

Sevenoaks care home combats loneliness for International Day of Friendship

Tuesday 27 July, 2021

The staff and residents at Lavender Fields, a care home in Sevenoaks, are demonstrating the ways in which they prevent loneliness within the home, in time for International Day of Friendship on Friday 30th July.

'Chronic loneliness' is a pressing issue for many older adults worldwide, more so than for their younger counterparts, with 6% to 13% of people aged over 65 living in the UK saying that they felt lonely all or most of the time. Older adults who are socially isolated are also at a higher risk of both mental and physical health issues.

International Day of Friendship sees countries around the world celebrate the power of human connection. Many of us have spent so much of the last year apart, and care homes in particular have felt the effects of social distancing, as many residents rely on their daily visitors to strengthen their sense of social connection.

One way in which Lavender Fields is encouraging friendships between residents is with its new 'Pop-in Parlour.' Originally one of the activities rooms, the Pop-in Parlour was renamed to encourage more residents to visit. The room was given a 'vintage' style makeover, along with the facilities to provide refreshments.

During the COVID-19 lockdown periods, residents across the two floors of Lavender Fields were prevented from mixing. However, now that residents are allowed to socialise across both floors, many have 'popped in' to the parlour to mingle over a cup of tea, a crossword, or even an exercise class.

Activities co-ordinator, Diane, talked about the convenience of the parlour, saying:

"I was talking to a gentleman resident last week as I was walking down the corridor, and he was talking about outer space. He came with me to the parlour, and I put a space documentary on for him, and he sat watching it with a cup of tea."

There has been a noticeable increase in socialisation since the introduction of the Pop-in Parlour, as well as the mixing of the home's two floors, as Diane continues to say: *"The residents are definitely visiting more frequently, and we now have quite a few regulars. It is definitely more social, with more people mixing and talking."*

The care home environment can provide opportunities for older adults to regain a sense of inclusion that is often lost during later life, and initiatives like International Day of Friendship will hopefully encourage new friendships worldwide.

For more information about Lavender Fields, please visit <https://www.greensleeves.org.uk/care-homes/lavender-fields-sevenoaks/>

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