



Preparations afoot for another Art and Craft Show

The Cardinal Stepinac Village annual Art and Craft Show is always an eagerly anticipated event for many aged care facilities around NSW.

Having run for many years in Lidcombe and attracting entries from all over the state, the event has now moved to Edensor Park's King Tom Club, and it is hoped will see even more participants than previous years.

This is a result of the hard work put in by CEO of the Cardinal Stepinac Village, Matt Smolic and his activity team.

"Last year we had around 20 categories of exhibitions which were divided into individual and group events," says Matt. "This year this will probably be extended to even more, although we are trying to streamline it slightly as we do not want to make it too confusing."

With categories ranging from sewing and knitting to ceramics and photography, Matt says that he is open to suggestions from new participants but that the main thing is to provide fun and excitement for aged care residents who are keen to demonstrate their artistic flair alongside like-minded others.

"These art and crafts they will be demonstrating may be skills they have been practising with pride for many years.


"It is great to see their faces light up on the day of the event, when everyone's hard work comes to fruition and is recognised for their achievements.


"It also provides them with a lot of self-esteem when they get to talk to the judges about their individual entries."





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This month the focus of The Standard is on leisure interests and activities. This is the area in which many people form an opinion about a home – questions about activities and how they are planned and evaluated are common among residents and relatives looking for a home.

We would expect to see active involvement from residents and relatives in the planning and decision making in regards to leisure interests and activities. It is those homes that do this well that stand out from others and contribute to a greater quality of life for residents.

There are many great examples of homes that demonstrate better practice in leisure interests and activities. Some of them are on our website after receiving a Better Practice in Aged Care Award.

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

Mark Brandon,
Chief Executive Officer

Reminder

Have you provided us with a corporate email address?

Recently we wrote to CEOs and designated contacts to ask for corporate email addresses as we move to communicate with homes primarily via email.

If you have not already responded to the letter, please provide designated contact name, position title, home's name/s and

email address to updatecontact@accreditation.org.au or fax (02) 9633 2422.

To ensure effective management of email communication, it is important that the contact email addresses we hold on record are corporate as opposed to individual email addresses. It is also important to maintain a management process around the receipt of emails and forwarding onto the relevant people.



Photos of each event are sent out to all participants, including those who may not have been able to make it due to ill health. "We don't leave anyone out of the event," says Matt. "It is important that everyone feels involved and we are sending out regular mail-outs so that people can contribute their ideas for this year's event."

Mrs Miklos, manager of St Elizabeth Home in Dean Park NSW, which has entered the event before, says she was really happy with the way it was organised last year. "The exhibits were really lovely and it meant so much to our residents to take part. "They all thought the cakes were delicious too!"

The Annual Arts and Crafts Exhibition will take place this year on 7, 8, 9 October. Potential exhibitors are asked to email Matt on ccar4657@bigpond.net.au for further information on the application procedure.

Dolls not just for child's play

Dolls have proved to be more useful than just play things at Blue Care's Kingscliff Gardens Aged Care Facility.

The Kingscliff NSW aged care facility has implemented the use of special therapy dolls as part of its behavioural therapy and wellbeing of its dementia residents.

In undertaking sensory-based activities with the dolls, residents have experienced wide-ranging benefits which have included a reduction in loneliness and communication difficulties, says diversional therapist Sue Woods.

She says the facility first started looking at doll therapy two years ago, when it discovered significant research suggesting that it can help in some areas of rehabilitative nursing.

"Many of our residents have really benefited from the dolls," says Sue. "Our dementia residents often suffer from severe feelings of agitation.

"Sometimes, something as simple as putting a doll into bed with an agitated lady can really work wonders in calming her down."

Sue says that sentence structure has also been seen to be improved amongst residents with dementia. "Communication is often tricky for these people, but we find the dolls have given many residents a focus in their interactions and this really improves their sentence flow."

She says the dolls have also had the benefit of breaking down sexual stereotypes. "I was really pleased to see that even plenty of our male residents are happy to interact with the dolls. I think this is because, what with their long-term memories being so good, it really brings back their recollections of their own child-rearing days."



