

A Word From Alison

By Alison Boote, Operations Director

With autumn coming to an end, I've been reflecting on the incredible moments and achievements that have taken place in our homes during this season. It is truly fantastic to see the fun and enjoyment had within our Larchwood community.

It has been a busy time for many of our homes with Remembrance Day, Bonfire Night, Wear it Pink Day and our company-wide scarecrow competition in the lead-up to Halloween. It is wonderful to see such creativity within our homes and to be able to share this on social media for our homes' local communities to see.

At Diamond House, we've witnessed dreams come to life through their 'Wish Tree' initiative, touching the hearts of residents like 88-year-old Jenny, who dreamt of tulip fields in Amsterdam. While an international trip may be challenging, team members have planned a visit to the charity tulip fields of Norfolk Tulips, ensuring Jenny's wish can come true. Over the Remembrance weekend, Lily House joined forces with the Ely Branch of the Royal British Legion to pay their respects to members of the Armed Forces, past and present. Resident Sgt Tom Cross, who served with The Royal Welsh Regiment, laid the wreath on behalf of Lily House at the foot of their very own 'Tommy'.

There were so many amazing entries for our annual

Scarecrow Competition, with Avonbridge Care Home crowned the winner for their creative Halloween display. Their investigative scarecrow became a fun talking point for the local community, perfectly capturing the spirit and celebration of the spooky season.

Speaking of celebrations, I, along with the senior team, am immensely proud of our homes' finalist success at the Caring UK Awards.

Appleby, Avonbridge, and Mundy House have showcased excellence in dementia care, outdoor environments, community involvement, and innovation in dementia care. Congratulations to all the dedicated teams for their outstanding contributions, and good luck at the awards night on 7th December 2023.

Looking ahead, my favourite time of year is upon us, promising lots of magical moments for our residents and teams. I know that our homes will be a hub of activity, and there are lots of exciting plans to make this season truly special. I look forward to sharing those in our New Year newsletter.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas!



Tulips From Amsterdam on Diamond House Resident's 'Wish Tree'

Diamond House care home in Downham Market has introduced a 'Wish Tree', to make the dreams of its residents come true.

The tree stands as a testament to the home's commitment to continually enriching the lives of those in its care.

The premise of the 'Wish Tree' is simple yet profound. Residents are encouraged to write a wish, big or small, and hang it on the tree. The staff, wherever possible, then try to turn that wish into a reality. The first wish on the tree came from 88-year-old Jenny Cockrell, who expressed her dream to witness the tulip fields in Amsterdam. Although an international trip might be challenging, the team at Diamond House is working to ensure Jenny can experience the next best thing. In the spring, a visit to the charity tulip fields of Norfolk Tulips in Kings Lynn, which opens its fields for a few weeks annually in support of the local charity, The Norfolk Hospice Tapping House, is planned.

Other touching wishes that have graced the tree include the hope to walk once more, the yearning to reunite with lost parents, the desire to go swimming, and even a wish to drive a car once again.

Robbie Liebenberg, home manager, commented: "It's humbling and heartwarming to see the depth and variety of wishes our residents have. This initiative not only gives them something to look forward to but reinforces our commitment to ensuring they lead fulfilling, joyous lives while in our care."



A Rewarding Time At Larchwood

We are so proud of the success three of our homes had at the Caring UK awards. Appleby Care Home in North Shields has won the Dementia Care Team category at the awards, which recognise excellence and achievement within the care sector across the UK.

Appleby Care Home offers an innovative approach to dementia care, catering to a mixed service user group on the ground floor, and a separate specialised male unit specifically designed to support those living with dementia who may benefit from living in a male-only setting. Many of the gentlemen who reside at the home have worked in the local fishing industry, a defining aspect of their lives. Recognising this, the home manager and maintenance manager transformed the garden to create a permanent seaside scene, featuring a boat, sea fishing equipment, lobster pots and sand, fostering reminiscence.

Within Appleby's male unit, a bespoke bar area, lovingly crafted by the maintenance manager, allows residents to gather for afternoons filled with camaraderie, non-alcoholic beer, card games and dominoes, as they would have enjoyed following long days in the fishing trade.

Alison Boote, Operations Director at Larchwood Care, said: "The amazing win for Appleby demonstrates how Clare and her team go above and beyond to ensure that residents living with dementia have the very best quality of life.

"They are a brilliant example of person-centred care, treating each resident as an individual and taking time to find ways to make their lives safe, comfortable and fulfilling."

Mundy House in Basildon received the double honour of winning the Community Involvement award and reaching the finals for the Excellence and Innovation in Dementia Care category. One of the standout initiatives is the Archie Project, an innovative intergenerational dementia awareness programme. The home has partnered with local schools and community members to tackle the stigma around dementia. Its collaboration with Fairhouse School has been particularly successful, with regular visits between the school and Mundy House fostering understanding and friendship between generations.



Mundy House has also made significant strides in dementia care. Its approach to inclusive living ensures that all residents, regardless of cognitive abilities, are part of a vibrant community. The Namaste Room, created after the Manager and Deputy attended a Namaste workshop, is a sanctuary of relaxation with sensory elements that cater to individual preferences.

