Volunteer brings personal experiences to his work on behalf of hospice

Liz Ounanian was only at the Stanley R. Tippett Hospice Home for a brief time, but it made a big impact on her husband Harding Ounanian, Jr.

“I think it’s the best thing I did for Liz after she became ill. I had never been to the house before. When I came in, it was very warm, very inviting. The staff welcomed us. They provided a sense of dignity for her final hours, which was so important,” said Harding.

Liz and Harding had been married more than 30 years. He described Liz as “very much an outdoorsy woman.” The couple hiked the Grand Canyon and Zion National Park, summited Ben Nevis in Scotland, and visited about 16 national parks in the United States and abroad. When they first met, Liz worked as an administrator at a Boston law firm, and Harding as a writer for a Boston advertising agency.

When Liz learned she had breast cancer, she underwent chemotherapy, a mastectomy, radiation, reconstructive surgery, and more tests before finally being declared cancer-free. But the cancer returned four years later, and chemotherapy was no longer effective.

The Ounanians initially turned to VNA Care for specialized pain and symptom management known as palliative care. A nurse visited Liz at home twice each week. If Liz’s condition worsened, she could smoothly transition to VNA Care’s hospice program, which provides physical, emotional, social, practical, and spiritual support for terminally ill individuals and their loved ones. Hospice care is provided at home and at VNA Care’s three hospice residences in Cambridge, Needham, and Worcester.

Liz eventually began lapsing into bouts of unconsciousness. Since it

Continuing the legacy of compassion and caring

Campaign for the 25th anniversary of the Tippett Home

The Stanley R. Tippett Hospice Home opened in June 1994 to provide compassionate end-of-life care in comfortable surroundings for both patients and their loved ones. Private donations and grants from generous community members made the Tippett Home possible, and have continued to play a vital role in allowing VNA Care to sustain the residence and its mission of caring for 25 years.

More than $250,000 in needs have been identified at the Tippett Home, so VNA Care has embarked on a special 25th anniversary campaign to ensure the structural integrity and energy efficiency of the building, warm and home-like surroundings, and highest quality care for patients and loved ones.

To learn more about the 25th Anniversary Campaign for the Tippett Home and how your charitable gift can make a difference, please contact Laura Wise at 617-835-9654 or Laura_Wise@vnacare.org. Donations may also be made at www.vnacare.org/25celebration.
was difficult to care for her safely and effectively at home, Harding moved Liz to the Tippett Home in Needham. 

“She received outstanding care from the nurses and staff. Though she never regained her full consciousness, she had visitors, and staff made sure she and I were comfortable,” remembered Harding. 


The experience stayed with Harding. Four years later, he found himself in a conversation with a member of VNA Care’s Fund Development staff about the exceptional care he and Liz received. Wanting to give back, he joined the Needham Area Community Cabinet to raise awareness of and charitable support for the Tippett Home. 

An avid gardener, Harding also took on a volunteer position at the home to share his love of nature. His beautiful floral arrangements can be seen throughout the home and bring joy to patients and guests. 

Harding said, “I look at the Tippett Home as more of a place of peace, calmness, and friendliness. All guests and their visitors are treated as individuals and are on a first name basis with nurses and attendants. Staff are aware of guests’ background and can lend more personalized care. A steady stream of volunteers delivers meals to rooms, sit and talk with guests, take care of laundry and chores, garden, and do whatever is called upon.” 

He added, “Though none of us like to think we might wind up at the Tippett Home, it is extremely reassuring that it’s here and ready to serve.”

Volunteer Harding Ounanian, Jr., and Helen Nicotera, one of the hospice nurses who cared for his wife Liz

From your letters

Your generous support makes our mission of caring possible. Thank you for changing lives!

“(Our nurse) is incredibly kind, compassionate, smart, articulate, and wonderful. I don’t know what we would have done without her. My family is so grateful for the wonderful care she showed my mom.”

