



Openday- Heidi O'Reilly

"I think it gave our visitors a really good sense of the culture at our Village and what living here would be like, and it gave us a feeling of pride to see our visitors so impressed."

Heidi echoed these sentiments, emphasising that the open day provided an opportunity to showcase the level of care and support the team provides, while also serving as a wonderful community event in which residents could actively participate.

"It offered a chance for socialising beyond the usual routine, and creating memorable experiences together.

"We will definitely be ordering up another one."



Chief Executive Officer insights for 2024

Looking back on 2023, from the age care crisis to the disruptions caused by cyclones, floods, and the enduring impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, I'm pleased to say The Masonic Villages Trust retirement villages and aged care facilities fared well.

Despite the adversities, our communities continued to flourish under the guidance of our exceptional teams and we managed to progress our major investment programmes that we have underway.

In 2024 we see further investment in growth allowing us to offer more accommodation in our Villages and even better environments for our care provision. This is all underpinned by staff who are deeply committed to catering to the diverse needs of our residents.

And that will be helped, in part, by the support of the NZ Nursing Development Fund grant provided by Freemasons NZ. You can read more about that in this issue of Communicate.

This funding not only enhances our team's capabilities but also benefits those we care for.

Our approach to care is rooted in collaboration, drawing on the expertise of our entire team, including nurses, carers, our management and hospitality staff, and our maintenance team.

I want to thank them in advance for their commitment, their hard work and the unwavering support I know they will give to all our residents during the year. Together, with our shared values, practices, and standards of care, we ensure the well-being and happiness of our residents, staff, and families.

"As we embark on this journey into 2024, let us embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead with optimism and determination, united in our commitment to provide great care and great communities."



Warm regards,
Warick Dunn, CEO, The Masonic Villages Trust

“In mountaineering, it’s simple: you either can or you can’t.

“When you face a summit, you need the mental strength to believe you can conquer it, not just physical fitness.”

Paul is also an ultra-light hiker (Google it).

“There is definitely a skill to it,” he says, “but it can be done safely.”

After years of hard work, Paul retired early at 57 and now at 72, he shows no signs of slowing down.

He did opt for a slower pace, however, and relocated to Dargaville.

“Living at Hokianga Masonic Village gives me freedom to chase the good weather and focus on the things that make me happy.

“Not having to worry about maintenance on the house is also a bonus.”

His first major adventure in retirement was a 20,000km bike tour around America. Over 10 and a half months, he travelled from Key West to Virginia, then crossed over to Oregon and made his way to Portland. Following the coast, he returned to Los Angeles.

Paul’s passion for adventure has helped him explore the world. With no fixed travel agenda, he mostly figures out each morning where he will travel to that day.

“I enjoy experiencing things that take me out of my everyday life.”

When asked about the future, Paul chuckled.

“Let me complete this adventure first, and then I’ll consider the next one.”

While he already has some plans in mind, he emphasises the importance of relishing the present moment.

“For me, it’s all about taking it one day at a time. You need to rest, plan for the next adventure, and most importantly, enjoy the journey,” says Paul.



Woburn Masonic Care and Apartments open day triumphs!



Woburn Masonic Care and Woburn Apartments opened their doors to the community this March, drawing in a crowd of 100 people for their open day.

The eagerly awaited event, which was planned over two months and coordinated by Woburn Apartment Manager Chris Wilson and Woburn Care Facilities Manager, Heidi O'Reilly, with invaluable support from residents, offered guests a glimpse into the lifestyle at Woburn Masonic.

"The open day was a fantastic opportunity for us to welcome members of the community into our home," says Heidi.

"We wanted them to experience the warmth and hospitality that Woburn Masonic Care and Woburn Retirement Apartments provide to our residents on a daily basis.

"It's not just about the amenities; it's about the sense of belonging and community that we've built here."

Upon arrival, guests were treated to tea and coffee and mingled with staff and residents before heading out on guided and unguided tours of the grounds.

