

Springdene Newsletter

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Springdene
CARE HOMES 

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WITH the clocks having gone back this week, there is a real sense that winter is around the corner. But the festive season will soon be upon us, and our folk at Springview have been busy making their Christmas cake. Everybody had the chance for a stir and a wish – many no doubt expressing hopes for better times ahead.



Gladys Gathergood was the lucky one who got to lick the spoon – at 107 she has well over a century of happy memories of Christmases past. It's been a tough few months, but our seasonal celebrations across the homes this year promise to be better than ever. We're greatly looking forward to them!

Like you, we are sorry that visiting is paused for the time being. But there's been a delightful gesture from the Year 10 girls of South Hampstead High School to help make up for the loss. Until the start of the pandemic, pupils from the school, which is just around the corner from Spring Grove, had been frequent visitors to the home. Now they have written personal letters to the residents, to which folk are now busy replying.

The girls are thinking of other ideas to engage with the residents. They are currently making a video giving a guided tour of the school, so that residents will know where they come from. They are also thinking of recording some poetry, short stories and music which could put be up on a website. It all sounds a lovely idea.

As for visits by relatives and friends, we're sorry to have to emphasise that there can be no exemptions to the embargo on visiting, except in end-of-life circumstances. The rules are not discretionary. Here's what Public Health Haringey say in their advice to Spring Lane (the same applies in Camden and Enfield, where our other two homes are based):

"We recognise the emotional burden borne by care home residents and their loved ones through lack of face to face contact, however we must weigh this against the significant risk of rising infection rates for the most vulnerable in our society. We will work to ensure every care home is supported in finding ways of keeping residents and their families in touch."

You don't have to be very tech-savvy to stay in touch with your loved ones by video call. As we've said, we'll help you to get together using the tablet devices we have available in all the homes. There are several easy platforms, including *Skype*, and *Zoom*. You can even make a video call with *WhatsApp*, which many of you may already have installed on your phones. Simplest of all is *FaceTime*, for those with *Apple*-connected devices.

On a positive note, we've been sent an encouraging story this week from one of our favourite charities – Medical Detection Dogs – for which the residents and friends of Springview recently raised a large sum of money. The clever dogs are being trained to sniff out Covid-19 in a revolutionary government-funded study.

On Tuesday two Labradors, Basil and Bob, showed off their sniffing skills in front of the Duchess of Cornwall and health secretary Matt Hancock. The dogs could quickly tell which of five human volunteers was wearing an item of clothing impregnated with the scent of Covid-19. A dog's nose has 300 million receptors compared with five million for a human. Research by Hanover University has previously found that the dogs can detect coronavirus with 94% accuracy. We're glad the funds you raised are being put to such excellent use.

We've a special welcome for our newest resident at Springview, Leila Abrahams, who has attained the grand age of 100. But she has another achievement to her name – her very own autobiography, which is currently being read to the residents at the home.

Leila grew up in a poor working-class family in Manchester. Her parents made clothes, but her father was a very talented tenor and sang with an opera company when she was very young. She was a talented artist, designed dresses and had her own shop, re-trained and got GCEs and A-levels, became a teacher and later studied for a degree with the Open University, becoming a headteacher in her forties. She ran creative writing classes and has done many more exciting things. A very active and talented lady – we wish her well as she enters her second century.

Leila's tale is a reminder of other folk at Springdene who have fascinating back stories. Spring Grove, for instance, is home to Dr Marcelle Jay, the prominent ophthalmologist, who has a room named after her at London's Institute for Ophthalmology. Another eminent resident is Dr Ian Willison CBE, the former Head of English Language at the British Library – not to overlook Robin Young, the *Times* journalist and wine critic of *The Spectator*.

Spring Lane is home to Pat Arrowsmith, the author and peace campaigner who is co-founder of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Do you have a loved one whose achievements or story you would like celebrated in the newsletter? If so, please contact us at mwilliams@springdene.co.uk.

"Life is for living," as our Springdene motto proclaims, and life in the homes is certainly full-on at the moment.

Everyone has been getting in the mood for Halloween, with Susie at Springview carving pumpkins and Steve running "spooky keep-fit" and "scary bingo". Over at Spring Grove, Steve has also been curating a hard-fought Scrabble championship and helped raise £44 for the Lennox Children's Cancer Charity with a "name that Teddy bear" competition.



Also at Spring Grove, Odile is running some brilliant art classes where she is demonstrating the different ways in which Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo used colour, among other more practical skills (see photograph). All very illuminating!

Meanwhile the *Artists 'n' Residents* "Midweek Proms" go from strength to strength, with a wonderful classical recital last week from the Fitzwilliam Quartet. This week was very different with the talented Donna King performing some favourites from the Great American songbook of the golden era.

The organiser Jennie Muskett has now provided us with nine great free concerts so far and Springdene has made a substantial donation to keep this wonderful series going. You can now

view the concerts every Wednesday live via the website

<http://www.artistsandresidents.org/> which offers you the chance to donate, too.

Jennie says: "Your generous donation helps enormously on the financial/practical front, and also offers encouragement to continue. It's important to know the concerts are of value, and I deeply appreciate your gesture."

Lastly, we send our congratulations to Eirlys Roff, who has been promoted to the new position of Group Activities Manager, with a remit to coordinate and expand activities across the homes. Anyone who knows Eirlys will be aware of her energy and creativity and we are sure she will be a great success in her new role.

Stay safe and stay well.

Jeremy Balcombe
CEO Springdene Group
