We’ll soon be celebrating the third anniversary of a very important time in our history, the day VNA Care Network & Hospice, VNA of Boston, and VNA Hospice Care joined together to redefine what it means to provide health care in patients’ homes and in the community.

The support of our donors, friends, volunteers, and staff have made this a truly incredible time. By working together, we’ve introduced new services to help more people remain out of the hospital and live independently at home. We’ve also received national recognition for the quality of our patient care.

We thought it was time that our logo and newsletter reflect our work together and still recognize our individual nonprofits’ work in the community. We’re retiring our three separate newsletters (Caring Connection, Homecoming, and The Voice) and replacing our logos.

VNA Care Network, VNA of Boston, and VNA Hospice & Palliative Care are working together to provide exceptional care in patients’ homes and the community. As always, donors may designate which agency or service should receive their gift: VNA Care Network, VNA of Boston, VNA Hospice & Palliative Care, one of our three hospice residences (de Rham Home, Cambridge; Monahan Home, Worcester; and Tippett Home, Needham), or greatest need.

Caring Matters will be brought to you four times each year. We’ll share stories about the ways your generosity impacts the lives of people throughout Eastern and Central Massachusetts. I hope you enjoy your very first issue.

All the best,

Mary Ann O’Connor
President and CEO

Diane Leclair
Chair, VNA Care Board of Directors

Moving forward, you’ll be seeing our new logo, which shows that our heart is in the home.
Your caring makes history:
Country’s first VNA celebrates 130 years of compassionate care

The members of the Women’s Education Association, a small philanthropic group, were troubled by what they saw in Boston in the 1880s. Large numbers of people were in desperate need of health care.

Little did they know their response would inspire a national movement.

The group established the Instructive District Nursing Association in 1886. This precursor of VNA of Boston was the first organized home health care provider in the country and was created with the vision that everyone deserved access to quality health care.

With the support of donors like you, the VNA of Boston has delivered exceptional care for 130 years, most recently being named to the 2015 HomeCare Elite. Donations have enabled VNA of Boston to develop services once limited to hospitals, such as IV therapy; invest in technology, like telehealth, to help patients manage complex health issues while living at home; and care for people of all ages when they need us most.

Heroes in Health Care Benefits VNA of Boston

VNA of Boston will hold its 11th annual signature event, Heroes in Health Care, at the Mandarin Oriental in Boston on Saturday, Nov. 12. This spectacular black-tie Gala begins at 6 p.m. with a cocktail reception and auction followed by dinner and awards ceremony. This event sells out quickly, so purchase early at vnacare.org/gala.

Thanks to support from generous corporate and community partners, the Heroes in Health Care Gala has raised $2.5 million for sick babies, mothers with pre- and post-partum complications, and our charitable care program.

To sponsor the 2016 Gala, please contact Laura Wise, manager of fund development, at 617-886-6460 or Laura_Wise@vnacare.org.

Babies and children have always been among VNA of Boston’s home health care patients. Top: A nursing visit from the early 1900s. Above: Marie Carten, RN, recently cared for a young patient served by VNA of Boston’s Maternal Child Health Program.
Great-grandmother overcomes serious fall with support of home health team

After weeks at hospitals and a rehabilitation facility, Alice Nahatis simply wanted to go home to her family.

The 93-year-old suffered a fall that caused a long, deep gash in her leg. “We thought she had severed an artery,” said Johanna Kadra, one of Alice’s five children. Alice was quickly taken by ambulance to a local hospital and transported to another hospital for surgery. This stay was followed by an additional two weeks at a rehabilitation facility.

When it was finally time to make the transition home, Alice and her family were given several options for home health care providers.

“We said we’d like VNA Care Network because of our great experiences from other visits,” said Johanna, including care after a hip replacement surgery for a loved one.

Johanna remembered her father being “so excited” for Alice’s return. Married for 69 years, Christos and Alice have seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He and his family rearranged the house to make it easier for Alice to get around with a walker.

Alice’s home health care team included a registered nurse, who focused on making sure the serious leg wound healed properly. (VNA Care Network and VNA of Boston offer a specialized wound care program, and have Certified Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses who serve as resources to staff, patients, and families.)

