



It gives us great pleasure to introduce Avante Care & Support's first newsletter demonstrating our philosophy of care, the Eden Alternative.

We hope the newsletter helps to explain the Eden Alternative, which aims to combat the three challenges of loneliness, helplessness and boredom and how this enables us to fulfil our vision of 'Communities where everyone has a vibrant and fulfilling life'.

This issue provides examples of the creative activities and achievements of our residents, service users, families and colleagues during last summer when the Covid-19 pandemic was at its peak.

The Eden Alternative philosophy of care has helped our care home and home care teams through these difficult times, with its focus on supporting a life worth living. This has never been more important than in the past months.



Eden and the pandemic



Movie time



Never a dull moment

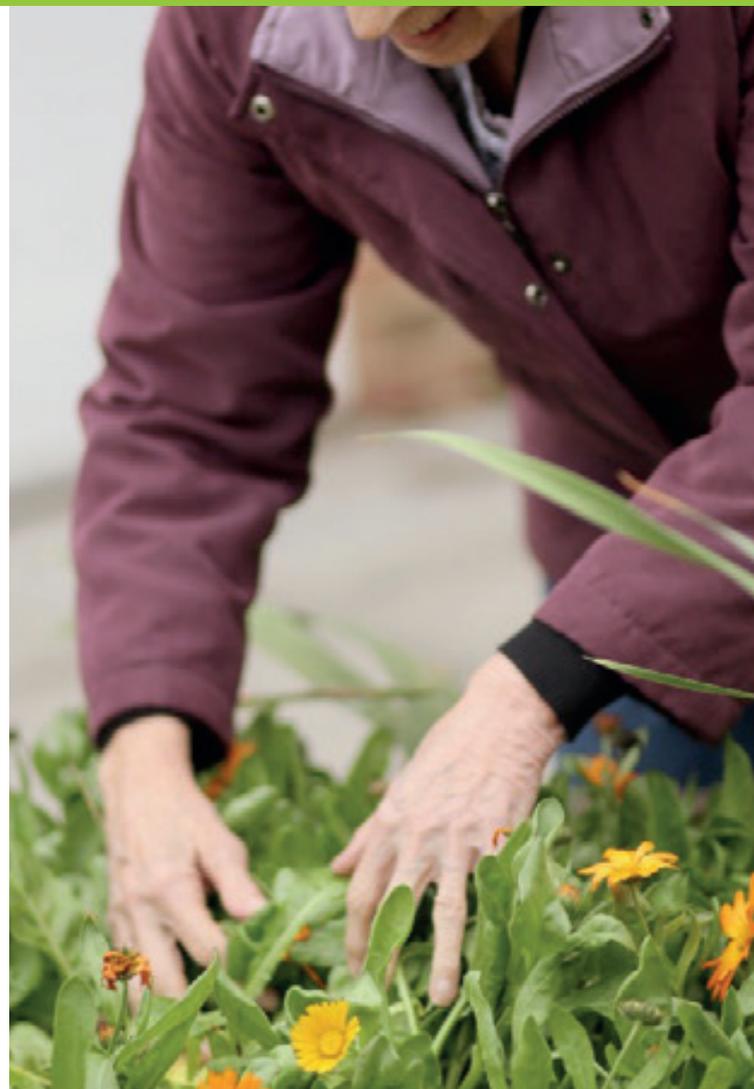


History of the Eden Alternative



In the early 1990s, Dr Bill Thomas worked as a physician, attending a nursing home in New York. The facility had a proud history and was, in every way, a credit to the community. It had everything a care home could ask for; a modern, well maintained building, a thoughtful and committed Board of Directors and a dedicated staff and Management Team.

While he visited the nursing home Dr Thomas observed the residents and recognised that the residents were living with three previously unidentified problems; loneliness, helplessness and boredom. It was from this observation



that he and his wife Judy, developed the principles of the Eden Alternative philosophy of care.

Over the years, the Eden Alternative has been successful in promoting changes in multiple environments including nursing and residential care homes internationally. Avante adopted the Eden Alternative as its philosophy of care in 2017. However, our association with Eden dates back to 2005 when our Director of Quality, then our London General Manager, attended the first UK Eden Associate training course.

By 2009, all Avante care homes were on the Eden Registry and in 2019 we were proud to achieve Eden validation in all of our nine care homes and both our Home Care & Support services, the first organisation to do so.

