



VNA Care Network  
VNA of Boston  
VNA Hospice & Palliative Care

# Caring Matters

Spring 2023



**Your  
Support  
Changes  
Lives**

Bringing hope and comfort  
when people need it most

# Sisters find loving, supportive, respectful environment for final days together at VNA Care's Rose Monahan Hospice Home

Sisters Debbie Feingold and Anne Mack were constantly in each other's company. Known as the Tirechix, the two ran the family business, Harding Tire in Worcester, for many years.



Anne Mack

Debbie laughs as she remembered, "At night we'd be on the phone for an hour because we didn't have enough time together during the day."

That time together became even more precious

when Anne was diagnosed with progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), a rare neurological disorder for which there's no effective treatment. The Rose Monahan Hospice Home would become part of the family's journey as they sought to make the most of their remaining days together.

It's difficult to say exactly when PSP may have begun affecting Anne. The first symptom is often loss of balance when walking. Anne suffered a fall seven years ago when going down some steps. Debbie said her sister was "small in stature but she was tough." Anne limped into work for the following week, refusing to see a doctor until she couldn't walk. Anne had broken her hip and underwent replacement surgery.

About two years later, Anne fell down the stairs in her home and broke her pelvis. Debbie remembered that Anne "just wasn't the same" after that fall. They soon learned that Anne had PSP, which shares some symptoms of Parkinson's disease and impacts body movements, walking and balance, and eye movements.

Anne's condition deteriorated. She suddenly developed hemophilia, a

condition in which blood doesn't clot normally, and was hospitalized. When it appeared the problem was under control, she went home only to be hospitalized again two days later. The family was prepared that Anne may only be with them for a matter of days. They decided to move her from the hospital to VNA Care's Rose Monahan Hospice Home.

Debbie was already familiar with the residence. Not only does she live nearby, but she knows other families who have turned to the hospice home. During her first visit, Debbie remembered the residence was quiet and peaceful, and Anne's room had a lovely view overlooking Coes Pond.

"I thought it was beautiful. It looks just like a home," said Debbie. The family made Anne's room feel even more familiar by bringing in her favorite blanket and filling the bedroom with family photos. Harvey, Anne's Chihuahua, was among the frequent visitors.

"The staff was incredible. They just want to make sure the patient is comfortable," said Debbie. "They give the patient dignity and respect. If you need someone, they come right away."

She added, "They don't just take care of the patient and make sure they're

comfortable as they're transitioning, they support the whole family."

Debbie was particularly touched by a tradition at the Rose Monahan Hospice Home, a moment of silence after a patient passes away. The loved one, covered in a handmade quilt, is brought by the living room where family, friends, staff, and volunteers gather to say a final farewell. Monahan Home staff express their gratitude to the family for allowing them to care for their loved one.

"It was very moving," said Debbie. "I was happy that Anne was in a place like that."

Having experienced the compassionate care at the residence, the family wanted to give back and help others facing a terminal illness. The family requested donations be made in Anne's memory to the Rose Monahan Hospice Home and made a gift to have Anne's name inscribed on a plaque at the residence. Charitable support is essential and provides for patient care and other critical needs.

Debbie added, "The Monahan Home is like a hidden gem in the city. ... You want your loved one in a loving, supportive, respectful environment. This is it."

## Rose Monahan Hospice Home embarks on next quarter-century of compassionate care



We are incredibly grateful to the many individuals and organizations who helped us establish this very special place in 1997 and sustain our hospice home's vital role in the community for the past 25 years. It is truly an honor to care for and support families during the end-of-life. Thank you for being part of this important work.

