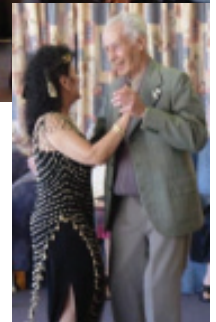


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- Profile: Sharon Davis, NT Manager

FRONT COVER: Smiling faces and happy residents at Moonta

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The art of cathedral building

The amalgamation of two facilities and lots of staff all working as individuals rather than as a team were just two ingredients in a mix which led to some poor audit reports for a small country aged care home.

“They were rock cutters, and there was no vision that we could even put up a wall, let alone the vision of building a

cathedral,” laughed CEO Peter Aitchison at the recent South Australian Better Practice event.

He said he and some of the staff had been inspired by last year’s presentation about culture change and customer service by consultant Di Adamson. She told the audience the ‘vision’ anecdote about how some labourers, when asked, said they were digging a trench or cutting rocks. Others replied that although they knew they were cutting rocks it was to build a wall. But a rare few, when asked, replied they were



A masquerade party in the dementia unit

Cont'd page 2

Just a word...

Innovative work practices and benefits for aged care residents continue to be the highlights of the first two of the 2005 Better Practice events.

All of those who filled in the feedback forms for the Adelaide event in May said they would be able to implement new ideas and practices, and had been motivated to pursue better practice.

It is feedback like this which reconfirms our belief there is a benefit in sharing practical ideas amongst those who work in the aged care sector. The Better Practice events also showcase to the wider community that there is



much to be proud of. The sessions also build credibility where we can get positive media coverage.

Two of the speakers who seemed to strike a chord with the audiences were 98 year old actor Margery Irving and her story about what she would like to see in an aged care home, and Peter Aitchison's story about

uniting the Moonta aged care team. Their stories are featured in this issue.

This month we are preparing for the NSW and ACT event at the Novotel at Homebush, to be officially opened by the Minister for Ageing, the Hon Julie Bishop on 21 July. The range of topics includes responses to how others have made improvements to clinical care, medication management and oral and dental care, as well as practical ideas about assisting residents who cannot communicate and assisting those with dementia.

People have now had a chance to look at the new on-line application of accreditation form. The feedback has been positive, with a few calls to the technical help line in the first month. It is all part of our goal to reduce the paperwork required for accreditation to that which would be present for any quality management system in any business.

Mark Brandon
Chief Executive Officer

Facts at a glance

As at 31 March 2005

No of accredited homes in Australia	2,935
Accredited for three years or more	2,679
No. of homes fully compliant	2,876
No of homes with non-compliance in one outcome	35

From 1 January to 31 March the Agency conducted:

Site audits	77
Review audits	23
Support contacts	956
Spot checks	98

Cont'd from page 1

cutting rocks to build walls, which would form part of a beautiful cathedral.

Peter said he was inspired by this talk and returned to Moonta, 200 kilometres north of Adelaide, and told the Moonta Health and Aged Care Services Board and senior staff they had to start building a cathedral.

In reality this meant the group examined a long list of 'symptoms', the causes of the symptoms and put forward the outcomes they wanted to achieve. He said it was painful but it had to be done. The list included lack of staff commitment, lack of communication, poor feedback, people working as individuals and not as a team and that accreditation was not seen as being relevant to the daily operation. The merger with the nearby Parkview Hostel and a 'them and us' attitude as well as absence of senior management were listed as causes.

Di Adamson helped the organisation paint a picture of what outcomes they wanted – a picture of their 'cathedral' that

included stronger management, improved morale, teamwork, and building on their own strengths.

Peter called a meeting of all potential cathedral builders. He provided lunch and it was voluntary to attend. And they worked through their steps of 'we need more of, we need less of and

What he now sees is smiling faces and happy residents.

we need to do this differently...' And what would be done and what would be measured and fixing a date of completion.

That was over 12 months ago. The shared vision of "Because people matter we care" has translated into the staff taking risks, experimenting, being innovative and generating winning ways. He says the home now celebrates small victories and praises and appreciates contributions made by staff. He said

everyone has learnt to listen and value feedback.

