IN THIS ISSUE

Terry Hilder  Out of My Comfort Zone  Palliative Approach to Care  ElderCare Goes to the Show
From the Chief Executive Officer
Jane Pickering

Welcome to the Summer edition of Eldercare Matters

I am delighted to write my first article for Eldercare Matters as the new CEO of Eldercare. I commenced in mid-October, replacing Klaus Zimmermann, who had been with Eldercare as CEO for 12 years. I feel privileged to follow on from Klaus who has made it easy for me to step into the role. He has handed over a high-quality organisation in excellent shape and I look forward to meeting as many residents, staff and volunteers as possible over the next few months.

This appointment is certainly my career highlight. I am very pleased to take up this role and believe that my most important career goal — working in an environment where my own personal values align with my employer’s values — will be achieved in this role.

I have been working in health and aged care for more than 30 years, most recently as CEO of Saint Hilarion Aged Care, a not-for-profit residential aged care and home-care provider in South Australia. Prior to that role, I was the CEO of Domiciliary Care SA for over seven years, and have also held executive appointments at Saint Andrew’s Hospital and Repatriation General Hospital. I have a background as a Registered Nurse and Midwife, as well as in business, education and project management.

In the last edition of Eldercare Matters Klaus wrote about the move to the new head office, and I am pleased to report in this edition that staff have settled into the new premises and it truly is a wonderful environment to work in. Everyone’s hard work during the move appears to have paid off!

New website

We recently launched Eldercare’s new website. It looks fresh and professional and is easy to navigate. It also has several additional features and I urge you to log on and spend some time exploring. Feel free to pass on your feedback or comments to our Marketing and Communications team at web@eldercare.net.au.

Quality and accreditation

I am proud to inform you that we continue to have a successful record with the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, reinforcing our reputation for providing high-quality services. Over the past two months our residential care services at Allambi, Cottage Grove and Oxford had unannounced visits from the Agency. Each site met all of the required standards and all received very positive feedback. Our site at Seaford had a full accreditation assessment in mid-October and whilst we have not yet received the final report from the Agency, the initial feedback was excellent with all 44 quality outcomes across the four standards being met with flying colours. Of particular note were the men’s group work and the education program for staff.

I would like to thank all of the staff involved in the preparation for the assessment for achieving such a great outcome.

Christmas wishes

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas and New Year. For me, this time of year is a time to reflect on how lucky we are in this beautiful country where diversity, respect and freedom is celebrated and embedded in our laws. Christmas is a time when I can celebrate with family and friends and I hope that everyone connected with Eldercare also has the opportunity to celebrate with their friends and family members.

Jane Pickering
CEO | Eldercare Inc.
“At the age of 16 I was selected to represent South Australia in The Australian Surf Titles run in conjunction with the 1956 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

I joined the SA Fire Brigade in 1959 and attended many emergency rescues and worked in the control room. In May of that year I was on duty in the control room at the SA Fire Brigade when three representatives of the South Adelaide Football Club: Max Murtee, Harold Woolsley, and Coach Fos (Foster Neil) Williams, walked into my office and asked me to have a run in the B’s. I told them I wouldn’t play B-grade football — I only had two more A-grade games for Noarlunga Football Club (FC) to get my one hundred games, and life membership.

What were they thinking!

Two weeks later they came down to Thebarton Oval to watch me play. Fos Williams liked what he saw in me that day and put me straight in the side — which had recently lost five games straight.

In the previous year’s grand final Port Adelaide played West Adelaide and we beat them
both in my first two games, so I figured I was right for the next couple of games.

I have a chuckle to myself when I hear people say how Fos yelled and screamed. He wasn’t that type of coach.

I completed my 100 games for Noarlunga FC in 1959 before moving to South Adelaide Football Club. I only played five games, and was beaten by a handful of votes. I would have loved to have won a Mail Medal but guess that wasn’t to be.