Operations Director, Alison Boote, said:

"Congratulations to everyone at Mundy House. The home continues to go above and beyond for its residents, with initiatives like the Archie Project and the Namaste Room making a huge difference to the residents' lives. The team are racking up the awards and we are all very proud of them."

Finally, Avonbridge Care Home in Hamilton was shortlisted in the Best Outdoor Environment category. Their commitment to enhancing resident well-being is evident in their newly crafted outdoor sanctuary. The Avonbridge team raised an astonishing £2325 through a Cold Water Challenge, paving the way for the creation of an enchanting sensory garden.

Crafted by the maintenance manager, this garden is a symphony of sensory delights with a picturesque rockery, the soothing aroma of lavender, and the gentle murmur of a water feature. It's not just a garden; it's a therapeutic retreat that touches the soul and calms the mind. Since its unveiling, the garden has been the centre of numerous activities. One memorable event was a 'trip' to Blackpool Pleasure Beach, complete with garden decorations and sensory experiences, evoking nostalgic memories among residents.



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

Scarecrows Abound At Our Homes!

Many of our homes took part in the annual Larchwood Care scarecrow competition recently. There were some fantastic and varied entries but there could only be one winner. Avonbridge Care Home in Hamilton was crowned the winner showcasing exceptional creativity and community spirit with their Halloween display.

This year's winning entry featured a headless man scarecrow, humorously laid on the ground depicting a workman investigating a spooky infestation near the old tree on Old Avon Road. Initially causing a stir among passersby, it quickly became a source of amusement, perfectly capturing the fun spirit of Halloween.

"Our team at Avonbridge always strives to bring joy and engagement to our residents and the local community. This display, especially our unique headless man, was a great way to do just that," said Emma Duffy, Home Manager at Avonbridge Care Home. "Seeing the smiles and hearing the laughter from people, especially the local school children who walked past our home, was truly heartwarming."

Located on a popular walking trail, the home regularly attracts attention from locals and visitors with its seasonal displays. This tradition blossomed during the COVID-19 pandemic when local children organised a Halloween parade past the home's windows, bringing much-needed cheer to the residents.



Happy Feet At Avonbridge Care Home

Residents at Avonbridge in Hamilton are getting to know some of the youngest members of the local community and enjoying fun times with music and togetherness.

They welcomed children from Happy Feet Nursery and Out of School Club Larkhall as part of its work with Boogie Beat Music and Movement, during which they shared stories, sang songs, and danced together.

The visit, which is the first of the partnership, was a resounding success, with the children, residents, carers, teachers and parents all getting to know each other and enjoying time together.

Avonbridge Care Home Manager Emma Duffy said: "It was amazing to see our residents so overjoyed to share their time with the children from Happy Feet Nursery. We have undertaken some intergenerational work in the past and it always puts a smile on our residents' faces, and gives them an excellent opportunity for interaction. Many of

our residents are parents, grandparents, or even great grandparents and love spending time with the children. We look forward to continuing this collaboration and fostering more connections with the community."



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Larchwood Care Remembers



Remembrance Sunday is a very important occasion for many of our residents and across our homes services were held. Some residents remember the Second World War and other later conflicts, and while a sober time remembering the fallen, the tales of wartime life are fascinating to hear, especially for the younger members of our teams. Activities also included poppy making, wartime music, quizzes, and visits from the Royal British Legion.

Residents and staff of Lily House came together in a very special act of Remembrance. Thank you to Dave and Tom, from the Ely Branch of the Royal British Legion, who joined them as they paid their respects to members of the Armed Forces, past and present and remembered those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Resident Sgt Tom Cross, who served with The Royal Welsh Regiment, laid the wreath on behalf of Lily House at the foot of the home's very own "Tommy". Residents at Alexander Court in Thetford joined the local community at the town's Remembrance Service. Also in attendance were the Mayor and other dignitaries as well as local Armed Forces representatives and friends, family and neighbours.



Scary Times

Many of our homes go the extra mile at Halloween to ensure a ghostly, but fun, time for residents. There was dressing up, decorations, creepy crawlies and all manner of spooky goings on as these fantastic pictures show.



Five Minutes with . . .

Rose, Kitchen Assistant at Dove Court since 2004



What makes Dove Court so special?

What makes it truly special is the warm and welcoming environment created by the very friendly staff. Personally, I really enjoy working here!

What attracted you to working in the care sector?

I was drawn to the care sector by my enjoyment of the busy kitchen, providing lovely meals to all of our residents.

Could you tell us a highlight of your work at Dove Court?

A standout highlight has been the strong connections and positive relationships I've built, both with my team members and our wonderful residents.

Who inspires you and why?

I find inspiration in our manager, Nicole Thompson, someone I can share a laugh with, creating a positive and enjoyable work atmosphere that motivates the whole team.

What do you always carry with you at work?

I always carry my keys with me at work to ensure a smooth and efficient day!

What hobbies do you have outside of work?

My hobbies include enjoying the company of birds and cats, bringing some relaxation to my time outside of work.

Rose helps to make Christmas special for Dove Court's residents. She said: "We always have seasonal table cloths, napkins, and crackers on the table. Tables are always decorated beautifully for Christmas, Boxing and New Year lunches.

"Turkey is always on the menu with Christmas pudding and brandy sauce, sherry with the royal speech at 3 pm then buffet tea with trifle. Relatives are welcome to join us for lunch or just the sherry in the afternoon."