

Water Hall

After languishing in a prolonged summer and convinced that the warm weather would prevail, we went ahead and organised a sponsored wheel chair push around Willen Lake, but alas!!!! As luck would have itit turned out to be a chilly day. This however did not deter our residents or our volunteers who all turned up punctually with all the verve and joy of a beautiful autumn day. This fund raising effort, which raised £628.00 was shared between Willen Hospice and our Comfort Fund.

One of our compassionate carers Katie B organised a cinema afternoon. The event was advertised within the home and relatives and friends joined in with the residents to enjoy the movie. She brought in popcorn, lemonade and the DVD " Gone with the Wind" which the residents enjoyed in the happy atmosphere and comfort of the home.

Paul and his lady residents had been busy cutting, pasting and painting their hats long before Halloween. The units were all decorated most colourfully and a delectable Halloween cake was

brought in for tea. Games were played, with prizes galore while Martin and his guitar entertained the residents with his delightful music and singing. The atmosphere was most electrifying and a good time was had by all.

The call for a pre-Christmas shopping spree encouraged a few of our residents to request to be taken out shopping, and a few volunteers assisted with the pushing of the wheelchairs. This enabled the residents to enjoy the luxury of going shopping in their wheelchairs. The MK Centre was not too busy so the residents did their shopping at leisure, and the morning was rounded off with a delicious cup of tea and cake



We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Katy B on her marriage to Anthony in the summer

Congratulations must also go to Saski Thalaysingham on being promoted from Kitchen Assistant to Cook.

Dovecote Manor

The garden areas are being redesigned which will include raised beds, seating areas and points of interest. Inside we have completed a makeover of the hairdressing room, now Salon which has been renamed "Tiffany's" Grand opening to be held soon.

Work is also underway converting some of our other rooms into a café, a shop and sensory room. The additional facilities will help encourage meaningful activity and occupation for people living at Dovecote, as well as providing separate areas to meet with families and friends.

A Street environment is also being developed; complete with a village meeting point which will help guide people to the new facilities.

Residents recently enjoyed an afternoon of musical entertainment and quiz with Rachel from Nice & Easy. Our Halloween Party, which has become something of a tradition, was again a great success. The Halloween costumes were excellent and both residents and staff enjoyed a great time singing and dancing. Music was provided by Stuart Clements, who will be entertaining us again at our New

Year's Eve party.

Indulgence Hampers held a sale of their gorgeous smelling handmade soaps, bath bombs and gift sets. They also kindly donated items for us to put on our Christmas raffle. Lana Handbags also held a sale at the home and our Comfort Fund received a small commission from sales made on the day.

Hope MK, a youth project organised by various churches around Milton Keynes spent an afternoon with our residents, singing, chatting, playing bingo and performing a short play. The young people had given up their half term school holiday to take part in this project, so we were very grateful for the time they spent with us.



It has been a very busy and exciting time at the home.

We are very fortunate to have received a substantial grant from the Department of Health to be used to improve the environment for people living with dementia.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **16th December** - Martin Reeves Christmas Sing-a-long
- **22nd December** Christmas Party with Something Else
- **31st December** New Year's Eve Party.



Excelcare Chef of the Year announced

Welcome

to the Winter issue of Excelcare News.

Keeping you informed on the latest Excelcare news as well as news on events from the homes in your region:

Castlemead Court
Care Centre

Dovecote Manor
Care Centre

Neath House
Care Centre

Water Hall
Care Centre

The Willows
Care Centre



On Wednesday 23rd October, 3663 held their annual Excelcare Chef of the Year competition whereby five staff members competed for the title. 3663 are very proud to support this competition and this year saw some fantastic creations that really confirmed the quality of cooking in our care industry - something that rarely gets praise in our media. The competition was very close and the quality and presentation of the finished dishes would not have looked out of place in a Michelin Star restaurant - a testament to each chef's dedication and effort.

Congratulations to the winner, Anthony Tilley from Excelcare's Milton Keynes region and finalists Velica Cozma (Cambridge region), Annett Tait (London region), Anna Selversparra (Essex region) and Patricia Cannon (London Supporting People region). They have certainly raised the bar for next year's finalists.

Well Done to Brook House

A big Well Done to Brook House for getting into the final 5 for the Best Care Home Award in the UK by the Caring Times - National Care Awards. Staff members from Brook House, the Cambridge Region and three members of the Senior Management Team attended the National Care Awards 2013 Gala Night, which was held at the Hilton London Metropole Hotel on Friday 29th November. Although they didn't win this was a huge achievement to get down to the final 5 for this prestigious award.



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A warm welcome to recent new members of the team...

Castlemead:

- **Gabriel Petre, Hari Kumar, Binta Tourey, Pushpa Mathew, Daisy Page, Paige Harris**
HCA
- **Tara Murphy**
Hostess
- **Michelle Butler**
Activity Co ordinator

Water Hall

- **Monika Chinwadzimba, Mark Baker, Vicki Snowden, Deborah Scrivin-Cowan**
Health Care Assistants



Castlemead

Garden in Bloom

I am sure you will agree with me when I say a very well done to Terry Saint on Holly unit who won this year's Garden in Bloom Competition.

The competition was organised by Tower Gate Insurers and was a national competition open to all different organisations.

