

Snake Surprise!

Roy Braddock was one of the inquisitive and intrepid residents at Corpus Christi Aged Care Facility who enjoyed a recent close encounter with snakes and other reptiles.

With seeming equanimity and calm he invited a snake to decorate his neck - as if it were a fancy necklace! Having experienced plenty of snakes in North Queensland, Roy was very enthusiastic and exclaimed "Ooh, it's really sliding around" as the snake circled his neck under the watchful eye of the Snake Handler, Sean McCarthy. Roy was delighted that his son was present to see how much he enjoyed the experience.

Louis Perrone eagerly held a python and was amazed at the weight of it. "Could we keep it as the facility pet?" he asked! Over sixty residents and family members enjoyed the exhibition of snakes and reptiles – not all at such close quarters!



Roy Braddock (above) and Louis Perrone (below) enjoying the snake surprise.



Corpus Christi Village residents recently enjoyed a fire safety presentation from Dave, a retired fireman. A beautiful old brass fireman's helmet captured the imagination as Dave spoke of the good old days as a firefighter.

Independent Living Units

Cooler summers and warmer winters are on the cards for residents living in 108 of our Independent Living Units, thanks to the recent installation of ceiling insulation. Our Property Services Team was quick to take up the opportunity of Australian Government funding valued at \$63,225 for this purpose. They are also looking at ways to fund improvements to ceiling insulation in other units, which is not functioning at the optimal level.

Our thanks to all residents for their cooperation with the condition audit of all our independent living units. The data is now being analysed and will be used to inform our capital improvement plans. We will keep you informed.

Catholic Homes Newsletter

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Message from the CEO

One of our strategic priorities is to assist seniors with support needs to remain living safely at home. So we were delighted to receive thirteen additional Community Packages from the Commonwealth Government in July 2009. This includes 8 Extended Care at Home Packages (EACH) designed for seniors requiring higher levels of care and service.

On 4th August, residents and staff at St Bernadette's Aged Care Facility warmly welcomed the Hon. Justine Elliot, Federal Minister for Ageing, and the Hon. Bill Shorten, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services. They were impressed by the recently completed 15 bed dementia unit. Bill Shorten offered his support to residents as their local MP.

In July, I attended the Global Ageing Network Conference and toured a diverse range of aged care facilities and retirement villages in the UK. Our services compare very well and we face similar issues and challenges. This experience will be of value as we prepare our Strategic Plan for 2010 to 2013 over the coming months.

Justin Villa residents and staff recently received a special presentation of their 3 year Accreditation Certificate by the State Manager of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency, Raelene Thompson. Raelene praised Justin Villa for providing such excellent resident focused care.

Joan Donoghue

Hon. Justine Elliott (2nd from the left) and Hon Bill Shorten (at right) accompanied by Michael Dillon and Penny Iddon during their visit to St Bernadette's Aged Care Facility.



Raelene Thompson & Lorraine Baker (4th & 5th from the left) from the Aged Care Standards & Accreditation Agency presenting the Accreditation Certificate to staff and residents at Justin Villa, with Joan Donoghue (right).



Transformation at St Catherine's

During late autumn and winter 2009, the high care section in the gracious old villa at St Catherine's has benefited from a \$430,000 refurbishment program. Facility Manager, Michelle Willison, describes the transformation as "a butterfly emerging from its cocoon". Residents were inspired to name the communal areas after flowers & trees.

Mass is now transmitted daily via CCTV from the chapel to many more residents in the Gardenia Lounge. Residents are also enjoying the new entertainment system.

The works included new flooring and window furnishings, freshly painted walls, 7 renovated ensuites, new communal furniture, new cooking appliances, as well as improved storage and staff work areas. The result is a brighter and more homely environment that enhances the comfort and enjoyment of residents, as well as giving a new lease of life to the Victorian building.

Thank you to all residents, families and visitors for your cooperation and patience. We also appreciate the great teamwork by St Catherine's and Property Services staff.

Staff Perspective

Caryn Wells loves her job as Care Manager at Corpus Christi Aged Care Facility. "I love the resident interaction - hearing their stories, having a laugh and a chat together. I get close to residents and it enables me to give better care," says Caryn.

Her philosophy is to create a happy and enjoyable environment and to treat each resident as an individual so that she can cater to their needs on a one-to-one basis.

"It's important for staff to treat residents as they would their own parents or grandparents. You treat others as you would want yourself and your family to be treated. If you want respect you've got to give respect," says Caryn.

Caryn says she has learnt a lot from older people during her 10 years in aged care. "It makes you reflect on your own life. I realise how fortunate I have been compared to what the older generation has been through, with wars and the depression," says Caryn.

"You also learn about how to age well. I think if you are true to yourself, then everything else falls into place."

Caryn says that she hopes that if she ever needs aged care, she would be cared for in the way her staff care for residents at Corpus Christ Aged Care Facility.

Below: Caryn Wells with resident, Eileen Sutton.



Footy Celebrations

Footy fever was rampant in the wintry week leading up to the Grand Final. Jubilation, disappointment, jocular rivalry and competitive tipping were all part of the heady mix culminating in festive celebrations and footy tipping prizes.

Below: Pat O'Haire, St Joseph's resident, receives her footy tipping prize from Karen Lambert, Lifestyle Assistant, with Joan Harding and other residents.



Leading with Technology

Over 100 contractors have used Catholic Homes' online induction program since its launch on 1 July 2009. Val Maeorg, Facilities Manager at Catholic Homes, suggested this innovation to provide greater certainty that all contractors fully understand the Code of Conduct, Occupational Health and Safety and other requirements before they visit a site for the first time. "We take the safety and security of our clients and residents very seriously. The online induction program gives us much greater control over the process. Contractors also like it because they can complete the program at a time most convenient to them, which is often outside normal working hours," says Val.

Keeping Older Workers

John R Hannah is participating in Swinburne University's Meteor Project, which aims to improve and prolong the working lives of staff aged 45 years and over working in aged care.

The Meteor Project is based on a very successful workability program for older workers, which has been operating in Finland for the past 20 years. As a result, people are continuing to work into their late 60's, as well as reporting higher levels of job satisfaction, improved health and reduced levels of stress. The benefits for organizations include reduced sick leave, work-related accidents and absenteeism.

"The typical aged care worker is 50 years of age and there is a growing demand for aged care services, so it is vital that we retain skilled and experienced staff for as long as possible," says Ray McIntosh, Residential Services Manager at John R Hannah.

The project is commencing shortly and will lead the way to effective strategies for recruiting and retaining older workers, which can be implemented throughout Catholic Homes.

Uplifting Tai Chi

Tai Chi classes conducted at Providence every Monday by Danny Conlan are very popular.

The term "Tai Chi" is an accepted English equivalent of the Chinese word "Taijiquan". "It's an integral part of our *Stay on Your Feet and Don't Fall Program*", says Margaret Edgar, Facility Manager. "Practising Tai Chi helps with balance, strength and flexibility, keeps joints mobile and improves muscle tone and bone density. It improves our quality of life and daily physical performance," says Margaret.

Residents particularly enjoy the group activity using the multicoloured parachute and balloons. "The benefits from this activity include the sense of unity and cohesion from everyone working together as a group and doing the same thing at the same time. Residents also enjoy the sensory stimulus from the movement, the interactions with others and the vibrant colours," says Danny. He adds that the exercise creates a refreshing air flow - firstly upwards and then rushing across your face as the parachute falls downwards. "That was fun" and "I feel so much better" are among the favourable comments by residents at the end of the session.

Residents at Providence enjoying a Tai Chi experience