Sue says simple things such as taking a walk around the facility takes on a new meaning when residents are able to take the dolls out in a pram.

"Rather than simply pacing around in an agitated way – as residents with dementia often do – it's great to see residents gaining real therapeutic benefit."

Using the dolls on an ad-hoc basis, Sue says the therapy is very much resident dictated. "Staff simply get the dolls out during any of our other leisure activities, as and when residents like.

"We also use an evaluation calendar to record comments from people on how well the therapy is going. It works really well for everyone and resident families have also been impressed with our results."

That's amore

Proving it's better late than never, Beatrice Borgia, resident of San Carlo Homes for the Aged in South Morang, Victoria, has recorded her own CD of Italian songs.

Since her youth, Beatrice has been involved in church groups and choirs and was happy to entertain other residents with her voice.

Tracy, head of diversional therapy, found a recording studio to help Beatrice in her dream to become a recording artist.

The selection of songs comprised of a variety of Italian pop songs – the CD is titled 'Beatrice Borgia at San Carlo' and will be on sale at San Carlo Homes for the Aged.



Remembering, celebrating and dreaming together



Remembering, Celebrating and Dreaming was a creative project, which, last year, brought together the residents of Emmaus Residential Aged Care with year 5 and 6 children of the local school, St Pius.

Deidre Moran, director of Mercy Aged Care in Brisbane, Queensland, says it was discovered that many of Emmaus' residents had an abundance of stories to tell from their earlier lives. "Our residents had lots of exciting tales to tell and memories to share and it seemed a shame that they did not always have an audience to share them with."

The aged care facility got the chance to team up with St Pius, in order that the 11 and 12 year old children could indulge in craft activities with the residents, as well as indulge in some personal storytelling.

Over the course of a few months, small groups of the students were put together with one or two residents who would pick a particular story about their lives.

"It was really beautiful to see the kids hanging on every word of the residents' stories," says Deidre. "Stories covered anecdotes ranging from how many cows someone used to hand milk, to one elderly man's recollections of how he used to use a divining rod to detect where water was on his farm."

For each story, children created a symbol out of clay which were then made into tiles to create a living memory between the two age groups.

"At the end we held an open day so that everyone could see what had gone on. It was really a great experience for the residents and a real legacy for the future."

Deidre says that where residents found it hard to participate due to cognitive or communication problems – maybe associated with dementia – small groups were organised with those residents' families on an individual basis, so that they could help them. "In these cases, it was especially nice for the families to find out a little bit more about their relatives' early memories," she says.

Emmaus Residential Aged Care was fortunate in being able to offer the use of a bus for the transport of the children to the facility each week. "The deputy assistant of the school brought the kids to us each week which was really handy."

Unfortunately, says Deidre, some residents found difficulty with dexterity in handling the craft materials that were used as part of the project. "However this was soon resolved, as we found that many of the children were really helpful in helping our residents out. They were fantastic and can't wait for the next project!"

Remembering, Celebrating and Dreaming is set to be held again later this year and will focus around different musical preferences for children and elderly people.

"This project is just the beginning of what we hope will be an ongoing relationship between the residents and our community. It has provided a powerful affirmation of the value of their lives and hopefully, instilled in 50 children an appreciation of older Australians," Deidre says.

Young and old unite for socials and tea

Timbrebongie House in Narromine, NSW has reported success with a special project that provides ongoing benefits for both residents and young people in the community

Joining up with Dubbo-based organisation Breakthrough Projects, the aged care facility has welcomed young people with disabilities to take part in various activities as part of their 'transition to work' program.

Activities officer for Timbrebongie House, Sandra Edmunds explains. "We recently had a young blind girl who came to us once a week, in order to produce 'flash cards' for the local primary school.

"With the help of our residents calling out the words to her, the girl was able to produce Braille on the back of the cards with her Braille machine so that she could then go and help teach the schoolchildren to read," says Sandra.