# YOUR IMPACT IN ACTION

## HOME HEALTH CARE

**Patients Served**  
24,005

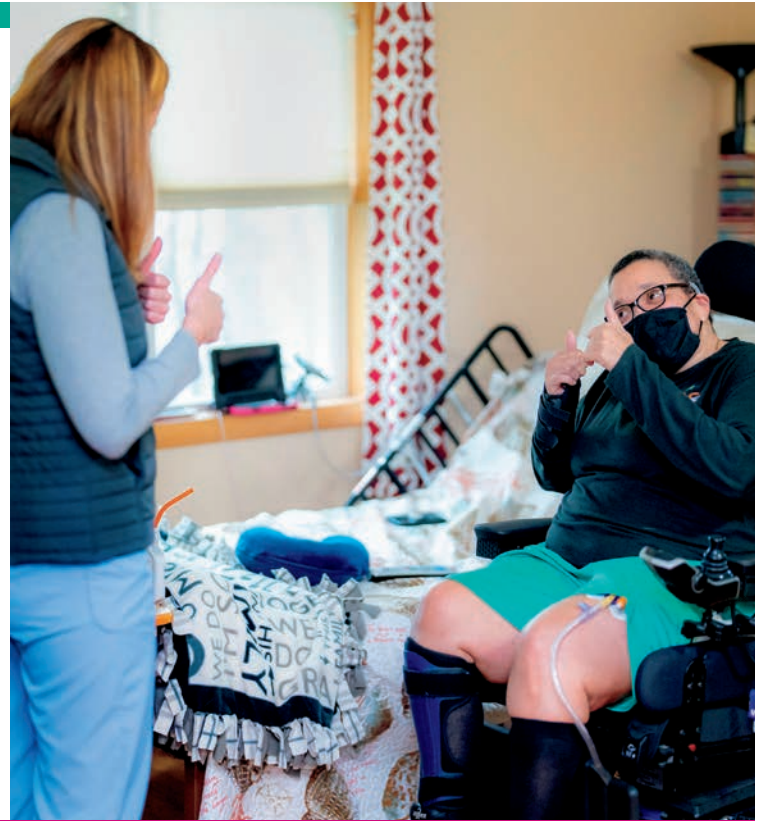
**Total Visits**  
329,591

**Age Range**  
0 to 111

**Visits by Discipline**  
Skilled Nursing: 44%  
Physical Therapy: 39%  
Occupational Therapy: 13%  
Home Health Aides: 2%  
Other: 2%

**Specialty Services**  
IV Therapy  
Cardiac Care  
Chronic Disease Management  
Wound and Ostomy Treatments  
Fall Prevention  
Medication Management  
Total Joint Replacement Program, among others

**Top Diagnoses**  
Cardiovascular  
Cancer  
Post-Surgical  
Respiratory...and more than 2,650 unique diagnoses



## VNA Care Clinicians and Staff: 865

**Clinical and Staff Education**  
7,523 Sessions

**Miles Driven**  
2,106,616

**Languages/Dialects Spoken**  
Over 30 with additional languages through our translator services



## HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

**Patients Served**  
2,218

**Total Visits**  
46,249

**Rose Monahan Hospice Home**  
243 Patients, and Support for Families and Loved Ones

**Average Patient Days**  
48

**Age Range**  
21 to 107

**Top Diagnoses**  
Cancer  
Cardiovascular  
Respiratory  
Dementias

**Bereavement Outreach and Support**  
7,058 Sessions

**Hospice Volunteers**  
92

**Care Providers**  
Nurses and Nurse Practitioners, Physicians, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Home Health Aides, Medical Social Workers, and Chaplains

# Nurse supports her patients throughout their health care journey

Sierra Fleming believes that her role as a visiting nurse is all about going the extra mile in caring for her patients and their families.



Sierra Fleming knew since childhood that she wanted to make a difference as a nurse.

What that means changes with each and every person, but the end goal is the same – helping them heal and keeping them safe where they are happiest, in their own home. “That’s huge, and that’s what we all want,” said Sierra.

She remembered visiting one woman who was having trouble managing at home since her son passed away. He had helped with so much, and she didn’t have any other family to help her with medications, groceries, and other day-to-day needs. The woman

was prepared to sell her home and move to an assisted living facility. The woman was afraid she’d no longer be able to live on her own.

Sierra shared, “Within the first 10 minutes of us having a conversation, she felt so relieved that I knew about all of these services that could help, and that within a week we had everything set up for her. She was able to stay in her own home because of the support we provide our patients.”

Looking beyond immediate medical needs is an integral part of VNA Care’s success in helping patients remain at home after they are discharged. Meals on Wheels, personal care assistants, and automated medication dispensers are just a few of the wide-ranging resources Sierra has shared with this and other patients.

There are times when Sierra sees patients who are nearing the end of life. One man with end-stage cancer was continuing to pursue curative treatment, but it was leaving him feeling even worse.

