

Elizabeth Court Newsletter

No 2 October 18th 2007

Hello again,



1. October 1st saw the first ever National Older People's Day. We celebrated it here at Elizabeth Court with an event to recognise that the wisdom accumulated during the combined total of 1,634 years of our residents' experience has to be priceless. We called it 'Pearls of Wisdom'. The event was organised to allow everyone to participate as far as they were able, with maximum choice at every stage. Some staff were able to give direct help to the event and others were an enthusiastic audience. In brief, each resident was asked what they felt being an older person meant to them, or what they had learned during their lives. Each of these was written down and attached to a pebble (—we couldn't run to pearls, so a trio of intrepid souls braved the sunshine and ice cream to harvest them from our beach!) with a number allocated to it, chosen by them. All these were put in a 'safe'—where else would you keep your valuables? ! At lunch on October 12th, the 'safe' was opened and each resident picked a 'pearl'. The corresponding numbered piece of wisdom was read out. The 'pearls' were many and varied, with 'Drink when you are thirsty' being given an appreciative round of applause! The event ended on a good note with 'Do a good turn every day' being heartily endorsed by all. It was fun and inspiring to all of us. On your next visit, look out for a permanent display of 'pearls' in the hall so that you can share in the wisdom.

The whole of October is dedicated to awareness of older people and their achievements and abilities. I hope to organise at least one more event on a similar theme before the end of the month.



2. We have had some fantastic weather this month, and the apples are in abundance. Sadly my favourite Elstar is coming to the end, but we have Spartans, Jonagold and Gala now, as well as Coxes (getting better by the week), Russets, Bramleys, Conference and Comice pears (particularly delicious baked in red wine with spice and brown sugar). You will find me at Hastings Farmers Market on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month (10-3) if you want to try any of them.



3. It has been a month of celebrations. Congratulations to Mrs Norma Day and Mrs Gladys Watters, who were each presented with a large bouquet and a cake on their birthday. Carol Robinson and Mandy Dade, our manager and head of Care respectively, were surprised by a party thrown in honour of the 5th anniversary of their arrival at Elizabeth Court. Staff and residents presented them with bouquets and a buffet lunch, including champagne. My, the afternoon shift was a blur that day! Photos of these events can be seen at the home. And that is not the end—a Halloween party is planned very soon.



4. We now have a new addition to the gallery in the dining room. It is a charming picture of a collection of dogs in the back of a land rover—chocolate, black and golden Labradors, and Jack Russell and Border Terriers. But wait... all is not what it seems. This is no ordinary picture, but a jigsaw of a 1000 pieces completed by Peter Ware, one of our residents. In only one week..! A clue to the next puzzle he is working on-----a large relative of our domestic moggy and not one you would want to meet on a dark night in the jungle. GRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR. Peter tells me it will take him a lot longer than a week to finish this one. Mind you, everyone who goes past stops to add a piece or ten. “Please! Just one ...more... piece! ” Carol cried as we dragged her away to answer the phone.



5. A relentless procession of insects was seen recently flying in and out of a hole in the hedge over the road. Our neighbour agreed to deal with them once he was persuaded that these buzzing black and yellow striped creatures were not flies..... but wasps. There are nearly 300 types of wasps in this country, but these were the ones that we all instantly recognise and treat with respect for their capacity to sting and survive, and for



their persistence at the otherwise relaxed picnic or barbecue. Because wasps can't store food over the winter, unlike bees, their colonies only last the summer and the workers die. Before this happens, the new queens and males that have been developed fly off to mate. The males die soon after mating (what a way to go?!) but the females find somewhere sheltered to spend the winter (Why is it always in my attic room?), and then they start the new colony off by laying eggs in the spring. By the end

of the summer, there can be as many as 25,000 wasps in the nest, and all of these have been flying past our window. No wonder we spotted them—that's an awful lot of wasps. I kept an empty wasps' nest for a while to show at my daughter's primary school—it was an amazing structure and I don't think any one could fail to be impressed by it. They may be pests but goodness they can build... (For more info on wasps go to www.thepiedpiper.co.uk)



6. Last week we had an unannounced inspection; this is always a big event, and our chance to share our good practice and learn what more we should be doing. We will inform you of outcomes when we receive the report. That leads on to the next item. We want to make sure that you, residents and relatives, can contribute ideas to the



running of the home. A 'Comments, Compliments and Complaints box' is to be sited in the dining room on the dresser, for any suggestions you may have. Paper and pen will be next to the box for this purpose, although of course you can add anything on your own paper when you think of it. If you prefer to remain anonymous that is fine. And of course you can talk to Carol, Mandy or myself, or any of the staff at any time. Your suggestions will be recorded and acted upon, and notification of changes will be made at residents' meetings.



7. Talking of residents' meetings, at our latest one we spent some time talking about meals, and as a result new menu ideas are to be developed. I spoke to a group of several residents about their preferences and will repeat the process with everyone. Watch this space for our new menus, coming soon....

Rose Fordham October 2007

I hope everyone is enjoying the new newsletter, as you can see there have been quite a lot of things going on and some changes as well. All changes are in order to improve the quality of life at Elizabeth Court which is what we have always strived to achieve.

We would like to welcome two new members of staff to our team, they are Tina Sargent and Louise Harris who are both night carers and have come to us with lots of experience of care. Louise has her NVQ2 and Tina will be starting her NVQ2 very soon.

As always, if you have any concerns or problems please do not hesitate to contact Mandy, Rose or I and we will do our best to sort things out.

Carol Robinson