

NEWS

Essex

Keeping you informed on the latest news and upcoming events

Hard work and family values

In 1989, OSMAN 'OZZIE' ERTOSUN, chairman of Excelcare Holdings, opened his first care home in Catford, South London. Ozzie tells Caring Times editor Geoff Hodgson his story of three decades in the care sector.

Excelcare is still a family business after 30 years. Starting with the 24-bed Bowood Nursing Home in Catford, the company now operates 33 care homes around London and East Anglia. "Whenever we interview new staff we always stress that it's important not to forget that we are a family business, but with corporate disciplines," said company chairman Ozzie Ertosun.

"Because of our responsibilities in terms of regulation, local authorities, safeguarding and so on, disciplines have to be followed, but we like people to know, whether they are relatives, family, friends or staff is that they can call at

any time and have an open and frank conversation - that is really, really important." Excelcare's portfolio is mixed; some nursing, some purely residential and many registered as specialist dementia. The company also operates a homecare business.

In 1988, when he was just 19, Ozzie did some work experience at a care home

called Nora's Lodge in Sydenham.

"It was a small residential home belonging to a family friend. I worked there for six months, realised that it was an industry I wanted to be in, and I felt I could do it better than it was being done in those days, in a nicer building.

"Our family had a background in construction so we built our first home, Bowood Nursing Home, a 24-bed facility in Catford in 1989. I built that with my father and some tradesmen - we physically built the home over two years."

"You have really set a standard here," a lady who was the main inspector for the Lewisham area told Ozzie. "But you have the disadvantage that you are very young; people may not have the confidence to place your parents with you."

"She was right," Ozzie remembers. "For nine months I didn't have a single admission! But I soon learnt: I got a nice, mature Manager who worked for me for 28 years before retiring."

Then, beginning in Lambeth, Ozzie began to take on ex-local authority homes.



"I didn't have a financial background and I asked my father, 'How do I grow this company?' It's working; I'm enjoying it and it seems to be popular with the local authorities.' He said I needed to learn how to borrow money in a bigger way - our accountant helped me to organise bank loans and we bought people on board who had worked for local authorities. They steered me towards block contracts, and this became our target market. We won a 15-year contract with Lambeth, taking over three of their homes, refurbishing them and building a new one. Then we tendered for a contract in Cambridge and that began our activity in East Anglia.

"Our hard work and family values paid off; local authorities could see we were sincere, that we weren't here just to make some money and get out of the business. Then we gained a 30-year contract in Milton Keynes - we would buy the buildings, rebuild them and provide the care. And

Continued next page →

then we did the same thing in Essex. We didn't really target the private market because in those days, the local authority rates gave you a reasonable return. We have always been open and honest, and local authorities know we have nothing to hide, and that our profits are at the bottom end of the market."

Homecare

About 15 years ago, Ozzie launched a homecare business. It has been successful and is still operating but he has recently closed some of its branches.

"We couldn't find the staff and maintain the quality," said Ozzie. "How can you go in and provide 15 minutes of care for people, and at the rates that were being offered? We could see what was happening and we didn't want to be in that market - homecare has become a disaster in some local authorities. On the whole we have a very good reputation with CQC and with local authorities and I didn't want to bring that

reputation down."

And the future? Again, like many other providers, Ozzie is beginning to look at the private-pay market.

"We are looking to knock down some of our older buildings and build better homes for our residents. A lot of this will be 'care suites' - they don't need to be flats, they can be something like a studio-type apartment but small, so elderly people can easily get around them. I would want these to be within a care home setting but provide something more than just a room with an en-suite."

Recruitment

Like many other providers, Ozzie places recruitment at the top of his list of concerns.

"Up to two years' ago I had never used agency staff in London. But we have struggled to get nurses and carers. We increased pay as much as we could but then it became still more difficult when

government tightened the regulations for recruiting nurses from overseas. It now takes about eight months to bring a nurse in from abroad and it is so expensive that it is sometimes not cost-effective. I have closed about five homes over the last five years because the fees would not have allowed us to care for people properly.