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the wonderful care I received after my surgery. I am pleased to say I had a great recovery, and I walk as normally as I did before I had the need for the hip replacement.”

“Thank you so much for your wonderful care of our mother during the last days of her life. …You are truly earth angels, and your care was felt by all who visited. Thank you for granting us a bit of peace in all of this and for being so wonderful not only to (our mother), but to our father. I know he was truly moved by the grace and dignity you gave to his lifelong love.”

“I couldn’t have survived if it wasn’t for you.”

“We will never forget your kindness and care for our mother during her last days. Thank you all, from the bottom of our hearts.”

“The care and concern shown by all of you was above and beyond our expectations.”

“My caregivers were not only professionals, but caring and cheerful. I welcomed them into my home each day.”

You’re invited to the Tippett Home’s 25th Anniversary Celebration

The Stanley R. Tippett Hospice Home

The volunteers on VNA Care’s Needham Area Community Cabinet are marking the Anniversary Campaign (see front cover) and this milestone year in the history of the residence with a 25th Anniversary Celebration on Thursday, May 16, at 6 p.m. at the MIT Endicott House, a stunning, French Manor-style mansion on 25 acres, located at 80 Haven St., Dedham.

Guests will enjoy wonderful food, an auction, and a special guest performer. Tickets are $75 per person.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit www.vnacare.org/25celebration.
Dr. and Mrs. Kaulbach to be honored for community service at annual North Shore Spring Benefit

Dorothy “D.L.” Kaulbach remembers the day in 1955 when she met her future husband. A nursing student at The Brooklyn Hospital, D.L. needed a doctor for a routine procedure in the women’s surgical ward. Maximiliaan “Max” Kaulbach, an intern in medicine from the Netherlands, just happened to be walking by. D.L. talked Max through the procedure, and the two have been an unstoppable team ever since.

The couple married in 1957 and eventually settled in Marblehead, where they raised their four children and helped establish a youth soccer league.

Max practiced cardiology at Salem Hospital. D.L., an avid painter for more than 40 years, has been involved in local arts associations and the Peabody Essex Museum, among other nonprofits.

VNA Care became part of their lives when Max wanted to remain active in the community after his retirement in 1998. He’s given his time to the board of directors, Planned Giving Committee, and North Shore Community Cabinet. Together, the Kaulbachs have been dedicated supporters of VNA Care’s charitable mission.

John Archer, chair of VNA Care’s North Shore Community Cabinet, said, “Max and D.L. have enriched the lives of local residents through their work and volunteerism in health care, the arts, sports, and much more. It’s our honor to recognize their contributions to the community.”

Max shared, “When you think about medical care, 90% is given by nurses, not doctors. My wife had been a nurse. It seemed logical if I was going to volunteer that a nursing organization would be high on the list.”

D.L. said, “A lot of people don’t really know what visiting nurses do until they come to your home. As a student, I would follow a visiting nurse. I thought it was very hard work.”

D.L. invited VNA Care into her home after knee replacement surgery. The nurse was “very reassuring,” and the physical therapist kept her moving.

Max added, “They are a really good team.”

Join us to toast the Kaulbachs

The volunteers on the North Shore Community Cabinet will host the annual spring benefit for VNA Care’s home health services on Thursday, April 25, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Corinthian Yacht Club, 1 Nahant St., Marblehead.

The evening will feature hors d’oeuvres, an auction, and live music in the Corinthian’s beautiful clubhouse on Marblehead Neck with spectacular views of the harbor.

Tickets on sale now
Tickets are $50 per person and may be purchased at www.vnacare.org/northshore or by calling VNA Care at 888-663-3688, ext. 1365.

