



August 25

NALC Holland Newsletter vol.17



I Hope everything is all right with you. We had very hot weather at the end of June and the beginning of July. Please take care of yourself well.

In June, I went to Slot Loevestein, which is shown in the photo on the left above. Hugo de Groot of the portrait attached, was imprisoned in this castle, and with the help of his wife, he got into a book box and escaped to Paris on March 22, 1621, during a festival in a village on the other side of the river. Some of his famous works are "On the Law of the Free Sea" (Mare Liberum) and "On the Law of War and Peace" (De jure Belli ac Pacis) in 1625, and he is considered one of the founders of international law.

Even these days there are wars in Ukraine, Palestine, and other places. I feel the value of peace. If he hadn't escaped, the state of the world might have been worse. I hope we can all help each other and build a peaceful world.

NALC Holland Chairman
Kuniharu Iwasaki



Senior Exchange Meeting

Chieko Otsuka

It is already two years since the first senior exchange meeting was held in March 2023 at Zonnehuis, a nursing home in Bovenkerk, Amstelveen. In the summer of 2021, I presented an idea of "Senior exchange meeting" to NALC committee members, which is aimed at deepening ties between Japanese and Dutch people. Initially we held the exchange meeting at NEMO Sabo. However, we were concerning how to develop this project, because we were not able to attract as many people as we had hoped. Then, JWC told us that they were looking for someone (group) who could visit the Japanese resident at Zonnehuis from time to time. This prompted us to discuss with the people in charge at Zonnehuis and we decided to plan an event together once every two months for not only Japanese resident but also Dutch residents, which has led to our current activities.

In the first year, since we had just started, we focused on simple events to try out, such as tea parties and origami, etc.. However, with the cooperation of NALC committee members and also other members the senior exchange event planning began to get on track, and from the following year awareness of the event increased among facility staff and residents. With Mrs. Kannan at the center, we were able to organise more advanced events that require tools, such as "Chigirie" (Hand torn paper collage), calligraphy, etc.. We carry out each activity with about 10 elderly people each time.

In the summer of 2024, a large-scale event was held at the facility for several days as Asia-themed week. With the cooperation of not only NALC members but also JWC members, the Japanese groups came together and participated in the Bon Odori dance and tea ceremony demonstration, which was an activity that was very well received by everyone at the facility. I think it was a

valuable event that allowed residents who were unable to go away on holidays to feel "Japan" and enjoy themselves. There was also media coverage, and NALC Chairman Iwasaki answered an interview on behalf of the group for a local station (RTV Noord Holland), which was an opportunity to widely publicize NALC's activities in the Netherlands.



Since last year, JACOP (Japanese Communities Platform) has also recognized that our activities are contributing to the local community in Amstelveen, and we have been able to receive a grant of 30 euros per activity, which has allowed us to expand the scope of our activities.

Thanks to the grant from JACOP, we have already completed three activities in 2025, and we have been continuing to hold exchange events that may be difficult to do with other organizations, such as making Hina dolls using egg shells in January, a music therapy workshop with guest musician Kawai-sensei in March, and a pottery workshop by NALC member and art specialist Keiko Oyamamatsu in May.

We have three more senior social gatherings planned for this year (July 22, September 23, and November 25), and we welcome everyone, whether you have helped us in the past or are attending for the first time. The elderly people at the facility are very charming, cheerful, and kind, so we volunteers are often comforted by them, and we always have a great time. We would be delighted if as many people as possible could participate in these wonderful social gatherings.



Home nursing and care "Hot News" 2025 New Year's issue (2/2)

Following the previous 2025 New Year's issue

Recap of the Previous Story

Ms. Warner (pseudonym), 88 years old, lives alone. After losing her husband, she enjoyed relationships with neighbors, but due to chronic pain and the passing of close friends, she became increasingly isolated and went out less. Her physical and mental condition declined until a home nursing team intervened. With temporary support from her brother and his wife, she regained enough strength to live independently again. Currently, she receives weekly home care visits, but feelings of loneliness and frustration over not being able to go out remain ongoing concerns.

* * *

Mrs. Warner (not her real name), 88 years old, living alone, began to show signs of depression and forgetfulness, and by the time the POH (specialist nurse working under a family doctor) noticed, she was barely able to do anything herself. We provided her with daily home care and continued supporting her to be independent, and within six months she had recovered enough to be able to live almost independently. However, her chronic back pain became worse, and she frequently complained about social isolation and loneliness. So we began to look for further solutions.

It is also the job of the visiting nurses to listen to her how she feels in depression and frustration, and find ways to distract her and solutions. Holistic care is essential for a person to continue living independently in the community. This

overlaps with the role of the case managers, but we know the client's circumstances better than they do.

As a solution, we proposed and recommended that she should join "Odensehuis", a village-based organization that provides encounters and activities for "elderly people with mild dementia and living alone". She was enthusiastic, and she goes there once a week for a few hours. However, her wish to "go out and do some shopping sometimes" is not fulfilled there. We contacted local volunteer organizations many times, but there was a shortage of volunteers. We finally found someone, who could still drive, but the person was already about 85 years old, and we couldn't expect so much there.

So we tried to intervene with "home guidance organizations", which have been expanding their activity area for the past few years (note: thuisbegeleiding, which has a paid volunteer element supporting clients to maintain their independence. It provides services (Huishouding) according to the client's requests apart from nursing care and cleaning. However, financial problems emerged. So we asked the case manager and family doctor to apply for WLZ (Wet Langdurige zorg= Long-Term Care Act) so that she, who suffers from mild dementia, could receive assistance from the government. A staff member from CIZ (an organization that assesses the level of long-term care required) came to interview Mrs. Warner to check the level of her independence.

The case manager, her brother and his wife, and a visiting nurse were also present. It would have



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been better if she had said something like, "I'm forgetful and my back hurts so much that I'm having difficulties in my daily life," but she answered, "For now, I'm managing to do it myself. I use a meal service, and my neighbour upstairs does the shopping for me when I need it. I forget things, but it's not so bad. It's sad that I can't go out, but as I get older, fewer friends I have, so nothing can help it." Do you understand? With this answer, she will not be certified as needing long-term care. The idea of hiring a "paid volunteer home guidance organization" was thus scrapped.

So, how can we give her a chance for going out from time to time? The case manager and we thought that there was nothing we could do, but since she continued saying, "Oh, if only I could go

out..." and "My back hurts...", then we started wondering again if there was something else we could do.

Finally, a volunteer was found who was a member of "De Zonnebloem." This volunteer had just retired, and hit it off with Mrs. Warner the first time they met. We were told that she would visit about once every fortnight, and would occasionally drives for Mrs. Waner, which was a great relief for us.

This gives her something to look forward to every day. Her complaints of back pain may also decrease.

Buurtzorg Doorwerth team 2 Visiting nurse Yoko
(Diary entry for January 15, 2025)