In 1964 I left the SA Fire Brigade and took on the position as Assistant Manager of the newly-built Noarlunga Abattoir. Soon after I joined the Thaxted Park Golf Club. I had never hit a golf ball before joining and under the tuition of John Sullivan, who in my opinion was the top professional coach in South Australia at the time, reduced my handicap to “6” in my first year.

In 1974 we purchased Bower Bank, a magnificent property on the outskirts of Deloraine in Tasmania. This property was equipped with a rotary dairy that I closed down. I ran Bower Bank as a sheep and Fat Lamb property. We lived at Glen Lee in Hagley, which we turned into a Murray Grey stud, with an excess of 100 cows.

In 1987 I sold both properties to The Department of Main Roads and retired. I was 52 and weighed 100kgs. We purchased a house on the Esplanade at Seaford and within weeks I commenced jogging.

At first I could not complete a lap of the Noarlunga Oval.

During my retirement I have completed 11 marathons, including The London Marathon in 1996. My weekly training consisted of 100kms per week. With the exception of the Canberra Marathon, where I lost all but two of my toenails, I was successful in winning my age group in every state in Australia.

I qualified for the Boston Marathon with a time of 3hrs, 38mins, 28secs in 1996 and in the Perth Marathon my daughter Gayle ran the last half a kilometre with me which was a great thrill.

“ I am now, and was as a child, a competitive spirit. ”

My best time was a 3hrs, 28mins, 33secs in Hobart. I ran in ten consecutive Olympic Dream events, and Melbourne’s main fun run in 43mins and 17secs, being my best time. I also competed in 11 consecutive City to Bay fun runs and won my age group on each occasion, with the exception of the first which I ran with my brother Rick. I was so proud of the way Rick ‘gutted’ it out, as he had done very little preparation. My best time was in 1996, when I ran the 12 kilometres in 47mins and 52secs.

I have competed in more fun runs than I care to remember, probably closer to 200 than 100. My best time was when I won the Phoenix Fun Run, and broke the four-minute kilometre for the first time.

I am now, and was as a child, a competitive spirit.

In 1997 I was diagnosed as having Supranuclear Palsy, often confused with Parkinson’s Disease, which finished my competitive running.

Progressive Supranuclear Palsy is a rare neurological condition affecting the parts of the brain that control walking, eye movements, balance, speech and swallowing. Symptoms usually begin between the ages of 60 and 70. It is not contagious, does not run in families and can affect men and women from all nationalities and lifestyles. I hate the disease and what it is doing to my body. My mind is still fairly sharp and the thing I miss the most is the activity, running, competing and pushing myself to be the best I can be.

I have problems with walking (or ‘gait’) and suffer from stiffness, problems with balance and falls, particularly backwards — but I can still run on my treadmill. At Eldercare Seaford they make sure I have a physio person with me and that is OK, I still just need to run.

Last year staff at Seaford asked me if I would like to participate in the City to Bay Fun Run, I said “Yes please”. I knew I would not be running but to be there in spirit and to feel the energy of all the participants … is just a great thing for me.

Life is not so bad!”

Previous page: Terry Hilder with Yvonne Woolfe, Gillian Webber, Tina Carr and Trish Collins from Seaford at the 2012 City to Bay fun run
Terry Hilder – Born to Run

One of the highlights of Seaford resident Terry Hilder’s year was competing in the City to Bay fun run, which he has done many times over the past decades.

In 2013 Terry competed in the 12km Wheelies event, with his grandson Mitch pushing his wheelchair (whilst running) the entire course. They finished a respectable ninth place with a time of one hour, 3mins and 11secs, but would have probably beaten this time had the wheelchair been up to the task. According to Mitch, the wheelchair was very wobbly and ‘not designed for speed’. In 2012, Terry’s daughter Gayle pushed him over the finish line in third position in the 6km Wheelies run — in a much faster wheelchair!