Charitable donations and sponsorship opportunities
To make a donation or become an event sponsor, please contact Karen Webber at 888-663-3688, ext. 1365 or Karen_Webber@vnacare.org. Donations may also be made on our ticket sales page listed above.
Health care leaders honored at gala for home health and hospice care, over $250,000 raised

VNA Care’s 13th annual Heroes in Health Care Gala at the Mandarin Oriental, Boston, raised essential funding for home health care provided by the 132-year-old VNA of Boston and end-of-life care provided by VNA Hospice & Palliative Care. “The success of the event would not have been possible without the financial support of our generous sponsors and donors. We were also fortunate to have a tremendous group of volunteers who planned this amazing evening,” said Laura Wise, manager of Fund Development. For more information about supporting the 2019 Gala, please contact Laura Wise at 617-886-6460.
From left: Joe Gerardi, Mutual of America President and CEO John Greed, Jean and Mike Maguire, and Chris Bailey from trustee sponsor Mutual of America.

Presenting Sponsor ($25,000)

Boger Family Foundation

Trustee Sponsors ($15,000)

Corridor

Mutual of America
Your Retirement Company

Patron Sponsors ($10,000)

Forcura

GE Healthcare

TUFTS Health Plan

Benefactor Sponsors ($5,000)

John & Denise Murphy
Agios
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Boston Children’s Hospital
Byram Healthcare
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care
Medline Industries
Suburban Homemaking
& Maternity Agency

Supporter Sponsors ($3,000)

Deborah & Ron Feinstein
The Wise Family – Marni, Bob & Laura Wise
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
BMC HealthNet Plan
Canon
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Harvard Medical School
Health Recovery Solutions
Hologic
People’s United Bank
PhRMA
Sullivan’s Pharmacy & Medical Supply

In-Kind Sponsors

Dion’s

Rapid Liquors

Photos by Roger Farrington
“Joan is easy to talk to. It’s almost like I’ve known her my entire life,” said Gloria. “She thinks of things others don’t. She gives you time to ask questions. You never feel rushed.”

Nancy Jalbert, who has anemia, faithfully attends the clinics once a month. Joan is able to administer a B12 shot, saving Nancy the drive to her doctor’s office in bad weather and a $40 copayment.

Joan said, “VNA Care removes barriers to wellness for seniors. For some, copays can really add up and transportation can be a problem. Others might not want to ‘bother’ their doctor with something they think is minor. We have the clinics at easily accessible locations. It’s very relaxed, and we can take our time with each client. People are more likely to say, ‘This is probably nothing, but…’ It helps us catch possible problems early, and put people at ease if everything is just fine.”

More seniors than ever before are living with chronic health conditions. The National Council on Aging reports that approximately 80% of older adults have at least one chronic condition, and 77% have at least two.

Beverly Salate, RN, preventative health director, oversees the clinics. She said, “Chronic diseases can bring some very big lifestyle changes. People may need to overhaul their diet, start exercising regularly, or learn how to give themselves insulin. It’s a lot to take in during a doctor’s appointment. Seniors can attend the Keep Well Clinics to have their questions answered, progress monitored, and have a cheerleader in their corner.”

For more information
For a clinic schedule and to learn more, visit www.vnacare.org/keepwell or call Beverly Salate at 888-663-3688, ext. 5603.

Save the Date: Dining for a Cause
The Woburn Friends of VNA Hospice & Palliative Care will host Dining for a Cause on Thursday, April 11, from 4 to 10 p.m. at The Green’s Grille & Pub, 5 Country Club Road, Woburn.

Green’s Grille will donate 10% of food sales that night to support hospice care for terminally ill individuals and their loved ones. (Let your server know you are there for Dining for a Cause.)

The Woburn Friends are a group of volunteers dedicated to raising awareness of and support for hospice care. In addition to Dining for a Cause, the volunteers are currently planning the 22nd annual Step Out for Hospice in Woburn on Sunday, Oct. 6.

For more information, please contact Deborah Corkum at 888-663-3688, ext. 1362 or Deborah_Corkum@vnacare.org.