"One thing I would like to see change, is that the recruitment process be speeded up. At present it can take up three months to six months to replace someone when they leave. We've written to all the ministers, all our MPs, our managers have written as well, asking them to acknowledge that we have a problem and to make these immigration policies softer and easier for qualified people to come here where they are needed. It is such a long-winded process; people can get jobs elsewhere and be working within a week, so that puts care providers at a massive disadvantage." ●

SWEYNE COURT

Autumn has been busy for us. We have celebrated birthdays, we have been baking, we held a cheese and wine evening, and we welcomed Pets As Therapy Dogs, to name a few events! We also enjoyed our fantastic glitzy ball, which was a great opportunity for us to dress up and dance the night away.

We are also pleased to announce that we have been shortlisted for a prestigious national award. The Caring UK Awards are now in their third year and we have beaten off competition from hundreds of others across the UK to be shortlisted in the Excellence and Innovation in Dementia Care in the awards. Keep your fingers crossed for us.

In other news, the cats, Bobby and Joyce continue to bring love and laughter to everyone throughout the home. Everyone takes their turn in looking after them, and they have their favourites that they choose to visit.

The sweet shop now has a few extra sweets as requested. This sweet shop is set up entirely of donations from staff this is something that we like to give back and is not charged for. ●



LIME COURT

Lime Court has good community links with the local schools and colleges. We have regular visits from pupils from Spring Meadow Primary School. It is lovely to see the interaction between young and old with the children helping the residents with the games and vice-versa. We also have regular visits from Harwich & Dovercourt High Schools 'Smile' Group to join in with the activities which have included active ball games and a horseracing afternoon. During term time we also have students from Harwich & Dovercourt High School and Colchester Institute attend weekly for work placement.



Lime Court residents recently went on an excursion to Walton. They went seal watching on a wildlife boat trip around the beautiful backwaters of Walton on the Naze. The residents had lots of fun and laughter on our seal watching adventure.

A Coffee and Cake morning was enjoyed to celebrate National Care Home Open Day. In the afternoon we had a visit from the Mayor and Mayoress of Harwich and Mr Bean Entertainment put on a show performing magic and balloon modelling for everyone.

Lime Court has recently joined the Facebook group Postcards of Kindness. We are overwhelmed at the success of this and have received lots of postcards, letters and painted children's pictures from many locations in the UK and overseas (including Hong Kong, USA, Canary Islands and the Netherlands). This has proved an amazing activity of reading, discussion and reminiscence of the location or theme on the postcard. We have also been hand making our own postcards to reply to some of the senders. This has caused so much excitement and smiles around the home. We have had some more wonderful things to come from this including a resident who spent many years in the Netherlands now receiving regular letters from a Dutch penpal and another resident who is now writing to a fellow Liverpool football supporter in another Care Home. ●



UPCOMING EVENTS

Residents are also set to enjoy the following activities/entertainment over the next few months:

- Singalong Sessions with Claire from Harwich Sing Choir
- Regular live musical entertainment
- Weekly Hairdresser visit
- Massage / Aromatherapy sessions
- Arts and Craft Sessions with Creative Mojo
- Visits by local schools
- Music Therapy sessions with Kiddleydivey
- Fruity Fridays
- Therapy dog 'Wanda' from charity Canine Concerns
- Gentle exercise sessions with GFit
- Work Experience Students (activities)
- Gecko Theatre residency
- Petting zoo visits
- Themed Food Days
- Family and Friends Evenings (Quiz Nights, Cheese & Wine Evenings, Pizza and Bingo)



LONGFIELD

David James entertains on open day

In June we held our Care Home Open day. Throughout the morning we had a cup cake decorating, board games and the tofel Tovertafel (magic table). We had a display of resident's art work in our music room along with a coffee morning. We had visits from the Mayoress and the deputy Mayor.

