

Autumn 2022 Newsletter



Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter. We hope that you enjoyed the first edition at Christmas. As we share stories and special events with one another, we hope that we are also building closer connections with one another, as residents and friends of one big community. You are invited to submit input for the newsletter via your site editor—see the inside pages for the contact details of your site editor. This is OUR community newsletter, and we'd love to share special news and stories from one another.

Greetings from our CEO



As I look afresh at 2022 it is difficult to know what the year holds and I find it difficult to look forward without also taking time to reflect on the last two years. The last 2 years have been an enormously challenging time for our residents, our families and staff. Each group has coped so impressively in an environment characterised by high levels of uncertainty, change and challenge. Everyone should be very proud of how they have managed during this time. All of us have needed to be flexible as rules and restrictions change on such a regular basis, often at very short notice. Sadly, over the last two years, there has not been the same level of freedoms in visiting and catching up with one another.

I would like to take the time to thank each group for the level of graciousness and support you have demonstrated during this time. To our aged care residents, there are times when your loved ones have been unable to visit and we have not been able to run programs with the normal levels of interaction. Thank you for your patience, understanding and acceptance. You have kindly adapted to the necessary restrictions aimed at keeping everybody safe. Please feel free to share any ongoing concerns you have, or even if you would just like someone to talk to. Our retirement village residents have also continued to be flexible and adaptable in dealing with the last two years. Each village has had times of Covid which has been dealt with quickly and efficiently and without any unnecessary spreading to other residents. It has been great to see each of the villages recommencing social activities and catching up with one another as this is such an important and rewarding aspect of community living. To our families, we appreciate that the time catching up with your loved ones is precious, incredibly important and valuable for all concerned. We want to thank you for your tolerance and continued respectful treatment of staff during what we understand can be frustrating times. We also encourage you to share your concerns or changes you may have noticed in your loved one recently. These insights are extremely valuable as they come from a lifetime of knowing a person.

I would also like to recognise and thank our staff who have needed to convey difficult messages about visiting restrictions, have been working under duress in full PPE (especially during summer), taking on longer shifts or working harder when fellow staff were unwell or isolating. Your effort and dedication is enormously valued and appreciated.

It is hard to know what the year ahead will hold, apart from some unpredictable twists and turns. We very much appreciate the relationship between all three groups, and it remains vitally important for each of us to work closely together. Please continue to keep our organisation in your thoughts and prayers as we continue to seek to create an environment where we all work together in close partnership to deliver ongoing, loving, respectful care of our residents.

Neil Morgan
Chief Executive Officer

Around the villages...

Olive Gardens

The first few months of the new year brought an easing of restrictions, and we are looking forward to re-joining one another for morning tea in mid-March. It has been a long time since we have been able to plan gatherings as a community, and we have missed getting together for celebrations and regular events.

There has been a bit of maintenance and building activity at Olive Gardens recently with the introduction of yearly unit inspections producing a list of jobs to be commenced soon by visiting tradesmen. Greg and his team continue to look after our routine maintenance.

Several residents have recently moved from the village to Outlook Gardens Aged Care, and there is now one unit available for sale in the village. If you know anyone who may be looking to move into our friendly community, please contact Chris Dennis on 9795 7566.

Ebenezer

2021 ended and 2022 started on a high at Ebenezer Village, with a New Year's Eve celebration. Many turned out for an evening of fun, laughter, food, music, singing and dancing. A year of many challenges and disappointments would be replaced with a sense of optimism and opportunity.

Our regular activities slowly resumed after being suspended due to Covid. Our first event for the year was recognising Australia Day on 26th January with our traditional flag raising and singing the national anthem. After which we celebrated with brunch, including coffee and lamingtons.

On 10th January, we welcomed Greg Caldwell our new fulltime gardener. Greg is looking forward getting to know all the residents and has already made a significant change in how the village looks.

A bus tour has been planned to Healesville Sanctuary on 16th March, our first outing in almost 2 years. Greetings to all our readers from Ebenezer Village.

Outlook Gardens

Thursday morning coffee is now back on and a good place to catch up with friends and also to hear of any new developments from management.

There is a lovely new bookcase in the Community Centre to house the many books that make up the library. Books are free and work on the exchange system.

Irene De Ryk, Janny & Don Mekking and Yvonne De Kretser have all moved from the village to the hostel. We wish them all the best settling into their new home.

As a village community we also want to place on record our sincerest thanks and gratitude to Bill Krins for the years of faithful service as our coach driver. He was called home to his eternal rest a few weeks ago, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to his dear wife Kitty and their family. He will be sorely missed. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Even so says the Spirit, for they rest from their labours."

Reflections...

This page would usually contain a spiritual reflection from Chew, our pastoral carer. Chew is currently on leave, so the reflection below is from the online resources of the Christian Nurses Fellowship. We look forward to Chew's contribution in our next newsletter.