The Seven Domains of Wellbeing

explained by June Burgess, Member of The Eden Alternative Board

Why the Eden Alternative

The Eden Alternative is a philosophy which, when adopted, is intended to enhance the wellbeing of all those concerned in the giving and receiving of care. Wellbeing is not easy to define so Eden uses what it calls Domains and these fall into seven categories:

Identity is the first. As we get older people often say they become invisible; they are not consulted or valued for the wisdom that comes with age. Eden seeks to recognise everyone as being an individual in their own right. They have a history and a life story; they are parents, grandparents, have cared for loved ones, have had jobs and careers and have contributed to society in one way or another. Similarly, Carers are not just those who help us to do the things we cannot do for ourselves but they may be wives and husbands, parents, friends and they will have a whole life besides the job they do.

Growth is the second. Learning should not stop just because you need help with everyday life. New skills, new interests and new friends are all available in an Eden home for residents. And staff continue to grow even as they learn from the people they are caring for.

Security comes next. Not just the security of the building but feeling secure enough to speak out when things are not to your liking. Feeling secure because you have privacy and are treated with respect and dignity. This also means security for staff to be able to speak out if they have concerns about how residents and service users are treated.

Connectedness is the fourth. It is important because as we get older our world

becomes smaller because it is not possible to do all the things we did in our youth. Being connected to those around us in a positive way, staying in touch with interests and friends outside the home and for staff being part of a team, are vitally important to the way we all feel about ourselves.

Autonomy is number five. This something we all need; the right and permission to make our own decisions about the way we want to live our lives. For those that need assistance, the opportunity to choose the time of day for events like bedtime and meal times, and the sort of clothes we like to wear, is very important. For those giving care, to be empowered to act without always having to seek permission from 'the boss' is equally important.

Meaning is sixth. Being able to do things that have meaning for us instead of just to fill in the time is essential to a life worth living. Getting to know everyone well, both residents and carers, their likes and dislikes, is the key.

Joy is the seventh. This is not simply happiness but also the little moments that lift your spirits and give you that warm feeling of 'good to be alive'. These are a must, if introducing the Eden Alternative is to be measured and celebrated as being successfully implemented.

Parkview Care Home Residents and care staff feeling energised

The current COVID-19 pandemic has meant community engagement for all care homes has become more difficult to achieve. All care homes across the UK are now in isolation with only health care professionals able to visit. Yet continuing to keep residents and staff entertained through this crisis has not been impossible and certainly not for the team at Parkview, following their Eden training.

The Eden Alternative encourages involving the whole community, forming a 'care partnership' for the wellbeing of residents, staff and everyone connected with the care home. During the hot summer weather residents enjoyed visits from EMA Catering who kindly provided all residents and staff with ice-creams and refreshments, and food parcels were delivered from TK Maxx Bexleyheath, not to mention

other generous food and gift donations received since the start of the outbreak.

In a further link with our communities, Energie Fitness in Erith, generously offered all Avante Care & Support staff free access to their live fitness classes to support staff with their fitness, nutrition and wellbeing. The staff took part in a stress relief session during their lunchbreak, a great way for them to re-group, laugh and exercise.

Claire Evans, Home Manager said, *"Keeping our residents safe, healthy, engaged and entertained is our main focus and equally the wellbeing of the care team is vital in order for them to provide the care and support our residents need through these unprecedented times. Following the Eden Alternative as our philosophy of care creates the right space for these things to happen."*





Sensory Garden

Adam, the Maintenance Technician at Puddingstone Grange, has worked for Avante since 2003, so is fully aware of the Eden philosophy. Adam decided he would like to enhance the residents' lives by creating an interesting area in the grounds, where they could become more connected with nature and relax.

With support from other staff members and residents, a little piece of tranquillity was created within the grounds of Puddingstone Grange. In July

this hidden gem was officially opened, suitably named by resident Dianne, the Garden of Tranquillity. The Garden of Tranquillity allows residents and families to take in the beautiful plants around the seated areas with a water fountain at its centre. It is surrounded by a sensory area with ornamental displays full of colour and different textures. Tucked away to the side is an area called the reflection sanctuary which provides an area for peace and relaxation; a place for reflection, to unwind





and calm the mind through meditation or prayer.

