



HOME

A NEWSLETTER OF THE
VISITING NURSE
ASSOCIATION OF
NORTHERN NEW JERSEY, INC.

Caring



A New Season of Caring & Giving

Fall Programs
at Friendship
House

Holiday
Celebration
of Life

Helpful Online
Care Pages

FALL 2011

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National Home Care and Hospice Month

Tell Us Your Story

This newsletter is published by the Visiting Nurse Association of Northern New Jersey.

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If you have a change of address or would like us to add someone to our mailing list, please call the Community Relations office at (973) 451-4169.



Faith F. Scott, FACHE, President & Chief Executive Officer

A Home Team Hurricane Response

When Hurricane Irene, a natural disaster of historic proportions, swept through our region, I'm pleased to report that the VNA was ready with a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan.

In fact, we began conducting a Patient Care Priority Review and reaching out to staff, volunteers, clients and caregivers to implement contingency plans about a week before the storm. In the event of a power outage at VNA headquarters (which ultimately did occur and lasted for three days), we printed "hard copies" of patient logs that document their specific, individual needs and shared them with each client or their primary caregiver. We also synchronized hundreds of battery-operated laptop computers used by VNA managers, nurses and rehabilitation therapists and tested a backup phone communications plan.

Our House Call Groceries for Seniors volunteers pitched in and made extra shopping trips to help their homebound clients secure bottled water, batteries and other supplies. Extra quantities of medications, oxygen tanks and other essentials were ordered by our nurses for select patients. In one instance, we even referred a "must see" patient in a known flood area to an assisted living facility to ensure that his needs would be met.

Sadly, at the height of the storm in the early hours of Sunday morning, one of our Hospice clients passed away. His nurse valiantly worked with the local police and made multiple efforts to comfort the family and assist with arrangements in person only to be denied access due to flooding and downed trees.

To all who came together throughout our organization and went "the extra mile" to ensure the safety of our clients, I extend my sincere gratitude for helping to uphold the VNA's distinguished tradition of caring that spans 113 years and numerous natural disasters. To those who are still dealing with the lingering effects of Hurricane Irene, our VNA joins the entire community in extending good wishes.

Faith F. Scott, FACHE

PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A Friend to Vulnerable Adults and Their Caregivers

Day Center Supports Families

“The VNA has been very, very good to us,” Luz Chaves said recently, as she explained how the agency supported every aspect of her husband Douglas’ care from pre-hospital discharge arrangements to facilitate a safe homecoming to his current involvement in the Friendship House program.

A stroke that necessitated extended hospital and nursing home stays followed by several months of in-home assistance from a VNA team that included nurses, a certified home health aide and physical and occupational therapists, left Douglas Chaves feeling frustrated and depressed from the lingering effects of vascular dementia. Fortunately, his experienced home care team recognized that he was an excellent candidate for Friendship House – and his wife and primary caregiver, Luz, welcomed the referral and trusted the VNA to provide day care.

“My husband lost interest in grooming when he was homebound. He was often irritable and just wanted to sleep all the time. Now that he looks forward to attending Friendship House, he’s in a better frame-of-mind and motivated to bathe, shave and help choose his own clothing,” she said. “I enjoy watching him interact with other clients and the staff when I pick him up there and he always comes home with stories about his day or crafts that he’s made.”

Caregiver Benefits

While Douglas is in the care of the VNA, Luz is free to run essential errands or even enjoy a brief, well-deserved respite. “I get so much more done now,” she said. Another unexpected benefit of her spouse’s attendance at Friendship House has been access to a network of other caregivers who understand the stresses and challenges associated with that role. She participates in monthly Caregiver Support Group meetings facilitated by a VNA social worker and communicates with new friends from the group via phone between get-togethers. “The social contact at Friendship House has benefited both of us in many ways. I wouldn’t hesitate to recommend this program to other families.”



Participation in the VNA Friendship House has proven to be an important turning point for Douglas Chaves and his wife and primary caregiver, Luz. “This program is fantastic and we’ve both benefited from our involvement,” she said.

Dispelling Myths About Adult Day Care

While Luz Chaves quickly embraced the concept of social adult day care as a result of a bond established with the VNA, many caregivers are unfamiliar with the service and reluctant to consider it.

“There are a lot of misconceptions about adult day centers and many people are unaware of the breadth of services and activities that we provide. Seniors who might otherwise be isolated at home without meaningful opportunities to socialize with others can participate in enjoyable activities here that help to preserve their cognitive and physical skills,” observed Mayelin Ravelo, Program Coordinator for the VNA Friendship House. “Our goal is to bring some joy into the lives of our clients each day and then return them safely to their primary caregivers who are refreshed by the respite that we have provided.”

