



VNA Care Network
 VNA of Boston
 VNA Hospice & Palliative Care

Caring Matters

Winter 2019

"To me, being a hospice nurse is a privilege. People allow me into their homes and into their lives during what can be a difficult time of life. ...I carry a piece of each of my patients with me, and it makes me a better person."

—Giselle Desroches, RN

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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Hospice team helps patients and loved ones focus on life

Even though Giselle Desroches, RN, cares for people in their last months of life, she thinks about hospice nursing as "how do I help a person live – live the best that they can for as long as they can."

After more than a decade as a hospice nurse with VNA Care, she has hundreds of stories about the ways hospice improves quality of life at the end of life for patients and their loved ones.

Among those Giselle cared for was a woman with lung cancer who could barely breathe when she moved. The situation was so severe that the woman's life revolved around sitting on a stool in her kitchen. From there, she could easily reach what she needed to get through the day. The patient spent much of her time looking out the window, longing to work in her garden.

The hospice team adjusted her medication, and provided the information and support the patient needed to feel at ease with the new plan. Giselle stayed with the woman for her first dose of the new medication to make sure she felt comfortable.

Giselle could hardly believe the change when she visited the patient again. The woman was outside, enjoying a beautiful spring day. She spent much of the next three months doing what brought her the most joy in life, gardening.

When people with terminal illnesses choose hospice early, they often "marvel at how well they feel because we kind of bang away at their symptoms," said Giselle. "We don't care about what's causing the symptoms as much as we do about how we can make people feel better."

The hospice team includes nurses, social workers, trained volunteers, home health aides, chaplains and bereavement counselors, medical director, and other clinicians as needed. Care is provided in patients' homes and assisted living and skilled nursing facilities across Eastern and Central Massachusetts. When remaining at home is not possible or optimal, VNA Care offers homelike hospice residences in Cambridge, Needham, and Worcester.

Patients are not the hospice team's only focus. Loved ones receive support before and after their loss. Giselle remembered the wife of a patient who was struggling with her husband's sudden decline. The wife had been a nurse whose instinct was to "fix" all of her husband's health problems. Although her husband

Hospice team...continued on p. 5

Donors choose how to make an impact

Because of the generosity of our donors, we're here for the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Donations help us care for patients in need, provide end-of-life care in patients' homes and at our hospice residences, develop new health care programs, provide advanced training to staff, purchase medical equipment, and much more.

Donors may ask that their gift be used for the greatest need or direct their support to:

- VNA Care Network
- VNA of Boston
- VNA Hospice & Palliative Care
- Elizabeth Evarts de Rham Hospice Home, Cambridge
- Rose Monahan Hospice Home, Worcester
- Stanley R. Tippet Hospice Home, Needham

Our Fund Development staff is available to provide personalized assistance. Please contact us at 888-663-3688, ext. 1365 or giving@vnacare.org. You can also learn more about ways to support home health and hospice care, including memorial donations, and make a gift at www.vnacare.org/donors.

How to reach us

Service Information
800-521-5539

Donations and Mailing List
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giving@vnacare.org

Online
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Ribbon cuttings celebrate new Acton/Concord and Dorchester offices



Holly Chaffee, MSN, BSN, RN, president and CEO of VNA Care, (second from right) officially opened the Acton/Concord office.

VNA Care recently dedicated clinical offices in Acton/Concord and Dorchester.

Local dignitaries met with staff to learn more about the ways VNA Care's home health, palliative, and hospice services support people in remaining at home, despite complex illnesses or injuries. President and CEO Holly Chaffee, MSN, BSN, RN, led the ribbon cutting ceremonies at both offices.

Guests at our Acton/Concord opening included State Senator Jamie Eldridge, State Representative Jen Benson, Acton Selectman Jon Benson, Acton Selectwoman Joan Gardner, and Acton

Economic Development Committee Chair Derek Chin. The office is located at 36 Knox Trail, Acton, on the Acton/Concord line.

Our Dorchester staff welcomed representatives from Mayor Martin Walsh's and Representative Daniel Hunt's offices, the Commission on Affairs of the Elderly, Boston City Councilor at Large Anissa Essaibi-George, MassHealth, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, and the Home Care Alliance. The 150 Mount Vernon Street, Dorchester, office is the new home-base for staff previously at our Charlestown office.



