kindle, with hard back copies also available.

Some of the stars that have agreed to participate in the project, include award-winning filmmaker and author Dave Jeffery, filmmaker, publisher and author Justin Park, and authors, editors and twins C.L. Raven. Each name brings with them a wealth of talent and experience, with their work commonly featuring in novels, magazines and anthologies across the UK, USA and Australia.

Speaking of the project, Louis du Toit, activities coordinator at Oake Meadows, said: "This is a wonderful project and we are both honoured and excited to have the opportunity to work with some of the UK's leading writers. We are huge fans of their work, and it is a real coup to be able to get them involved with our poetry book. This project has been in the offing for some time and it seems like the stars have finally aligned for us to get it completed!"



To find your nearest Larchwood Care home visit: www.larchwoodcare.co.uk, search for 'Larchwood Care', or call our central office on 01564 820140 and our team will be delighted to help.

Search for your local Larchwood care home on Facebook

Larchwood Care Nominated for Prestigious Industry Award



This year has been a very strange year for everyone, and particularly our residents. Our staff have done an amazing job in ensuring residents are happy in the absence of visits from family members. To recognise our hard work, Larchwood Care has been shortlisted for the prestigious LaingBuisson Large Residential Care award!

To be shortlisted, entrants must display excellence in residential or nursing care for older people, with a focus on innovation and engagement with service users within a larger organisation.

The key drivers for the nomination were:

- The way Larchwood Care supports staff with career progression and training
- How Larchwood Care utilises technology and innovation to ensure the efficient running of the homes, with in-house tech products including Care Portal, the IMPaCT Audit system and the HowDidWeDo? feedback app
- Improvements in regulatory body ratings in the last 4 years, including CQC scores rising from 41% Good or Outstanding overall to the current figure of 85% Good or Outstanding

Lynn Fearn, managing director of Larchwood Care, said: "I am very proud

that the organisation has been shortlisted for the LaingBuisson Large Residential Care award. This is a very important award and to have been shortlisted as a finalist from the many excellent applicants, is a major achievement in itself.

"As a care provider, we firmly believe that whatever an individual's means, they deserve to feel safe, be cared for in a dignified and respectful manner and to receive that care in as comfortable an environment as possible.

"I look forward to the awards being announced in due course, and would like to congratulate everyone at Larchwood Care for getting this far; without each and every member of staff being as dedicated as they are, we wouldn't be where we are today."



Happy Birthday to you!



Birthdays are always a huge celebration in our homes; ensuring our residents feel like kings and queens on their special day is very important to us. One of our residents who celebrated a milestone birthday with us this year was Nellie Dando, a resident at White Rose, who turned 105 years young! She enjoyed a socially distanced party with fellow residents and staff, which included a cake, and a card from the Queen. Nellie is a New Tredegar native, who moved to London as a teenager and returned home when she was older to care for her grandmother. She has two sons, Ivor who lives in Australia and Kenneth who moved into White Rose in March this year. Nellie loves knitting and spends most of her day stitching and purling. She also loves singing along to music during afternoon activity sessions. She has lived at the home since December 2019 and enjoyed a birthday celebration with a buffet and a tippie. Staff worked hard to make the

day special, because the rest of Nellie's family were unable to visit due to restrictions in place at the time in Wales. Nellie said: "I had a lovely time celebrating my birthday at White Rose with the lovely staff and my friends. Although I'm no spring chicken, I'm always up for a party and some cake. It was fantastic!" Another Larchwood resident who is looking forward to celebrating her birthday very soon is Cams Ridge resident, Ivy Kingswell. On 21st December, Ivy will also be 105, and to help her celebrate at a time they can't visit the home, her family took to social media to ask kind-hearted members of the public to send Ivy a birthday card, in the hope of getting 105 cards sent to the home. Unexpectedly, the post went viral, and was even shared by Arlene Phillips and Keith Lemon! We hope that Ivy has a wonderful birthday, and we can't wait to find out how many birthday cards she receives!

Ivy has one daughter, two grandchildren, four great grandchildren and five great, great grandchildren. Ivy sadly lost her first husband Eric in the war, and later remarried Fred Kingswell who passed away many years ago. Ivy trained as a Norland Nannie, looking after high-ranking officials' children. She also worked in Sainsbury's Fareham before they discovered she should have retired five years earlier! Michelle Shann, home manager at Cams Ridge, said: "When Ivy's family told us about her going viral on social media, we couldn't quite believe it! Turning 105 is such a special occasion and we are going to make sure that we do everything we can to ensure Ivy celebrates it in style. "We are going to have a socially distanced house party and her family will be able to join in on FaceTime. Hopefully, Ivy will receive lots of wonderful cards and we will be able to spend time reading them together at Cams Ridge."



Staff Recognition



Alexander court



Briar House



HillCrest



Cavell



Kingsgate



Dungle Manor



Cavell House



Ravenstone



Mundy House



Swan

Staff Recognition Week has always been a special time to help us to thank our staff. After a tumultuous year it was more important than ever that we recognise the hard work and efforts of everyone at Larchwood Care.

Running from 23rd November, the week was filled with cards, gifts, prizes and foodie delights for our social care heroes. Giovanni Pernice, one of Strictly Come Dancing's professional dancers, even recorded a special message for our homes!

Appleby Care Home, in North Shields, kickstarted the week with a rap written and performed by MC Jo and the Appleby Angels! The home also celebrated throughout the week with cards, cake and many more delicious treats.

