

Life for Seniors

Autumn/Winter 2010

*The Quarterly Newsletter of
The Restorative Professionals
Alliance of Ontario*



IN THIS ISSUE

A Success Story In Perth • Mobility for Parkinson's Patients
Cards of Recognition • The Sound of Healing
...and more!



RESTORATIVE PROFESSIONALS ALLIANCE
OF ONTARIO

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THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

The concept of the Butterfly Effect was first introduced in 1890 by Edward Lorenz. Imagine if you will, that a butterfly can gently beat it's wings, and the small amount of air movement it generates has the potential to be felt the world over. Adding to this, when hundreds of butterflies beat their wings simultaneously, it creates a cumulative mass movement of air, and the air becomes a breeze. In turn, that breeze moves across the land and affects everything that it touches. It can carry seeds for new growth, bring about shifts in direction, and generally creates an awareness of its presence in all living things.

This was, in part, the concept for the presence of a butterfly in the RPAO logo. We believe that through cumulative efforts, we can all make a difference to those in our care by implementing strategic and educated decisions and actions in our Restorative Therapy efforts. In turn, our efforts can be felt widespread across the industry, and these "breezes" can bring about the true winds of change, and an enhanced quality of life for those under our professional care.

With the increased awareness of the importance of implementing Restorative Therapy efforts, we welcome you to our newly founded group, **The Restorative Professionals Alliance of Ontario**. As a member of the group, you will be kept up to date on changes and newly implemented standards in the industry, along with techniques for improving your own Restorative Therapy programs. You will also have the opportunity to network with other professionals, and share your thoughts and ideas with other members.

We will be publishing *Life For Seniors*, a quarterly newsletter in conjunction with our www.rpao.ca website. We will also hold a yearly conference where we can all meet to strategize and share our cumulative knowledge.

Move your own wings, be part of the winds of change. We hope that you will join us! Thank you.

Sharron and Bruce Brigham,
Founders, RPAO

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The RPAO Newsletter is published quarterly.

Membership in the RPAO is \$40 per year for individuals, \$70 corporate. Call or visit our website to join.

To advertise in *Life for Seniors*, please contact Bruce at creativeone@rogers.com.

MEMBER PROFILE

Elmwood Place, London



Elmwood Gives Back...A Story of Love

In September of 2009 I was asked to be a part of the one run campaign in hopes of raising awareness and funds for breast cancer. This is the story of Theresa Carrier, a breast cancer survivor's courage to run 100 kilometres in one day. To raise funds we visited schools and businesses and successfully raised over 175,000 dollars. Working in the community I felt something was missing...our seniors. How could I involve them in this amazing journey? Thus the idea of a Volleyball tournament was born.

On June 17th 2010, residents and staff at Elmwood Place Long Term Care Home in London, Ontario hosted the first ever Elmwood Volleyball Championship Fundraiser. The stage was set. In preparation for the big day the residents painted their own jerseys and worked the raffle table raising over \$400 for the cause. On the day a volleyball net and two teams, *The Alley Cats*, coached by Theresa, and *The Bears*, coached by Tina Morgan. They battled in front of a live audience comprised of residents, family, staff, Dave Motte (a professional singer) and our very own Mayor, Anna Maria DeCicco-Best. We cheered, we laughed, and some cried as they each received a medal for their efforts. We were living the moment! It hit home to me when one of my residents said, "Never in a million years did I think my kids would see me in a volleyball game".

"Our residents are loving, caring compassionate people who want to give back to the community", says Janet Groen, executive director at Elmwood Place. "This volleyball tournament is our way of taking personal responsibility for our community's well-being while promoting physical and mental health at every age."

To have a truly successful restorative program one must have the compassion and understanding that all things are possible. By focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses, one can succeed. Our roles are deeper than simply walking, ADL, feeding, yoga, and hand dexterity programs. First we must empower our residents and show them that getting older does not mean we stop living or dreaming, rather it is a place for continued growth and joy...embrace life...live life to the fullest.

This quote says it all for me, *"Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul"*.

*Tina Morgan, RCA
Revera Long Term Care
Elmwood Place
46 Elmwood Place West, London*

THE SOUND OF HEALING

Music - the very word puts me in a good mood! Since I can remember, singing, playing instruments, listening to music and dancing, have all been a big part of my life. This enthusiasm for music led me to organize a choir of Seniors (age 50+) in the Georgian Triangle area. The choir, called the Outreach Singers, was formed almost 15 years ago. For four or five weeks, a collection of secular and sacred songs is taught in unison, 2-part and often, 4-part harmony. it truly is amazing to me how quickly the pieces come together. The choristers are certainly dedicated - some have been in the group since its start-up. Why, you might ask, would someone give up that amount of time to sing in a choir? These are some of the many reasons the members give me:

- *It's fun! It gets me out of the house!*
- *My breathing has improved since I started singing.*
- *I feel needed. When I miss rehearsal, my section misses me.*
- *Singing keeps me mentally alert*
- *I am happier when I leave practice than when I came*
- *Making music together, de-stresses me. I feel peaceful.*



Now, if that isn't something to sing about, here's the rest of the story, perhaps the best part. Once the Outreach Singers have rehearsed their repertoire for five weeks, they then present their songs to Seniors in various Nursing and Retirement Homes in the area. What a joy it is to see the smiles on the faces of the residents as they await to hear the 45-minute musical program. The assembled audience is then encouraged to sing along on any songs that they know. Many tap their fingers or clap their hands to the beat. Others sway to the music, some closing their eyes, the lyrics bringing back memories of family and friends. At the conclusion of the presentation, both the choir and the residents know it has been a better day because music has been shared and enjoyed by all!

I do believe that I have experienced first-hand the difference that music can make in a senior's life. Singing on a regular basis can promote healthy aging. Participating in rhythmic activities gets the blood flowing and quickens the pulse. Listening to music soothes and de-stresses the body. I support the current research on music and its protection against the effects of Alzheimer's disease.

Contributed by Catherine Brown

CREATIVE HANDS

SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

Cathy Wood original hand painted cards express the beauty through floral design, finely cut laced edges, complimented with words from the heart. These are wonderful cards that you can give to express your thoughtfulness to a person who has done a great job, or needs motivation, inspiration, or kind words support and praise. Cards, certificates, or notes of inspiration mean so much to a staff member, reminding them that they are cared about, appreciated and are part of the team. Cards can also be custom designed for business to business needs. The ideas are endless! Give the perfect card that is custom designed for you for that special reason. All cards are hand made and hand painted.

Contact Cathy at creative.hands@bell.net or call 1-705-428-2154 for more information.



“Thinking of You”

One of Cathy's beautiful and unique hand crafted, hand painted card designs.

POSITIVE THINKING

*Here I sit, I am me.
Through this aging skin, this faded grey hair,
my dim sight, my shaky hands.
I walk quiet and slow, in my mind remembering those first steps in life,
young and carefree.
Every stage of life brought something new within me, around me,
challenging me, caressing me in life.
I feel proud, I feel blessed, I feel sad.
But in the last days of my life, I come to this strange home where people care.
People laugh, people encourage as we give up and grow tired.
It is to them that I am thankful, encouraging me to walk those steps,
again and again.
For those smiles and hugs I get.
Nursing homes are for the living, for those that have lived,
who can share their stories and their wisdom to those who want to listen.
Together it is home. Together I feel life.
Here I sit. I am me. I am loved.*



THE PARKINSON SOCIETY

The Parkinson Society Central & Northern Ontario is embarking on an exciting new initiative. Starting this fall and gaining steam in the new year, we will be working on the first phase of a new initiative with long-term care facilities in the region to educate front line, and nursing, staff on Parkinson's generally, and on the importance of getting medication to Parkinson's patients on time—every time. The overarching aim of the Get it on time (GIOT) campaign is to improve the quality of life of people living with Parkinson's disease, by ensuring that they are able to maintain a personalized drug therapy schedule whether at home, in the emergency room, or at a long-term care facility by educating staff and providing support materials and policies. This exciting new program is both informative and visually stimulating and should work to ensure that health care providers remember its important message. Central & Northern Ontario CEO Debbie Davis notes, *"This much needed program has been called for by Ontarians living with Parkinson's for a number of years, and it is clearly a priority. We look forward to working with long-term care facilities in the region to see that staff members are more educated and understanding about Parkinson's and to ensure that Parkinson medication is given on time—every time."*

First launched in the United Kingdom in 2006, the award winning GIOT campaign was expanded to Australia and is now being brought to Canada. Parkinson Society Canada is partnering with the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom to share information and to expand and adapt the GIOT materials for the Canadian context. Parkinson Society Central & Northern Ontario is very excited to be the first regional partner to be in a position to deliver in-service education in addition to distributing the Canadian materials.

The need for this program is readily apparent, as people living with Parkinson's and their carepartners have shared numerous stories of their difficulties in hospitals and care-facility settings. Not receiving medication on time causes many potentially disastrous, negative effects on a patient's health, a fact that program supporter Elaine Conner knows all too well: *"I am committed to support this outreach financially and am a strong advocate of this educational project. This is extremely important, as I have witnessed what happens when medications are not given in the right quantity and at the right time,"* she says.

PSCNO is eager to provide education to long term care facilities. If your facility would be interested in receiving an in-service presentation, please contact Jon Collins, Education Program Development Coordinator at jon.collins@parkinson.ca or 800-565-3000 ext 3372.

HOW CAN I HELP WITH MOBILITY?