This was followed by a new visiting entertainer, David James. He was dressed very smartly and performed beautiful songs and danced with the residents. For those unable to dance, he got down one knee and serenaded, like a proper gentleman! Everyone was swooning and really enjoyed the afternoon. We cannot wait to see him again.

Summer Fete

We held our summer fete in September, the weather was good to us, we had lots of stalls, residents and visitors alike had a lovely afternoon. Nick Holland our cook was in the stocks, getting a good soaking from one of our residents.

Longfield Garden

This year the residents of Longfield care home have been working hard on their garden. We planted our own vegetables from seed, they are growing well and we had our first crop of tomatoes this week and are looking forward to more vegetables becoming ready to pick. We went shopping for flowers for our new sensory garden, which the residents enjoy seeing and watering. Our sunflowers are starting to bloom and we are having a little competition to see who had grew the tallest in each lodge. Everyone is enjoying spending time in the garden and watching everything grow and bloom.



Harvest and Tea Party

Our Chefs Anna and Nick have been very busy this week making cakes for both the lovely harvest festival service we had in the home on 23rd September and the musical tea party we had on 26th September. The tables were laid up in a decorative way, bunting hung from the ceiling and music played in the background. During the tea party residents chose the music they wanted to listen to and our new echo dot played their music whilst the residents sang along.

On both these occasions Anna and Nick excelled at the beautiful cakes that were on display to eat. The residents said they really enjoyed this and loved eating all the cakes!

The Reverend Stephen Carter and some of his choir visited the home; we had a lovely service of hymns, prayers and readings. Then after the service they stayed and enjoyed tea and cake whilst conversing with our residents.

Armed Forces day at the prom

There was an armed forces day down the Maldon Promenade where there was a selection of vehicles from throughout the ages. They were from different areas of the armed forces, army, navy, marines and some from USA. We had a good look around conversing as we went. Afterwards we all enjoyed an ice cream and then a walk around the lake before heading back home. ●





ST FILLANS

It's been a busy, fun, hot summer here at St Fillans with lots of events and celebrations. Our summer fete was a great success despite the wet weather and the fete was held indoors so as not to disappoint. Residents, Relatives and Visitors, enjoyed a scrumptious BBQ, and we had a number of stalls selling goods on the day. There was an array of lovely scented candles available to purchase - the best seller was a candle called "Fireside" it really did remind you of those days sat in front of a real coal fire. With proceeds from the summer raffle and money raised on the day we raised nearly £350, residents are currently deciding on what they would like to spend the money on.

Residents at St Fillans have been writing down the 'wishes' they would like to be granted. The wishing washing line is a FANs creation and is a simple but very effective way of joining the community with local care homes, enabling them become a FANs (Friends and Neighbours) making a positive experience. The wishing washing line is set up in Tesco's supermarket for staff and shoppers to read the wish and if they can grant the wish they contact the care home, it is very simple.

St Fillans is now connected with the Colchester UP project. The Colchester UP Project consists of a weekly visit from children aged 1-5yrs and their childminder. The Colchester UP Project is an inter-generational project that helps support those living in care homes to re-engage with our younger generations, we will still be continuing with our weekly visits from little beginnings.

Students from Colchester institute college have chosen to undertake their placements at St Fillans. Students are studying Level 3 in Health and social care and are getting involved with many different activities with the life style co-ordinator's it is a great way of students gaining skills and experience and enabling them to further their careers in Health and Social Care.

PAT dog Tilly visits one Saturday a month. Residents always look forward to having a visit from Tilly, she is a beautiful black and white border collie. Tilly gets spoilt rotten, and always knows who has the biscuits! ●



SHERRELL HOUSE

We would like to say a huge welcome to all of our new starters who have joined our team. We hope you will love being part of our Sherrell House and ultimately our Excelcare family.

We would also like to say a fond farewell to those who have decided to move on to pastures new. Many of these staff have chosen to progress in the Health & Social Care field and to know that we have played a small part in their decision to progress makes us feel very proud. Good luck to one and all. Sadly this season has seen many losses in the home of those residents who have been very dear to us. It has been a real privilege to care for them and their loved ones and our thoughts remain with their families.