“Most caregivers are understandably cautious about entrusting others with the care of their vulnerable loved ones, so they steadfastly struggle to keep pace with escalating needs around the clock to the detriment of their own mental and physical well-being,” she said. “Some hesitate to seek help because they believe they can’t afford it.”

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That's why Ravelo invites every caregiver who inquires about the center to come for a visit. "We often refer to that as a tour, but it's actually much more," she said. "Caregivers are encouraged to bring their loved one along, so that meeting also serves to assess whether the Friendship House is a good fit and provides the caregiver with insights into how their loved one will be treated." At the same session, Ravelo addresses any concerns about the program's costs and assists with financial arrangements that may include a reduction of program fees for those who qualify or grant assistance from the Morris County Office on Aging and other sources.

Therapeutic, Fun Activities

Once enrolled in Friendship House, most clients quickly find some activities that pique their interest and hold their attention. Since the center serves clients with varied intellectual, emotional and physical challenges and some clients have progressive conditions, the staff offers activities that are appropriate for men and women with varied skill levels and provides one-on-one assistance and

encouragement. Activities include discussion groups, diverse arts and crafts including a new program offered through an affiliation with Arts Unbound, a nonprofit group devoted to bringing the arts to youth and seniors with special needs; light exercise programs such as Yomenco, a musical hybrid of yoga and dance designed exclusively for seniors; gardening activities led by volunteers from the Morris County Master Gardeners' Program; and seasonal celebrations and theme parties.

The VNA Friendship House, located on the grounds of St. Clare's Behavioral Health in Boonton, is open from Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Adults who require supervision due to physical or cognitive impairment or advanced age are eligible to participate from one to five days per week. Financial assistance with program fees is available to those who qualify. If you have a loved one who might benefit from the Friendship House Adult Day Program, please call Mayelin Ravelo, the Program Coordinator, at **(973) 451-4152** for a free consultation and tour.



Friendship House clients often rediscover the joy of making new friends and sharing new experiences. Program Coordinator Mayelin Ravelo and her staff are constantly introducing interesting, new activities designed to help participants preserve their physical and cognitive skills. Activities that appeal to both men and women are offered and a recent jewelry making session provided in partnership with another nonprofit organization, Arts Unbound, was particularly popular with female clients. They enjoyed the camaraderie of working together and were excited to wear their colorful beaded necklaces.

Be a Friend to Friendship House... Make a “Wish List” Gift

While demand for social adult day programs like Friendship House is growing among families both locally and nationally, funding sources aren't keeping pace. You can help the VNA to continue to make Friendship House affordable for all area residents who would benefit from participation by donating one of many items on its “Wish List” (new or gently used) or making a monetary gift designated expressly for the purchase of a Wish List item. The center's list encompasses both big and small-ticket items including those listed below:

Electronics: a TV set; a Wii with senior-appropriate games such as Wii Sports Resort, Fit Plus, Big Brain Academy: Degree and My Fitness Coach; a digital camera; a color printer; and a die-cutting machine.

Activities Materials:

senior-appropriate exercise videos such as Chair Yoga and Arm Chair Pilates; jigsaw puzzles; and games.

Household Goods:

card tables; decorative baking pans and baking accessories; curtains or drapes.

To make a donation or obtain a more complete Wish List, please call Janet Russell, Development Manager, at **(973) 451-4133** or e-mail jrussell@vnannj.org.



Your gift will support enjoyable, therapeutic activities including arts and crafts.

Young-at-Heart Volunteer Enjoys Heart-to-Heart Discussions

In volunteer recruitment materials, the VNA often points out that there are meaningful assignments available for people of all ages and lifestyles. The most important characteristic required for success is simply a desire to help others. No volunteer more vividly underscores those principles than Janet Proudley.

When the Fellowship Chapel in Flanders published a call for VNA volunteers in its church bulletin, Janet and other parishioners were eager to help. However, shortly after completing the agency's volunteer training program, she began experiencing health concerns that restricted her mobility but not her spirit for volunteerism. That's when Judy Rogers, the coordinator of a VNA phone support program for the loved ones of recently deceased Hospice clients, suggested that her service might be an ideal fit. "I'm a widow myself, so I can identify with the people I call," Janet observed. "I'm able to volunteer from my own home and my calls seem to be appreciated. Many people ask me to continue to keep in touch."

