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We know that caring for a loved one at home can be rewarding, but difficult. Find out more about the professional services we provide.

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WEARING RED FOR A CAUSE

When the American Heart Association approached us about participating in their annual Go Red for Women Day, the employees of VNA Home Health responded enthusiastically. After all, our staff is dedicated not just to providing healthcare services after an illness or surgery, but also to educating our patients to keep them healthier. The Heart Association is also committed to educating the public, and each year they do just that with the support of thousands of individuals and organizations on National Wear Red Day, held this year on February 5.

Participants wear red to show their support while donating funds to the American Heart Association. A large number of our employees made donations and wore their most stylish red tops, jewelry, slacks, foot-ware, and even streaked their hair red! Check out our website at vnaalbany.org for photographs. Colorful and healthy red food was also abundant. Lots of great informational hand-outs and helpful tips about preventing heart



Karen Smith, Carol Iacocca, Seba Varughese, and Lura Correia get into the spirit on Go Red for Women Day

attacks and maintaining good heart health were made available. Thanks to all our participants, a generous donation was made to the American Heart Association, and a fun, educational day was had by all. For more information about heart health for women, go to www.goredforwomen.org.

AMAZING GRACE

What do you call someone who has spent the majority of her 95 years nursing the sick in their homes, stocking shelves at the local food pantry, reading to children in the hospital pediatric ward, and gladly taking on any other community service work that comes her way? Here at the VNA, we simply bow our heads and say, “Grace, of course.”

When high-school student Grace Mabboni heard that the Sisters of St. Francis in Syracuse were looking for volunteers to serve as “baby nurses” for young mothers in their flock, she jumped at the chance. Grace loved the thought of taking care of babies. What she didn’t realize at the time was that she would get even more satisfaction taking care of their moms. It was at St. Francis that Grace first knew she wanted to be a nurse. “I’d found my niche,” she said.

Grace attended nursing school at St. Joseph’s in Syracuse before joining the Navy in 1942. She spent the last three years of World War II in the service, caring for wounded soldiers on several naval bases, including Pearl Harbor on Oahu. Navy benefits enabled Grace to complete her bachelor’s degree in nursing from Syracuse University, where she met her future husband, Dan Roznowski.

In 1950, Grace and Dan were married. They moved to Urbana, Illinois for two years while Dan pursued his graduate degree in geography, then moved to Albany when Dan was offered a job with the state. For more than 13 years, Grace stayed at home to raise their four children. One year, she and Dan took their children and traveled throughout Europe for ten weeks, a trip she looks back on with fondness and pride. It instilled in her children a love of travel and appreciation for other cultures that they now share with their own kids.

When her youngest child started school in 1964, Grace decided to resume her nursing career by taking a part-time position with the VNA one day a week. Her hours and responsibilities grew until she began officially working full-time in 1972. Grace remembers how much working conditions improved when the agency moved from Lark Street to a larger building on Colvin Avenue in 1976. “When we were on Lark Street, if you wanted to have a private conversation with someone, you had to do it in the bathroom,” Grace recalled with a chuckle.



Grace (left) and a colleague in the mid-1970’s.

The move also allowed the VNA to expand its team concept, in which a case manager develops an individualized care plan specifically for each patient. Grace enjoyed the team atmosphere, and she always loved home care, because every day and every patient was different. Going into someone’s home meant that “they were in charge,” which put her in a different position than seeing a patient in the hospital. It also allowed Grace to see first-hand how the patient lived, enabling her to make more practical

care decisions. In her years working with the VNA, Grace inspired everyone with her strong work ethic, unsurpassed skills, team spirit, and compassion for her patients.

Retiring in 1981 did not slow Grace down at all. She and Dan spent a month traveling cross-country by train, and when she returned to Albany, Grace took on a new career as a full-time volunteer. Of course, she’s performed an array of duties as a volunteer with the VNA, and is proud to report that she’s volunteered

Continued inside

FROM OUR CEO



Dear Friends,

For many of us, winter never really arrived, but I'm confident that this spring is going to be glorious. Warmer weather, along with blooming flowers and blossoming trees and bushes, seems to put a smile on everyone's face.

