

Volunteer Views



Issue 23 / March 2026



Our Values:

- ♥ **Respect**
- ♥ **Compassion**
- ♥ **Commitment**
- ♥ **Ethics**
- ♥ **Service**

MESSAGE FROM THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR KATE MERKOWSKY

Merry March!

We are very pleased to be reintroducing our quarterly Volunteer Views newsletters.

Each issue will feature new education topics and important refreshers that will help support you in your volunteer role with us.

If you have suggestions of topics that you would like covered in the newsletters, please feel free to send them to me at anytime.

Let me thank you all again for the incredible difference you make in the lives of our residents!

Whether you are helping with activities, meals, bingo or socials, your time and efforts are very much appreciated.

Here is hoping the weather holds and we are entering into spring soon!

MESSAGE FROM THE LIFE ENRICHMENT COORDINATOR JENNIFER DE LEON

Our Chinook and Southwood Hospices have enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Pet Access League Society (PALS). Since 2010, Southwood Hospice has been honored to collaborate with PALS twice per month to offer Pet Therapy visits to the residents of our unit. Similarly, Chinook Hospice has been benefiting from these visits since 2015 and we are excited to have recently expanded to twice-monthly visits as well. (www.palspets.com)

The bond between animals and people is undeniable. Animals are accepting, non-threatening and non-judgmental; they create an environment where residents can relax and engage more comfortably.

A few key benefits of Pet Therapy visits for hospice residents include:

- ✚ Reduced anxiety, grief and depression
- ✚ Reduced feelings of isolation
- ✚ Reduced need for medication
- ✚ Increased trust and engagement
- ✚ Enhanced reminiscence

The goal of the PALS program is to bring the remarkable benefits of Pet Therapy to the healing process in whatever form that may take. Pet Therapy is recognized by those in the medical community as an effective treatment and we remain grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with PALS and offer this valuable service.

We encourage all of our current volunteers to refer a friend or family member who might be interested in experiencing the rewards of Volunteering.

Please feel free to invite interested individuals to contact the **Volunteer Coordinator:**

Kate Merkowsky

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FALL RISKS AND PREVENTION INFORMATION FOR INTERCARE VOLUNTEERS

Residents in continuing care can be at a high risk for falls; we depend on active participation from everyone to help keep our residents safe. Factors that can lead to falls include: impaired cognition; medications; visual, hearing or mobility impairments; as well as environmental issues, such as tripping hazards or clutter.

When an individual is admitted to one of our Care Homes, their risk for falls is assessed and preventative measures are put in place based on the individual's care and safety needs.

The Role of Volunteers in Resident Safety

- Ensure any concerns are reported / communicated to staff.
- Ensure areas are clear of hazards when walking with a resident.
- Ensure resident is wearing solid footwear with laces tied.
- Remember **volunteers are not allowed to lift or transfer residents** - volunteers **must** get assistance from a staff member.
- Observe wheelchair and walker safety.
- **Remember what to do in the case of a resident fall...**

If a resident falls:

- ✚ DO NOT try to help the resident get up!
- ✚ IMMEDIATELY inform staff!
- ✚ DO NOT attempt to break the resident's fall by catching them!

Walker Safety

- When the resident standing up, ensure that the resident pushes off of the arms of the chair rather than balancing on the walker.
- Ensure that the walker is turned so that the handrails on the sides of the walker are on either side of the resident.
- Ensure that the resident looks ahead while walking, rather than at their feet.
- Ensure the brakes are in the locked position before resident proceeds to use walker.
- Once the resident ready to walk, remind resident to release brake.
- Never push a resident on their walker, as the walker can tip and cause a fall.

Wheelchair Safety

- Inform the resident before moving them in their wheelchair and ensure you have obtained their consent.
- A resident may have a blanket or sheet covering their legs; please ensure the blanket or sheet do not get caught in the wheels.
- If a resident is standing up or sitting back down into a wheelchair, remember that the **brakes must be locked**.
- When you leave a resident who is sitting in a wheelchair, remember that the **brakes must be locked**.
- When moving a resident in a wheelchair, push carefully from behind.
- When you are pushing a resident in a wheelchair, make sure their hands are not on the wheels.
- Always go slowly when pushing a wheelchair.
- If you are going down a ramp or a curb, take the wheelchair down backwards.
- If you are going up a ramp or curb, go forwards with the wheelchair.
- When entering an elevator, move the wheelchair backwards.