The home has clarified roles, surveyed staff to seek out areas for improvement, has reviewed and changed its orientation package; set in place team guidelines; started workplace meetings; developed a rewards program, a staff development scheme and redeveloped their vision, mission and values.

What he now sees is smiling faces and happy residents. He says staff at the home are having fun and in doing so the residents have greater interaction and sense the positive change in the atmosphere. There is pride in the home and staff now look forward to coming to work.

Peter says the ideas keep on coming, but the home has now earned a high reputation in the community and is now networking with others in the region to gain even more benefits of sharing ideas.

The cathedral has become a reality.

Love, compassion and dignity at 98

A swimming pool? A room with a spa? Five star luxury? What do potential residents look for in an aged care home?

Speaking at the Agency's first Better Practice event for 2005 in Adelaide in May, 98 year old Margery Irving explained that it was none of these things.

With her warmth and charisma, Margery gave an insight into what potential residents of aged care homes are looking for. (Margery does not live in an aged care home which she calls "one of those places.")

She spoke about about the basic things she would look for including physical appearance and location (suburb, outdoor appearance, an airy room and a window with a view). Then she spoke of what she sees as the most important ingredients she would look for in a home: compassion and dignity.



Margery Irving at the Better Practice event in Adelaide

"As I walk in I want to feel a shawl of love around my shoulders. I'd want to feel that it's a good place. Every person that walks into a home is so vulnerable. They are giving up a home that they have probably had for 60 or more years and it seems like they've lost everything. It's a terrible feeling so it's very important what those first impressions are."

"It is important that people coming into these homes are met with compassion and dignity. We must never take away the dignity of old people," she said.

As Margery spoke, she made clear the apprehension and sadness that many

residents feel upon first entering a home.

"Going into one of those places, it's like you've lost a skin. You're really so vulnerable. You're so unhappy and you've got to be brought out of that."

Margery also believes that a family atmosphere is important. "I wouldn't want to be in my room all the time. I would like to feel I was part of a family. That's very important to me."

Taking care of residents' interests through such things as shopping trips, committee meetings, readers' clubs and exercise classes were also some things Margery highlighted in her talk.

Although a lot of what Margery had to say is not new, her talk struck a chord with the audience. Her final words "Please God, I don't want to go into one" emphasise how frightening a home can be and how important compassion and helping to maintain dignity really are.

Call for assessors



NSW assessors Bridget Paul and Leonie Tinslay (right) on the job

The Agency is increasing its team of aged care quality assessors ready for the peak in accreditation activity in the next 18 months.

Although expressions of interest have been received from many interested in contract work, there are also term-defined and permanent positions to fill with varying start dates.

The full list of criteria is on the Agency website www.accreditation.aust.com

Experience in aged care

or health and relevant qualifications such as nursing or allied health are not essential but would be advantageous.

The Agency will provide training as assessors for those selected for the permanent positions. Experience as an assessor can benefit your career in aged care.

If you are interested in training and employment as an aged care quality assessor, send your brief resume to: careers@accreditation.aust.com

Celebrating Chinese culture and cuisine

St Ann's Home in Hobart Tasmania, has embarked on a cultural program for Chinese residents that has had the added benefit of enlightening non-Chinese residents also.

The home introduced aspects of the Chinese culture into the home, with a monthly Chinese lunch club including residents and other older Chinese members of the community showcasing their language, music, food and traditional pastimes.

The residents have so far enjoyed a live recital on the Gu Zheng (a Chinese table harp), as well as delicacies such as black sesame rolls, Chinese rice pudding, and dried scallop and chicken porridge.

For the Chinese participants it is about holding on to an important part of their culture. For the others, they get to learn a bit more about their Chinese friends.

Oral help - Better Practice event

Oral and dental health was one of the best received sessions at the South Australian Better Practice event. In particular a session presented by Anne Fricker Project Manager of the SA Dental Service outlined how vital good oral health is to older people's general health.

Anne talked about Oral Health Protocols for aged care facilities. These are available on the website www.sadental.sa.gov.au

Profile: Sharon Davis

Job title:

Regional Manager for Frontier Services (Northern Territory)

Sharon recently received the Louis Ariotti Award for her role in developing aged care services in the Northern Territory and the Kimberleys. The Award recognises innovation and excellence in health services such as research, policy, leadership and service development.