Many guests took the opportunity to visit both facilities, gaining insights into how The Masonic Villages Trust ensures a seamless transition from independent living in the apartments to comprehensive care if needed, guaranteeing support for every stage of one's journey.

Many commented on the aesthetics and feel of the facilities, noting a stark contrast with competitors.

"The buildings were intentionally designed to resemble a home rather than a traditional retirement facility," says Masonic Care General Manager, Anne McLean.

"That's a feature that visitors clearly noticed and appreciated."

The staff at both the retirement village and the aged care facility also received praise for their neighbourly and friendly approach throughout the day.

One visitor noted that the atmosphere allowed her to experience a family-like environment, something she had not encountered in other care settings she had recently visited for her mother.

One of the best parts of the day was the chance for guests to interact with residents and hear their thoughts firsthand. From sharing memories of their time at Woburn Masonic Villages to discussing the activities and amenities they enjoy; residents shared their views on living in this tight-knit community.

Apartment Manager, Chris Wilson said it was great to hear so many positive stories from both staff and residents.

"It was an incredible opportunity for us to engage the local community directly with our residents and staff,"



Katrina Villegas



Jayne Davis



Prachi Puri

Championing nursing excellence and community support

During the pandemic, New Zealand faced exacerbated nursing shortages due to border closures. Since then, there has been a frantic effort to address this shortfall, with intense competition for recruitment.

Masonic Care attempted to mitigate the effects of this shortage by creating a fund to bolster the training and development of the current nursing workforce within its care facilities.

In July 2022, Freemasons New Zealand came to the party and approved the NZ Nursing Development Fund, totalling \$50,000, for various training programmes and tertiary courses.

The Fund has five options that provide career development pathways:

1. Initial registration support for Internationally Qualified Nurses (IQNs)
2. Competency Assessment Programme (CAP) support for IQNs
3. Assistance for current carers to progress toward becoming Registered Nurses in New Zealand (NZRN)
4. In-house courses in speciality areas
5. Nurse Practitioner Pathway

“Uptake was slow for the first eight months because our facilities were grappling with COVID outbreaks and staff illnesses, which limited our ability to release staff for training,” says the General Manager of Masonic Care, Anne McLean.

“However, uptake improved in 2023, and we accepted eight staff for training.”

Anne says the training fund was promoted across all five Masonic Care Facilities. Individuals had to submit a written application that was reviewed by The Masonic Care Clinical Governance Group. Once approved,

each recipient receives a certificate containing the Freemason NZ logo, indicating they were awarded the fund for training.

Since 2022, six IQNs have obtained registration with the NZ Nursing Council and are currently employed by Masonic Villages. In addition to grant funding, they also received financial assistance to settle into the country, immigration visa support, coverage of wages during the three-month courses, and assistance with the registration processes.

Anne emphasises the courage she witnessed in the IQNs who arrived, often young women travelling halfway around the world alone, based solely on an internet interview’s promise of a job.

Despite this, they settled in well and are now valued members of The Masonic Care team.

Each of the following Nurses brings a wealth of experience and expertise and is set to make a meaningful impact within the facilities and beyond.

Katrina Villegas - Registered Nurse at Woburn Masonic Care

Katrina originally completed her Bachelor of Nursing Science over 16 years ago in the Philippines. She came to work at Woburn Masonic from Tawan Hospital in the United Arab Emirates, where she held duties as an Infection Control Officer. At Woburn, she holds the role of Infection Control and Prevention Nurse, along with her other duties.

Jayne Davis - Quality Coordinator at Horowhenua Masonic Village

Jayne applied to complete the Quality Plus Health Auditor training.

The course is designed to provide participants with the skills required to perform audits against the Ngā Paerewa Health and Disability Services Standards, enabling Jayne to gain a recognised qualification.



Anju Sebastian



Vismaya Sabu



Ronesh Prasad and Artika Devi

Prachi Puri - Registered Nurse at Glenwood Masonic Hospital

Prachi has worked at Glenwood for nine and a half years, and prior to this, she completed her Bachelor of Nursing in India. Prachi is also an Infection Control Officer and applied for funds to complete a paper at Victoria University: Nurse Practitioner Clinical Pharmacology.