Staff at Briar House, in Kings Lynn, also made the most of Staff Recognition Week with a fun-filled schedule for everyone to enjoy. Everyone received personal 'thank you' goodie bags and care badges, and the home held award ceremonies to appreciate special acts from staff members. Amber Towler won the Abacus Award for being the person that everyone

nition Week



House



Alwoodleigh



Appleby



Briar House



Avonbridge

at Briar House could count on.

At The Chanters, in Manchester, the residents ensured the staff felt special throughout Staff Recognition Week, and helped to create some beautiful pictures to give to the care workers.

Kingsgate Care Home, in East Kilbride, hosted daily quizzes and created a display board filled with kind messages of appreciation from colleagues, residents and their families.

Lynn Fearn, managing director of Larchwood Care, said: "Staff Recognition Week is a particularly important week for us here at Larchwood Care. Though we appreciate our colleagues all year round, this is a time where we can really pull out the stops to ensure every one of our colleagues feels appreciated.

"2020 has been a tough year for us all, and the whole team has showed resilience throughout the pandemic. There are so many times that staff have gone above and beyond for our residents that it would take a week to list them all. I sincerely hope that everyone enjoyed Staff Recognition Week and would like to say another huge 'thank you' from the management to all our wonderful people."



House



The Chanters



Wordsworth House



Rose Martha Court

Five Minutes with . . .

**Kelly Moore, activities coordinator
Kat Avonbridge Care Home,
Hamilton**

What attracted you to the care sector?

I was attracted to the care sector because I have always enjoyed helping and caring for others. I am also quite a creative person, so I wanted to use my creativity to make others happy. That's why I wanted to become an activities coordinator, so that I could share my creative flair with the residents at Avonbridge. The residents here love to get stuck in with whatever activities we have planned, and it's always a great afternoon filled with laughter when we can all get together. It is really important that the range of activities is varied and stimulating and that we aim to try and work with our residents and their interests before they moved to Avonbridge.

What is the highlight of your work at Avonbridge Care Home?

I always enjoy the fundraisers that we have going on at the home because it's so nice to see how much support we get from relatives and the local community. I also really enjoy the intergenerational sessions that we have with local children. It's great to see the residents getting along with the younger generation and it's very beneficial for both our residents and the children. I'm looking forward to being able to welcome the children back to our home, hopefully in the not too distant future! I know it might sound a little cliched but we really are a family here at Avonbridge so to have youngsters around is always fantastic.

Who most inspires you and why?

All of my colleagues who help to make Avonbridge such a lovely place for the residents, especially

during these tough times. I try to ensure I don't take our camaraderie for granted, as seeing my colleagues' smiley faces on a daily basis really helps and supports me. When we all inspire each other and work together as a team, it also helps to create a warm and friendly environment for our residents.

What hobbies do you have?

I really enjoy arts and crafts! When I'm not working, you'll always find me in my "She Shed" creating something. I like to share my love for creating things with our residents at Avonbridge too. It's always great fun when we sit down together and make things, whether it be drawing beautiful pictures or baking delicious treats. Doing arts and crafts is quite communal too, and it doesn't matter whether you're an expert at it or not, you can still have a great time. We have some very arty residents here so the home is always brightly decorated with the things we've created.

What do you carry with you at all times?

I am always carrying the Avonbridge mobile phone so I can capture all the nice moments that happen in the home on its camera. Our residents haven't grown up around technology in a way the younger generations have, so it's often not your first thought as a carer to take pictures all the time. When we do, it means we're able to share all of our wonderful memories on our Facebook page, so that our residents' families can see. Technology has become more important to us during the pandemic, and it has been the lifeline in keeping our residents in touch with their families, particularly through video calls.



Some of these pictures were taken before Covid-19



Remembrance Day Commemorations



Although Remembrance Day celebrations were slightly different this year, our homes ensured residents were able to commemorate those who fought for our country, and those that continue to make our armed forces the envy of the world.

At Whitby House, resident Pauline Butterworth kindly knitted poppies to help raise money for the British Legion as the pandemic meant that the home was not able to receive the usual box of poppies.

She raised £25 for the local British Legion branch through the sale of her hand-crafted poppies which were snapped up by staff at Whitby House.

Pauline said: "It was a shame that we couldn't receive our poppies from the British Legion this year, but I wanted to ensure that we could still raise money.

"I am a keen knitter, so I picked up my knitting needles and ball of wool and started making lots of poppies that the staff could buy. The funds will be donated to our local British Legion branch, which does wonderful work for veterans in our community."

At Ravenstone Care Home, resident John Tarleton has received a memorial wreath from his regiment to ensure he can still take part in Remembrance celebrations. John served in the Royal Mechanical Engineers and laid his wreath in the home's garden.

John requested that the wreath was then taken to Droitwich War Memorial, where it was laid by Dylan, the son of carer and British Legion member, Sarah Moore.

Wendy Stokoe, home manager at Ravenstone,

said: "It has been a very strange year for everyone, however we have been working hard to help the residents feel included as part of the wider community, as well as feeling safe and stimulated within the home.

"Remembrance Day is incredibly important to many of our residents, particularly those who are veterans or who have family members who have served, and we knew we needed to find a way to mark it appropriately, even if we couldn't visit a public event.

"We gave our residents time and space to reflect and remember and share stories of their own experiences and those of loved ones on this significant day. We hope that next year we will be remembering with family and friends in the community, together again."



Pauline Butterworth



John Tarleton

Loving Life at Larchwood!



To find your nearest Larchwood Care home visit: www.larchwoodcare.co.uk, search for 'Larchwood Care', or call our central office on 01564 820140 and our team will be delighted to help. Search for your local Larchwood care home on Facebook