



retirement living Issue 5

Summer Newsletter

Rays of Sunshine

By Lynn Fearn, Managing Director

The thought of the warmer summer days and sunny evenings approaching is guaranteed to raise a smile. As we head into summer, there have been plenty of smiles at Wren Retirement Living homes across the country. It is wonderful to see that infection rates remain low while vaccination rates soar, and this has enabled us to gently ease visiting restrictions further. As of 17th May, government guidance allows care home residents to choose up to 5 designated people to visit them indoors, with a maximum of 2 at any one time. Thanks to the dedication of our care teams and the patience and understanding of our residents' families, expanding our indoor visiting arrangements to allow for the extra designated visitors has been a smooth and very welcome transition. Also, as you read in this newsletter, we have been working closely with our green fingered residents to ensure our gardens are beautiful spaces to enjoy with loved ones on sunny days this summer. In another eagerly awaited milestone, many of our homes have been able to safely welcome their professional hairdressers back through the doors. Following a negative lateral flow test result and adhering to strict infection control procedures, our visiting hairstylists have been treating our residents to some regular pampering. The smiles in the photos you will see further on indicate just how well received this bit of normality has been!

Over the past 12 months, while our teams have gone

to great lengths to ensure our residents continue to live safe and meaningful lives, we, as an organisation, have been working hard to support the mental and physical wellbeing of our

staff through a challenging period. As restrictions continue to ease, we turn our focus to supporting our teams in achieving healthier lifestyles. We know that many team members are working towards giving up smoking. In a move to support our staff to achieve this, from 1st June all outside areas around Wren Retirement Living premises will become non-smoking environments.

Once again, I would like to thank our teams for their unwavering dedication during this difficult period. Not only have they continued to deliver an exceptional level of care for our residents despite the challenges of a pandemic, but they have also been working through our training and improvement programmes with great enthusiasm. With that, a huge congratulations to the team at Featherston House for recently achieving 100% training compliance! I am confident that the teams at our other homes will reach this landmark in quick succession.



Happy 100th Birthday

Joan Collier, one of the residents at Westerham Place care home, recently celebrated her 100th birthday, and the home did everything they could to ensure she had a lovely day.

Joan marked the special day with a small celebration in the home, based on Quebec Square in Westerham, and even had the chance to see her nominated visitor, daughter Carolyn Guinness. One of the most memorable parts of Joan's birthday, and something she had been looking forward to for a while, was receiving her birthday card from the Queen.

Joan and Carolyn enjoyed an afternoon tea celebration together, and Joan's Westerham Place family all sang 'happy birthday' with one member of staff even dancing the cancan for her!

Joan often shares stories with fellow residents and staff members about her life, and her wonderful husband, Jim. In 1949, Joan married Jim, whom she was married to for 49 years before he sadly passed away in 1998. Joan worked for many years as a civil servant in Southport.

Joan said: "I've had such a wonderful time celebrating with the staff and my daughter at Westerham Place. This year was very different as I was unable to see lots of my family like I had hoped. The best part was being able to hold my daughter's hand. I also loved receiving the telegram from the Queen.

"I put my long life down to my strong genes, but also, red wine! I also love spending a lot of time with my family making memories, something that definitely keeps me going!"



A Taste of India

Staff at Linden House care home in Epsom received deliveries of authentic Indian cuisine from a local college student.

Elliott O'Byrne, 17, has been helping his mum Sudesh, owner of Good Evening Food Ltd, to cook and provide authentic Indian lunches for the care home staff during lockdown as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. Elliott, who is in Upper 6th at Epsom College, has been helping to make dishes each week including Chana Masala with pea pilau rice, chicken tikka with veg and nut pilau rice, tarka dal and mixed veg pilau rice, meat and vegetable samosas and much more.

Elliott and his mum deliver the food to the home and leave it on a table outside, neatly packed, labelled and with clear instructions on how to heat up each dish.

Elliott said: "I have really enjoyed helping my mum to cook authentic Indian dishes and it has been very rewarding to give something back to the hardworking staff at Linden House.

"As part of my Duke of Edinburgh award, I wanted to do something for my local community, and this seemed like the perfect opportunity to do something worthwhile for key workers."

Paula Windmill, home manager at Linden House, said: "We were delighted to receive the delicious dishes from Elliott and his mum, they went down a treat on our breaks!

"We have a wonderful relationship with Sudesh already, and it's lovely to see her son is just as good a cook as she is! We wish Elliott the best of luck with his Duke of Edinburgh Award, I'm sure he will do great!"



"I've Got a Golden Ticket!"

The team at Wren House care home have been discovering golden tickets all over the home as they have been going about their daily tasks. After nearly 12 months of the coronavirus pandemic and going above and beyond to keep their residents safe, the management team decided to give the care staff a well-deserved boost.

For three days in a row, Wren House team members were delighted as golden tickets appeared while carrying out their jobs. Each ticket entitled the lucky winner to a prize intended to enhance wellbeing. Prizes included everything from beauty products to chocolate, wine to motivational keepsakes.

The Wren House residents have been playing along too, excited to find out who would win next and throwing in a few red herrings along the way!

