



December 2021 Good News Story

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Benevolence Care Centre tackles the impact of COVID-19 on mental health



Outdoor events were a welcome return at Benevolence Care Centre. They're one of the many ways the recreation team intentionally set about tackling the impact of COVID-19 on residents' mental health.

Kateline Hladky, Recreation Manager at [Benevolence Care Centre](#), made it her and her team's mission to minimize the negative impact of COVID restrictions on residents' mental health. Throughout the pandemic, they were faced with many obstacles, which included being on an outbreak. Working through these challenges and recovering from them became Kateline and her team's top priority.

During this pandemic, Benevolence Care Centre quickly realized how much family visits truly meant to residents and their loved ones, so they did whatever they could to give that happiness back to them. iPads were purchased so residents were able to have more frequent video calls with their loved ones. Kateline and her team also worked hard to set up window visits, which provided a sense of in-person connection. They also created a memorial wall to honour any lives lost, which helped residents and staff through the difficult grieving process and move forward after the outbreak.

Kateline and her recreation team started a gardening club to give the residents something to care for and look forward to. They started with just seeds and eventually the garden became so big, it was "gorgeous enough to have a wedding in!" The plants were so successful, they were able to sell the fruits of their labour to the families, with all proceeds



going back into the garden program. They even received a generous donation following a wedding ceremony, which was held in the outdoor garden once restrictions allowed outdoor visitations and events.

The gradual lifting of restrictions allowed more outdoor activities. Kateline arranged visits by a variety of therapy animals to cheer up the residents. She and her team even brought in horses to the outside visitation area, courtesy of [Project Smiles](#), to meet the residents. Benevolence Care Centre welcomed the opportunity to work with the [Edmonton Antique Car Club](#) to put together an outdoor program so residents could see some amazing antique cars.

To support the efforts made by the recreation team, everyone – including the HCAs, admin staff, nurses, and managers – did what they could do to lend a helping hand. Staff would make time in their day to sit with the residents and just watch movies with them. Managers would start their day by making breakfast for the residents. Everyone worked together to “bring more life into residents’ lives with everything [they] do.”