Sierra spent time with the man’s wife, answering her many questions and guiding her on options. The couple decided it was time for the comfort

measures that hospice would bring, and Sierra transitioned the patient to VNA Care’s hospice program.

The wife later called Sierra to thank her for all the time she devoted to their care. “It’s things like that that remind me why I do what I do,” Sierra said.

Many of VNA Care’s patients are elderly and facing complex and often chronic health conditions. Sierra was on the road to visit one of these patients when his daughter called, concerned about her dad’s condition. Sierra quickly obtained his physician’s orders for bloodwork.

As she assessed the patient, she found that his condition was quickly deteriorating yet the patient refused to go to the hospital. Sierra could see the fear in his daughter’s eyes. She asked the patient to consider his family, and “that’s when it hit him. He went to the hospital and it saved his life.”

To Sierra, “Working in home health care has given me so much. I just want to further my nursing career, so I can give back to this job that’s given me a lot.”

## 2023 Events Calendar Events that are truly special

Whether you join us as a sponsor, attendee or volunteer, we hope to see you at an upcoming fundraising event benefiting the patients and families we serve.

### Caring Together, Let’s Celebrate!

North Shore Benefit  
June 7, 2023  
Danversport, Danvers

### Summer Solstice

Needham Area Benefit  
June 22, 2023  
MIT Endicott House, Dedham

### Celebration of Caring

Worcester Community Benefit  
September 21, 2023  
Beechwood Hotel, Worcester

### 26th Annual Step Out for Hospice

3-mile walk, 5-mile run, Fun Run  
October 1, 2023  
Irish American Club of Woburn

### Heroes in Health Care Gala

Signature Event  
October 13, 2023  
Mandarin Oriental, Boston

*To learn more about sponsoring these events, please call 617-886-6460 or visit us at [www.vnacare.org/donors](http://www.vnacare.org/donors).*

## Charity Care: \$3,262,000

Since 1886, the community has relied on VNA Care to provide high quality health care services to the most vulnerable of our neighbors.

We couldn’t have provided 16,816 charitable care patient visits in 2022 without the generous support of our donors.

Through a wide range of programs and resources, we address the barriers our patients face to achieving their best possible health and maintaining their dignity and independence.

## Doris Lynch is proud to leave her legacy with VNA Care's hospice

Giving back to the community she cared about so deeply was simply the way Doris Lynch lived her life. Her commitment to helping others became part of her legacy through a bequest to VNA Care's hospice program.

"She really cared about people. She took great fun and joy in the happy things in life, and wanted to be there to help people whenever she could when things were challenging," remembered her niece, Marietta Lynch.

Doris was born in Woburn and lived in the city for more than 90 years. Many knew her as a beloved teacher and former chair of the business education department at Woburn High School and as an active member of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Woburn.

She saw firsthand how VNA Care's hospice team makes a difference in the lives of patients and their loved ones during her sister Helen Lynch's terminal illness. Doris later joined the hospice's board of directors.

Wanting to do even more, she established the Woburn Friends of VNA Hospice & Palliative Care in 1992. The volunteer group, under Doris' leadership for many years, is

dedicated to raising funds to support the nonprofit's work and awareness of hospice care. The group has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for end-of-life care through such activities as the annual Step Out for Hospice walk/run, which marked its 25th anniversary last year.

Even when Doris handed off her leadership role, she remained active in the Woburn Friends, who she thought were an "extraordinary group of people," according to Marietta. Doris sponsored Step Out for Hospice and mobilized her entire family in her fundraising efforts. Marietta herself is a longtime supporter of VNA Care's hospice services as a sponsor of Step Out for Hospice.

Marietta said, "I think my aunt was not only caring and active in her commitments, but she was also smart in understanding how things worked and what would be a good way to really pursue those same values as times changed."

One of those ways was to include a charitable bequest to VNA Care's hospice program in her will, an act of gratitude that Marietta said had been very important to her aunt. Her gift leaves an enduring impact by



First row, from left: Doris Lynch, founder of the Woburn Friends of VNA Hospice & Palliative Care, and Jamie Kelley, co-chair of the Friends. Second row: Marietta Lynch, longtime sponsor of Step Out for Hospice; Connie McGilvray, vice chair of the Friends; and Brian Kelley, co-chair of the Friends

helping others to live out their final days and weeks with dignity through compassionate care. Doris passed away on Oct. 19, 2021, at age 98.

