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## Aged stretch it out with the young

Andrews House in Trafalgar, Victoria has become one of the first homes to be awarded a Better Practice Award by the Agency. The award was granted for a program which encourages residents to take regular walks with young volunteers to improve the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of residents.

Staff in Andrews House

found that residents were not keen to initiate their own exercise even when individual exercise programs were developed in conjunction with their physiotherapist. Libby Reeves, the home's principal carer, said: "I believe that people of all ages are more likely to exercise if it's a group activity". So she designed an innovative walking program, *Stretch It Out*.



L to R Justin Ainsworth, Grahame Fancourt and Jake Malady Stretch it Out together

"Initially we were only concerned with the physical wellbeing of our residents, but when the idea was met with growing excitement from the residents, I realised it would

have a positive impact on mental health, so that also became an important part of the program. It was very encouraging to see the smiles on our residents' faces," Libby said.

Libby gained feedback on the idea from residents, staff, volunteers, the local pharmacist, naturopath, GP and physiotherapist before setting out a project vision, expected outcomes and an action plan in consultation with residents.

*Cont'd page 2*

## Just a word...

2006 promises to be another busy year for the Agency and for the aged care sector generally with a number of activities being planned.

As this is the first edition of *The Standard* this year, I would like to take this opportunity to find out your views on the ways in which the Agency communicates, and in particular, on *The Standard*.

This issue of *The Standard* contains a feedback survey which I encourage you to fill in and send back so that we can evaluate our



communications and look at ways we can improve.

In this issue of *The Standard* we feature the first recipients of the Better Practice in Aged Care Awards. This will become a regular feature of *The Standard* as more homes receive the award by demonstrating how they improve the lives of their residents.

Planning is under way for this year's series of Better Practice events. See page 6 for event dates and locations. We are looking for speakers to present at the events on a range of topics, including strategic planning; falls prevention; governance; evidence-based practice; restraint and cultural and linguistic diversity.

For information on submitting a paper, go to our website, [www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au) or call your local office on 1800 288 025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Brandon'.

**Mark Brandon**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## Better 2006 Practice

**Adelaide**  
25-26 May 2006

**Hobart**  
29-30 June 2006

**Brisbane**  
13-14 July 2006

**Sydney**  
24-25 August 2006

**Perth**  
19-20 October 2006

**Melbourne**  
23-24 November 2006

### Calling for papers for Better Practice events

We are looking for a wide variety of speakers from a range of homes large, small, metropolitan, rural, remote, private and not-for-profit. If you think you have a great idea or program that you'd like to present at one of our Better Practice events, go to [www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au) or phone your local state office on 1800 288 025.

Presentation topics include:

- Mobility and dexterity
- Strategic planning
- Sleep
- Ageing in place
- Customer service/resident focus
- Falls prevention
- Governance
- Complementary and other medicines
- Evidence-based practice
- Dementia behaviour management
- Information and communications technology
- Restraint
- Education and training
- New residents
- Cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD).

Willing residents were assessed and placed into walking groups according to ability and two young volunteers from the home's existing volunteer program were recruited to help on the walks. As the popularity of the walks grew, other volunteers were recruited to take residents on walks whilst 'the boys', as they are known, were at school.

Since the project started, residents have not looked back, with 12 currently actively engaged with the program and others walking independently. Residents in wheelchairs are also included in the program with volunteers recording the number of steps taken. Walks of a suitable distance have resulted in a 50% decrease in depression and are good for physiological and psychological health as well as bringing social benefits to residents.

Some residents who were unable to walk further than from their bedroom to the dining room are now frequently walking outside with the help of the volunteers, with one gentleman walking for four

kilometres and now able to regularly walk to visit his sister.

The program is very straightforward and has huge benefits for residents, by allowing them to become empowered and by focusing on their needs. It is cost effective with the only purchase for the program being of several pedometers so that residents are able to record their own progress. It is this simplicity that Libby believes has made the project so successful. "We had to think of something cost-effective that would improve the lives of our residents, and anyone can take part in this program which is why it has proved so popular."