When I think back to the start of a new year pre-pandemic, it was typically a time when many of us set goals for the coming year--goals we'd often forget by the time spring rolled around. Post-pandemic experiences have changed us. So rather than goals, we acknowledge the lessons we've come to know:



- We can't give to others from a cup that's empty. And just as Jesus took time away, we need time alone as well. Time to be...time to pray...time to take a walk...time to rest. Finding that time in the hecticness of our schedules and the staffing shortages feels next to impossible. *Lord, hear our prayer for time with you.*
- We need others. "Adulting" wasn't meant to be done alone. When I look back, I'm not sure where I would be right now if not for the prayers and support of others. I know it would be a much darker place. *Lord, hear our prayer for healthy connections and support with others.*
- We recognise the need to hold things loosely. We remember this place is not our true home. We yearn for what's eternal and cannot be taken away. We acknowledge that "control" is a figment of our imaginations, a step we take to cope with the changes all around us. *Lord, hear our prayer to better understand and follow what it means to see your Kingdom here...your will being done.*
- Memories can bring us pain or they can sustain us. One lesson God has been teaching is the joy that can come from what's often overlooked: the ordinary, everyday tasks of our day. Taking in the beauty of the sun as it sets, the laughter of a child, a moment connecting with someone who needs prayer, or the lift in our spirits as we soak in a song of worship. *Lord, hear our prayer and give us eyes to see the blessings that are a part of our day.*
- Our identity is in God. It's not in what we do or in how much we do each day. We are God's sons and daughters. We have purpose...we have value...we have worth. The Holy Spirit lives within each of us as believers. We are not alone. *Lord, hear our prayer to have both head knowledge and heart knowledge as we claim the promises of what it means to be a child of the most high God.*

A heart of gratefulness can fill us. Too often we take for granted the "basic" necessities of life such as heat, water and food. We can be grateful for the laughter of family and the presence of the Lord in all we face. We can be grateful for the smell of coffee or the change of seasons. As we make gratitude a daily practice, our minds will begin to look for more to be grateful for. *Lord, hear our prayer to see and verbalise the many things that fill our hearts with gratitude.*

An update from our maintenance team



As our community has expanded, our support team has been growing to keep up! With three retirement villages and a 95 bed aged care facility, there is an increasing need for maintenance and garden upkeep. Chris and Greg do a wonderful job coordinating and prioritising maintenance, garden and improvement works, and they are building a strong team to work across all four sites. A full time gardener (Greg Caldwell) has recently commenced at Ebenezer Village, and we have also welcomed Joey Rassavong (pictured left) to the team to assist Greg Davenne with maintenance across all sites as required. We also continue to engage contractors as needed for specialised maintenance. All garden and maintenance requests should be logged by calling 9795 7566 and speaking with reception during business hours. For urgent or out of hours requests, please call the same number and speak with the nurse in charge

From our Board

At the first Board Meeting of 2022, the Board met to elect new Office Holders. At this meeting, Harold Dykstra stepped down from the Board, drawing many years of service both as a Board Member and Chairman to an end. The Board presented a plaque commemorating his years of service. During his time on the Board, Harold led the Association strongly as well as being an influential driver of the most recent amalgamations. His incredible dedication and meticulous attention detail will be difficult to replace. Thank you Harold.

We also wish to welcome and thank Bram Vander Jagt as he takes up the role of Chair. Bram will be ably supported in this role by Harrie Veerman who will continue as Deputy Chair, John Visser as Secretary and Joe Harmelink who has accepted the Treasurer role. Joe takes on the role of Treasurer following the resignation of Leon Weenink, who has been another very dedicated and faithful servant. Leon also served the Association very capably for many years, and his contribution and financial oversight is enormously appreciated. Thank you Leon.



Thank you Harold!

On a sadder note, we heard in recent months that Bill Krins passed away. Bill had a unique spirit of joy and encouragement that he brought to our Association in filling his Board role as well as our much loved bus driver for resident social outings. He will be sorely missed by fellow Board members, staff and residents alike. We extend our sincere and heartfelt condolences to Bill's friends and family.

Noticeboard

FROM OUTLOOK GARDENS AGED CARE FACILITY

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance concerns or requests can be logged during business hours by calling Outlook Gardens reception on 9795 7566. Urgent issues should be reported immediately, via the same number.

We have recently welcomed a number of new residents to the facility, including several from each of our retirement villages. It's wonderful to see new residents reconnecting with old friends in the facility, as well as making new friends in the dining room or at activities. Outlook Gardens is a wonderful community, and new residents always receive a very warm welcome from their neighbours.

We currently have various rooms available designed to cater for a wide range of care needs. Every resident is assisted to maintain as much independence as possible, and our rooms range from high care/full assistance through to rooms with a kitchenette for those who are able to make their own tea/coffee—if you or someone you know is needing respite or permanent care, we would love to meet with you and show you around. During a facility tour you can view some rooms, meet some staff and learn about activities and daily life within the facility. If you would like to come and meet us, just phone and book an appointment on 9795 7566.

Talya Goldsmith, Director of Aged Care