Keep Well Clinics support seniors in maintaining good health and independence ...continued from back cover

Do you know this nurse or patient from 1961?
The Manchester Historical Society recently discovered this photo of a visiting nurse and her patient. If the newspaper on the bed was current, the photo was most likely taken in mid-December 1961. The Manchester VNA, established by the Manchester Woman’s Club in 1910, is part of VNA Care. We’d love to know the names of the two women in this photo. If you have any information, please contact Deborah Corkum, manager of grants and donor communications, at 888-663-3688, ext. 1362 or Deborah_Corkum@vnacare.org.
When Linda Blais went home after major surgery to return blood flow to her foot, she was in pain and dealing with a large wound that required special equipment to help her heal.

“I thought it was the end of the world,” said Linda.

That all changed when VNA Care’s home health team started visiting.

VNA Care’s nurse specialists include certified wound, ostomy, and continence nurses (CWOCN), who have advanced education in the field and have completed a certification exam. The CWOCNs serve as a resource for patients as well as VNA Care’s own staff when facing complex surgical wounds, pressure ulcers, and much more.

Linda was supported in her recovery at home by Carol Jones, RN, BSN, CWOCN, WOC Nurse team leader, and the home health care team.

“Carol came in here and said, ‘We’re going to make you feel better,’” said Linda, a retired psychiatric nurse.

Linda’s surgery, known as lower extremity revascularization, involved creating a bypass using her own veins taken from her arms and legs to restore blood flow to her foot. She returned home with a wound VAC, a device that decreases air pressure on a wound to promote faster healing, that was in an awkward spot and leaking. The wound dressings caused a burning sensation, and she was dealing with an infection.

Carol kept her promise to Linda. She focused on managing Linda’s pain and helping her significant wounds heal as quickly as possible. Carol worked with Linda’s doctor to change the dressing to something more comfortable. She got the wound VAC under control and provided additional education and support to others involved in Linda’s care. Carol taught Linda about nutrition that would support her recovery, made sure Linda had supplies and medications, and monitored her progress.

“I have nothing but good things to say about the nurses,” said Linda. “Carol is a true nurse. She really cares about her patients. She’s a special person.”

After six weeks of care, Linda said she feels “almost 100% better.” She’s able to walk around her home and uses a cane when venturing outside. In the short-term, Linda looks forward to meeting her goal of taking her dog Coco for a walk around her apartment building.

With Carol’s support, Linda said, “I’m confident I will meet my goal.”

Longer term, the 73-year-old wants to return to riding a motorcycle, which she did until three years ago.

Linda said, “I want to live life. My goal is to ride a bike, even if it’s a three-wheeler.”

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

How to reach us

Service Information
800-521-5539

Donations and Mailing List
888-663-3688, ext. 1365
giving@vnacare.org

Online
www.vnacare.org
www.facebook.com/vnacare.org
www.twitter.com/vnacare
Before Joan Fitzpatrick, RN, unpacks her nursing bag, a line has already formed for VNA Care’s Keep Well Clinic for seniors. It’s no wonder, since Joan’s been called a lifesaver.

Joan recently noticed a regular client’s weight was up and feet swollen. The changes were troubling. Joan sent the women to her doctor, who diagnosed her with congestive heart failure.

Keep Well clinics support seniors in maintaining good health and independence

VNA Care’s Keep Well Clinics give seniors the opportunity to meet one-on-one with a wellness nurse. The clinics are free, thanks in part to charitable support, and held throughout Eastern and Central Massachusetts.

Wellness nurses offer a variety of health screenings, including blood sugar levels, bone density, and blood pressure; link seniors to community resources like Meals on Wheels; provide health education; and offer support in making lifestyle changes. The goal is to help seniors be as healthy and independent as possible.

Those eager to see “Nurse Joan” on this day included a man who began attending the clinics regularly two years ago after a heart attack. He asked Joan to check his lungs in case his cold was turning into something far more serious. “She’s really good. On a scale of 1 to 10, I’ll give her a 10,” he said.

Gloria Carter likes being able to stop by the Keep Well Clinics between doctor’s visits. She’s managing asthma, and asks Joan to make sure her blood pressure and weight are on track.

Keep Well...continued on p. 6