Guests joined Holly Chaffee (fourth from left) and staff at the Dorchester office opening.



Members of the Worcester Area Community Cabinet, from left: Linda Maykel, DDS, co-chair; Linda Haddad; Liisa Holm, co-chair, also of Platinum Sponsor Marsh & McLennan Agency; Karen Webber, director of Fund Development; Mary Whalen; Janet Jones; Cheryl Milas; and Janet Birbara



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Volunteers organize first Halloween On Ice for home health, hospice, and Monahan Home

The Worcester Area Community Cabinet, a volunteer group established in 2012, continued raising awareness of and funds for VNA Care's work in Central Massachusetts with a new benefit, Halloween On Ice. The event at the Worcester Ice Center featured a private reception, ice skating, silent auction, visit by the Worcester Railers' Mascot Trax, and more. The benefit raised over \$63,000.

Halloween On Ice was generously sponsored by:

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Worcester Area Community Cabinet

Janet Birbara	Michael Maguire	Karen Webber
Holly Chaffee	Linda Maykel, DDS,	Mary Whalen
Linda Haddad	Cheryl Milas	Heidi Wilson
Liisa Holm, Co-Chair	Lenny Monahan	
Janet Jones	Robin Spaulding	



Back, from left: Lynda, Eric, and Chuck Monahan. Front, from left: Florence Kirschbaum and Kelsey Saucier.



Members of the Whalen Family gathered at the reception overlooking one of the ice rinks.



Deborah and Mark Freeman, a Friends Sponsor of Halloween On Ice



Louise Condon (left), of the Community Cabinet and Gold Sponsor Louise Condon Realty, and Holly Chaffee, president and CEO



From left: Laura Wise, manager of Fund Development, with Justin McCallion and Betty Velasquez, both of Rockland Trust, a Gold Sponsor of Autumn Swing



Ellison Patten and Kerrie Patten, a member of the Needham Area Community Cabinet



From left: Stephanie Jackman-Havey, CFO; Brian Silven of BrightStar Care of Norwood, a Bronze Sponsor; and Holly Chaffee, president and CEO



Milton Manousaridis and Wendy Bradley of Wellesley Bank, a Bronze Sponsor

Needham Area Cabinet hosts 5th annual benefit for VNA Care and Tippett Home

Fantastic food, live music by the Worcester Jazz Collective, dancing, and live and silent auctions were enjoyed by guests at the Needham Area Community Cabinet's Autumn Swing fundraiser.

The evening at the Needham Golf Club raised \$55,000 for home health care, hospice care, and the Stanley R. Tippett Hospice Home.

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Kathy Whitney
Laura Wise

Take steps to reduce your risk for a fall and fall-related injuries

Three million older adults are treated for fall-related injuries each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Checking your home for common hazards is one way to reduce your chance of becoming part of this statistic.

Make your home safe

- Remove books, shoes, and other objects from the floors and stairs.
- Keep telephone and electrical cords out of pathways.
- Tack rugs and glue vinyl flooring so they lie flat. Remove or replace rugs or runners that tend to slip, or attach nonslip backing.
- Ensure that carpets are firmly attached to the stairs.
- Do not stand on a chair to reach things. Store frequently used objects where you can reach them easily. If you have to use a step stool, choose one with a bar that you can hold.

Keep a well-lit home

- Have a lamp or light switch that you can easily reach without getting out of bed.
- Use night lights in the bedroom, bathroom, and hallways.
- Have light switches at both ends of

stairs and halls. Install handrails on both sides of stairs.

- Turn on the lights when you go into the house at night.

Tips for a safer bath

- Add grab bars in shower, tub, and toilet areas.
- Use nonslip adhesive strips or a mat in shower or tub.
- Consider sitting on a bench or stool in the shower.
- Consider using an elevated toilet seat.
- Use care walking
- Use helping devices, such as canes, as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Wear nonslip, low-heeled shoes or slippers that fit snugly. Avoid walking in stocking feet.

