



The ABBY takes residents on many adventures

Salem Home in Winkler Manitoba is home to 146 residents who can no longer live on their own due to a disease process that limits their ability to live independently. The Relationship Centered model of care focuses on staff establishing relationships with the residents instead of getting tasks done in a hurry.

Ninety-three percent (93%) of residents live with some form of dementia, with many of them having responsive behaviors. To mitigate those behaviors, in the past three years, staff have implemented a number of strategies, such as the Montessori Way for Dementia, and tools such as the introduction of wheelchair accessible swings and most notably two ABBY boards. As we continue this journey to decrease behaviors, Salem Home has gone from 78% of residents having responsive behaviors in 2018 to 33% of residents with responsive behaviors in 2020. Residents have behaviors, but staff have the ability to redirect so behaviors are indeed mitigated. As Mark from Ambient Activity Technologies says “a resident cannot engage in an activity and a responsive behavior at the same time”.

The Salem Home Ladies Auxiliary purchased its first ABBY in 2019 for the Dementia Care Unit. Having had a demonstration of how the ABBY worked, it was exciting to see how residents responded to the various activities as staff had anticipated. There is always a shortage of activities for male residents, so the steering wheel was and is of particular interest to the men. One resident had never owned a car, or had a driver’s license. He sat down at the ABBY and touched the steering wheel saying “I am finally driving my own car”. He was sitting in the chair with his legs crossed, one hand on the steering wheel and one arm as if the window was down in his car.

With all the positive responses, the Ladies Auxiliary again designated funds towards the second ABBY, along with the local high school Youth in Philanthropy program and a top up from the Salem Foundation. The ABBY arrived in August 2020, again with much anticipation. This time the ABBY was located on the

Main Floor. The residents have enjoyed the ABBY and its various programs tremendously. It gives staff another alternative to keep residents engaged in their community.

The pandemic has brought many changes to LTC organizations. Salem Home is no exception. The ABBY has given residents the experience of “traveling” just like before. One little lady sat down at the steering wheel and told the staff “Let’s go to Florida”. It is a wonderful way for residents to have experiences beyond the walls of where they live.