This is one of many City to Bay fun runs that Terry and Mitch have competed in together. Their first event together was when Mitch was in primary school. Terry ran the event back then, but he still likes to compete now despite his ailing health, with the assistance of his devoted family.
Recently I was asked by a colleague to assist them with some physiotherapy services in an area that presented a unique challenge.

The nursing home in question was a small 30-bed facility in remote Western Australia servicing a largely indigenous population.

It took me 21 hours to get from Adelaide to my final destination of Halls Creek (900 km inland from Broome), including two plane flights and a nine-hour bus trip, leaving at 3am.

After three hours of sleep and a strong coffee I began the long walk to work. The red dust turned my shoes from black to orange, but what struck me as unfamiliar was the space around me — endless plains leading into the low hills on the horizon, and the dry, hot wind with a hint of diesel in the air.

Finally arriving at the nursing home — an iron-clad structure with a small kitchen and office — I was greeted by a group of smiling, waving residents all anticipating my visit.

After a brief tour of the verandah, the flywire screen-doored residents’ rooms and the fire pit, I began my assessments.

The challenges came thick and fast. How does one perform a physio assessment on a resident who prefers to sleep outdoors or prefers to lie on the grass and not a bed? What exercises would help a resident with hand weakness and still remain culturally relevant?

The experience was amazing, challenging, rewarding and successful. The residents were all very welcome and only too happy to participate in mobility exercises.

After three days I had completed all my work and was then treated to a wonderful couple of hours of sitting around the fire pit with the residents, where I learnt some unique language and was given a first-hand look at a traditional dance.

Then it was back to the main street to get on the bus for another nine-hour overnight trip to Broome.

I plan to return again, but in the meantime I have a new appreciation for the facilities and team environment here at Eldercare that we sometimes take for granted.
The trial and a series of focus groups held with residents, families and nursing/catering staff are part of a project led by research consultant, Sandra Ullrich, for Eldercare’s Dementia Excellence Program. Sandra has also been observing mealtimes at these facilities and specifically, how carers interact with residents. Current practice is to present texture-modified (pureed) meals on the plate in a series of ‘blobs’ or swirls. Moulding pureed meals into recognisable shapes (broccoli florets, meat, carrots) provides visual cues to care staff and residents as to the foods being served and may reduce the stigma surrounding such meals. Often staff cannot relate to the pureed foods on the plate and find it difficult to initiate conversation with the resident about the meals being eaten.

Sandra is researching whether shaping texture modified (pureed) foods can improve the mealtime experience for residents with dysphagia*, and increase acceptance of the meals, leading to better nutritional outcomes. She also hopes that if staff react more positively to the meals, the interaction between carers and residents at mealtimes will also be more positive.

**Mealtime Environments — Dignity and Inclusion**

Sandra believes that the mealtime environment is just as important as the appearance and taste of the food being served. She has noted from her observations that residents in princess chairs often ate their meals outside of the main dining area due to design and space issues. This had the unintended effect of distancing these residents from the visual cues necessary to encourage them to eat, for example, watching other residents enjoy their meals.

Evanston Park is trialling two specially-designed tables that can accommodate princess chairs so that these residents can eat their meals seated at a table rather than using a tray. The arrangement of tables within the dining areas has been reconfigured to provide a more welcoming and inclusive environment. Previously tables were arranged in two long rows, however, following input from staff they are now arranged in small groups of four, allowing residents in princess chairs to eat alongside other residents and share in conversation.

**The Findings**

Moulding pureed foods has improved how these foods are perceived and has positively enhanced the verbal interaction between residents and care staff at mealtimes at the trial sites.

(continued on page 17)

---

*Dysphagia: Difficulty in swallowing due to frailty, dementia and other medical issues*
Trowbridge House Goes to the Show

Several residents from Trowbridge House visited the Royal Adelaide Show in September to view the four artworks the site had entered in the Classes for Special Needs category. Lifestyle Coordinator, Ritesh Sehdev says that the outing brought back many happy memories of the Royal Show for the residents.