In Parkinson's disease, the messages sent from the brain to the muscles are not processed properly. As a result, patients muscles become stiff (known as rigidity) and movement becomes slow and clumsy (bradykinesia). Their muscles – particularly those in the neck, shoulders and calves – can become sore or cramp up. Untreated, this stiffness can affect a person's mobility and safety. Fortunately, drug treatment can be very effective, especially when combined with regular stretching and exercise. Here are few suggestions for enhancing a person with Parkinson's flexibility and movement:

- *Follow the doctor's recommendations for drug treatment and exercise.*
- *Encourage the patient to continue any exercise that they currently enjoy, but to know their limits.*
- *Avoid activities that require sideways or backward movements.*
- *Adapt activities to the patient's current abilities. For example, even light stretching performed while in bed, or with the back of a chair as support can have great benefit.*
- *Seek the advice of a physiotherapist who can assess the patient's safety, mobility, and stamina. A therapist can recommend exercise and stretching programs that can be performed safely in the patient's room.*
- *Start an exercise program slowly to build your stamina and self confidence.*
- *A regular walking routine is excellent exercise.*
- *Massage and local applications of heat or ice can provide temporary relief for stiff and sore muscles.*

As the disease progresses, there can be problems with balance and posture. However, exercise is important to maintain muscular strength and flexibility, so encourage the resident to move around, especially when he/she is rested. People with Parkinson's need to be mobilized as much as possible. Physiotherapy intervention should be considered throughout the patient's stay in long term care.

In addition to issues with general stiffness and slowness, patients with Parkinson's experience a broad range of mobility issues.

About 30% of people with Parkinson's experience a sudden feeling of being stuck in wet cement where they are frozen in one spot, unable to walk, and which no amount



of willpower can overcome. Freezing can also occur when you are initiating movements like when you want to get out of a chair, so it can occur when you want to start moving or when you are already moving.

Be aware that 'freezing' can be dangerous and can cause a person with Parkinson's to fall. Do not try push or move the resident. Find out from the family or ask the resident what visual or sensory cue will get him/her moving again.

You might consult with a physiotherapist for tips to help the resident overcome freezing episodes. One trick is to place your foot or an item on the floor in front of the person and ask them to step over it to get him/her moving again. Playing music or counting with a steady beat may also encourage movement.


Here are some suggestions to help a resident move around more easily and safely:

- *Lift feet, heel first, to avoid shuffling and falls – a slight foot drag is common to Parkinson's*
- *Avoid prolonged standing with feet too close together – could increase the risk for falls*
- *Use appropriate walking aids such as a cane or walker if balance is a problem*
- *Keep hands free when walking – use shoulder straps, fanny packs or walker baskets*
- *Wait a minute before you first get out of bed or up from a chair*
- *Wear proper walking shoes – rubber or crepe soled shoes are not recommended because they grip the floor and may cause tripping*
- *Avoid pivot turns – walk through turns slowly using BIG STEPS.*

Some residents can have On-Off episodes. "On" describes the ability to move when medication is working. "Off" refers to the inability to move or function because medication is not working. These may be unpredictable and are not always related to medication timing. They can immobilize a resident from minutes to hours. On-Off episodes are a characteristic of late stage Parkinson's. Remember, the resident is not stubborn – they have no control over these episodes.


For information on exercise, or mobility issues, please feel free to contact Parkinson Society Central & Northern Ontario.

800-565-3000 ext 3372



Parkinson Society Central & Northern Ontario is pleased to announce the launch of the *Get it on time* campaign.

To book your *Get it on time* Parkinson information in-service please contact 800-565-3000 ext 3370 or visit www.parkinsoncno.ca



In Partnership with Parkinson Society Canada

PARK AND DINE

The Perth Community Care Center's award winning Park and Dine program assists residents in their need to continue to walk or to return to walking for those who haven't done so for a period of time. The program also contributes to and recognizes dining as a social activity, and allows them to sit in regular dining room chair in comfort. Staff involvement, along with a belief and support of the program play a vital role in the programs success.

OUR PLAN

Each residents' ambulation plan is individualized, and based realistically on their present abilities as well as their long term goals. We look to give positive feedback for even small successes. Residents are offered the opportunity to ambulate to the washroom, activity areas and dining rooms. The program works best if there is a destination instead of simply walking just for the sake of it. The residents can be supported by aids such as walkers, pushing a wheelchair, gait belts or just a staff member's arm.

BENEFITS

Immobility, and prolonged use of a wheelchair for seating, can have harmful effects on residents, leaving them at risk of becoming wheelchair bound and unable to ambulate. Constant use of wheelchairs can also contribute to the risk of pressure ulcers, skin tears, contractures, muscle weakness, depression, constipation and urinary incontinence. More walking and less sitting can improve independence and the quality of life for long term care residents.

GOALS

Reducing pressure ulcer risk

Reducing the time sitting in the wheelchair will improve circulation and decrease the potential for pressure ulcer formation.