The two high school boys who volunteer for the project are highly regarded by both staff and residents and their leadership has resulted in a high level of enthusiasm for the scheme, as well as strengthening links between Andrews House and the local community. Local publicity for the *Stretch It Out* program has led to staff at the home now leading a weekly walking group for other older people in Trafalgar,

with residents joining this group as well.

Special achievements such as the first time a resident walks into the town are recorded through photos to mark the occasion, with residents taking great pride in these achievements when talking with friends and family. Residents have decided to showcase the program at the next 'Battle of Trafalgar' festival by walking with volunteers and staff with specially-designed shirts and caps.

Libby would suggest that any other homes considering a similar physical exercise project should launch it at the coolest time of the year to ensure participation, and to designate a specific member of staff to co-ordinate the program and volunteers.

**For more information on the project, contact Libby Reeves at [libby.reeves@wghg.com.au](mailto:libby.reeves@wghg.com.au)**

**For more information on the Better Practice Awards, go to [www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au) or contact Jennie Day [jennie.day@accreditation.org.au](mailto:jennie.day@accreditation.org.au)**

## Innovative approach to management of skin tears - Lakeside Aged Care, Redcliffe, Western Australia

After a suggestion to consider alternative treatments of skin tears was made at a staff meeting, an analysis by Lakeside Aged Care found conventional management of skin tears to be slow and often painful for residents. After consulting residents and their families, a trial was carried out to test the

effectiveness of Emu Oil, skin repair oil and skin repair cream. To the delight of residents, the new treatment healed tears more quickly than conventional treatments, and also strengthened surrounding skin. As a result, Emu Oil is now widely used and its use has also been extended



*Resident Mrs Ionnee Johnson, known as Amy, outside Lakeside Aged Care*

to treat persistent ulcers successfully, and there is now a higher awareness of how skin tears occur.

## Purpose-designed residential respite model - Alwyndor Aged Care, Hove, South Australia

The respite centre, which became operational in May 2005, was developed following the analysis of a pilot and designed in consultation with Carer Support and Respite Service and the Alzheimers' Association.

The centre has 11 beds available all year and meets the needs of respite clients who often don't enjoy being in a home designed for permanent residents, and meets the needs of permanent residents who often resent the interruption to their lives made by respite clients.

The centre is designed to avoid de-skilling of clients and allows them to maintain community links whilst giving their carers a break.



*City of Holdfast Bay Band playing at the opening of the Alwyndor Respite Unit in February 2005*



*Opening of Alwyndor Respite Unit in February 2005 (from left) Dennis Chamberlain, Corporate & Economic General Manager, City of Holdfast Bay, Ken Rollond, Mayor, City of Holdfast Bay, The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Ageing, Carlien Coulthate, Chairperson, Alwyndor Board of Management, Rob Donaldson, CEO, City of Holdfast Bay.*

## Quality management system - Redland Bay Nursing Home, Queensland

After a period of assessment of available Quality Management Systems in 1996, Redland Bay Nursing Home prepared for, and introduced, an ISO Quality Management System into their service in 1997. It quickly became the platform for a more efficient, transparent and accountable way of managing the aged care service.

The home's mature ISO system allows key



*L to R Mark Fleming, proprietor, Rosanne Fleming, EDON, Ken Jones, the Agency's QLD state manager and Ann Kingston, DON*

personnel to have confidence that the system and processes will continue without their direct intervention, but will alert them to any potential concerns.

This has significantly diminished many of the time constraints experienced in aged care facilities, and made it possible for creative energy, research and innovation to be expressed ensuring optimal quality of life for all residents.