Ironically, a second volunteer assignment with VNA would also prove to be a good fit. During a visit to St. Clare's Behavioral Health in Boonton where she attends meetings of a support group, Janet noticed Friendship House next door and a quick, impromptu

visit ultimately led to more. "I was startled to discover that an old friend whom I hadn't seen in years was a client there," Janet explained. "Although time and an illness had taken their toll, she still remembered me and greeted me warmly. We had a lovely conversation and other clients joined in."

That talk was the first of many Janet would have with Friendship House clients. Although mobility constraints prevent her from assisting the staff with physical activities, her pleasant, caring, upbeat demeanor is welcome for discussion periods intended to help clients preserve their cognitive skills and remain focused and alert. She also enjoys reading to the group. In fact, she often clips and shares thought-provoking observations about life and aging. "As a senior helping other seniors, it's not difficult for me to find topics where we'll have common ground," she said. "I may be in my 80s, but I have the spirit of a 50-year-old. I enjoy sharing items that take a clever, light-hearted view of aging."

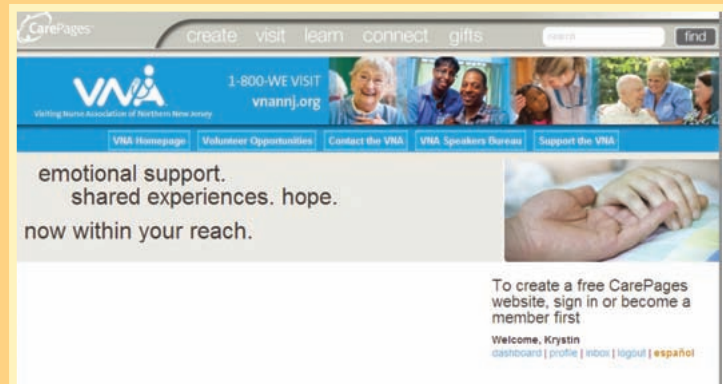
An array of interesting, rewarding volunteer assignments are available with the VNA. If you can spare as little as two hours per week, please visit vnannj.org for more information, call the volunteer office at **(973) 451-4128** or e-mail jrussell@vnannj.org.

Care Pages Connect VNA Clients with Family and Friends

Keeping in touch with concerned loved ones in the midst of a serious or extended illness is often difficult for VNA clients and their primary caregivers. That's why we're partnering with **CarePages.com** to offer a convenient, free online resource.

"At a time when many of our clients need the support and encouragement of family and friends the most, they're prone to social isolation because they're too overwhelmed to reach out," observed Lisa Salmone, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer. "Care Pages are a terrific way to quickly and efficiently update both local and long distance loved ones and receive their replies."

The Care Pages program is user-friendly and requires only the most basic computer skills, Salmone said. Unlike other social media outlets, it's also dedicated exclusively to the needs of those with



serious or long-term health issues and their primary caregivers. To establish a VNA Care Page, visit **vnnanj.org** or speak with your VNA representative. To learn more about this service, go to **CarePages.com** online.

Annual Celebration of Life and Tree Lighting



You're invited to a very special, nondenominational holiday get-together. The VNA's Second Annual Celebration of Life and Tree Lighting will be held at **5 p.m.** on **November 17**

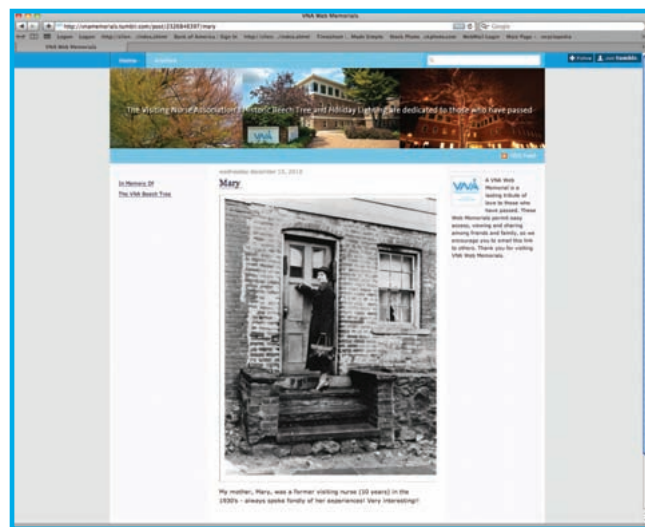
outside the VNA's 175 South Street headquarters in downtown Morristown. The free, outdoor event will feature musical performances, inspirational speakers and light refreshments.

"Throughout the year, we help elderly, disabled and terminally ill area residents enjoy their best possible quality-of-life and remain in the comfort of their own homes, so it's appropriate for us to host a celebration of family and friends and a remembrance of past holidays with loved ones who are no longer with us," said Faith Scott, FACHE, President & Chief Executive Officer of the VNA. "We're delighted to have established a new winter tradition in this community."