And don't forget...

- Review medications with your doctor or pharmacist. Some drugs, including over-the-counter drugs, can make you drowsy, dizzy, and unsteady.
- Have your hearing and eyesight tested. Inner ear problems can affect balance. Vision problems make it difficult to see potential hazards.



- Exercise regularly to improve muscle flexibility, strength, and balance.
- If you feel dizzy or lightheaded, sit down or stay seated until your head clears. Stand up slowly to avoid unsteadiness.

Additional resources

The CDC offers fall prevention tips at www.cdc.gov.

This information is intended for educational purposes only. For health, legal, tax, or financial advice, please contact your professional advisors.

Hospice team ...continued from front cover

had done well for a long time, his disease was now beyond cure.

Giselle and the wife talked through her fears and concerns. The couple's children began stopping in during Giselle's visits, and she was able to prepare the entire family for what to expect and how their husband and father would be kept comfortable during this stage of his journey. Giselle said, "He died very peacefully, and they were very grateful for that."

"To me, being a hospice nurse is a privilege. People allow me into their homes and into their lives during what can be a difficult time of life. I know a lot of our nurses feel the same way," said Giselle. "I carry a piece of each of my patients with me, and it makes me a better person."

Volunteer opportunities

Provide companionship, support, and more to hospice patients and their loved ones in patients' homes or at

one of VNA Care's hospice residences. Training and supervision are provided. To learn more, please contact Volunteer Services at 781-569-2811.

VNA Care's Community Cabinets and Friends groups raise awareness of and charitable support for the agency's nonprofit mission. For more information, please contact Karen Webber, director of fund development, at 888-663-3688, ext. 1365 or Karen_Webber@vnacare.org.

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Jamie Kelley and Brian Kelley, co-chairs of the Woburn Friends of VNA Hospice & Palliative Care

Woburn Friends and the community gather for 21st Annual Step Out for Hospice Walk and Run

Hundreds of walkers and runners turned out in support of end-of-life care during the Woburn Friends' 21st annual health walk, road race, and children's fun run. Presented in partnership with the Irish American Club of Woburn and the Shamrock Running Club, the day raised more than \$70,000 for VNA Hospice & Palliative Care.

Longtime teams Geronimo Horsefeathers, Hardy's Party, Team Lanie Allen, Team Doherty, and Simply the Best were joined by several new teams, including Team Fabulous Annie, Hello from Heaven, Purple Squid, and J. Mulkerin Realty. The Lucky Ones cover band performed rock, pop, and country hits for the crowd.



J. Mulkerin Realty, a Gold Sponsor, walked in memory of Lorraine Malloy, who was a realtor with the company for eight years. From left: Mark Gaffney, Anne Marie DiMauro, Seana Gifford, Joanne Mulkerin McEleney, Arthur McEleney, and Kelly McSheffrey Ryan.

Woburn Friends of VNA Hospice & Palliative Care

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Helen Barry | Brian Kelley | Connie McGilvray |
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| Carol Flaherty | Ed Maguire | Carole Torrice |
| Richard Haggerty | Joseph McDonough, Jr. | Tracey White |
| Paul Jamieson | Barbara McElhiney | |

Save the Date

The 22nd annual Step Out for Hospice will be held Sunday, Oct. 6, in Woburn. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Deborah Corkum at Deborah_Corkum@vnacare.org or 888-663-3688, ext. 1362.

Family donates a piece of nursing history

Kathryn Mongeau knew she found something special when she came across a nurse's cape, pins, and cap that her late mother, Margaret "Peggy" Mongeau, had carefully saved for more than six decades.



Margaret Mongeau

"Being a nurse myself, these things are very valuable to me. It's an appreciation for nursing history," said Kathryn.

Peggy wore the cape as a visiting nurse in Worcester during the early 1950's

and as a student at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester and a nurse at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

The Mongeau family gave the items to VNA Care's archives, which span over 130 years of home health and hospice nursing in Eastern and Central Massachusetts.

Peggy would tell Kathryn about her days as a visiting nurse. She walked from one patient's home to the next carrying her nurse's bag filled with

the supplies she'd need for the day. Worcester's seven hills sometimes added to the challenge of her work.