Jamie Kelley, co-chair of the Woburn friends, said that Doris "showed so many people the importance of giving back. She was somebody who brought people together and was always so appreciative of the work we all did. I strive to emulate Doris."

### ***Hospice nurse encourages people to "enjoy the dash" and celebrate life...continued from back cover***

Sheila explained how this meant her mother's body was slowing down. While these conversations can be difficult, Sheila supported and guided the family so they could all help her be comfortable and peaceful.

Pain and symptom management are central to Sheila's work. Another of her patients was a young man with cancer who also endured financial hardship. He experienced a pain crisis that could not be easily managed at home, so Sheila worked with her colleagues to have him moved to VNA Care's Rose Monahan Hospice Home.

The hospice residence is a home-like place for people to receive end-of-life

care, and the home's general inpatient unit provides hospital-level care for individuals with complex needs. The hospice team at the Monahan Home were able to get the man's pain under control, and he was able to return home to his family.

The patient had told Sheila that he was a lifelong fan of Superman and, as a child, dreamed of being this superhero when he grew up. He was so grateful to Sheila for helping him remain comfortable and at home that he presented her with a Superman necklace.

Sheila proudly wore the Superman medallion in his honor when she ran

the Providence Marathon. Despite Sheila's life-threatening accident more than a decade before and predictions that she may never walk, never mind run, ever again, she had persevered.

Sheila said, "I have this strong faith and I tell my patients that they're part of my mantra when I'm running."

Following the race, Sheila presented the marathon medal she had won to her patient, telling him that "he was my true superman."

Sheila remembered, "his mom texted me when he passed that 'Superman is flying high in the heavens now.' He was a wonderful man."

# Celebrating home health and hospice clinicians' extraordinary care

Patients and their families warmly express gratitude and recognize the compassionate, skilled care of VNA Care's nurses and clinicians through meaningful donations. These gifts bolster our organization and support our dedicated clinicians. The following staff were honored in 2022 through our **Thanks for Caring Society**.

## Nursing

Augustine Abunaw  
 Andrea Adamopoulos  
 Mackenzie Adams  
 Shelagh Amrich  
 Gaille Anderson  
 Jacqueline Anderson  
 Suze Aristide-Bonheur  
 David Auger  
 James Barker  
 Heather Barrows  
 Cheryl Basque  
 Carrie Lee Bergman  
 Jill Beverly  
 Andrew Binder  
 Heather Bliss  
 Caitlin Bonneville  
 Nancy Borgatti-Krouse  
 Elia Borges  
 Susan Carrigan  
 Suze Christalin  
 Kimberly Connelly  
 Amy Daley  
 Patricia Daniels  
 Tiffany De Souza  
 Marlie Degand-Raphino  
 Giselle Desroches  
 Denise Dunn  
 Nancy Egger  
 Brenna Ferrentino  
 Megan Fikucki  
 Joan Fitzpatrick  
 Emelia Follansbee  
 Deneajah Francois  
 Jean-Marie Francois  
 Jennifer Gagliastro  
 Deborah Gallahue  
 Michelle Garside  
 Deborah Giniewicz  
 Nicole Glasberg  
 Gina Grady  
 Valerie Green  
 Ashley Griffin  
 Paulette Hallihan  
 Courtney Hayes  
 David Heredia

Heather Hodgson  
 Joan Hurton  
 Anne Irish  
 Katelyn Ivatts  
 Mercy Kamau  
 Roisin Keenan  
 Helen Kennedy  
 Margo Kiss  
 Diane Kizito  
 Sophia Kontoes  
 Mary Beth Kramer  
 Michelle Krug  
 Heather Lambert  
 Sheila LaPointe  
 Angela Lee  
 Mandy Leo  
 Eileen Lynn  
 Stacey Maenzo  
 Bonnie Mahoney  
 Melisa Mantha  
 Delsye West Mason  
 Mary McCarthy  
 Calvin McKemmie  
 Debra McLaughlin  
 Katie Mechan  
 Aimee Medicke  
 Jorge Medina-Rivera  
 Michele Mercuri  
 Kimberley Misner  
 Janine Mulkerin  
 Pamela Nichols  
 Kerry O'Connor  
 Janice Oliveira  
 Mary Ortgiesen  
 Kristina Phillips  
 Danielle Piehl  
 Jean Piverger  
 Rose Plaisival  
 Ashley Provonsil  
 Vivian Richendollar  
 Maria Rivera  
 Jennifer Robitaille  
 Erica Roesch  
 Miriam Rogers-Montalvo  
 Marie Sagaille  
 Kathleen Schwarzer