In this way, residents were given an enjoyable task which helped them to participate within the local community and feel useful at the same time.

Sandra says the idea was also extended to the girl producing cards with which to play picture bingo with the residents, adds Sandra.

The Breakthrough Projects initiative has also seen a young man with cognitive impairment arrive at Timbrebongie House in order to do work experience as a gardener/handyman.

"Again, this was also very successful as it gave our residents a chance to interact with the young man in an informal setting in a way that they are not normally able to," says Sandra.

"Many of our residents really look forward to these young people coming each week and it is great to see the social interaction that takes place."

Regarding the home's residents with dementia, Sandra says that they too gain benefit from the visits, sometimes simply just to "sit and observe them and feel like part of a family."

"We are often sorry to see the youngsters leave but everyone is generally very accepting of it and just glad of new people coming in who they can have a good chat with!"



Sandra says that the program is continuing to run at Timbrebongie House, with a range of new ideas.

"Some young people will come in here and play various games with residents such as 'shoot and shuffle' but on many occasions, just having a cup of tea with a friendly face is all that is needed to light up the face of a resident."

Fun to remember the whole year through

Having residents pose for a calendar is not a new idea but what a lot of fun and enjoyment it brought to the residents, staff and family members of St Hedwig Village in Blacktown NSW.

Themes for the months included Australia Day, skiing, beach babe and Oktoberfest. Residents were all keen to pose in ski jackets, swimming costumes and in German national dress.



Exhibition provides unique insights into local lifestyles

Residents at Churches of Christ Life Care's Roselin Court at Joslin, SA have taken up cameras to provide others with unique insights into their lives.

Through their photographs, nine residents – each with various levels of memory loss or dementia – along with a relative, have demonstrated that memories, even when they begin to fade, are wonderful companions in life.

Each resident was given a camera and the opportunity to travel with trusted companions down their own memory lanes to places that were important in their past.

Life Care, in association with the City of Norwood Payneham and St Peters, Alzheimer's Australia SA and



Avante Australia Media has reproduced their photographs along with written recollections of their colourful lives.

Among the memories were Tom Porter's account of local roads being made of clay and how fruit and vegetables were delivered to homes by horse and cart; Vera Leslie coming to Adelaide from South Africa in 1913 and how her family was referred to as 'white foreigners'; and Bill Morris, who tells of growing up with cerebral palsy and how his mother stitched leather patches into his pants to help him shuffle around on his bottom before he learnt to walk on crutches.

Kosher ice-cream parlour a hit!

Looking for a different way to raise funds for charity, Perth Jewish Aged Home staff made gallons of kosher ice-cream in a variety of flavours and set up their very own ice-cream parlour in the home, complete with 'Greensleeves' music playing in the background.



Bridging the age gap

Riverview Gardens Aged Care in Queensland has adopted local year eight and nine students from St Peter Claver College, who volunteer their spare time to visit residents once a fortnight for afternoon tea and to chat about schooling, sports and family life.

Some of the 20 students who eagerly participate in the program have social and communication difficulties. While the residents love having someone young to talk to about their own schooling and youth, the students' teacher believes that the residents are not the only ones benefiting from the interactions.

Leisure interests and activities

Think about:

- Do you consult with residents, staff and others in assessment, planning and evaluation of leisure interests and activities?
- Do you consider specific cultural or spiritual needs?
- Is there an assessment of the current and previous history of leisure interests and activities for each resident?
- How do you consider any barriers to participation, for example cognitive or communication problems?
- How do you demonstrate how leisure interests and activities complement and assist other care areas?
- Are activities consistent with the individual resident's plan? Do plans include information regarding access, support and a varied program encompassing the needs and preferences of residents?
- Do you regularly evaluate and review the approach taken to ensure participation in leisure interests and activities meets needs and preferences; including monitoring of staff practices and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs?



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Aged Care

Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd

Contact information

The Editor, Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd

PO Box 773, PARRAMATTA, NSW, 2124

email: editor@accreditation.org.au

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