



OVERWHELMED? WE CAN HELP.

We know that caring for a loved one at home can be rewarding, but difficult.

Find out more about the professional services we provide.

CALL TODAY: 518-489-2681

VNA STAFF BRING CHRISTMAS CHEER

For several years, VNA staff members have been quietly working behind the scenes to provide some much-needed extra assistance to their patients. The medical services we provide are generally paid for by commercial insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid. But when Christmas-time comes, many of our patients do not have the resources to purchase gifts or make a special meal for their family. That's why VNA Home Health established its employee-driven Holiday Fund.

Staff members voluntarily contribute money each paycheck toward the Fund. Shortly before Christmas our nurses, rehabilitation specialists, and case workers request gifts for their most needy clients. Through the Holiday Fund, gift cards to Walmart or Price Chopper are purchased, then hand delivered to the surprised and grateful patients.

We were also able to give our patients another special gift this year – a wreath



Photo courtesy of Cindy Schultz, Times Union

to decorate their homes for the holiday! More than 170 wreaths were created and donated to the Times Union newspaper by generous individuals and groups. Then the wreaths were given to Capital Region not-for-profit organizations to distribute. VNA Home Health was one of the fortunate recipients of the wreaths, which were delivered to patients along with holiday gift cards. Truly, the greatest reward this holiday was seeing the delight and tears of joy on so many faces.

For many of our employees, delivering these gifts, and seeing how much it meant to the recipients, was one of the highlights of the season. The Holiday Fund and the wreath donations are another way in which we go above-and-beyond for our patients.

VNA CELEBRATES 135 YEARS

Welcome to VNA Home Health's new publication, *VNA Community*. For the staff and board of the VNA, 2015 was a year of celebrations and challenges. In addition to caring for thousands of patients across 11 counties amid a constantly shifting healthcare landscape, we found opportunities to cherish and commemorate our colorful history.

Many of you may only know VNA Home Health in its present form – a progressive and innovative home healthcare agency offering skilled care throughout the capital region. What you may not know, is the VNA of Albany is one of the oldest continually operating healthcare providers in the state.

In fact, our organization had its start in 1880, an era when doctors and hospitals were only for the rich. Albany's sick and elderly relied on family for care, often driven to abject poverty by their illness. That is, until a group of resolute young women resolved to find a way to address the needs of their less fortunate neighbors. They formed "The Fruit and Flower Mission," delivering their wares throughout the community with a smile and a desire to be of service.



in 1896, and within the next few years, meal delivery, dental care, and obstetrical services were added. From the start, free services were given to anyone who could not afford to pay.



As the public's need for medical care grew, so did the Guild. A clinic in Arbor Hill was founded, and nurses began traveling outside of the city to meet increasing demand. By 1920, almost 22,000 home visits were recorded, at a cost of 75 cents per visit.

To better reflect its purpose, the agency's name was changed in 1937 to the "Visiting Nurse Association of Albany." By then, the charge for a nursing visit had gone up to \$1, and the charge for attendance at the delivery of a baby was \$5.

By the mid-1960's, the agency had offices in three low-income housing communities. The VNA also became the first agency in New York State certified to serve Medicare and Medicaid patients.

In 1976, the VNA moved to its present home at 35 Colvin Avenue. The move allowed the addition of rehabilitation therapists to our staff. The early 1980's saw an expansion into Saratoga County, followed by Rensselaer County in 1992. In 2014, the agency began providing services in eight more Capital Region counties.



One critical thing has remained the same since the beginning – those who could not afford to pay received care free-of-charge. To give the agency a vehicle to raise money for these unfunded services, the not-for-profit VNA Foundation was established in 1984.

Visiting Nurses Home Care (VNHC), an affiliated licensed home-care service agency, was founded in 1988 to provide supportive services including certified home health and personal care, homemakers, companions, licensed practical nursing, and registered professional nursing.

Continued inside

FROM OUR CEO



Dear Friends,

I recently celebrated five years as the CEO of VNA Home Health. When I look back at my tenure here, I'm proud to note that whatever challenges arise in the healthcare landscape, our agency is always quick to respond. That's not surprising of course, because VNA Home Health has been doing just that for 135 years.

Since 1880, we've been at the forefront of home healthcare, continually innovating and

expanding to meet the growing demand for services. We've formed invaluable partnerships, developed new programs, and expanded our service area. VNA Home Health has simply done whatever it takes to continue meeting the needs of our community. More than 135 years later, our mission remains the same - providing the best possible health care in the most efficient, appropriate, and cost effective manner.

Physicians and hospitals now recognize that healing at home is often the best option for their patients. The long-standing partnerships we maintain with regional healthcare providers enable our patients to receive high-quality care at home, in lieu of or after a hospital stay. More than a century ago, Florence Nightingale said, "It's fundamental that the hospital shall do nothing to harm the patient. My view is that the ultimate destination of nursing is the nursing

of the sick *in their own homes*. But it is of no use to talk about the year 2000." And here we are in the year 2016!

At VNA Home Health, we're committed to Ms. Nightingale's vision - whenever possible, keeping patients in their homes. The core of our success rests with the many talented individuals I am privileged to work with, some who have devoted their entire working careers to the VNA. Their tireless dedication is critical to maintaining our long-standing traditions of care. Because of them, we continue to excel in providing skilled, innovative, and professional services to meet the evolving healthcare needs of our community. Thank you for your support in helping the VNA fulfill our 135-year tradition of unwavering commitment.