Reducing the use of physical restraints

Increased ambulation leads to strengthening of bones and muscles, which leads to safer mobility, posture, and decreased incidence of falls. While ambulating and sitting in regular dining room chairs, even those few residents who require restraints are restraint free.

Improving the management of pain

A daily ambulation program helps to promote muscle use and improvement which leads to decreased overall pain and discomfort that comes from weakness and mobility.



Measuring resident and family satisfaction

Increased walking and sitting in regular chairs leads to a feeling of "normalcy" and increase self-esteem and independence, leading to an improved self-concept. It also offers families observable improvement in their loved ones.

Staff turnover and adopting consistent assignments

Staff report feeling more satisfied with their jobs when they can see improvements in their residents' condition, and they are aware that they played a role in the outcome.

Submitted by Lynn Crawford, Perth Community Care Center



Do you have a unique program that you would like to share with other members? If so, please let us know. Your submission will be considered for the next issue of Life for Seniors.

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PERSPECTIVES

So, you can't wait to retire, right? Looking forward to giving up the old homestead and moving into a seniors building to simplify your life. Just think, no more grass cutting, snow shoveling, painting, property repairs. Sounds pretty good right? From my transition into a seniors high rise from my country property in Fergus, Ontario, I have quickly learned some valuable lessons, and comprised a couple of rules for all to follow.

Lesson One—Never, ever ask anyone how they are feeling on that particular day. Rarely will you be rewarded with a simple, "fine thank you, how about yourself?" Be prepared for a long descriptive response, in which you will find out what part of the body hurts, what the doctor said about the hurt, and even the odd prediction on what body part will be causing grief in the days to follow. Never ask this question if you are in a rush, or are expected somewhere soon. Allow yourself a good half an hour if you do ask. Stick to a simple nod or passing smile until time permits!

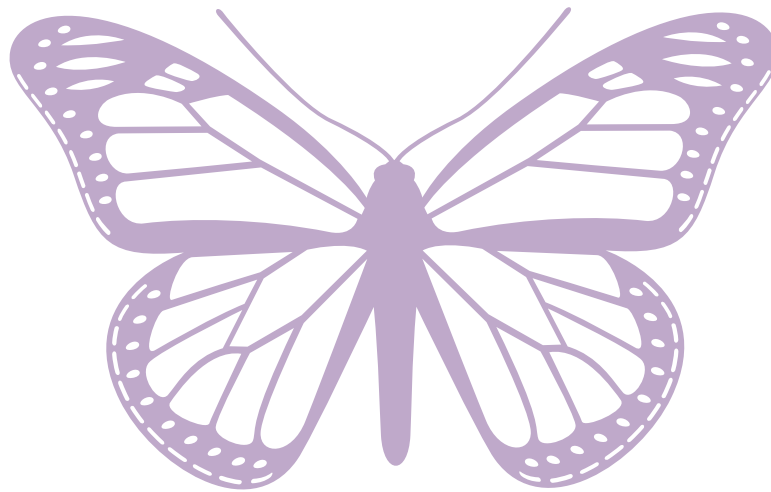
Lesson Two—When returning home from a shopping trip with a bag from the LCBO, make sure you are very discrete. Hide the bag within another bag, or you will quickly be labeled as the local lush, or known as being someone who likes to drink. Many of us enjoy a glass of good wine, the keyword being "glass". As a hobby, I make and bottle my own wine at a local wine making shop. See what happens when you put 3 cases of wine on your shopping cart, and wheel them into the buildings lobby. Or better yet, wheel out 3 cases of empty bottles. You have now made it well known to your neighbors that you have consumed 36 bottles of wine.

Lesson Three—Accept gifts of food with grace. Many of us like to cook for others, and the gesture is an honest and kind one. Be prepared to sample all sorts of food for the first time. At 84 years old, one would think you have tried it all. Maybe we get creative in our cooking techniques as we age, but I have been given all sorts of creative concoctions from neighbors.

Lesson Four—Be thankful for your health. Don't take your condition for granted. Even if you aren't in the prime of health, there is always someone who, unfortunately, is much worse off than you are. The other day, I entered the elevator on my way out for lunch with some friends. A dear much older lady entered on the next floor pushing a walker, and said, "My don't you look lovely!" I humbly thanked her, and told her that I was on my way out to meet some friends. I went on my way, thinking of how lucky I am to be able to get into my car and go out at my free will. Many of us in our eighties (or younger) do not have the ability to do so. While reflecting upon my own level of mobility, I considered with empathy those who did not possess such an option. I am fortunate to be able to come and go as I please. In short, always count your blessings, and help others when you are able.

Contributed by Jean Garlick. Mrs. Garlick is 85 and lives independently in Mississauga, Ontario.

Together we are Stronger



Join Us.



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