

## Welcome to the second edition of 'The Village'.

Well, it's certainly been quite a year! COVID-19 has interrupted much of our programme, but we're delighted that so many of you joined our 'Zoom coffee catch-ups' and enjoyed the weekly newsletter.

In this issue of The Village, we discuss the importance of making decisions about aged care early, rather than in a crisis (read on below). We also talk about why it's vital to embrace change, and we profile some of our staff and members.

Amazingly, Christmas is only weeks away, so I'd like to wish everyone a happy and joyful season – and I look forward to catching up with many of you at our Christmas shared morning tea.



Bonnie Robinson  
CEO



## Planning ahead for the old age you want and need

Planning ahead for all stages of your retirement years is vitally important, says HBH Senior Living CEO, Bonnie Robinson. "In our experience, it's a lot better if people have planned early and proactively for their older years, rather than leaving it until crisis point," she explains. "If you haven't, you may have to make important decisions quickly"

**Bonnie says the four most important questions to ask yourself are:**

### 1. Where do I want to end up living?

As we age, our housing needs can change. If your home becomes too large or too hard

to maintain, what are your options? Do you want to stay there and get help, or do you have family nearby? Or would you prefer to move into a retirement village or apartment at some point? If so, plan ahead, so you can choose where you want to live, rather than having to take whatever's available if you need to make a change quickly.

### 2. What if I'm left on my own?

If something was to happen to your spouse, would you wish to carry on living at home on your own? Would you be able to? Or would that be the right time for you to move into an apartment or retirement



village? "Many people say they'd like to live in their own home forever, but you need to consider if that's realistic for you," says Bonnie.

### **3. What if I'm not able to make a decision myself?**

If something happens to you and you can no longer live independently, do you have a plan? "It's good to talk about it beforehand, especially with your adult children," says Bonnie.

**"With a plan in place, you'll have something to fall back on if the worst-case scenario does happen."**

### **4. When is the best time to move into a retirement home?**

"It's often earlier than you might think," says Bonnie. "It's nice when couples move in together – then if one spouse dies, everyone knows that person. Those who've planned ahead do seem to have better outcomes than those who've made a decision in a crisis.

"Start by simply sitting down and talking with trusted family and friends," says Bonnie. "To explore our options before we need them, make decisions early, and to convey those wishes to others, is much more desirable."

## **Treat change as a friend, not a foe**

Change is an inevitable part of life, so instead of resisting it, try to embrace change - or even better, initiate daily changes or challenges yourself. This keeps you ahead of the game and improves your ability to cope with unexpected changes, like the challenges most of us have faced this year with COVID-19.

**"Change is the only constant in life."** Heraclitus

In our recent 'Spring Challenge', members were challenged to make a small, positive change to their lives. One of our members, Terri, took on the challenge by renewing her passion for gardening.

"The Spring Challenge has kept me very busy," says Terri. "My herbs are bounding away, as well as new sage, parsley, thyme, even garlic. Many years ago I taught permaculture gardening and helped set



up community gardens: then I let it go when my life changed after a surgery. This challenge has brought back the passion of working in the garden again. I can't thank you enough!"

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## Getting to know Lyn Butler, VVE member



**Lyn Butler,  
VVE member.**

Lyn Butler and her husband have lived in Bucklands Beach and Dannemora for 36 years. "Right from when we moved into the area I've liked the feel of the place," she says.

Since retiring, Lyn has done a lot of volunteering. "I was a Blue Coat at the airport for eight years doing the early shift," she says. "These days, I still seem to be involved in a lot of things." As well as VVE, Lyn belongs to the Lions Club, SeniorNet, the Wine Club at the Howick Club, and attends Tai Chi classes.

"I really liked the concept of Virtual Village East," she says. "I've learned new skills and have met some really interesting people so far. I enjoyed the Zoom catch-up sessions during the lockdowns, as well as the mindfulness and 'move to stay mobile' classes. These activities have allowed me to get to know members on a deeper level and to learn new skills."

## Armchair travels with Barbara Davis

*In our 'armchair travel' series, VVE members share their amazing adventures to inspire others once we can travel again. If you have a story you'd like to share, please contact Lee Warmington (details on back page).*

**Regular travellers, Barbara and Michael took a 14-day tour of Morocco in 2015. Barbara says that this was one of the most memorable trips they've had, but for all the wrong reasons!**

"Our first four days were spent in and around Fes, and it was very interesting," says Barbara. "Then on a bus trip to Erfoud, across the High Atlas Mountains, the bus broke down and we were delayed by five hours. By that time, some of us were suffering from a stomach bug, and by the end of the trip the whole group had it. Fortunately, our GP had sent us away with plenty of medication!"

Despite the challenges, Barbara reports there were many fascinating sights. "The highlights were goats in the native argan trees, and my favourite food, 'Moroccan Eggs'. It was interesting to see a totally different way of life where the religion dominates all that they do, and where the native Berbers co-exist with the conquering Muslims."



# Stay safe, strong and sociable with Karyn

Karyn Annison is a physiotherapy assistant at HBH Senior Living. She also runs our 'Safe & Strong' exercise programme, one of our most popular activities.

"I really enjoy taking the Safe & Strong classes - the participants are all so lovely and friendly," says Karyn. "We start the class with a warm-up and then we do a circuit of different exercises. I'll pop some music on and off we go! If someone has a particular concern or area they'd like to work on, I can tailor the programme as needed."

The gym has acquired new equipment to provide a range of ways to exercise. "Everyone goes at their own pace and I work with individuals to ensure they get the most out of it. It's wonderful to see participants get stronger and fitter, but it's

also been lovely seeing the groups get to know one another, gain in confidence and to see friendships develop."

Karyn encourages other seniors give it a go. "Just come along and have a look. There's no obligation to join up or to continue if it's not for you. We're always keen to welcome some new members!"



## A Very Merry Invitation for Seniors

To celebrate Christmas and being able to get out and about again, local seniors are invited to come along to a special **Christmas Coffee & Catch-up morning tea** on **Tuesday 15th December**.

The morning tea is hosted by Virtual Village East, a social network of mutual support and friendship for older people in the East Auckland community. Come along to celebrate the season, to hear what Virtual Village East is about, meet new people and catch up with familiar faces. All seniors welcome!

**When:** Tuesday 15 December, from 10.30am to 12noon

**Where:** HBH Senior Living, 139 Union Road, Howick

**RSVP:** by Thursday 10 December for catering purposes to Lee Warmington, phone 09 538 0827 or email [co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz](mailto:co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz)

**A network of friendship & support for seniors**

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To reserve your place please call Lee on 09 538 0827  
or email [co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz](mailto:co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz)

