

MEDIA RELEASE

28 April 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Who loves ya baby? **“We do!” ... says TLC Aged Care Residents**

Residents at **TLC Aged Care - The Belmont** in Geelong are enjoying a positive and uplifting visit each week from Tina Terrill's two children – one year old Bryar and four year old Denver. And these visits have got residents and staff at TLC Aged Care literally saying, “We love you!”

Welcome to ‘The Baby Club’, a group that meets each week thanks to TLC Aged Care’s Lifestyle and Activities team members Sue Windsor and Jane Mills, and of course Bryar and Denver’s easy-going and very kind mum, Tina.

“This really is a wonderful thing,” said Lifestyle and Activities Coordinator Jane Mills. “You can see how it is changing the lives of many of our dementia residents.”

And there is another touching dimension to The Baby Club: one year old Bryar Terrill is the boy who has come to the public’s attention recently because he has a congenital heart defect, yet has been turned down for a vital operation. But Bryar still comes to visit, along with his four-year old brother Denver and they bring their grandma along for the visit too.

Every Friday the two boys visit aged care residents and enjoy a few treats like a biscuit and cordial. For dementia residents, the weekly visit of Bryar and Denver is especially sweet.

“Oh there they are!” the residents will say, as the boys arrive with their mum. “They’ll cuddle young Bryar and laugh and enjoy this special time with them.

“This is such a grounding activity,” says Jane. “It immediately places them as an older person. They’ll remember being a parent or having children and it’s a powerful and positive experience for them.

“This type of visit helps replace some of the loss they’ve experienced. They’ve lost family members over the years, close friends, perhaps their house, and this is a very comforting thing for them,” she says.

The Baby Club works so well because it is applying what’s known as Attachment Theory, a therapy that is so effective for many aged care residents and in particular, those living with dementia.

“Some of our residents are so positively affected it just brings tears to our eyes,” says Jane. “Like one old chap here, he recognises Bryar and Denver immediately and will laugh and smile and chat away. It’s all such a natural response.”

Dementia residents still have a very enjoyable life, as long as the environment is right. They have a lot of senses at work so activities that are tactile for example – art, gardening, sewing and music therapy – have some wonderful effects.

“At TLC Aged Care we have a range of individual activities that are fun, calming, interesting and involving,” says Jane.

“But of course dementia can also mean that memory loss or confusion are present. Your way of expressing things is different and that means it can often be difficult to interact in everyday society. That’s why we’re providing appropriate activities that give a great level of enjoyment to residents.

“With The Baby Club, residents are immediately grounded to ‘now’. It’s immediate love and affection. It really is a big thing as it makes them feel needed and that they’re providing something valuable by holding a baby and looking after it.”

The Baby Club is looking forward to growing with other contacts and connections of the residential aged care home in Belmont interested in bringing their babies in for a visit.

“A previous staff member, Rebecca will be bringing her new baby in for regular visits and our residents will have the opportunity to bath the baby too!”

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Photo opportunities available.**