

The 21st Annual Tree of Lights

Bringing light to lives overshadowed by illness

A special message for friends of the VNA ✨

Home. There's no place like home. Dorothy said that in "The Wizard of Oz," a favorite childhood movie and memory. Our family home was always full of happy memories. My father, Gar Creps, was able to stay in this home full of wonderful memories until his death on August 13th, 2008 at the age of 88.

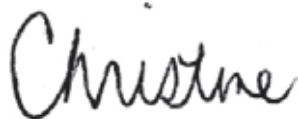
When my dad's health began to fail two years ago, my brother, Howard, and I discussed how we could best assure Dad's health, happiness and safety. Dad's wish had always been to be at home. The call to VNA was made and Dad was able to have his wish.

Caring nurses and companions made Dad's house a home again. There were lots of smiles, laughter, long talks and all the help he needed to remain in his home. He was also able to participate in planning his care. In fact, he had his favorite Waldorf Salad for lunch nearly every day! He asked for it and "the girls" made it for him. Four days before Dad passed away, he was able to attend his 70th High School Class Reunion with the help of a very special companion from VNA Extended Home Care. And, when he left this earth to go to his final home, a very dear nurse from VNA Extended Home Care was the last lifeline that I had with my wonderful father.

I am a Registered Nurse having graduated from Indiana Hospital School of Nursing in 1979. Part of our community nursing program was to go out on home visits with the VNA nurses. I went with Debbie Bier. Things have changed a lot since then. The compassion of VNA staff has not. How very blessed we are to have this group in our community!

Rising healthcare costs and lack or loss of healthcare makes it so important to offer our help through contributions to the VNA. And, as we all spend precious time with our families and in our homes, let's always remember those who are ill whose only wish is to stay in homes that hold all of their memories. Our VNA needs your help to grant these very important wishes. Thank you for letting me share my dad with you and thank you in advance for your support of our VNA.

Sincerely,



Christine Creps Hudson

P.S. - A reply envelope is included inside this newsletter, for your convenience. If you made a gift to the VNA in recent weeks, please enjoy At Your Door with our good wishes. It is not our intention to solicit gifts from recent contributors.

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AT YOUR DOOR

A Newsletter for the Friends of the Visiting Nurse Association of Indiana County

Outstanding service to the community, extraordinary philanthropic contributions – *The 2007-08 Annual Report and Gifts Report*

Charitable contributions to the VNA have supported every service in every division. It is a pleasure to acknowledge, in this special issue of *At Your Door*, the friends whose generosity helped to sustain the agency in fiscal year 2007-08. At a time when financial crises are the headlines, the VNA is staying the course, encouraged by the community's commitment.

The past year was a period of positive transitions. The agency's Annual Report, at the center of this issue, chronicles our large-scale impact on Indiana County and surrounding communities. We cared for more than 3,000 people last year. Double that by adding just one family member affected by a loved one's distress, and you see how wide a net we cast.

Among our contributors are those who have experienced our services, as well as those who have not, but who recognize the VNA's vital place in the continuum of healthcare. We hear from more and more people how important it is



to them that their charitable dollars stay here in Indiana County. We are proud to merit that trust. Between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2008, the VNA received \$199,825 in gifts, gifts-in-kind, grants, and allocations. Included in that total were the donor-designated United Way and SECA gifts of more than 175 people.

At a time when the demand for VNA services is growing, all sources of third-party payor funding are declining. Your gifts reaffirm in the most concrete way your belief that staying at home, with the appropriate care and support, is the best option for healthy aging. Thank you!

Gearing up for “the perfect storm”

Technology grant will network VNA nurses

The VNA was notified on September 22nd that we will receive a \$183,000 grant, beginning in May of 2009, from the U. S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development/Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program. This is a national, competitive grant opportunity which involved months of preparation. Of 143 awards in 41 states, the VNA is one of only five recipients in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The grant will help to fund the agency’s conversion to new technology to meet the home healthcare needs of thousands of rural, elderly residents of Indiana County. As we have reported in past newsletters and appeals, we see a “perfect storm” on the horizon, precipitated by the fact that more care will be needed for more people, with more concurrent illnesses and disabilities; and it will be delivered by the same number of clinicians or fewer, from agencies being paid less and less. We hope that new networking technology will be part of the solution, making accurate data immediately available to all VNA caregivers (nurses, aides, and therapists); allowing information to be shared among all entities involved in treatment.

The VNA’s telehealth monitoring program clearly demonstrates the improved care made possible by technology, particularly for elders with high-cost, high-risk diseases. Hundreds of seniors with no previous hope of independent living are now enjoying better health through self-management, versus frequent, more expensive

treatments outside the home. Remote monitoring offers the best possible care in these cases, at considerable cost-savings and without the impediments associated with transportation and distance from healthcare facilities. Starting with 25 remote monitoring units, we pioneered the use of this technology in 2001. We now monitor 100 patients or more at a time with 82 units. Our successful implementation of telehealth monitoring reinforces our conviction that we can integrate point-of-care technology across the agency to expand and improve patient care.