"My Mom loved people and being a nurse is a real people skill. ...It's working with patients and their families. It's not just going in and being a robot," said Kathryn. "She liked more intimate kinds of settings than the bustling hospital. The VNA definitely fit that category."



Kathryn Mongeau models the nurse's cape, pins, and cap that belonged to her mother.

From Your Letters

Thank you to our donors, volunteers, and friends for supporting our mission of caring. You are helping us make a difference in the lives of our patients and their loved ones. These are excerpts from just a few of the many thank you notes we've received.

"Thank you so very much for caring for my dearest friend. Your gentleness and empathy during her last moments were greatly appreciated by myself and all her friends and neighbors. "

"Your organization was with me every step of the way, anticipating any need."

"(My physical therapist) helped not only with my physical therapy, but also helped me deal emotionally."

"The past three years have been very difficult for me having had a severe broken leg and this past year heart surgery. My caregivers were not only professionals but caring and cheerful. I welcomed them into my home each day."

"She (my physical therapist) was very professional and knowledgeable, and went above and beyond what one would expect in trying to develop the right exercise program for me ...I will continue doing the exercises she showed me, not only because I hope they will make me feel better, but also because I can hear her voice encouraging me and see her smiling face when I am doing them. ...If I should need a PT again in the future I hope I will have the good fortune to have her as my therapist."

"(My mother) was under your care for the last two plus years of her life. Her decline was slow, but Hospice stuck with her, helping to keep her comfortable and safe. I have immense gratitude to you all for how you helped Mom – and us, her family – navigate this last chapter of her life."

Former visiting nurse ...continued from back cover

health that I had some mental support through the health professionals who came into the house," said Linda.

In addition to offering emotional support, the team taught Linda and her family about her condition and the steps needed to aid her in regaining her strength and reaching her optimal health. Linda and her family always had someone to call if they had questions or concerns.

Linda said, "It was a tough road. VNA Care made a difference in my recovery, there's no doubt about it." Having been both a visiting nurse and a home health care patient, she often finds herself

encouraging friends facing an illness or injury to contact VNA Care. Linda said, "I think it's the best thing you can do for your health."

As a volunteer with VNA Care for nearly 20 years, Linda makes a difference in the health of the community as a member of the board of directors and Worcester Area Community Cabinet, which raises awareness of and charitable support for home health and hospice care. Linda is also a past member and chair of the VNA Hospice & Palliative Care board.

Linda said, "I've been involved with VNA Care practically my entire life. This is the organization that I love."



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From Your Letters



VNA Care Network

VNA of Boston

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Fund Development Office

199 Rosewood Drive, Suite 180

Danvers, MA 01923



Linda Haddad is a longtime volunteer, supporter, and advocate for VNA Care's home health care and hospice services. She's pictured with her husband, Dr. Abe Haddad.

Former visiting nurse experiences what it's like to be a home health care patient

Linda Haddad was taken completely by surprise when she had a heart attack three years ago. The longtime volunteer and former visiting nurse for VNA Care knew just what to do when it was time to transition from hospital to home.

"I asked for an order for VNA Care to come in because I needed a lot of care

and a lot of monitoring," said Linda. "I had physical therapy, nursing and other services, and it was wonderful. Who knew I was going to have open heart surgery, and I'd have VNA Care again."

Linda first experienced the value of home health care as a nursing student over 50 years ago. She spent one of her

clinical rotations with a visiting nurse caring for people in their own homes.

"That was always on my mind, even as I went through different types of nursing," she shared.

After getting her nursing license, she worked as a visiting nurse in the Boston and Worcester areas.

"If we had an order that was to do a dressing, that wasn't the only thing we needed to look at. We had to go into the social situation, the family context, and diet. We taught the total package to patients and family members because all of those contributed to the health of the patient. That's what I liked," said Linda.

Taking a holistic view of each individual patient and providing the education, care, and support to help them reach their health care goals is a trademark of VNA Care's home health care clinicians. Linda got to see the other side of this, especially when she returned home after open heart surgery.

"I was in tough shape physically and emotionally. It was vital for my physical

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