Adam said, “When I was planning the sensory area, I wanted it to be accessible for all, from in or outside the home. I had an area and vision in mind, I just needed to create it! I asked residents what they would

like to see in the sensory garden and I have tried to capture everyone’s ideas, not just through colour, but by stimulating all the senses. Not only is the area a place for residents to enjoy, it is also a relaxing and tranquil setting for families to use when visiting loved ones”.



streaming of social events, is used in the home. For example, the Jubilee Club in Greenwich live streamed an afternoon of musical entertainment for residents. Pauline also arranged for the local Catholic Priest to hold a communion service in the garden at Puddingstone Grange, adhering to strict social distancing and hygiene rules.

The Eden Alternative encourages us to give residents the opportunity to give as well as receive care. The new sensory garden has helped greatly during this time as the residents love to visit it, care for it, and talk about the plants and insect life.

Pauline has encouraged residents to meet each other on the different suites, using social distancing, to spend time over a cup of coffee in order that they can meet others and not feel so isolated. It has been a very difficult time for everyone but Pauline knows she is able to be spontaneous

and adapt her work for the benefit of each individual and feels her Eden training, whereby carers are encouraged to be inventive and put the residents at the centre of decisions about their daily lives, has given her the confidence to do this.

Pauline says she absolutely loves her work and she is very proud to be working with her colleagues at Puddingstone Grange, who have focussed on the wellbeing of residents as well as each other, showing great commitment to their role.



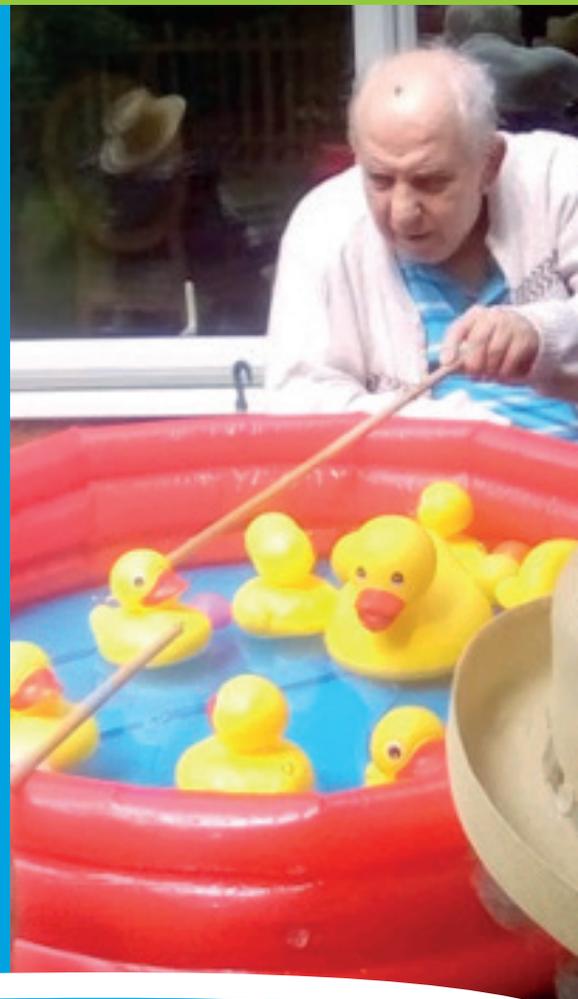


Bridge Haven care home – Never a Dull Moment

Bridge Haven is a popular home in the picturesque village of Bridge, near Canterbury. It is surrounded by beautiful views and countryside and in keeping with the Eden Alternative philosophy of care, is well supported and very much part of the local community of Bridge.

It is more difficult at present to keep residents in touch with the community around them but staff are ensuring this happens as much as possible. In keeping with the fourth domain of wellbeing, connectedness, staff have been

working really hard to ensure residents do not become isolated from the local community. Because of the good relationship of the home with the surrounding businesses and social groups, at the start of the pandemic, the local community of Wickhambreaux worked together to donate favourite books to residents and staff, each with a short letter explaining why they donated the book. Many residents have since read some of these books and have shared their thoughts on what they liked best about them.



Bridge Haven staff have worked hard to ensure residents still feel connected with their families. Home Manager Kim Drury arranged for family members to receive a 'pocket hug' through the post from their loved ones, each with a personal message.

During the summer Bridge Haven held its own mini fete to keep the annual traditions going. There was even a 'hook a duck' which unveiled some keen fishermen amongst the residents!