The paintings up for judging were produced by residents during art and craft lessons with the assistance of lifestyle assistant Deb Gilmore and volunteer art teacher, Divya Sehdev.

Resident Doris Wall and Divya worked one-on-one for two months on the painting of two birds entitled: *Colours of the Flying Memories*, which was awarded fourth place in the Oil, Acrylic and Water Colour Painting category.

The large mosaic painting, produced by the residents in the Memory Support Unit won third prize in the Group Exhibit.

The prizes were presented to residents by Royal Adelaide Show delegates at a high tea held at Trowbridge House in October.

For those residents who could not attend the Show, Trowbridge House held a ‘Show Month’. Activities included chair-side travel, and a cooking group with fairy floss and cupcake making, a chocolate fountain and freshly-made hot donuts. Homing and show pigeons were brought in for residents to view and set free and the Tin Can Alley was also a huge success.

As part of festivities residents enjoyed watching chicks hatching in their Living Eggs incubator, bringing tears of joy to some. Others kept vigil next to the incubator for hours at a time, waiting to see which egg would be the next to hatch. The Lifestyle team organised a range of activities and events around the eggs, including Sweeps for the first egg to hatch, theme lunches and naming of the chicks.
The Palliative Approach to Care

An increasing proportion of residents at Eldercare’s residential care facilities are being admitted with complex health needs requiring more specialised care. In addition, it’s been estimated that an average of 52% of Eldercare residents (68% at some sites) have a diagnosis of dementia. As a consequence, end-of-life and palliative care are now a significant and growing aspect of the services we provide.

Eldercare continues to ensure we provide best-practice holistic care, which encompasses physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing. Research clearly shows that spiritual and emotional support are highly beneficial, and significantly complement clinical aspects of care. The role of the chaplain is to provide spiritual and emotional care during palliative stages.

Eldercare is exploring ways we can further implement the Palliative Care Approach to Dementia Care — which is closely aligned with our Dementia Excellence Program — at all of our aged care facilities. This ‘palliative’ approach applies to all residents, not just those at end-of-life stage, and focuses on quality of life and comfort care within an aged care setting.

The pastoral care contribution to palliative care at Eldercare has four areas of focus:

- Spiritual and emotional support for residents
- Family support
- Resourcing staff and volunteers
- Advance care planning

Spiritual and Emotional Support for Residents

The Eldercare practice of pastoral care is based on a trusted tradition of personal respect. Chaplains at each site are selected and trained to be impartial and confidential; ‘safe’ listeners to deep concerns; inclusive and sensitive; resourceful and friendly; and skilled mediators.

In the context of a palliative approach to care, the spiritual and emotional needs of residents are addressed by the chaplain as they relate to specific issues surrounding dementia and palliative care. The chaplain is a reminder that spiritual and emotional care are at the heart of all care as they affect the whole of life.

Family Support

Within aged care facilities, the focus of care is on residents. Families play a significant role in the wellbeing of residents, and the need for the family members’ emotional involvement is clear. As people experience dementia and palliative care, families encounter significant spiritual and emotional challenges. Spirituality often serves as a coping mechanism, and strategies effectively addressing families’ spiritual and emotional needs will reduce the impact of these challenges.

The approach taken at Eldercare aims to find practical ways of meeting these needs. Through engagement with family members at various family support sessions, Eldercare aims to help families identify the resources available to them in relation to their spiritual and emotional needs.

Resourcing Staff and Volunteers

Staff acknowledge that dementia and palliative care stages are very difficult to experience and they can often struggle to meet all the needs of family members.

The chaplains are helping staff to support residents when those around them pass away, and also teaching them how to communicate more easily with family during the end-of-life stage.

Advance Care Planning

Another initiative underway is to ensure each resident has an effective advance care directive in place.

