

# Caring Matters

Fall 2018

## Kindness and compassion of hospice staff and volunteers inspire family to give back

The late Alden Palmgren wouldn't be surprised to see his daughter, Anne Deedy, and grandson, Matthew Palmgren, both volunteering at the Rose Monahan Hospice Home in Worcester.

"As a family, it's what we do – we give back. My parents set the tone for that," said Anne.

Alden spent his last months at the Monahan Home, a home-like setting for end-of-life care. The hospice team and volunteers provide physical, emotional, social, practical, and spiritual care to help patients remain comfortable and live with dignity. Loved ones are supported as well.

VNA Care also offers hospice in patients' homes and at the Elizabeth Evarts de Rham Hospice Home in

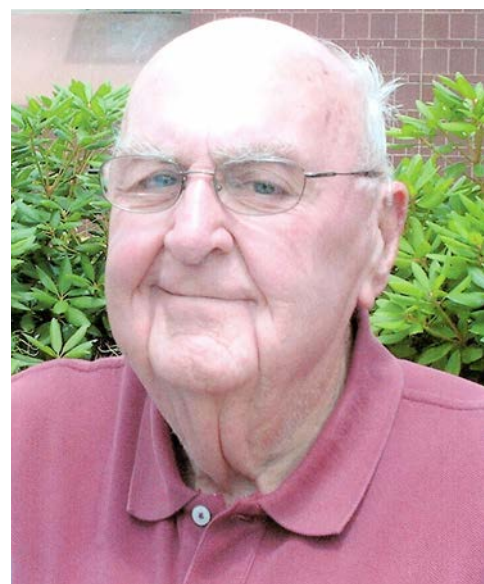
Cambridge and the Stanley R. Tippet Hospice Home in Needham.

Matt said, "I just really appreciated how well Rose Monahan (staff) took care of him. You could tell how happy my grandfather was in those last months he was alive. ...I thought if there's anything I can do, donate any small amount of time, that I would do it."

Anne has volunteered at the residence for more than three years. "What keeps me coming back is the experience we had as a family having a patient at the house... Just the kindness and compassion from the staff, from everybody in the house," she said.

Anne took comfort in knowing volunteers were there for her Dad between visits from family. She laughed when she remembered her father hinting that family didn't need to visit on Fridays. That time was reserved for hospice volunteer Fred Gay, a former colleague of Alden's at Wyman-Gordon. The two could be found watching Red Sox games together. Alden also told Anne about the frequent visits and lengthy conversations he had with other hospice volunteers.

"I thought, that's what I need to do for families who aren't able to be there and for those patients who have no family," said Anne.



Alden Palmgren (pictured) and his wife Shirley encouraged their children and grandchildren to take up community service. Alden passed away on Oct. 1, 2014, at the Rose Monahan Hospice Home, where his daughter and grandson now volunteer.

Every volunteer shift is different. Anne and Matt may find themselves helping in the kitchen or other day-to-day household activities as well as visiting with patients and families.

Matt, who began volunteering earlier this year, said, "I think the more meaningful sessions are when you have the opportunity to sit and talk with a patient for an extended period of time."

*Kindness and compassion...continued on p. 3*

*VNA Care's mission is to provide the right care with kindness and compassion every day for every person we serve.*

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Michael Braney of Mutual of America, Platinum Sponsor, and Laura Wise, manager of fund development



From left: John Archer, chair of the North Shore Community Cabinet; Donald Kowalski, DDS, of Bronze Sponsor Kowalski Dental, PC; Maryann Kowalski, member of the Community Cabinet; and Jane Woodbury, retired vice president of fund development.



From left: Karen Webber, director of fund development; Stacie Craig, member of the North Shore Cabinet and representative of Gold Sponsor Byram Healthcare; and Mark Craig

## North Shore Cabinet's Kentucky Derby Party raised over \$43,000 for home health care

Justify wasn't the only winner of the 144th Kentucky Derby. VNA Care's North Shore Community Cabinet raised over \$43,000 for home health care services at a Derby-themed party at the Salem Country Club.

The sixth annual North Shore benefit was generously sponsored by:

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From left: VNA Care Wellness Nurses Karen Fletcher, Joan Fitzpatrick, and Peggy McDermott



Dan and Melanie Lewis of Guardian Angel Senior Services, a Friend Sponsor

### North Shore Community Cabinet

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## How to reach us

### Service Information

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### Donations and Mailing List

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giving@vncare.org

### Online

www.vncare.org  
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### ***Kindness and compassion...continued from front cover***

He remembered one patient he connected with during several visits, learning about the man's interests, children, and more.

Matt said, "One of those visits happened to be very close to when he passed away. He couldn't speak at that point. His wife wanted some respite. I just sat there with him. They teach us that sometimes all you need to do is be there and just be a presence."