Sports Day

We held our very own sports day and the winning team are pictured here.

We were also delighted to have our relatives join our staff in the ever popular sack race...

Kirsty's Mad Adventure!

Our very own Kirsty Law agreed to join her sister to take part in the Scottish Half Marathon as a birthday present! – Whilst we could think of better things to do for our 40th, Kirsty did not want to let her sister down and the two achieved this massive feat. Kirsty decided to raise money for the residents of Sherrell House and achieved a massive £130 to go to the residents fund for activities. Kirsty said 'I couldn't walk for two days afterwards, but I feel very proud of my achievement and am so pleased I could do something for our wonderful residents'. Here she is with one of our ladies congratulating her on taking up this challenge;

Mad Hatter's Tea Party

Back by popular demand from our residents, friends and families the Mad Hatter's Tea Party was all it proved to be and more! Celebrating as part of Silver Sunday the theme was silver and sparkles which our residents enjoyed decorating the pub lounge.

Church Service

Faith is very important to our Sherrell House Community and many of our residents enjoy the monthly church service provided by our local Vicar.

And finally...

We could not leave without showing one of our most popular activities within the home, the afternoon movies. Whether it be the thought of swooning over Cary Grant or the knowledge of being able to have popcorn with your favourite tippie, movie afternoons are well attended by our residents. ●



WINIFRED DELL

Winifred Dell has had a very busy few months. On 28th June we held our Care Home Open Day. Throughout the day we had a variety of activities such as garden games, puzzles and jigsaws. In the afternoon we held a BBQ followed by some live music from our regular performer, Mark. He has been singing at Winifred Dell for a few years and the residents always love his performances.

In July we had Lisa the pony come to visit along with the local community nursery, Nappy and Paddies' to spend some time with the residents. Everyone enjoyed interacting with and colouring and reading. The residents are so happy to see the children and to hear about their time at the nursery and it always brings a smile to their faces.

Also in July we held our very own bird show where we had a range of birds such as owls, birds of prey, eagle and a vulture. The residents enjoyed hearing about each individual bird and their history. This was an activity they'd very much like to see again at the home.

The residents had a visit to Southend on Sea and spent time at the beach along with a visit to the Sea Life centre where residents saw a variety of sea life animals as well as meerkats and monkeys! We'd like to thank the volunteers who helped us make this event so special for the residents.

Babette celebrated a very special 90th Birthday on 3rd August. We held a garden party with her family and close friends. Our lifestyle coordinator, Clare helped Babette's family to make this a very special day for her including arranging a singer to come and sing her Happy Birthday.

Another local care home, Mundy House came to visit us and joined in with the activities, it's very important to have care homes and community join together to get to know all the other residents. Our residents enjoyed the visit and we are planning to arrange another event like this very soon.

Winifred Dell had their summer fete in our garden during August. There were a variety of stalls and entertainment. Our Chef, Joanne helped by cooking a BBQ for everyone. We raised £442 to go towards more resident's activities fund. A big thank you to everyone who gave up their free time to support the home and residents. We couldn't have done it without everyone's help.

We'd like to congratulate Mr & Mrs Campbell on their diamond wedding anniversary; the home arranged an afternoon tea for them to celebrate this special milestone and they received a special card from the Queen.

Winifred Dell would also like to say a huge welcome to all of our new starters who have joined our team and become part of the Excelcare family. All activities are displayed in reception and on the units. ●



STANLEY WILSON

The Saffron Club

We have enjoyed the lovely warm weather and in the garden the lilies have been beautiful and full of colour.

We have had some brilliant entertainers come to the Club and we have all enjoyed some singing and dancing.



their repertoire of songs and providing instruments for us to play along with them. Fortunately it did not hamper the afternoon and a good time was had by everyone.

The local school Katherine Seymour kindly visited with 33 children, (just some of their school choir) they produced a brilliant sound; they provided song sheets and sang songs the residents knew.