At several sites an advance care planning process is being implemented. Chaplains and clinical teams follow this process to assist residents and families to engage in conversations regarding future care and end-of-life wishes, and to provide opportunities for review as appropriate.

If you have questions regarding the pastoral care program in relation to the palliative approach at Eldercare, please contact your site chaplain.
Eldercare’s Sustained Success program is continuing, with sites working on their chosen ALE (Action Learning Exploration). Topics are varied, ranging from clinical issues such as wound care and continence management, through to environmental and space issues, staff morale and communication.

Continuous Improvement Coordinator at Oxford, Karen Walker, shares her journey so far through this year’s ALE program.

This is the second ALE project I have been involved in and although the team continue to face some of the same challenges as last time, this ALE ‘feels different’.

The initial process was well planned and the team agrees that keeping the speakers ‘in-house’ (as opposed to having external consultants) made the experience much more ‘real’, with a sense of support and commitment from Eldercare. It was good to work with a ‘coach’ who kept us all on track when we inevitably started to digress to other areas, trying to solve all our perceived problems at the first meeting!

The issue identified by the staff team at Oxford and translated by the ALE team was:

“Residents lack personalised and appropriate stimulation or activity at specific times”. Those times were identified as ‘sundowners’ (after 2.30pm), weekends and evenings.

This ALE has been identified by the people working on ‘the floor’ and who are ultimately responsible for making it work, for improving their working environment and improving the lives of the residents they support. The process has been much more consultative and staff have been willing to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Of course there are always those who come to the party kicking and screaming and for them the ALE just brings ‘more work’, but we are lucky to have a good ALE team with various skill mixes who are passionate about trying to make a difference.

After much thought and group discussion our group aim is:

To ensure residents have the opportunity to be engaged in personalised, appropriate stimulation or activity at all times. By March 2014 all staff involved in resident care will be provided with education and knowledge about what constitutes ‘activity’ and how staff can be a part of contributing to resident stimulation and wellbeing.

We will do this by:

• Educating staff
• Improving communication processes between staff members
• Improving communication processes and enhancing communication skills (with residents and families)
• Encouraging teamwork
• Providing staff with the knowledge to provide person-centered activities and stimulation

• Provide staff with the equipment to provide person-centered activities and stimulation

Even with the challenges, this year’s ALE project has already proven to be a success.

Staff thought long and hard about the needs of the residents and how we can improve their quality of life and reduce some of the behaviours of concern (BOC) identified.

Personal Care Assistant and ALE team member, Jane Tansell, has spoken to the staff at care staff meetings and has given them some insight into how the changes we have introduced have made a positive impact on both resident behaviours and staff workload. In an ideal world, by March 2014 (the date we have set to complete our ALE), behaviours of concern will have vanished, staff incidents greatly reduced, and falls at an all-time low. In reality we will be happy to see behaviours of concern reduced, staff incidents relating to behaviours reduced, and falls reduced.

We have now put a number of continuous improvement initiatives in place to help meet
the issue identified. One of the key changes includes the introduction of a personalised ‘Resident Interest Sheet’ to capture residents’ individual preferences ‘in brief’, as well as their interests and the personal aids needed to enhance their lives. This simple initiative has already proven to be successful with residents engaging more with staff who appear to be more knowledgeable about the interests of the residents in their care.

Being part of the ALE program has not only helped our residents, it has also assisted with our Accreditation process.

It feels like we are heading in the right direction!
Eldercare welcomes the new Coordinator for Retirement Living, Carolyn O’Brien.

Carolyn will be assisting Retirement Living Manager, Lynne Cleveland with retirement living unit sales and building community amongst our residents.

Left: New Oxford Retirement Units residents Libby and John Macey with Retirement Living Coordinator Carolyn O’Brien (centre).
Life as a Personal Carer: Expect the Unexpected

Carer Seb Huizinga discovered life as a carer “a little bit by accident”.