When I first discussed this with Terry he was loathed to enter but after some gentle persuasion and a pint of beer he agreed. Terry spent many hours pruning and planting, producing some beautiful flowers and also wonderful herbs for our kitchen. The sage, mint and chillies were first class... Towergate visited the home in July and took lots of photos so they could go back to Head Office and decide who the winner will be. It wasn't till the October that we were informed that Terry had really impressed them with his herb garden and his use of the decking area. The prize was £250 which we asked for in Frost vouchers, and as an added bonus our Head Office agreed to give an extra £100 to the winner. Terry is looking forward to the spring when we can go shopping and purchase all those lovely bulbs and seeds.... Fingers crossed for next year...

Chef of the Year

3663 our dry food supplier held an event in conjunction with Uniliver to seek out the best Chef within Excelcare. Anthony Tilley one of our Chefs was put forward as a competitor.

The remit for the completion was to produce a main meal and desert that was appropriate to the client group was nutritious and within budget.

So Anthony then spent weeks agonising over the ingredients, the look and taste of what he was about



to prepare. The day before the competition he prepared for us what was I can only describe as the most delicious chicken and stacked vegetable dish. We devoured his work in seconds. The residents agreed it was a winner and we wished him every success.

Anthony went to the Unilivers Head Office in London and took his position up in the televised competition kitchen. After 90 very long minutes his dishes were complete and presented along with the 5 other contestant menu's to the Judges. A very short time later we were called to gather round the kitchens and it is with great pleasure to announce that Anthony was declared the winner over all in the competition. We are all so very proud of his achievements on the day and so very proud that we have a top chef working here in our very own kitchens.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Cedars schools nativity play
- New City Slickers
- Karaoke
- Juke Box legends
- Stuart Clemance pianist
- Christmas party with Martin Reeves as entertainment.
- Diamond School of performing arts Choir
- Comedy Panto
- Festive Panto
- Church Service



Halloween Party

This years Halloween party went extremely well... All who joined us would be sure to agree. The usual games were enjoyed by the residents and staff alike. As usual we held our competitions and the winner were as follows

- Best Hat - Laurian Williams
- Best Pumpkin - Catherine Davis
- Best Dressed Staff Member - Tracy Shepherd (and no I wasn't giving out bribes!)

A certificate and prize were awarded to all who entered.

Thank you so very much to all that attended, you make it so very special for us all and a wonderful night that we all remember.

Christmas Raffle

The staff and residents at Castlemead would like to say a massive thank you to all of you who donated to the Christmas raffle, local business have also given their support as they do every year.

For those of you who wish to purchase tickets please see Zoe on reception. All monies raised will go towards the residents comfort fund. Last year we managed to raise a fantastic £313! This year were hoping to better that amount.....
WATCH OUT - Zoe has a record to beat now!

Neath House

As winter approaches and the countdown to Christmas begins; we have been busy here at the home. We celebrated Jeff and Pam Horne's Diamond Wedding Anniversary. Jeff is a new resident here and he and his wife and their family had a party in the home to celebrate sixty years of marriage. Congratulations from all of us.

We were runner up in the Tower Gate Garden Competition and were

presented with a certificate for our entry 'A Wonderland in Colour'.

Events

Halloween - we had a spooky display in the reception area, made decorations and the staff were encouraged to wear a hat as long as they donated a pound to the comfort fund.

We are pleased to announce we now have a church service every month with Rev Andy Jowitt which was a big success with the families and residents. Our next service will be on Thursday 12th December at 2pm.

We had a cheese and wine evening on



UPCOMING EVENTS

- 13th December Christmas party
- 20th December Staff performing pantomime Peter Pan



The Willows

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Autumn breezed in, in fine style with our Harvest Festival Church Service, followed by a Harvest buffet of residents own homemade bread and cakes. Preparation was hugely enjoyed by all our residents who used their cookery skills of yester-year to knead, shape and bake the bread. Nursing floor residents made a wonderful scarecrow for the display with everyone adding their own personal memories of farm scarecrows from their childhood.

Celebrations were also underway for resident Flossie Looker who celebrated her 101st birthday. Happy birthday Flossie.

HALLOWEEN

The 31st October celebrations welcomed a visit from 'Ecolab' with their amazing selection of exotic animals. Residents, sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters all revelled in the spectacular, fearless residents and children handled snakes, snails, spiders



MEMORY WALK

A very blustery Sunday 15th September welcomed the 'Memory Walk' in aid of the Alzheimer's society. Willows resident Eileen Prince bravely faced the winds around Willen Lake and raised £200 for the Alzheimer's society. Congratulations Eileen, we are all so proud of you!

to mention a few. A marvellous 'spooky' buffet was provided by Maureen and Monica from the kitchen. Children's fancy dress was awesome with prizes for all who joined in. A most wonderful time was had by all.

BONFIRE NIGHT

Due to work still in progress in the garden we were unable to celebrate with fireworks but residents enjoyed craft making and bonfire night



treats and traditional guy Fawkes fayre.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

We were delighted to welcome the return of entertainer Fiona Harrison performing her stunning "We'll meet again" routine. Afternoon tea was served in the conservatory and residents shared the poignant memories.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 30th November 11am - 2pm Christmas Bazaar
- 9th December 2.30pm Fiona Harrison entertaining with "Rocking around the Christmas Tree"
- 5th December 6pm Jack and the Beanstalk pantomime
- 5th December 2.30pm Christmas Church Carol Service

