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## **Ontario Long-term Care Appreciates**

Recognizing staff, resident strengths contributes to greater good

Appreciating people's strengths and contributions is something some people working in Ontario long-term care settings are doing well, Axiom News coverage is finding as it provides generative news services to several of these organizations.

April Faux recently became administrator at Burnbrae Gardens, an OMNI Health Care-owned long-term care home in Campbellford, Ont. Several years ago, Fraser Wilson, former OMNI president and CEO, noticed April's dedication to residents in her position as life enrichment co-ordinator (LEC) and encouraged her to enrol in OMNI's manager training program.

"He said, 'I really see you going places; you should take the admin course' ... and here I am," says April.

In turn, April is now making a point of noticing others' gifts and strengths and encouraging people to be all they can be.

"I write thank-you cards when I see the staff doing kind things or thinking outside of the box, and that has really paid back for me in the last three months — even making personal phone calls to thank people for doing a great job," she says.

Trillium Villa Nursing Home, a Sarnia long-term care home owned by Steeves & Rozema, recently had a crisis. A musical act that was due to provide an afternoon's entertainment cancelled five minutes before going on stage, and after residents had already packed into the activity room.

Knowing the importance of the day's entertainment, life enrichment manager

Charlene VanBilsen and the rest of the programming department had to think fast. They decided to go into the crowd to find the home's musically-inclined residents and asked if they could be the afternoon act. Four residents jumped at the chance.

So, three singers and one piano player went on stage and performed some of their favourite numbers. The audience got the entertainment they wanted and four residents were acknowledged for their attributes.

Charlene says there's an important lesson to be learned from this experience.

"Know your residents and know what their abilities are, and know that you can utilize residents to help with programming; it doesn't always have to be staff-run," she says.

Spencer House director of administration Debbie Fleming recently earned Leisureworld Senior Care Corp.'s 2012 Award of Excellence in the communication category.

Communication is something Debbie, who works at Spencer House in Orillia, strives to make a top priority. For example, she makes a point to visit every area of the home each morning to talk with people so she knows how everyone's day is going and to keep abreast of everything happening in the home.

"If you're walking and you're doing that, you're communicating with staff and residents, they know that you're there so they can stop you and (share their thoughts). You're getting information first-hand," she says.

Debbie says she's heartened by the Award of Excellence recognition and that people think she communicates well, because communication is "the cornerstone of everything that we do" in long-term care.

"We can follow every rule and regulation but if we don't actually listen to the resident to know exactly who they are, what they want and how we can make their lives as comfortable and enjoyable for them as possible, then it doesn't matter what regulations we follow."

By shining a light on these stories, the intent is to show what's possible and ignite new connections which in turn can lead to new and evolved thinking and action for the better of the people Axiom News stories, their communities and beyond.

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