Susan Larman
Chief Executive Officer

STAFF RECOGNITION

On November 17, for the 32nd year, VNA Home Health acknowledged its dedicated employees with a staff recognition program and brunch. Twelve staff members were honored. Employees who received service awards are listed below.

30 Years of Service

Ellen Nash, Home Health Coordinator

25 Years of Service

Barbara Joralemon-Rogers, Patient Service Manager

20 Years of Service

Kymerly Brownell, Registered Nurse

Seaneen Gilleece, Occupational Therapist

Lynne Shaw, Registered Nurse
Diane Williams, Home Health Aide

15 Years of Service

Colin Byng, Home Health Aide
Susan McDermott, Registered Nurse

10 Years of Service

Chantel Blanton, Home Health Aide

5 Years of Service

Susan Larman, Chief Executive Officer

In addition, we ask our staff to nominate their colleagues for two very special awards. **The Employee of Excellence Award** honors an employee who always strives for and achieves excellence in his or her job, and demonstrates the highest levels of dedication and commitment. The award was named after retired nurse Grace Roznowski, who continues to be a cherished presence at VNA Home Health.

Registered Nurse Kristina Young was the recipient of this year's "Grace Award." Kristina's co-workers cited her strong work ethic and willingness to help, while referring to her as "the ultimate team player."



Kristina Young receives her award from Susan Larman and Grace Roznowski

Physical therapist William Anslow received the **New Employee Award**, which acknowledges the energy and commitment that our new employees show their patients and staff. Billy's co-workers noted that he is always cheerful, professional, and kind, and is a knowledgeable and skilled physical therapist who quickly began receiving accolades from patients and his colleagues.

Congratulations to all our employees. We're proud to work with them.

VNA Celebrates, continued from cover

Today, VNA Home Health has more than 170 employees and satellite offices in Saratoga Springs and Queensbury, and VNHC employs a staff of 45 administrative workers and more than 700 paraprofessionals. It boasts five locations to meet growing client needs, and has expanded its service area to encompass 18 counties.

For 135 years, our region has been in a continual state of change. We too, have changed. We've grown from teaching morals to teaching diabetes care, and from carrying medical bags to computer tablets.

More than a century after our modest formation, it's impossible to gauge how many thousands of lives have been touched by our nurses and therapists. What we do know is that our agency has not just survived - it has thrived. We saw more than 4,300 patients in 2015, and anticipate that number will grow this coming year. Our staff has increased to meet growing demand, and we take pride in the quality and efficacy of our services.

Our mission statement remains the same, though - providing the best possible health care in the most efficient, appropriate, and cost effective manner. You can rest assured that this dedication will endure for the next century and beyond.



Board members Frederick Hinrichsen and Michael Diacovo join Susan Larman in congratulating Billy Anslow

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS...

...FOR THEIR RECENT GIFTS TO THE VNA FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL APPEAL.

John W. Abbuhl
Mary Allsop
In honor of Sue Jennette
James L. Barba
Michael Belemjian
William D. Bennett
Bethlehem Memorial Veterans Association
Marie S. Carlson
John M. Chandler, CPA
Mary M. Coppola
Lura Correia
Catherine L. Crohan
Joann M. Crupi
Robert & Holly Day
Diane N. Derbedrosian
Angela & Michael Diacovo
Jan Dobris
Jo Ann Dunne
David Ellison & Carolyn Olsen
George F. Farrell, III
Henry & Joan Ferguson
Maria E. Forma
Anna C. Franze
Burton Frederick
Wakeman M. Gardner
Bryan Goldberger
Rohdel Green
In memory of Sylvia Green
Walter Greenberg
Herman P. Greene
Richard Hager
Susan Harrold
Joan Hart
Diana M. Hinchcliff
Frederick J. Hinrichsen
Bruce Hodsol
Mary Ellen Hoffman
In memory of Bill & Ruth Hoffman
John Hume, III
Howard A. Jack
David Johnson
Karen M. Jones

Garry J. Kearns
Ronald & Wendy Kozilski
Susan & William Larman
Noel R. Liuzzi
Jeffrey Lozman, M.D.
Elizabeth Mallory
Clement A. Marino
Louise McColgin
Elenore J. McCormick
In memory of Helen Madden
Peter J. McGinty
John C. Mesch, M.D.
Nancy Michela
Jean R. Mooney
Judith Ann Mysliborski, M.D.
Ellen & Donald Nash
Edward Neary
William J. Newman
In honor of Joan Hart
Helen M. Olund
In memory of Norman Olund
Judy Palmer
Carl & Joann Paulsen
Francis H. Person, Jr.
Gregory J. Rickes
Mary L. Roberts
Mary Rogers
Anna T. Ross
Richard E. Rowlands
Rob Roy
Jeffrey R. Ruetz
Mary D. Ryan
Mark Schaeffer
Cheryl Schnackenberg
Burton Shapiro
Sumner Shapiro
Gail Skapik-Hurewitz
Sylvia & Michael Solomon
Emily Stachewicz
Rachel Swire
Valerie J. Thompson
Ellen & Peter Thornton
Anders M. Tomsen
John A. Vanstone
Seba Varughese
Warren Winslow
Lucy E. Wong

Every effort has been made to include all donors. Please notify us of any errors at rswire@unaalbany.org.