



Aged To Perfection

...sharing the latest on caring for seniors

A LOCAL VETERAN'S STORY

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I know an elderly gentleman who is a veteran and whose story stood out to me. His medals are proudly displayed in a showcase on the wall in his home; hung below the showcase is a framed photo of him in uniform.

He is both proud and dismissive of his service. He is proud in the sense that he still smiles fondly when remembering his comrades, and his identity is closely linked to his military service. He is dismissive in the way that he doesn't feel he was any different than any other young man who readily volunteered for service. He felt it was his duty, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

As a young man, recently married to his beautiful new bride, he heard about recruitment for the Korean War. He discussed it with his wife, and of course she didn't want her new husband heading off to war. As he tells the story, the call of duty meant he couldn't forsake his country; he felt he was married first to the military, and secondly to his wife. He enlisted for service, and then had to break the news to his wife. To ease the announcement, he invited one of his



comrades over for dinner and waited until dessert was served to benignly ask his buddy, "so, how long do you think it will take us to get to Korea?"

As you might imagine, his new wife was less than impressed! She eventually came around though, and understood her husband's devotion. His loyalty has served her well too; the same devotion he showed to his country, he has shown to his wife and family ever since. He is a true man of valor.

It is to gentlemen—and women—such as him that we owe our thanks and appreciation as we reflect on Remembrance Day. From everyone here at Warm Embrace, we express our deepest gratitude for the sacrifices of veterans who have served and continue to serve our country. It is our absolute honour and privilege to

*"It is an honour to serve my beloved Canada."
~A Local Veteran*

care for such distinguished veterans in their hour of need.
Lest We Forget





SUPPORTING SOMEONE WHO LIVES IN A NURSING HOME

For someone who needs constant care and frequent medical attention, a nursing home may be the most suitable place to live. Often, placement in a nursing home comes after months or even years of being on a waiting list. Family members may be exhausted by the time their loved one enters a nursing home, and this creates mixed feelings of relief at no longer being the primary caregiver, but concern about what to do next.

When a loved one moves into long term care, they still need their family and friends to be involved as advocates, caregivers, and most importantly, the beloved family members that they are. Their social bond with you is necessary now more than ever.

Moving into a nursing home is quite a transition for your loved one. They have gone from a quiet life with abundant privacy, many rooms in their apartment or home in which to spend their time, familiar belongings and people, and a predictable schedule of their choosing.

All of these comfort elements are shaken up; nothing remains the same in a nursing home. Suddenly, your loved one has only one room to call his or her own, and that room may include a new roommate. Although some personal belongings are brought along, not all of the furniture is familiar and many cherished belongings must be left behind as space permits. There are new people, the setting is unusual, the menu is different, and there is a set schedule to which your loved one must adhere. This is a lot of change to adjust to, and that change happens literally overnight.

Having the familiarity of a friendly visitor who is dependable can be the lifeline that anchors a senior who has just entered a nursing home. Knowing that they can depend on a friendly face who is coming to visit them personally can make all the differ-

ence in the world. Family members and friends who spend time visiting their loved ones at a nursing home are actually making an important investment in their loved one's health—without even realizing it!

Dr. David Ryan, who is Director of Education and Geriatric Interprofessional Interorganizational Collaboration Initiatives for the Regional Geriatric Program of Toronto, has looked at various factors that affect frail seniors. At a keynote address in Waterloo, Dr. Ryan referenced a study that was done with seniors who were living in a nursing home.

During the course of the academic school year, students were assigned to visit seniors in a nursing

home. The control group of seniors were allowed to select their own visiting schedule—they determined how often and when the students would be visiting. The second group were placed on a predictable pattern of visits that were predetermined—the senior did not select the visiting schedule. The third group

experienced random visits that were at varying times of day and the interval between visits varied as well. The fourth group of seniors did not receive any visits at all.

The health of seniors was assessed at four different points and was giving a rating scale. The graph on page 3 shows the results.

It is not surprising to see that health of the seniors in all groups peaked at the 10-month mark. Since the academic school year is 10 months long, the students would have been visiting the seniors long enough to develop relationships and be receiving the benefits of strong social connection. Once the school year ended and the students were no longer visiting, the health status of the seniors also began to drop.

Those seniors who received regular visits—either on a schedule that was predetermined, or a





structure.

The group of seniors who received random visits, however, did not see the health benefits that regular visits produce. Their health scores were nearly the same as the seniors who received no visit at all. A random schedule of occasional visiting does not provide any substantial benefit to the senior receiving the visit.

According to Dr. Ryan's analysis, a predictable and reliable visiting schedule is more beneficial to a resident in long term care, than random visits—regardless of the frequency of those random visits.

These results could seem quite overwhelming to a caring family member. How is a modern family supposed to have time to manage a career, busy teenagers, a marriage, perhaps grandchildren, volunteering, social engagements AND a regular visiting

schedule of their choice—had similar results of improved health that correlated with the regular visiting

schedule to a nursing home? It could seem completely overwhelming.