The spring has always represented a time of growth and renewal, and for VNA Home Health, the

season is a time to reflect on our own growth over the past year.

The number of patient referrals we receive continues to grow. This increase is a reflection of several factors – the realization that healing at home is often a better option for patients than remaining in an institutional setting, the strong partnerships we maintain with regional hospitals and providers, and our reputation for excellence in the medical community.

I'm most proud of the outstanding reputation and high level of expertise our nurses and therapists maintain year after year. Our staff is truly what sets us apart, as you'll see in this issue of *VNA Community*.

Of course, more patients means more challenges, but I know

that for over 135 years, the VNA has consistently risen to every challenge. There are likely too many to count by now! But we've carried on, expanding to meet the growing demand for services, forming invaluable bonds in the community, and developing new, innovative programs. For more than a century, VNA Home Health has provided the skill, support and compassion to care for and guide patients and their families during vulnerable times.

No matter where our growth takes us next, you can be assured that our mission and passion will remain. And we will remain your caring neighbors in home healing.

Enjoy the sunshine!

Susan Larman
Chief Executive Officer

Grace, continued from cover

in the pediatric unit at Albany Medical Center for 45 years, and at a local food pantry for 33 years. Grace also fills in as a receptionist at her church. Several years ago, the VNA's "employee of the year" award was renamed the "Grace Roznowski Employee of Excellence Award." We're all delighted when Grace appears as a guest of honor at our annual employee recognition event.

VNA Home Health is not the only organization that has honored Grace for her spirit of volunteerism. She was recently chosen as a medalist for the Jefferson Award for public service. These national awards were created in 1972 to encourage and honor individuals for their contributions through public and community service. Grace was honored at a dinner on April 12



Grace enjoying the VNA Home Health Staff Recognition breakfast in November

with several other outstanding volunteers.

None of these accolades come as a surprise to any of us at VNA Home Health. Very simply, to know Grace is to love her. She always has been, and always will be, a cherished member of the VNA family. 🌟

IV TRAINING SETS NURSES APART

When you think about nursing, you may envision a nurse taking vital signs, planning treatment, administering medication, monitoring patient recovery, and educating patients and their families. Our nurses do all those things, and many more. In fact, they have the expertise to perform an array of high-tech treatments.

VNA Home Health offers a wide range of programs that support positive outcomes, care transitions, and hospital admission avoidance. One of these is infusion (IV) therapy. With the increase in the number of acutely ill patients being sent home from hospitals, VNA Home Health has seen a corresponding increase in the number of patients requiring IV therapy at home. To meet these

demands, an IV therapy training program was established for VNA nurses in 1997. Now, all of our registered nurses are able to deliver infusion therapy. This approach benefits our patients because it allows for continuity of care.

The training enables nurses to provide such services as the insertion of a central venous catheter, training on adverse reactions, hydration, the programming and trouble shooting of infusion pumps, pain management, chemotherapy, cardiac medications, and Total Parenteral Nutrition.

Each year, the agency holds an IV therapy skills validation day for its registered nurses. This March 1st, all VNA nurses were trained and tested. The fact that every one of our registered nurses are able to administer IV therapy sets us apart from other agencies in the area. Patients can rest easy knowing that whatever their needs, our dedicated staff can care for them. 🌟



Jaelyn Polyak, RN, hones her skills at the IV therapy training day.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS...

About the VNA Foundation: Many of our patients have critical needs that are not medical in nature, such as food, clothing, home furnishings, and utilities. Our nurses and therapists care deeply about being able to assist their clients. The VNA Foundation was established in 1984 to help us provide for those who have no other resources. Your gift to the Foundation is an investment in our future and those we care for. We are very thankful for your generosity and the opportunities it brings to our clients.

We are grateful to the following donors for their recent gifts.

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