Our local Art Group provided us with a morning of making greeting cards – they brought along lots of things to make the cards special and gave a professional finish that any card shop would be proud to sell.

Mike Copping's our "Play Your Cards Right Man" entertained us all afternoon with his quiz and banter to make us laugh, an enjoyable time had by all.

The U3A Strummers played to us with their Ukulele's, providing us a memorabilia afternoon of songs. The group just love coming to play to us as in their words we are so enthusiastic and appreciative of their playing.



We provided a "Sports Day" morning for our Nursery children, they just loved the egg and spoon race, getting the ball in the goal, throwing the bean bags in the paddling pool, dressing up race with the residents - two children from each team had to take it in turns to race backwards and forwards dressing up the resident of their team with hats, scarves, and stickers, was fun to watch and cheer on. The children all received medals for their efforts.

We have been very fortunate that a volunteer reading group are now visiting us connected to our Catholic Church volunteers. They take it turns to have different readers come in to read to our resident's stories of their choice. The residents like sort stories that are funny and like the odd funny poems, like those from Pam Ayers. ●

STANLEY WILSON LODGE HOME

Since the last newsletter we have been really busy here at Stanley Wilson Lodge. There has been so much going on with a Pub visit to The White Horse in Withersfield taking 13 of our residents to have a slap up lunch.

The weather could have been a bit kinder to us on our Cream Tea afternoon we had organised inviting relatives to come and spend time with the residents in the garden having tea, cream scones and cake, listening to The Woodwind of Stortford who kindly came and entertained us with

Trotters Visit to Goldenley

A friend of Lifestyle Coordinator visited kindly with his own original Trotter van From *Only Fools and Horses*, to do some wheeling and dealing with the residents. Great fun was had by all. The residents are looking forward to seeing Mr Bean's Famous Mini next time.



Gemma's Farm Came to Town

We had a fantastic day with Gemma's farm. The residents loved engaging with the animals and being able to feed them brought big smiles to them all. We are huge animal lovers, so it was a memorable day.



A Day Trip to the Shops

Two of our lovely ladies enjoyed a short trip to Canvey Island to have a walk round the shops and decided to try out the garden furniture in style and put their feet up and relax. They enjoyed a coffee and ice cream and although it was a bit windy, they had a lovely time.



Joe Beer Comes to Entertain

Joe comes to entertain us on a regular basis, when he is not being a skiing instructor in France. He is a big hit with the ladies! And has a lovely rapport with the residents. He always asks them to choose which songs they would like to hear.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Residents are also set to enjoy the following activities/entertainment over the next few months:

- 2nd Oct Brain Shaw solo artist singing songs from the 50's to 60s era
- 8th October Fitness with to music with Elaine, a new comer to the home
- 10th October one of the residents favourites on return The Haleigh voices Choir
- 17th October Hazels Pottery barn a great favourite and request return to do some poppies
- 22nd October Smokey Joe Country and Western day.
- 31st October our own lifestyle Coordinator Faith for Halloween to entertain residents with her own solo Set and fancy dress competition.

OKELEY

We've had so much fun this summer here at Okeley; our feet have barely touched the floor!

We celebrated National Care Home Open Day in June with unicorns, owls, music and great food in the garden. There was a lot of glitter and even more laughter as we joined together as a community with school children from Southend to enjoy a special time together in the beautiful weather.

Having started our very own choir in May, by June we were in full voice. Our family members chose the songs, we provided the words and everyone sings their hearts out every Wednesday afternoon. It's something we all look forward to and brightens up the week.

Our recent Autumn Fayre was a huge success, raising a staggering £500 for our family members!! This money will go towards providing a wonderful Christmas for everyone living here at Okeley. ●



July On 4th of July, The American Independence Day was celebrated with American music and American food was served during the day. Elvis, Peter, Dennis, Mark, Pete and Alex all visited us to entertain our residents with their music. Beloved songs lightened up the atmosphere here at Ashlyn. A Vintage Tea Party in the garden was held.