A physical therapist helped Alice improve her walking and ability to navigate stairs so she could get in and out of the house.

Cooking is one of Alice’s great pleasures in life. VNA Care’s patient-centered approach means supporting individuals in achieving their individualized goals for their health. Among other day-to-day activities, an occupational therapist showed Alice how to safely return to the kitchen.

The process began slowly with standing and feeling confident. Family made things easier by putting ingredients and other items on the counter. Alice learned how to reach properly and take other steps to minimize the risk of a fall or other injury. Alice is now back to making amazing baklava and other Greek desserts.

Alice said, “My care was incredible. ...The staff made me feel good the minute they walked in.”

Chronicle features hospice, Monahan Home’s role in improving quality of life at the end of life

Dr. James Baker, medical director for VNA Hospice & Palliative Care, summed up the role of hospice in just one sentence.

“We can’t stop the disease, but we can always make things better,” he said on a segment of Chronicle.

The WCVB show took viewers inside the Rose Monahan Hospice Home, one of three hospice residences that are part of VNA Hospice & Palliative Care. Chronicle also visited a hospice patient and his wife at home in North Oxford.

Dr. Baker talked about the ways hospice improves quality of life, adding, “More studies have come out that have shown patients who come to hospice, and receive the benefits of all we can do for them, live longer and they’re happier.”

To watch Caring, Not Curing, at Local Hospice, visit www.wcvb.com and type “Caring, Not Curing” into the search box at the top of the page.

Donor support makes hospice care possible in patients’ homes and at our three residences. Pictured is the Rose Monahan Hospice Home in Worcester.
CEOs named to advisory board

Mary Ann O’Connor, president and CEO, has been appointed to the Advisory Board of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Simmons College Nurse Executive Leadership Program.

New England Coffee Charity Golf Classic - A hole-in-one for hospice care

New England Coffee recently raised over $33,000 with their 24th annual Charity Golf Classic at the Andover Country Club to benefit VNA Hospice & Palliative Care and Rosie’s Place.

Melissa Gilreath, brand manager of New England Coffee, said, “Now in our centennial year, New England Coffee is taking the time to celebrate the extraordinary people in our community, and the teams at VNA Hospice & Palliative Care and Rosie’s Place are perfect examples of the extraordinary people who make a real contribution to our community every day. The money raised at this year’s golf tournament is our way of saying thank you.”

Architect finds calling... continued from back cover

Hospice Home, opened in 1991 to care for terminally ill individuals in homelike surroundings.

Mel said, “I never had a wildish dream that I’d be working at the de Rham Home.”

His interest in hospice was fueled by a book about caring for elderly parents, workshops on the topic, and caring for his own mother who had vascular dementia. Mel began volunteering at the de Rham Home 15 years ago.

“I loved working with patients and families and spending time helping them along their journey. It was like a calling,” said Mel.

Forty years in architecture was enough. He closed his office and completed a certified nurse’s assistant training course. Mel joined the de Rham Home staff nearly six years ago as a hospice residence caregiver.

Wendy Squires, a longtime volunteer at the residence and member of the Hospice of Cambridge Development Committee, likes to call him “Chef Mel” because he “cooks brilliantly.” In addition to making meals for residents, he sees to their personal care and comfort and is a supportive presence for families.

She shared how Mel “treats the residents like gold. ...He’s definitely a bright and positive presence here.”

More About Hospice Care

VNA Hospice & Palliative Care brings compassionate, expert care to patients and their loved ones in a variety of settings. In addition to the de Rham Home, our nonprofit offers the Rose Monahan Hospice Home in Worcester and the Stanley R. Tippett Hospice Home in Needham. Care from the hospice team is also available in patients’ homes, assisted living facilities, and other settings that people call home.

The hospice team includes nurses, physicians, social workers, home health aides, trained volunteers, chaplains and bereavement counselors, music therapists, and massage therapists. Registered dietitians and rehabilitation therapists are available.

To learn more, call 800-728-1862 or visit www.vnacare.org.

We can’t do it without you!

Donors like you are making a difference in local communities by planning fundraisers and other events that gain vital support for home health and hospice care. Learn more about volunteering on a Community Cabinet or Friends group.