"I look forward to bringing the skills I learned into my career at Masonic," says Prachi.

Anju Sebastian - Registered Nurse at Horowhenua Masonic Care

Anju initially planned to arrive from Kuwait, where she had been working, but because of Masonic reference checks, her employer cancelled her contract and visa, so she needed to return to India.

Anju has also worked at the Global Hospital and Transplant Unit in Mumbai. During her interview, she expressed to the board that, since she was a young child, she had a strong desire to live in New Zealand.

"The approval of the grant application realised my dream; this consisted of different phases from happiness to adaptation difficulties to new learning experiences," says Anju.

Vismaya Sabu - Registered Nurse at Horowhenua Masonic Care

Vismaya and Anju have a shared history, having worked together in Mumbai and later in Dubai. In fact, Masonic recruited three friends through the grant. Moving from the bustling cities of Mumbai and Dubai to the small town of Levin was a significant change for them, but these three were able to support each other as they settled into New Zealand life. Currently, they are all flatting together.

Ashna Chandra - Registered Nurse at Woburn Masonic Care

Ashna had to leave her husband behind when accepting the grant. She had earned her Bachelor of Nursing in Fiji and gained experience working in both medical and emergency departments. Since obtaining

her registration through CAP, she is now a Continence Nurse, offering guidance and advice to all care staff.

"Not only am I now a RN, but I have been able to have my husband join me here.

"Together, we can start a new life in New Zealand! Thank you."

Ronesh Prasad and Artika Devi (Husband and Wife) - Registered Nurses at Horowhenua Masonic Care

Ron and Artika arrived in Levin from Fiji with their two children and grandparents who provided childcare during the training.

Artika graduated with a Bachelor' of Nursing from Fiji in 2017.

"With my New Zealand registration, there is relief from financial and emotional burdens," says Artika.

While in Fiji, Ron accomplished a Bachelor of Nursing, a Master of Nursing, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Nursing Management and Professional Standards. He expressed a clear desire to eventually transition into a Facility Management role.

Anne says Masonic is now receiving regular requests for employment, enabling the organisation to expand its RN skill set. This expansion not only reflects a commitment to supporting nurses but also benefits residents by granting them access to a broader range of speciality clinical skills.

"The ability to attract and retain great nurses has been a result of this fund.

"We will always be thankful for the generosity of Freemasons New Zealand; it has truly been a game changer for us."



Anne McLean,
General Manager
Masonic Care



**THE MASONIC
VILLAGES TRUST**

Defining active retirement

By Paul Edwards



Tracking Paul Edwards down for a chat wasn't easy; a resident of Hokianga Masonic Village in Northland, and 'supposedly in retirement', Paul's always on the move. When we spoke to him, he was pedalling his way through New Zealand.

Today, as part of his current adventure, Paul has covered 52 kilometres on his bike. His journey began on the Kauri Coast Cycleway, which winds through

the Waipoua Kauri Forest, farmland, and the Kaipara Harbour mouth. After a stop in Pouto, Paul continued by boat to Helensville, where he's been biking ever since.

Despite the numerous competitions and organised cycling events organised regularly throughout New Zealand, Paul has always taken a different approach.

"Doing it my way opens things up. Riding solo like I do means I can go along the route or off the cuff, depending on how I'm feeling."

His love of outdoor exploration began at a young age. Growing up in Howick, Auckland, he says, provided him with ample opportunities for adventure.

In those days, Howick was vastly different from the bustling urban landscape it is today, characterised by sprawling farms, bushland, and paddocks.

After completing high school, Paul completed an engineering degree at Tunbridge Wells University in Kent. He then returned to Auckland, where he worked as a mechanic.

"Work was easy to come by, the money was good, and I could take off at any time, knowing I could find work easily when I returned."

As well as biking and hiking, Paul is a climber. He's climbed in many countries, including the Himalayas and in New Zealand.