George Shedd  
 Elizabeth Silva  
 Katy Swanson  
 Jeffrey Swatkins  
 Martin Thelusma  
 Michel Anne Thorpe  
 Sean Tobin  
 Jennifer Trocki  
 Dennis Ukatu  
 Lori Zinkavich

## Rehabilitation Therapy

Shawn Allan  
 Robert Baril  
 Charlotte Bolster  
 Maureen Bonta  
 Kylie Breadmore  
 Kenneth Breitenstein  
 Debra Brown  
 Galina Brusilovsky  
 John Budrow  
 Teresa Burgess  
 Mary Cantor  
 Ryan Carew  
 Andrea Carlson  
 Cynthia Carpenter  
 Linda Carroll  
 Victoria Catalan  
 Amy Clark  
 Teresa Coulter  
 Cheryl Crivello  
 Alison Dahl  
 Marie Davis  
 Alison Deane  
 Mildred Delance  
 Corey Deschene  
 Alexandra DesLauriers  
 Joanna Donato  
 Jaime Douglas  
 Susan Drapeau  
 Thomas Duffy  
 Diane Duncan  
 Michael Edwards  
 Aimee Evora  
 Kelly Feiz  
 Jenessa Fisk

Amanda Floersheim  
 Keith Fritze  
 Jeremy Gately  
 William Giuffre  
 Jennifer Gordon  
 Natalie Green  
 Brian Hailey  
 Denise Hall  
 Emily Hoadley  
 Michael Hoadley  
 Helen Hobson  
 Sasha Jean-Denis  
 Thomas Johnson  
 Olga Karaban  
 Harriet Katz  
 Heidi Kisiel  
 Sharon Kuebler  
 Kathryn Larsen  
 Karyl Learmonth  
 Diane Luca  
 Kelly Maguire  
 Philip Marchese  
 David McIntire  
 Lauren Decker McKay  
 Nicole Merrifield  
 Leah Micu  
 Amy Millette  
 Wendy Minnich  
 Anna Murphy  
 Rachel Murphy  
 Debra Nowak  
 Kelley O'Connell  
 Heather O'Hare  
 Yvonne Oliveira  
 Cheryl O'Malley  
 Gerald Paccioretti  
 Anastasia Panagopoulos  
 Nigma Patel  
 Barbara Ranieri  
 LeeAnn Reger  
 Nancy Ryan  
 Danielle Salmonsens  
 Kathleen Sciarratta  
 Andrea Segel  
 Monica Shelton  
 Joshua Sigsworth  
 Crisolito Sol Cruz  
 Susan Spencer  
 Jennifer Stanwick  
 Jamie Starta  
 Deborah Strzetelski  
 Danielle Sullivan  
 Nicole Sullivan  
 Deborah Tanner  
 Diana Thompson  
 Alexandra Tisdale  
 Matthew Towers



“  
**As a visiting nurse, I love being able to form strong bonds with patients and family members and value seeing the impact of my work in real time. I'm truly grateful to be honored through a donation and know how important these gifts are to sustaining patient care in the community.**  
 –Sean Tobin, RN, Hospice Case Manager  
 ”

**More Thanks for Caring Society Honorees on page 7**

## Patient recovers, returns to career he loves through expert care of RN

After three weeks in the hospital, Marc couldn't wait to return home.

Hospital staff had successfully treated his cellulitis, a potentially life-threatening skin infection. But one stumbling block remained – a very deep wound on his left foot that could take months to heal.

Hospital staff enlisted VNA Care to help Marc safely transition from the hospital to home. When Marc opened his door to Valerie "Val" Green, RN, he found an expert clinician who was unwavering in her mission to get him back on his feet.

"Education is a crucial part of the care we provide as nurses in the community, and being able to provide that in someone's home is extremely beneficial to our patients," said Val. "When patients are in the hospital or even their physician's office, the barriers to self-care are not always obvious to the providers. I get to see firsthand what barriers prevent someone from being able to meet their goals and help them learn while adapting the teaching and resources to each patients' particular needs."