On Friday the 12th of July, our residents went to Harlow Queensgate Cinema to enjoy another Dementia Friendly Screening of Rocketman. Then, The Wood Wind Group & their Flutes, Brian and Bernie with his Musical Cinema Day and popcorn and ice cream all brought smiles, music and happiness at Ashlyn.

On the 30th of July, our residents enjoyed the Southend trip with fish & chips at the restaurant and shopped for sticks of rock, sweets and souvenirs.

July brought for our residents, music & movements (chair based exercises on the sound of music), Bingo, Darts, Pamper Days, Card games and garden activities, all enjoyed by our Residents.

August was an amazing month here at Ashlyn and brought more happiness for our lovely residents. On the 1st of August, our residents enjoyed Baking Club – pizza day.

The following week, from 5th to 11th of August, residents enjoyed 'Beach week'. Every day had different themed activities: Monday was Postcard Day- written by our residents and sent to Longfield Care Home. Tuesday was Windmill day and paper windmills were made. Wednesday was The sensory table day. With a wooden box, sand, sea shells, hats, sun glasses, a picnic blanket, buckets, beach toys, and beloved songs brought memories about the sea, beach and holidays. Thursday was Paddling pool Day. Residents enjoyed a lovely morning by the pool with feet in the water, juices, ice lollies and beloved songs, followed by lunch in the garden. On Friday, the fish & chips were served the old fashion way, wrapped in newspaper and take away boxes. On Saturday, the Beach Week's pictures were printed and we all had a look at them before we shared them on the wall boards. Ice cream day, on Sunday, brought a final touch to the week.

Music & Movements with chair based exercises, Baking Club, Darts, Bingo, Pamper Day and music shows were all part of August's activities.

On the 31st of August our Summer Fete brought more fun for residents and their guests and we are proud to say that we successfully raised £517, which will again be used for our residents future activities and entertainment. ●





CAREHOMES IN YOUR REGION

Abbot Care Home
01279 452990

Okeley Care Home
01245 287500

Ashlyn Care Home
01279 868330

Lime Court Care Home
01255 506340

Sherrell House Care Home
0208 501 3389

St Filans Care Home
01206 855407

Stanley Wilson Care Home
01799 529189

Winifred Dell Care Home
01277 220897

Sweyne Court Care Home
01268 774530

Goldenley Care Home
01268 758487

Longfield Care Home
01621 857147

Excelcare
A premier care provider

Essex Regional Office
Longfield Regional Office
Fambridge Close, Maldon,
Essex CM9 6DJ
Tel: 01621 851010

ABBOT

The last few months have been very busy at Abbot Care Home. We welcomed a new Home Manager into post, Donna Johnson, and have commenced a big recruitment drive. During this time we have said goodbye to a few colleagues who have moved onto pastures new and have welcomed some new staff to the home.

We have a few more appointments to make, before we can say we are fully established but we are exciting announce, we have two new Lifestyle Coordinators joining us as soon as we have completed the statutory checks. This means that we can offer an activity/ events service six days a week, including one weekend day every week.

Soon after Donna arrived we held a family BBQ to get to know the residents, relatives and staff, and despite the rain we had a fantastic turnout and got to meet new friends and old friends alike!

A few weeks ago we held a Care Staff Appreciation Day. The lovely residents really captured the mood and made beautiful cards for the staff on duty to say their own thank you. I know that we are all very lucky to have such a great staff team who always go the extra mile.

Upcoming events

Abbot Care Home is hoping to form a walking group once the new Lifestyle Coordinators arrive. This will be held once a week and will get the residents out in the community more.

Christmas is just around the corner, which means we can have some fun judging the best dressed unit and arrange that a presentation is made to the best festive unit. We are hoping to ask one of the regional team to judge and make the presentation - watch this space for photographs as the units go head to head with the other units.

We are planning to start coffee mornings each week and to invite a member of the regional team to join us as often as they can. Please keep an eye out for the dates. This will be an opportunity to meet the Care and Home Manager and to just have a catch up on any ideas to improve the home or to review what we have done. ●