He added, "The staff is unbelievable. They are so good to the patients, but they are also so good to the volunteers. Any question we have, they are great about answering."

### **Volunteer opportunities**

Hospice volunteer opportunities are available at VNA Care's three hospice residences as well as at patients' homes in Eastern and Central Massachusetts. Volunteers receive training and ongoing supervision and support. For more information, please call Volunteer Services at 781-569-2811 or visit [www.vncare.org/volunteers](http://www.vncare.org/volunteers).

Volunteer opportunities are also available on VNA Care's Community Cabinets and Friends groups, which raise awareness of and charitable support for hospice and home health care. To learn more, please call Karen Webber, director of fund development, at 888-663-3688, ext. 1365 or email [Karen\\_Webber@vncare.org](mailto:Karen_Webber@vncare.org).

## **Congressman McGovern meets with VNA Care**

VNA Care was honored to host Congressman Jim McGovern at our offices recently where he met with Holly Chaffee, president and CEO; Dr. Steven Strongwater, president & CEO of Atrius Health; VNA Care board members and senior leaders; and representatives from the Home Care Alliance. The group discussed issues of importance to home health, hospice, and palliative care providers. Pictured, from left: Renee Harper, board member; Karen Chirsky, vice president of transitional care and business development; Robin Spaulding, board member and hospice volunteer; Gladys Rodriguez, Congressman McGovern's senior district representative; and Congressman McGovern.

## **Join us at an upcoming benefit and make a difference in the health of our communities**

### **September 21**

#### **Autumn Swing**

*Needham Golf Club*

Live music, dancing, cocktail party with cash bar, hors d'oeuvres, and live and silent auctions

[www.vncare.org/needham](http://www.vncare.org/needham)

### **October 27**

#### **Halloween on Ice**

*Fidelity Bank Worcester Ice Center*  
Reception overlooking rink, hors d'oeuvres, cash bar, ice skating, costume contest, and silent auction  
[www.vncare.org/halloween](http://www.vncare.org/halloween)

### **September 30**

#### **Step Out for Hospice Walk/Run**

*Irish American Club of Woburn*

3-mile walk, 5-mile run, free Fun Run for kids, raffle, silent auction, live music, and refreshments

[www.vncare.org/stepout](http://www.vncare.org/stepout)

### **November 10**

#### **Heroes in Health Care Gala**

*Mandarin Oriental, Boston*

Seated dinner, open bar, auction, award presentations, dessert reception, and live music

[www.vncare.org/gala](http://www.vncare.org/gala)

**For more information and tickets, please visit [www.vncare.org/donors](http://www.vncare.org/donors), call 888-663-3688, ext. 1365 or ext. 6560, or email [giving@vncare.org](mailto:giving@vncare.org).**



2 North Shore Cabinet raises vital funds



3 Congressman meets with VNA Care leaders



3 Make a difference at a fall fundraiser



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## Fund Development Office

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## Physical Therapist helps patient bounce back after knee replacement and reach goals of driving and golfing again

Bob Valair thinks that going above and beyond for patients is in Physical Therapist Lauren McKay's DNA.

He saw firsthand the care she provided one of his loved ones after back surgery. When the time came for Bob to have a total knee replacement, he told New England Baptist Hospital staff that he wanted VNA Care to provide rehabilitation therapy in his home.

The process, said Bob, was "seamless." Lauren was assigned to his care, and made her first visit the day after he returned home from the hospital. She checked his vital signs, reviewed his medications, made follow-up calls to his doctor, and reassured him that the discoloration and swelling in his leg were within the normal range. They also talked about how to manage any pain, so he could stick with the exercises that would aid his recovery and goals of returning to the golf course and driving.

Lauren visited Bob three times each week and called between visits to see how he was doing. They started slowly

with stairs, walking, and other exercises. He trusted Lauren to find the right balance – pushing just enough to regain his mobility while being mindful that his body was still healing.

Lauren would leave thorough notes for Bob at the end of each visit. He said, "There was no doubt about what I had to do, what was going to be done, and the follow-up. The care and training that VNA Care must provide therapists really shows."

As Bob progressed, Lauren integrated his stationary bike into therapy. He was eager to start driving again, so Lauren had him practice getting in and out of the car.

"It was amazing how much work you needed to do to get yourself back," said Bob.

Within a few weeks, Bob transitioned to outpatient therapy. Shortly after that, he started driving and taking golf lessons.

"I feel the reason I bounced back and I'm out playing golf and doing the



Bob Valair, pictured with Lauren McKay, MSPT, shared that he "can't say enough good things about Lauren and the care that I received from VNA Care."

things that I want in a timely fashion was Lauren's care and setting the right tone for what I have to do going down the road," said Bob. "VNA Care's employees go the extra mile."