No advance registration is required.

For further information, contact Amanda DeFelice at **(973) 451-4169** or e-mail **adefelice@vnnanj.org**.

Enhance Your Memorial Gift with a Personalized Web Memorial



Supporting the VNA's mission of caring with a memorial gift to the VNANNJ Foundation has always been a wonderful way to honor the life of a deceased loved one. Now, the VNA also offers memorial donors a very special opportunity to share a personalized, online tribute at **vnnanj.org**. The memorials, which can be created by completing a user-friendly online form, can contain both photos and written remembrances. For further information, go to "Create a Web Memorial" at **vnnanj.org**.



A Gala Success!

Strong Support for Lighting the Way 2011

More than 200 friends of the VNA gathered at the Madison Hotel on May 6 for the agency's annual Lighting the Way gala which netted nearly \$110,000. Proceeds from the annual event benefit the VNANNJ Foundation which helps to ensure that the finest quality home health care and elder care services are available to all residents of greater Morris County, including those who are experiencing financial hardships.

"As an active Hospice and House Call Groceries for Seniors volunteer, I've gotten to know many VNA clients and witnessed the remarkable and uplifting impact that VNA services can have on entire families," said Christopher Moran, this year's event chair. "The generosity of all who supported this year's gala will help to sustain the VNA's important work."

In addition to fine dining and dancing to live music, the gala featured the annual presentation of two prestigious service awards. The Caroline J. Cauldwell Corporate Founder's Award was presented to Eisai, Inc., a global pharmaceutical company, and the Anna B. Hillock Community Service Award was presented to Dan Hajjar, Executive Vice President and Managing Partner at Willis of New Jersey.



(Left to right) Denis O'Sullivan, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, is pictured here with David Trexler, who accepted the Hillock Award on behalf of Eisai; Dan Hajjar, recipient of the Cauldwell Award; and CEO Faith Scott.



The VNA gala has become a community tradition and friends of the agency look forward to the annual event.



CEO Faith Scott congratulated all who contributed to the success of the evening including Event Chair Christopher Moran.

This year's silent auction was the most successful on record. Under the leadership of Co-Chairs Lisa Appleby and Kristin Sostowski, an impressive array of luxury items including fine jewelry by leading designers, coveted VIP concert, sporting event and Broadway show tickets and original art by renowned artist Wanda Blake (a VNA trustee), were donated for auction and raised more than \$36,500.

Lighting the Way 2012 will be held on May 11 and planning is already underway. For information about sponsorship and online ad journal opportunities, auction donations and advance reservations, please call Amanda DeFelice at **(973) 451-4169**.



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CALENDAR

November

Free Community Presentation: "Finding Solace During Times of Celebration" – November 8

Hospice Volunteer Training – November 11-14

Annual Celebration of Life Tree Lighting – November 17

For more information about these events, go to vnannj.org.

Private Care Aides Take to the Road

VNA Adds Transport Services

Private duty VNA Certified Home Health Aides are now permitted to transport their clients to essential medical appointments, personal grooming services such as the hairdresser or barber, family celebrations and other outings that relieve the isolation of being homebound and improve quality-of-life.

"Transportation is often a major source of stress for our clients and their primary caregivers, so we're very pleased to offer this enhancement to make their lives a bit easier," observed Lucretia Rotella, Manager of Affiliated Health Services, who oversees the VNA's Private Care Services program.

Clients who wish to participate must provide a safe, fully insured vehicle and sign a waiver

authorizing the VNA aide to drive. For the safety of all involved, the agency's rigorous employment screening process will include a check of the driving credentials of all aides involved in the program.

Driving services are available exclusively to clients enrolled in the private care program which offers customized solutions for families with varied lifestyles and resource levels. Private certified home health aide assistance is available from a few hours per week to a full-time or live-in basis. To learn more about VNA Private Care Services, call **1-800-WE VISIT**. Clients already enrolled in private care who need transportation support are encouraged to speak with their Program Coordinator.

November is... National Home Care & Hospice Month

The VNA joins in this annual celebration and salutes the dedicated staff, talented volunteers and generous donors who are making a difference in the lives of our clients!

Tell us your story...

Have you noticed that *Home Caring* and other VNA materials feature actual clients who recount their experiences to help inform others? If you've had a positive experience with our home care team that you'd like to share, please call Amanda DeFelice at **(973) 451-4169** or e-mail **adefelice@vnannj.org**.