While Seb holds a Bachelor of Design (with a major in Jewellery Design), secure career prospects in the industry proved hard to find. Following several years working in a series of short-term jobs, Seb swapped a career in jewellery design for a career as a personal carer.

“I was liaising with a job agency and they suggested aged care as an area of growth and opportunity,” says Seb.

“I had previously had the thought of being a nurse in the back of my head and people had said to me: ‘You’d be good at that’, so I thought I’d give it a go.

“The idea that there’s room for advancement and the fact that there was more money than what I was getting was also a big plus,” he says.

After completing a Certificate III in Aged Care, Seb accepted a job at the Oakland’s Residential Care Facility and more recently, moved down south, where he now enjoys the flexibility of working between Cottage Grove and Seaford.

Seb says one of the positive aspects of his role has been the flexibility and variety that comes with shift work and moving between the two sites.

“I can work in any section and it means I never get complacent,” he says.

According to Seb, one of the best aspects of working in aged care is the satisfaction of knowing that every day he’s helping people and making a positive difference to the community.

“I’m not building a stairway to heaven for myself,” he says with a laugh. But it’s obvious Seb gains a great sense of satisfaction from his job.

“I enjoy being in an environment where I can work with people who come from a lot of different backgrounds and the teamwork is nice.

“It’s also one of the only jobs where I can talk as much as I want and not get into trouble!” he says.

On a more serious note, Seb says working in aged care has instilled him with a sense of humility and empathy, as well as a sense that there are “no guarantees for the future” and to savour family time.

Seb admits that while being a personal carer can be both physically and mentally demanding, he ends each shift with a sense of being uplifted by the staff and residents.

“Every day is different — expect the unexpected,” he says.

“I’d recommend it to anyone who wants to be part of a team and learn.”

Farewell Klaus

Eldercare farewelled its Chief Executive Officer of 12 years, Klaus Zimmermann, at the end of September. Klaus, whose career in the aged care industry spanned 22 years, retired to take up several part-time roles as Board Director with a number of national organisations.

Eldercare Board Chairman, Ian Price, says Klaus had been a positive advocate for the aged care industry for over 22 years and for the last 12 years as CEO of Eldercare.

Klaus represented the industry at state, national and international levels and made a significant contribution to both Eldercare and the aged care industry.

At his farewell event at Head Office, Klaus was presented with a specially-bound memoir containing a collection of messages from staff, photos and anecdotes of his time at Eldercare.
I was taught by my parents that in order to make a small country town exist you need to be involved with the community through various organisations.

As a young adult I did this through sport, and once married with children I became involved in their activities. I was a leader of the local Girl Guides for 25 years. I met many challenges along the way and today I still find daily challenges when involved with the elderly.

As retirement came along I entered another stage of life and started driving for Community Transport. This involved taking elderly clients to a variety of appointments. At this time I was first introduced to Elanora SYP Homes (now Eldercare Elanora), where many of my clients were residing.

Five years ago my father became a resident at Elanora and I decided to join the team of volunteers.

I have lived in the area all of my life and know so many of the residents and their families, and find it quite easy to relate to them.

My role is to work alongside Cheryl Lang and her lifestyle team and I am given many a challenge, planning and organising residents’ craft activities. I never know what each week will bring. There’s always some new idea or suggestion coming forward. Some residents actively participate; but many enjoy the chatting and involvement in choosing colours for the knitted rugs, or deciding how the woodwork pieces should be painted.

Every few months we enjoy armchair travel where we visit various countries with our local Pioneer Performers providing entertainment. We make passports, some form of personal decoration, flags of the country as table decorations, and backdrops to depict the scenery. It’s all a lot of fun! Many of our volunteers also don appropriate costumes for the day.

I am also involved in scrapbooking a Memory Folder for each resident in Elanora. The covers reflect some important aspect of their life such as a hobby or interest. As activity photographs are taken, I scrapbook the pages, sometimes with the resident’s assistance. We also encourage families to copy any special family photos and bring them in for us to include in the folder. These folders are a great tool for one-on-one visits and are eventually passed on to family as a keepsake.