Describe your job

To support managers of all our agencies in the Northern Territory and Kimberleys including residential care and community care programs. I'm also responsible for the recruitment of senior positions and the development of new programs.

Career background

I've been in various nursing positions since I was 16. I have worked in management roles in the public system and in private aged care in NSW and Northern Territory.

Challenges of your job

Not enough time and not enough resources.

What is different about working in aged care in the Northern Territory?

The Territory is home to a vast array of different characters with different needs. Often our



Assistant NT Manager Pauline Wardle (left) Sharon Davis, NT Regional Manager (right)

approach to aged care is different to other states because of these differences. For example: we became aware of an older man, living in difficult conditions, who was at risk of being moved to an aged care facility due to dehydration and poor general health. The problem was that he really didn't want to go into care. His address, was literally 'The Humpy, on the Pipeline.' We were able to come up with a solution where

staff delivered fresh water and food to him daily, and for six months we were able to maintain him in his own home – the place he desperately wanted to be. Later, he moved to a cabin in Juninga, an aged care facility in Darwin, but he returns for short stays in his own humpy when he needs to, and we're still able to give him what he needs to have true quality of life.

Your greatest achievement

There isn't one that stands out. At least once a week something happens that gives me a real buzz usually when I see staff achieving their goals.

What inspires you?

The people who hold these positions: the DONs who give 180 per cent of themselves to their clients. I think they are amazing women. I do the easy bit, they do the hard slog.

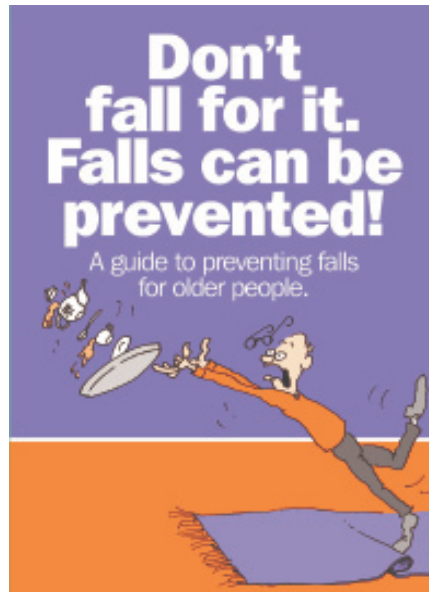
Do you or someone you know fit the bill?

If you believe that you or someone at the home you work or live in deserves a mention in our newsletter send us a note and let us know. Contact the Editor by email, fax or letter.

New government initiatives

Two initiatives designed to improve the care and safety of older people have been launched by the Minister for Ageing, Julie Bishop.

The first is a clinical leadership scheme under which, the government is sponsoring eight clinical fellowships in aged care in 2005 at a cost of more than \$150,000. The fellowships are awarded to health professionals working in residential aged care. They will receive advanced education and training in practical approaches to



identifying and using clinical evidence in the care of older people.

The second initiative is a booklet entitled *Don't fall for it. Falls can be prevented!* Aimed at

older people, this guide aims to prevent falls by making them aware of the dangers of falls.

The guide highlights three ways to help prevent and manage falls:

- Fall proof yourself - personal factors and how to reduce risk
- Fall-proof your surroundings - practical ideas on preventing falls.
- Just in case - what to do in the event of a fall.

For a copy of the guide, contact the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853.

Here's what you had to say about *The Standard*

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our recent reader survey. We are now looking at ways to implement the suggestions we have received.

■ 93% of our readers receive *The Standard* by mail however 129 respondents (24%) would prefer to receive it by email. Respondents who have indicated this preference will be added

to our email distribution list.

■ *The Standard* is widely read across staff in aged care homes with DONs being the largest audience (83%) followed by 66% of nurses. Residents are the least likely to read *The Standard*.

■ Over half the respondents surveyed (51%) indicated they would like to receive more copies of *The Standard*. As

a result we have increased the number of copies of we are now sending out.

■ 76% of respondents have said they would like to receive more articles related to expected outcomes and 61% want to read more accreditation news. We will be printing more of these articles.

■ More than 20% responded to the survey.

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