Point-of-care will allow nurses to enter and receive patient data while at the patient’s bedside, allowing more timely medical interventions as a result of centralized, synthesized data. The information available to the VNA clinician with a few keystrokes will give a picture of the patient’s past, current,

and projected medical status otherwise impossible with a paper-based chart.

The U.S.D.A. grant requires a substantial match from the VNA’s operating funds. The Funds Development Division is also applying for further grants for point-of-care. The Board and management studied the potential for point-of-care conversion for several years, finally deciding that it will be the key to increasing the agency’s capacity to care for the rapidly growing elderly population.

The U.S.D.A. grant requires a substantial match from the VNA’s operating funds. The Funds Development Division is also applying for further grants for point-of-care. The Board and management continue to study various point-of-care instruments, with plans to choose the best implementation early in the new year.



Robin Ruffner, BSN,(left) recently previewed a point-of-care software program with Betsy DeGory, Director of Funds Development. A VNA nurse for six years, Robin was the inaugural chair of the agency’s Cross-Functional Team, a new initiative to enhance communication and quality improvements throughout the VNA’s three divisions. Betsy coordinated the VNA’s application to the U.S.D.A.’s Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program.

The 2007-08 Gifts Report

Memorial gifts

A significant number of programs and services are underwritten each year with memorial contributions. These gifts honor friends and loved ones in a tangible way by helping those in need of healing, comfort, and encouragement. Memorial gifts totaled \$43,357 in fiscal year 2008. We thank all the families who designated our agency for contributions, by listing our name in newspaper obituaries and by making our memorial envelopes available at the funeral home.

Last year, in order to report tributes in a more timely way, we acknowledged those who gave through September 30, 2007, rather than closing with the end of the fiscal year on June 30. This year, therefore, we list memorials made from October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008. We hope that this report is a comfort to surviving loved ones and a testament to lives well lived.

Throughout the Gifts Report, we recognize our Loyalty Donors with a diamond ♦. Twenty-five more contributors reached the Loyalty milestone this year, defined as 10 or more gifts to the VNA, including the most recent fiscal year. We applaud the generosity and continuity of our 260 "Loyals."

Note: For individual donors, in the absence of a preference for Mrs. or Miss, we default to no title

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We cannot express enough how thankful we were for all of your help and support through out the years you've given to Phyllis Capitosti...Your patience went above and beyond duty. You all will truly never be forgotten. You're gifts from God!

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To the Hospice Care Team –

Not only are you a wonderful group of caregivers who gave Merv quality care and a quality of life in his last days – you also gave the family peace of mind, and we are forever grateful. Our gratitude cannot be expressed in words, but we hope that each and every one of you who worked with Merv know just how much we appreciated all of your efforts. Your kindness showed every day in every way. Thank you for all that you did and all that you continue to do for others. You are to be honored. It was our privilege to have you in our homes and our lives.

- From the Mervin Templeton family



VNA Visiting Nurse Association
OF INDIANA COUNTY

Home Health Care
Family Hospice & Palliative Care
Extended Home Care

Annual Report 2007-2008



**A review of our 38th year
in home health, hospice,
and elder care**

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Indiana, PA 15701
tel 724.463.6340
fax 724.463.8907

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VNA Family of Services

Visiting Nurse Association of Indiana County
 VNA Home Health Care
 VNA Extended Home Care
 VNA Family Hospice and Palliative Care
 (Including Family Hospice of Punxsutawney)
 VNA Funds Development

We remain committed to our mission.

For thirty-eight years, the Visiting Nurse Association's work has been driven by the mission to provide all of the people of Indiana County with compassionate, high quality, cost-effective home health and hospice care, regardless of the patients' ability to pay. Each day, 365 days a year, our skilled professionals travel every one of the County's 831 square miles to deliver a broad range of services.

VNA Home Health Care provides a full range of quality services to the ill and disabled in their own homes. Services include nursing, home health aides, medical social work, physical therapy, occupational therapy, infusion therapy, nutritional counseling, wound care, and specialized programs.

Family Hospice & Palliative Care (including Family Hospice of Punxsutawney) is a coordinated program of medical, spiritual, psychological, and social work services established to help those in treatment for life-limiting illness, and to allow them the choice of a comfortable and dignified death at home, with family, friends, and familiar surroundings. In addition to the full range of home care services, Hospice provides inpatient care, respite care, volunteer companionship, and bereavement support for families.

VNA Extended Home Care is our nonprofit, community-based affiliate, providing professional and non-professional home care services designed to benefit individuals of all ages who need assistance to maintain an independent lifestyle. Services are available in all settings - the home, hospital, or long-term care facility.

Nothing has ever been achieved by the person who says, 'It can't be done.'

We made 82,813 visits.

	<u>Home Health</u>	<u>Hospice</u>	<u>VNA Extended Home Care</u>
Total visits:	45,540	10,300	26,957
Total patients served:	2,384	357	337
			93,768 hours

We help people of all ages.