The Eden Alternative philosophy shows us that old age should not be a barrier to leading a useful and productive life. Quite often skills

learned throughout our lives will stay with us and people with dementia and who are older and more frail should have the opportunity to maintain those skills and even learn new ones. At Bridge Haven, activities such as helping with the laundry, hanging out and bringing in the washing, is encouraged as part of a daily routine for some of the residents. Residents who have an interest in gardening have always been encouraged to become involved in looking after the lovely gardens at Bridge Haven, and there has been a noticeable increase of interest in this recently, which means more fresh air and contact with nature for all involved.



Movie Time

Care homes across the UK continue to be closed for family visits in order to protect residents and staff from COVID-19. During this time all of Avante's care homes have kept residents entertained with numerous extra events complementing the already busy daily schedule of activities.

An example of this was when, residents across all 10 of Avante's care homes sat down for bags of laughter and popcorn, and enjoyed the same rib-tickling movie, Stan and Ollie! The recent film release about the much-loved comedy double-act entertained residents, and the portrayal of their off-screen friendship put a smile on everyone's



faces! Many of the homes hosted the movie in their very own cinema room whilst others aired the movie on screen projectors in a darkened lounge creating the perfect cinema effect.

In line with the Eden Alternative's belief that skills should be maintained, one home had their very own usher! Phyllis who lives at Court Regis had previously worked as an usher in a cinema. She shared with staff that she had not done this work for the money alone - she had loved being an usher and watching all the latest films. Phyllis was delighted when staff asked if she wanted to show them how it was done. One resident said *"It's been great watching the film together, I've never eaten so much popcorn! What's the next film?"*





A serenade with a difference



Staff at Amherst Court care home in Chatham have not let the current pandemic stand in the way of residents' day to day life at the home and have come up with some fantastic ideas to entertain them that work within the social distancing rules.

Protecting residents and staff from Coronavirus is the priority and at Amherst Court

they ensured residents continued to feel comfortable, happy, settled and entertained. Staff in every home have had to think outside the box and this approach is exactly what the Eden Alternative is about.

Staff at Amherst court came up with the idea of using the courtyard as a stage area to serenade everyone at the home, as the musicians could do so at

a safe distance. Musician Fred Clark played a set in the courtyard garden, where residents and staff could view the talented musician at a safe distance from the balconies, with plenty of room to have a dance and sing along! The set was a great success which Fred kindly performed free of charge to Amherst Court. A number of musicians and volunteers have played in the pretty courtyard

since. They were overwhelmed with how much interest and engagement was generated on social media.

Bake-Offs and art competitions have also been introduced at Amherst Court, as well as an increased accessibility for all residents to facetime or Skype families and loved ones, something which was welcomed on Mothering Sunday.





Pilgrims View - a day at the beach for Residents

Beaches became a popular hotspot for many during the summer hot weather, which led to a number of concerns around the practicalities of being able to be safely socially distanced on a crowded beach. But not for residents at Pilgrims View! Staff brought the beach to the residents with sun, sand and sea. *“Well, actually paddling pools but they did the trick”*, said Deputy Manager Claire Saxby. With its focus on putting the resident first by relieving boredom, loneliness and helplessness, the Eden Alternative encourages the thinking that there is always an alternative way to make something happen.

The garden was decked out to reflect a beach like scene with sandcastles, windbreakers, shells and beach games. There were also quieter areas for those





just wanting to relax and soak up the sun safely within the grounds of the home, enabling residents the opportunity to take part in the day as much or as little as they wanted. There were ice-creams aplenty and everyone enjoyed a fish and chip lunch to help support that beach day vibe.

Claire said, “We all had a wonderful day ‘on the beach’. It was obvious the residents really enjoyed themselves, and many have since talked about their beach visit with loved ones during video calls. Others have asked for pictures of the day to be framed and displayed in their bedroom to remind them of their beach trip.”

Using social media has helped residents to keep in touch with their loved ones at Pilgrims View and staff have ensured the links with the local community have continued, with poems and cards being sent by the local school and the children standing outside the home to sing Christmas Carols.



Amherst Court residents visit Dancing on Ice

Following a comment made by resident Doris that she had never ice skated before but had always wanted to, staff ensured that Doris and Kevin, another resident at Amherst Court care home were taken to the local ice rink to skate away the morning. Ensuring staff feel confident about arranging what might seem impossible, difficult or not 'safe' is how the Eden Alternative works in enabling staff and residents alike. Since the ice-skating, Doris and Kevin often talked together about their trip to the ice rink and how much they enjoyed it, even watching the popular sport on television at the home. It really did spark a new interest with Doris and Kevin and their fellow residents.