Marc's condition meant that he needed to stay off his feet, and diabetes would further complicate and slow the healing process. He was forced to take an extended leave from a job that he loves. Any outings

from his home, the top two floors of a brownstone in Boston with lots of stairs and no elevator, had to be minimized and carefully planned. His once active life began revolving around watching Netflix.

His treatment included a wound VAC, or vacuum-assisted closure, to decrease air pressure around the wound and better promote healing. Val would change Marc's dressing, make sure the wound VAC was working properly, check for signs of infection, and monitor his progress.

Marc appreciated the time Val devoted to helping him understand his condition. He learned about the way nutrition contributes to the healing process and countless other things like keeping his legs elevated and uncrossed to promote blood flow.

He said, "Val knows her stuff. She's very good at educating and explaining to people how every decision you make relative to your health impacts your success. ... If I said I was going to do something, she'd ask where I stand with it. At the same time, she was very, very encouraging."

Over the course of five months, Marc focused on each and every small success until he finally received the good news that his wound was healed. He's back to work and enjoying going out with friends.



Valerie Green, RN, loves "sharing my knowledge in a very personalized way to help patients succeed at home."

Val said she finds it fulfilling to "know the positive impact I have on someone's life and their ability to maintain their independence. I often will find myself running into former patients or former patients' family members while in the community, and it makes my day when they give me updates of how well things are going or just stop to thank me for the care I provided."

Marc is incredibly grateful for all that Val did to help him regain his health. He added, "I wouldn't have made it through this without Val. She was a Godsend."

### Thanks for Caring Society continued from page 6

#### Rehabilitation Therapy

Jenna Visconti  
Jennifer Vocino  
Susan Walker  
Megan Welsh  
Jessica Whalen  
Danielle Wheeler

#### Medical Social Work

Jaya Asthana  
Christine Camoreyt  
Glenn Degere  
Amanda Harting  
Doreen Moscaritolo  
Talia Piver-Duda

#### Hospice Physician

Deborah Turiano, MD

#### Hospice Aides and Caregivers

Alexandre Casimir  
Marion Kettell  
Sharon Sawyer  
Philip Wiafe

#### Hospice Chaplains

Kryisia Burnham  
Ted MacNeil  
Doreen Noble  
Nancy Small  
MaryAnn Thibeault-Vandette  
Andrew Tripp





VNA Care Network  
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### Fund Development Office

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Danvers, MA 01923

## Hospice nurse encourages people to “enjoy the dash” and celebrate life

Perhaps the most beautiful sunrise Sheila LaPointe has ever seen was from her bed at UMass Memorial Medical Center's intensive care unit.

She had been left in a coma after a van struck and dragged her 150 feet during a morning run. Her first memory after the trauma was smiling at her partner and saying “feel the warmth of the sun. It's going to be a beautiful day.”

The life-changing accident made Sheila realize just how short life can be. She admits she may sound cliché when she tells people to “enjoy the dash,” the years between your date of birth and death. As a VNA Care hospice nurse, she helps terminally ill patients and their loved ones live as fully as possible during those precious last months together.

“It's a matter of celebrating, and finding happiness and joy. I find so much inspiration in the stories families share with me,” said Sheila.

One of the patients in her care was an elderly man in the terminal stage of a stroke. He had moved his family from Vietnam to the United States years ago to give his four children a better future. Even when the patient was unresponsive, Sheila remained focused on his quality of life. Hearing is thought to be the last sense to remain during the dying process.

“I always tell families to share stories about their loved ones. Talk about what they did as a father or mother. Don't be afraid to play their favorite music,” she said.

The son took Sheila's advice and played religious music that his father would have found comforting. The man passed away peacefully with his family by his side.

Educating and supporting patients' loved ones is an important part of Sheila's role as a hospice nurse. She remembered one patient, a wife and mother of two daughters who had a long battle with cancer. During



Sheila LaPointe, hospice nurse, finds inspiration in her terminally ill patients' life stories.

one visit, one of the patient's adult daughters was in tears. Her mother was no longer taking her medications or eating, and the situation was incredibly distressing to the family.

*Hospice nurse encourages people...continued on page 5*