I also enjoy helping on the produce and cake stall at our Annual Garden Party. All of our volunteers play their part in making this day a great success. It is Elanora’s major fundraiser with all funds used to enhance the residents’ Lifestyle Program.

Do I enjoy volunteering at Elanora? The answer is a resounding ‘Yes!’ and my reward is the delight on a resident’s face each time I spend a moment with them.

The contributions of our volunteers and our community help to make Elanora the warm, friendly place it is!
Every fortnight or so the residents at Eldercare Cottage Grove aged care facility look forward to the arrival of Jill Gordon and her bundles of cut flowers. The flowers, donated by the Coles supermarket at Glenelg, are arranged by the residents and displayed in their rooms and as part of table decorations, bringing fragrance and a splash of colour to the facility.

Jill works as a merchandiser for the Lynch Group, one of Australia’s largest plant marketers. The Lynch Group distributes plants all over Australia to customers including supermarkets and service stations. All flowers on display for sale in the stores have a ‘use by date’ as they need to be flowering for at least one week following purchase. Some of the flowers that have to be removed from sale are still in good condition, some with buds, but would normally be thrown away.

Several months ago, Jill had heard of someone else donating these unsold flowers to aged care homes. Jill has several links to Cottage Grove — her sister-in-law, Cindy Gordon, is an enrolled nurse at the facility, and the grandmother of a friend of Jill’s resides at Cottage Grove.

Jill asked Coles if they could donate the flowers and they kindly agreed. Cottage Grove residents have been enjoying the flowers for the past 18 months, thanks to Jill’s initiative.
Teams from several Eldercare residential care sites recently competed for the coveted Horticultural Therapy Competition prize, run every year as part of the Lifestyle Program.

The competition is ‘horticulturally’ themed, and can include anything of interest to residents as long as it incorporates the competition’s theme, in this instance ‘Racy Ranunculus’. Ranunculus is latin for ‘little frog’ so residents, lifestyle staff and volunteers used frogs as part of their submissions. Five sites entered, all planting ranunculus for their floral displays, while others made hats, held ‘races’, created poetry, and produced frogs from various materials including plaster and paper mache.

The residents from all sites are incredibly competitive and all vie for the coveted award of the perpetual trophy (donated by Board Member Anne Burrow) that stands proud in the winning site’s lounge area. One of the judges, Facilities Project Manager Kent Smith, presented the trophy to the winning site, Oxford, at a special morning tea. The judges commented that the participation of the residents and their families was a key factor in the success of the competition at Oxford. Runners-up Trowbridge House and The Lodge received an ‘Award of Merit’ and ‘Special Mention’, respectively.
Creating Happy Spaces to Play

Karen was fortunate enough to secure a full scholarship to participate in the Governor’s Leadership Foundation Program (GLF) in 2011. The GLF is the Leaders Institute of SA’s flagship program, which aims to broaden and enhance leadership in individuals who have demonstrated the potential to become outstanding leaders in our state.

During Karen’s GLF year she worked on an Action Learning Project with the COMIC Australia Foundation. The COMIC Australia Foundation advocates and promotes awareness for the children of mentally ill consumers.

The project’s research highlighted the need to incorporate a space, room or a garden within mental health treatment facilities to provide a safe, secure and happy area for parents and children to interact.

Since graduating from the GLF Program, Karen’s project team continued to work with the COMIC Board to bring this project to fruition, undertaking fundraising and liaising with SA Health and interior design firm Studio Tonic.

Karen and her team members raised over $50,000 in cash, and received donations ranging from paint and furniture, through to an Xbox computer game and the services of an interior designer.

The team then facilitated the construction and refurbishment of an area within Ward 1G at the Lyell McEwin Hospital (the COMIC Family Space), which was completed in late 2012.