It was clear the new interest needed to be supported, so when Amherst Court residents were gifted tickets to go and watch the semi-finals of Dancing on Ice live at the Bovingdon Studios in Hemel Hempstead, they couldn't believe their luck! Kevin was sadly unable to attend but offered his ticket

to fellow resident Nora who had also taken a keen interest in the sport. Nora became the star guest during the show and she received an autographed photo of the judges, which she was delighted with. Doris meanwhile was so happy to meet with Phillip Schofield and shake his hand, a story which she has told everyone back at the home! They were lucky enough to also meet and chat with contestant Joe Swash and Judge John Barrowman after the show and have their photos taken with them. Doris didn't go to bed until 2am because she was telling everyone all about her star-studded evening.



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'Everyone Matters'

Thank you

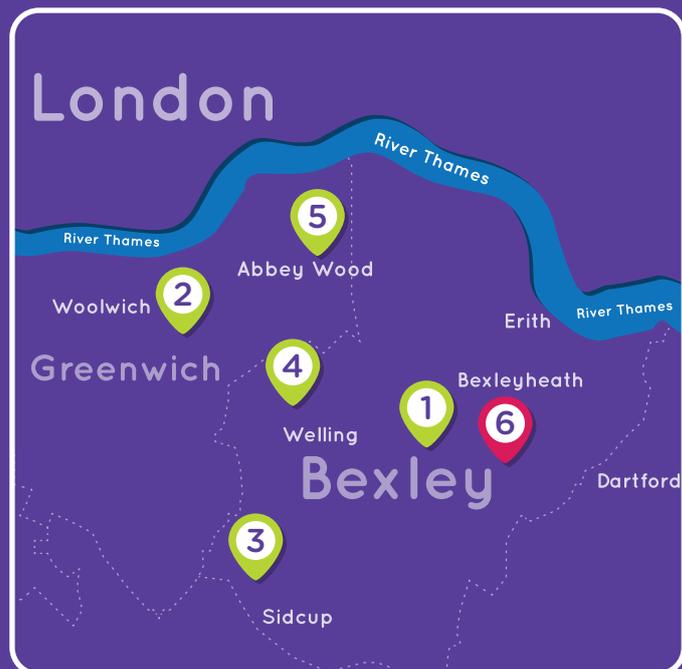
We hope you have enjoyed our newsletter showing how our philosophy of care, the Eden Alternative, works in practice. We hope you have found the information interesting, thought provoking and enjoyable, reading about some of the wonderful outcomes that have been achieved for our residents, service users, families and colleagues.

Look out for our next edition, when we hope we will all be back to 'normal' whatever that might look like.

We would welcome all feedback which you can email to us at enquiry@avantecare.org.uk

Thank you to everyone involved in this publication whether you helped write an article, took part in an event or helped to bring this newsletter together.

Our Service Locations



Bexley & Greenwich

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1 Parkview care home
105 Woolwich Road
Bexleyheath, DA7 4LP
Tel: 0208 3037889
- 

2 Puddingstone Grange care home
82 Plumstead Common Road
Woolwich, SE18 3RD
Tel: 0208 3170912
- 

3 Northbourne Court care home
Harland Avenue, Sidcup,
DA15 7NU
Tel: 0208 2699840
- 

4 Riverdale Court care home
17 Dovedale Close, Welling,
DA16 3BU
Tel: 0208 3179067
- 

5 Weybourne care home
1 Finchale Road, Abbey Wood,
SE2 9AH
Tel: 0208 3108674
- 

6 Home Care and Support - Bexley branch
Rear of 21 Bourne Road, Bexley,
DA5 1LW
Tel: 01322 318110

Kent

- 

7 Amherst Court care home
Palmerston Road, Chatham,
Kent, ME4 6LU
Tel: 01634 400009
- 

8 Bridge Haven care home
Conyngham Lane, Bridge,
Kent, CT4 5JX
Tel: 01227 831607
- 

9 Chaucer House care home
82 St Martins Hill, Littlebourne Road,
Canterbury, CT1 1PS
Tel: 01227 671985
- 

10 Court Regis care home
Middletune Avenue, Sittingbourne,
Kent, ME10 2HT
Tel: 01795 423485
- 

11 Pilgrims View care home
Roberts Road, Snodland,
Kent, ME6 5HL
Tel: 01634 241906
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12 Home Care and Support - Kent branch
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