

Program 'benefits everyone, especially the resident'

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Rockwood Miller

Seeing a positive character change in some residents at the Eden House Care Facility is the most exciting reward of the centre's Enhancement Program, says Eden House's director of care.

"I'm amazed," says Gail Bouwmeester. "I did not expect to see the range in improvement in the residents that I have seen. If we keep the program going, we'll be doing very well."

The program, initially targeted for residents with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, has been running since the summer, but had its focus changed in October.

"At first, the program's focus was on Alzheimer's residents, but we found there was a lot of potential for those who didn't suffer in their day-to-day activity," Bouwmeester, also a co-owner of Eden House, states. "It also helps the cognitively aware to develop and maintain their awareness."

The program's main goals are to stimulate all the residents' sensory areas, enhance their mobility both actively and passively, improve specific behavioural trends and enhance the quality of life of

the residents.

Bouwmeester says the Enhancement Program's two caregivers, Sue Lewandowski and B.J. Oates, are enthusiastic and "that makes all the difference in the world." Working 9:30 am to 5:30 pm, seven-days-a-week, she adds, Lewandowski and Oates work with residents who are cognitively aware, constantly depressed and aggressive types.

In the morning, cognitively aware residents are involved in mental aerobics, mind games and dialogue about their situation (i.e. what they thought a nursing home was about). The afternoon is geared to residents with dementia, more task-oriented than cognitive. Social skills such as eating habits are discussed, along with the resident trying to re-channel his or her anxiety and abnormal behaviour.

There is also some one-on-one time and residents in the program sometimes eat lunch together if there's a communication problem amongst the entire group, thus improving their social skills.

Any resident now admitted to Eden House automatically undergoes a two-week assessment to see if they require assistance via

the Enhancement Program.

"Once they're a part of the program doesn't mean they stay on forever," Bouwmeester explains. "As their needs change, they may remove themselves from the program and take its benefits with them. Some attend two-days-a-week, while others come for five."

The fate of the Enhancement Program for 1995 rests with a funding decision from the regional services branch, not the Ministry of Health. Eden House is licensed by the MOH, but they're not responsible for the long term care facility.

Bouwmeester says funding is done solely on documentation provided by Eden House staff rather than visual validation (i.e. entering Eden House and seeing a resident's improved character). This, she adds, is somewhat frustrating.

"It is often said the best therapeutic method is *not* to talk to



SEASON'S GREETING! Eden House resident Alice Dow received a present from Santa at the Eden House Care Facility's annual year-end resident-family party. (Doug Harrison photo)

them," Bouwmeester says of the residents, "but the most therapeutic way is to talk to them."

"If the families of residents are not getting involved and explor-

ing facilities such as ours, to see if an Enhancement Program or one like it is available, they should. The rewards benefit everyone, especially the resident."

Councillor search on

The search continues for a new councillor to fill the vacant seat of Eramosa Township Council.

After accepting the reeve's seat that was suddenly left vacant by the defection of former-reeve Leverne Harris, former deputy-reeve Rick Hughes accepted the top job. Former neophyte councillor Dave Adsett stepped up to fill the deputy-reeve position, leaving a vacancy that council decided to fill by application.

"We decided we didn't want to privately tap somebody on the shoulder to see if they were interested in the job," Hughes said in a recent interview.

"Council wants to broaden the net and we are looking for someone with community involvement — someone who can bring new skills sets to the Council table," Hughes explained.

Applications for Councillor will be accepted until Jan. 16; the seat must be filled by Feb. 1.

Rural break-in on Conc. 3

A string of rural home break-ins continued last month as police report that an R.R. 5, Rockwood residence was the target of a thief who made off with \$500 cash and a load of Christmas presents.

The break-in — which was reported on Friday but which occurred earlier in December — is still being investigated by police. There are no suspects at this time.

The culprit kicked in the front door to gain entry to the Conc. 3 home. Aside from cash, the thief stole a case of beer, a leather coat, three shirts and boxes of meat.

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