Contact Jane Woodbury, vice president of fund development, at 888-663-3688, ext. 1360 or Jane_Woodbury@vnacare.org.

How to reach us

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800-728-1862

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Winchester Friends of VNA Hospice Care raise nearly $90,000 for end-of-life care

Our sincerest thanks to the Winchester Friends of VNA Hospice & Palliative Care for organizing the 22nd Annual Dine-Around, Auction and Casino Night at the Winchester Country Club.

The Dine-Around was generously sponsored by:

Platinum Sponsors
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Mary LaGatta
Gilda Lopez
Nance Martin †
Margaret McIndoe
Joan O’Neil
Constance Rosenberger
Mary Beth Tamasi
Stacey Waugh
Sheri Weber
† Deceased
North Shore Community Cabinet’s Spring Fling secures over $40,000 for home health care

The North Shore Community Cabinet’s evening of live music and dancing at a private Danvers residence raised essential funds for VNA Care Network’s home health care services. Our appreciation to the Cabinet for this fourth annual benefit.

Thank you to our North Shore Spring Fling Sponsors:

Gold Sponsors

- Byram Healthcare
- Daniel Stone
- Mutual of America
- TD Bank

Silver Sponsor

- Institution for Savings

Bronze Sponsors

- Best Home Care
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- National Grand Bank
- North Shore Home Care Resources

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- North Shore Bank
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John Archer, Co-Chair
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Carol Jones
Maryann Kowalski
Jack Kriteman, MD
Joan Lunn
Meri Mastronardi
Charlene Mead
Mike Morris
Deborah O’Malley
Aimee Oliver
Four steps older adults should take to prevent falls

Falls happen to millions of people 65 and older each year, threatening older adults’ health and independence. Yet falls do not have to be an inevitable part of the aging process. Take these four steps to help lower your risk:

1. **Talk to your health care professional.** Your doctor or other provider can provide a personalized assessment and steps to reduce your risk of a fall. They can also review prescription and over-the-counter medications and herbal remedies for interactions or side effects that may make you dizzy or tired.

2. **Be physically active** to maintain or increase your strength and balance. Tai Chi is just one of many exercises that may help.

3. **Have your eyesight checked** at least once each year. Vision problems, such as cataracts or wearing the wrong prescription glasses, may increase your risk of falling.

4. **Make your home safer** by eliminating common hazards like clutter, slippery floors, and throw rugs. Non-slip mats and grab bars can make the bathroom safer. Install handrails on both sides of stairs. Make sure your home is well lit.

This information is intended for educational purposes only. For medical advice, please contact your health care provider.

Anytime, anywhere exercises to improve balance

Balance training is finding its way into gyms across the country. But you can improve your balance and reduce your risk for falls with these exercises that can be done almost anywhere.

Before you get started, make sure you have something sturdy to hold in case you become unsteady.

- **Tightrope Walker:** Walk heel to toe, placing the heel of one foot just in front of the toes of the opposite foot with each step. Your heels and toes should touch or nearly touch.

- **Look, No Hands:** Practice standing up and sitting back down without using your hands.

- **The Flamingo:** Stand on one foot, remembering to alternate feet.

This article is for information only. Always consult your health care provider to see which exercises are beneficial for your health.

Upcoming events

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Please join us at one of our upcoming events. For more information, visit [www.vnacare.org/donors](http://www.vnacare.org/donors), call 888-663-3688, ext. 1361, or email giving@vnacare.org. Your tickets, sponsorship, and auction donations support vital patient care. Thank you for making a difference!
Melvin “Mel” Gadd was an architect when he and other members of Cambridge’s Zoning Board were presented with the case to establish the state’s first hospice residence over 25 years ago.

Hospice of Cambridge, now part of VNA Hospice & Palliative Care, had taken on a pressing need – how to care for terminally ill patients who could not remain at home or who did not even have a place to call home. Donations allowed the nonprofit to purchase a home at 65 Chilton Street, Cambridge.

After much consideration, the board approved the project for the quiet street in Huron Village. Chilton House, now known as the Elizabeth Evarts de Rham Hospice Home (formerly Chilton House).

Architect finds calling as hospice residence caregiver