Lynnette Boon, home manager of Wren House, said: "The idea came to me after I stumbled across Charlie and the Chocolate Factory on Netflix one weekend. I thought that the golden ticket idea would be perfect to create a wonderful buzz amongst the staff. Also, it seemed the ideal opportunity to thank them for all of their hard work and dedication in keeping our residents safe during a very difficult year.

"The team were really excited and couldn't wait to find the next ticket. They kept asking for clues, but I gave nothing away!"

To ensure the contest followed the infection control procedures, the tickets were laminated and cleaned between each contact.

Wren House's golden ticket hunt has been so well received it will now run once a week.



Featherton House Has Got Green Fingers

Throughout springtime, many of our residents across all our homes have been exploring the homes' gardens and have started planting lots of flowers and produce.

The residents at Featherton House have thoroughly enjoyed being outdoors, planting lots of lovely flowers in the home's walled garden as well as repotting and tidying up the greenhouse.

Growing produce and flowers at the home helps to give residents, who enjoy gardening, something to take control of and look after. Any fruits, vegetables and herbs grown by the residents are used by the Featherton House chef, which definitely brings a sense of pride to the people who helped to grow them.

One of the Featherton House residents who thoroughly enjoys her time outdoors is Heather Starling, who got her love of gardening from her dad, who worked tidying and organising other people's gardens.

She said: "What I love about gardening is the fresh air and sunshine. It gives you a good feeling when you see your work come to fruition."

Fellow resident Jock Pirie said: Gardening keeps you active and gives you something nice to think about. Also, it is very rewarding when you start to see your seeds sprouting."

He added: "I hope we grow more produce for the home. It would be great to grow fruit and veg all year round for us to use in the kitchen here."



Garden Renovation for Westerham Place



As the weather improves and the nights get lighter, we are turning our attention to our homes' outdoor spaces.

It is very important that our gardens provide a calm and welcoming atmosphere and that they are accessible for all residents.

At Westerham Place, we have invested in improving the home's second enclosed garden area. This garden is a fully accessible dementia friendly garden, that has raised flower beds and planters, with seating and sensory elements. The garden has been planted with bold colours, scented perennials and grasses that rustle in the wind.

Westerham Place's other garden is an enclosed, fully accessible outdoor space with newly planted raised borders.

We want to create an environment where our residents feel truly at home, and we actively encourage any gardening they may wish to do. Pottering about in the garden is a very therapeutic activity and also helps to keep our residents' bones, muscles and joints healthy.

Claire Davis, home manager at Westerham Place care home, said: "The new gardens have made such a difference, our residents absolutely love them! Now that the weather is improving, it is great to have safe and beautiful outdoor spaces for our residents to sit and relax. Many of our residents have enjoyed walks in the new gardens with their nominated visitors and the sense of normality that brings.

"It has been wonderful to see our residents getting involved in the project too. One even planned what should be planted and where! The new gardens also became a deciding factor for one of our new residents. With a love of flora and fauna, they couldn't wait to move in and spend time in the new outdoor spaces."

Residents Get Back to the Salon



Throughout the pandemic, and due to lockdown restrictions, the Wren Retirement homes' usual hairdressers have been unable to visit. Despite this, unlike most of the population, the Linden House residents have still been able to enjoy regular trips to the salon.

The Epsom care home is lucky to have its own in-house salon, so residents do not have to go far. Thanks to this, the Linden House team have done a fantastic job in keeping hair and beauty treatments a part of weekly life. A good old chat, a wash, and a blow dry have gone a long way in enhancing wellbeing during visiting restrictions.

However, given the news that the hair professionals would be returning, appointments were soon snapped up! In the last week Janine and Rachael from J I Hairdressing, have set up in the Linden House Salon to treat residents to their first cut and colour in 12 months. Jeanette, a resident of Linden House, said: "Having my hair done made me feel a lot happier and made me look younger." Fellow resident Christine added: "I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and liked what the hairdresser did."

Following her appointment with the hairdresser, Anne added: "I thought she did my hair very well and I felt better for having it look so nice."

In line with current government guidance, hairdressers are now allowed to visit care homes following a dynamic risk assessment. With strict infection control procedures in place for the visiting professional, including a negative LFD Covid test, residents can enjoy the pampering they have missed.

The news of the change in lockdown restrictions around hairdressers was well received by the residents at Featherton House, who dearly missed their hairdresser Dawn.

Dawn has since been welcomed into the home's newly renovated salon with open arms, ready to transform our residents' lockdown hairdos and keep them looking their best.

Residents were still able to visit the home's salon during

lockdown, with kind members of the Featherton House care team offering to keep their hair in tip-top condition, but it certainly didn't beat Dawn's professional experience!

Resident Jean Waddup said: "It's lovely have our hair done again, especially when you have short hair it's nice to keep on top of it, keep it looking lovely."

Another resident, Heather Starling, commented: "It's just wonderful, it makes me feel like a new woman!"

Resident Jane Kellet, who is a keen visitor to the Featherton House hair salon, said: "I used to have my hair done every two weeks, so to have our fabulous hairdresser Dawn back is great. I don't feel myself without my perm done and my hair in place!"