More information and photos of the COMIC Family Space can be found at www.comic.org/projects

The group was recently awarded the Dennis Mutton Medal which recognises outstanding community involvement and contribution that has been initiated after a graduate’s completion of the GLF program.

Karen says the award is a positive way of drawing attention to an area of need in South Australia.

“We put in a lot of hours to get the area completed, so it’s nice to have that work recognised,” she says.

“Patients now have a dedicated space where they can spend time when visitors come, whereas before there was nowhere private to go.

“We feel like as a group we’ve made a real difference.”

Texture Modified Foods

However, by measuring plate waste, Sandra has determined that the amount eaten by residents in the trial has not noticeably increased.

In 2014 she will looking at the experiences of residents as they transition from normal food to texture-modified food. The findings will help Eldercare to develop the necessary support to assist residents and family members with this transition. This small study will occur at Allambi.

In the next edition of Eldercare Matters we will look at how Sandra Ullrich and our catering supplier, Medirest, are working with leading Australian chefs such as Maggie Beer, Simon Bryant and Peter Morgan-Jones to improve the taste, nutrition and texture of foods within an aged care setting.
Pets Put Their Best Paws Forward

Activities Coordinator Michelle Venning said Ginge is a popular member of The Village.

“Most of the residents are really receptive to having him here and a lot of the staff members have come around,” she says.

“He is so well trained and just has the perfect personality to live here.”

Staff have noted that residents who are normally unresponsive to other therapies often brighten up and chat when they interact with a therapy pet. The pets also give the residents a feeling of being needed, and make the sites feel more ‘home-like’.

Sash Ferguson residents enjoy their weekly visits from two-year old labradoodle, Bella, owned by lifestyle team member, Gail Bell. Bella has been visiting Sash every Thursday since she was eight weeks’ old. Bella has recently passed her ‘exams’ to become a member of the Caring Canine Association and she is having further training in palliative and comfort care.

Pauline Conlay, Lifestyle Coordinator, recalls a time when a lady who was quite unresponsive, began stroking Bella when she lay on the bed next to her. “It’s amazing stuff,” she says.

Pumba is a nine-year-old ragdoll cat, who has been visiting Sash for the last four years to have a cuddle with residents. Weighing in at 10kgs, Pumba has to be pushed around on a trolley to visit residents — something he doesn’t seem to mind!
Pets as Therapy


Above from clockwise (L-R): Betty Raymond and Ginge at The Village. Right: Pumba shares a cuddle with Ethel Phillips at Sash Ferguson; Connie Agius with Bella at Sash Ferguson; Bella. Lifestyle Coordinator Pauline Conlay and Colin Liebelt at Sash Ferguson.
Head Office
247 Fullarton Road
Eastwood SA 5063
PO Box 600
Fullarton SA 5063
Phone: (08) 8291 1000
Fax: (08) 8291 1098
admin.headoffice@eldercare.net.au
www.eldercare.net.au

Residential Care Locations

Acacia Court
Hendon

Allambi
Glengowrie

Cottage Grove
Woodcroft

Evanston Park
Evanston Park

Kirkholme
Goodwood

Oxford
Hove

Sash Ferguson
Mt Barker

Seaford
Seaford

The Lodge
Wayville

Trowbridge House
Payneham South

Yorke Peninsula

Elanora
Stansbury

The Village
Maitland

Residential Care Admissions:
1300 925 414

Retailment Villages

College Green
Kent Town

Collett Barker
Mt Barker

Cottage Grove Court
Woodcroft

Elmwood Grove
Mt Barker

Exhibition Court
Mt Barker

Jubilee Cottages
Mt Barker

Kingsborough
Norwood

Mulberry Grove
Felixstow

Old Oxford Court
Hove

Oxford Units
Hove

Sash Ferguson
Retirement Units
Mt Barker

Yorke Peninsula

Elanora
Stansbury

The Village Units
Maitland

Telephone (08) 8291 1040
(all retirement villages)