## Falls prevention program - The Gardens, Claremont, Tasmania

This home set up a committee to consider ways to reduce the level of resident falls. The falls prevention program was then developed which saw a 25% decrease in the number of falls each month. The committee now meets on a monthly basis to discuss patterns in falls and how they can be prevented. New residents are risk-assessed and if found to be likely to suffer from a fall, arrangements in their room are altered accordingly, and any necessary items, such as a touch lamp, are bought by the family. The program now means that residents become increasingly mobile, resulting in higher confidence and sociability.

## The end of an era



*Resident Monica Swarbrick heading off on a 50km road trip to her 90th birthday party*

One of the final Higher Ratings Awards to be achieved was by Abbeyfield Hostel in Williamstown, South Australia. This hostel is a small aged care service that provides emphasis on

community and resident focus, with ownership of the service by residents and volunteers emerging as a key feature.

Strategic planning of the hostel, developed in conjunction with staff, residents, volunteers and the local community, has resulted in a range of measures being taken to improve the lives of residents. These include a fellowship group, suitable roles in the running of the hostel being allocated to residents, a resident of the week scheme and an exercise group.

# Young and old connect in Marangaroo, Western Australia

A project to help Year 9 students from Girrawheen High School connect with elderly people with dementia was organised by occupational therapist Hilary Lee, and art worker Norma Hatchett, at John Bryant House, a Uniting Church facility in Marangaroo, WA. Students worked with residents in pairs to produce a hessian tapestry representing special times from the residents' lives. This was made possible by a grant from Catalyst, Community Arts Investment Fund, and allowed the sharing of ideas between students and residents. It was an opportunity for residents to reminisce and for students

to learn from the wisdom of the older people's experiences.



*The Hon Julie Bishop MP at the unveiling of the tapestry in October 2005*

Staff found that the residents became more and more confident, became more communicative and energised, and became capable with the new medium. Feedback from the students was extremely positive, with

many who had expressed doubts about the project finding their perceptions about elderly people with dementia changing for the positive.

The project found that people with dementia can benefit from learning new skills in a supportive environment, allowing creativity and a more positive approach to life.

The Federal Minister for Ageing, The Hon Julie Bishop MP, unveiled the new tapestry on 25 October 2005 and presented the students with certificates recognising their participation in the community arts project.

## Helping the kids at Christmas



For the second year running, residents of Ruckers Hill Aged Care in Northcote, Victoria, collected new toys for under-privileged children. Bikers from the Motorbike Association of Australia collected the huge number of gifts to distribute them in time for Christmas.

# The sandwich problem for daughters

For the majority of women who combine paid work with a greater share of childcare and domestic work, the current “double shift” is likely to become a “triple shift” in the future as they care for their ageing parents as well.

According to Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, and Commissioner responsible for Age Discrimination, Pru Goward, because women are having children later in life they are also increasing the likelihood of having an overlap between caring for teenage children and caring for ageing parents. She told the Better Practice conference in Perth on 10 November that this is being called the “sandwich problem”.

She said this was one part of the looming crisis

as the population ages and the question of who will care for the growing number of senior Australians. Already, of parents currently receiving informal primary care, an astounding 91% are cared for by their daughters.

“With a generation of women raised to expect many years of education, a rewarding career, an equitable partnership and children if they choose, it is not clear whether they will be willing to continue this level of informal care,” she said.

She said workplaces will need to be flexible enough to accommodate the family responsibilities of both female and male older workers if they are to continue to work in their mature years.

“Without workplace flexibilities and quality part-time work options for older workers, balancing paid work with caring for family members such as spouses, ageing parents and/or grandchildren will be a difficult task.”

Ms Goward mentioned the ANZ Bank for its employment policies which now allowed staff time off for caring for aged parents.

She said the “*Striking the Balance*” project of the Commission aimed to highlight intergenerational issues, such as aged care demands and choices, so that millions of Australians providing care are properly supported, now and into the future, as well as ensuring that the aged in our society feel supported to make lifestyle choices to suit them.

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