The good news is that a predictable schedule—however sparsely scheduled—is more beneficial than having no schedule at all. Create a visiting schedule that is reasonable for your lifestyle.

The really good news is that the regular visiting doesn't have to necessarily come from you. The study was based upon students, not family members, being the visitors. The seniors who received regular visits experienced health benefits even when they were being visited by a student they had not previously known.

While it is wonderful to have friendly staff in a nursing home, those staff are responsible to serve all of the seniors in that ward simultaneously. Having a visitor

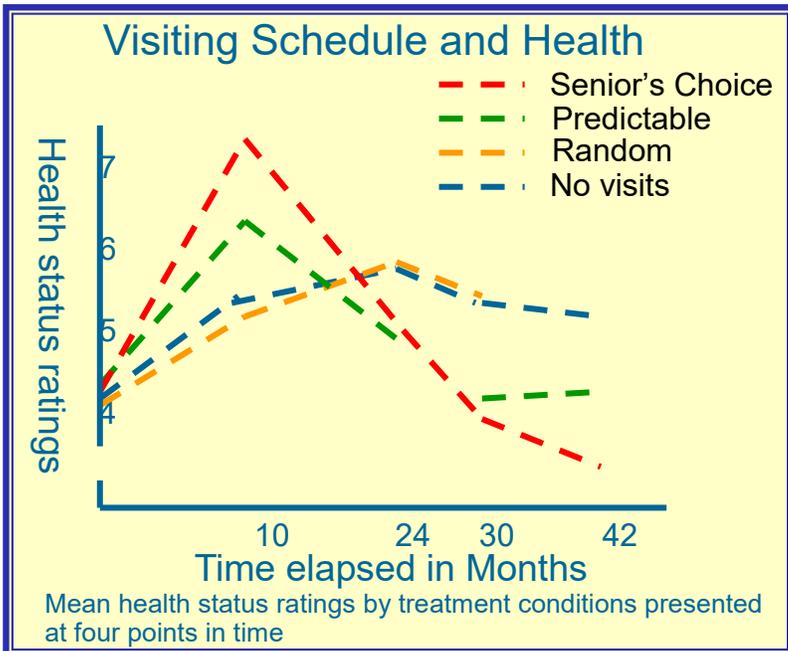


who is dedicated to one resident at a time provides the exclusivity that is necessary for a relationship and attachment to form. Your loved one can experience the same health

benefits and improved state of mind from having regular visits from someone who cares, a Companion Aide

from Warm Embrace Elder Care. This way, you are not responsible for maintaining an onerous predictable visiting schedule, and your loved one can benefit from having a regular visitor.

For more information on having regular visits by a Companion Aide for your loved one who lives in long term care, please call us at Warm Embrace Elder Care and we'd be pleased to discuss the options with you. We can be reached at: (519) 954-2480. We look forward to meeting you and your loved one soon, and starting you both on a journey of improved mental and physical health!



Based on information presented by Dr. David Ryan, Director of Education & GiiC Initiatives, Regional Geriatric Program of Toronto; March 1, 2011, Waterloo, On. Graphs based on a study adapted from Schultz 1976, Schultz & Hanusa 1978.



*...a mother & her daughters
providing meaningful
assistance to seniors*

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Warm Embrace Elder Care is owned and operated by a mother-daughter team, Brenda Hamilton and her daughters, Chloe and Avery Hamilton. Their goal is to assist seniors to remain independent for as long as possible through offering various services such as homecare, memory therapy, and one-on-one home exercise for seniors. Inspired by personal experience with family caregiving for Brenda’s mother, this mother-daughter team understands firsthand the benefits of enlisting help while caring for a loved one. Warm Embrace believes that independence does not mean that you can do everything by yourself, but rather that you get to choose how everything is done—we grant our seniors the respect and dignity they deserve by helping them to live as they desire.

PARKINSON’S SOCIETY CONFERENCE

The Parkinson’s Society provides information and support in the community. Conferences are typically held twice a year but may be hosted anywhere in southwestern Ontario. This month, the conference is being hosted locally—right here in Waterloo!

Here are some of the topics that will be covered:

- New approaches to identification and treatment of mechanisms underlying PD symptoms
- Info and strategies to help manage non-motor symptoms

- How to live your best with PD
- Young onset PD
- Sexuality and PD
- Advanced care planning

Date: Saturday, November 5, 2016

Time: 8:30am—3:30pm

Location : St. George’s Hall

Cost: \$50 per person
(includes lunch)

Registration: by phone 1-888-851-7376 or online at
www.parkinsonsociety.ca



CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERT

The KW Community Orchestra will be performing their first concert of the season later this month. This concert features the Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5 as well as a marimba concerto—there aren't many concertos for marimba, so this is a musical treat!

Date: Saturday, November 19, 2016

Time: 8:00pm

Location: Knox Presbyterian Church (50 Erb St. West, Waterloo)

Cost: \$18 (students \$15; high school or younger children \$5)

More Info: www.KWCO.org

If you watch the violin section, you just might recognize someone from Warm Embrace!