Statistics required by the Commonwealth of PA.

	<u>Home Health</u>	<u>Hospice</u>	<u>VNA Extended Home Care</u>
Birth to 20 years	92	0	4
21 to 40 years	117	1	3
41 to 59 years	375	37	8
60 to 65 years	214	21	23
66 to 75 years	447	47	48
76 to 85 years	729	119	149
Over 85 years	410	131	118

We treat many different illnesses.

Statistics required by the Commonwealth of PA.

	<u>Duplicated Patients</u>
Circulatory system diseases, including cardiac	602
Other – as yet undiagnosed when admitted to care	345
Musculoskeletal	289
Respiratory	230
Neoplasms (cancer)	202
Skin	174
Genitourinary	171
Mental	138
Digestive	126
Nervous system	122
Diabetes	104
Injury	84
Perinatal	50
Blood	47
Endocrine	26
Infections	23
Pregnancy	4
Congenital	2

Our services are paid for by a growing number of different insurers.

	VNA & Hospice	VNAEHC
Medicare	65.2%	-
Managed Medicare	18.8%	-
PA Medical Assistance	2.8%	30.9%
Highmark Blue Cross	5.6%	-
Other insurance	3.8%	13.0%
Patient/community service fees	-	54.0%
United Way contributions	.3%	-
Other contributions	1.8%	.1%
Other income	1.7%	2.0%

Unfunded, unreimbursed care: \$362,107

We have a comprehensive staff.

Linda Bettinazzi, *President and CEO*
 Debbie Bier, *Director of Home Health*
 Marion Nugent Cowan, *Director of Family Hospice and Palliative Care*
 Maureen Bonatch, *Director of VNA Extended Home Care*
 Betsy DeGory, *Director of Funds Development*

65 Registered Nurses (RNs)
 7 RN Supervisors
 8 Home Health Aides
 24 Office support staff
 5 Medical Social Services staff
 1 Physical Therapist
 1 Dietician
 24 Contracted service providers

We are regulated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

We are certified by Medicare and Medicaid.

We are nationally accredited by the Community Health Accreditation Program.

We are members of:

Pennsylvania Association of Home Care Agencies
 Visiting Nurse Associations of Pennsylvania
 Visiting Nurse Associations of America
 National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
 United Way of Indiana County
 Indiana County Healthcare Careers Consortium
 Indiana County Chamber of Commerce
 National Planned Giving Council
 Pittsburgh Planned Giving Council
 Affiliate of Indiana Regional Medical Center

In VNA Extended Home Care:

3 Registered Nurses
 7 Licensed Practical Nurses
 29 Nursing Assistants and Home Health Aides
 22 Companions and Housekeepers
 6 Office support staff

We are governed by a volunteer Board of Directors including healthcare professionals, other professionals, and civic leaders.

As a nonprofit organization, the VNA is truly owned by the community. Our dedicated Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that we are responsive to the needs of the community, and that we have the resources to do so. Because of the Board members' devotion, the VNA continues to thrive. Thank you!

Visiting Nurse Association of Indiana County/ VNA Extended Care Board of Directors 2007-2008

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VNA Extended Home Care Officers 2007-2008

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The Four Pillars

A message from the CEO



The VNA continues to navigate the increasing complexities of the home healthcare industry. The Annual Report reflects our determination to keep our patients' well-being front and center.

Our charitable mission is sustained by four pillars: **Quality, patient and family satisfaction, staff satisfaction, and financial stability.**

First, quality. The VNA was selected last spring as the top home care agency, among 223 in Pennsylvania, in the reduction of avoidable hospitalizations among its patients. (The VNA's Quality Insight Award was reported in the Spring/Summer 2008 issue of *At Your Door*.) The award culminated the three-year implementation of a team approach to identifying patients most at risk for emergencies. By front-loading visits, intensifying patient education, and using all of the agency's disciplines, we reduced acute care hospitalizations by 17%. Our current "Homecare Compare" outcomes continue to exceed state and national averages.

We have instituted an agency-wide Quality Improvement Task Force to study increased technology implementation, with representation from the staff of all divisions and the Board of Directors. We keep setting our sights higher, and our results become the benchmarks and best practices for agencies across

the Commonwealth and the U.S. We feel very fortunate to have been chosen, in an extremely competitive process, to receive a grant from the U.S.D.A. to network our field staff through point-of-care technology.

Second, patient and family satisfaction. All three divisions of the VNA consistently exceed national benchmarks for patient satisfaction. We employ comprehensive survey instruments through Fazzi Associates (healthcare consultants) and the National Association of Hospice and Palliative Care.

- In most recent reports, VNA Home Care scored 94.7% in patient satisfaction – that is, 94.7% of respondents rated their VNA care as "excellent," the highest choice – against a national benchmark of 92.6%.
- VNA Extended Home Care scored 96% excellent ratings.
- Hospice and Palliative Care scored 89.3% excellent ratings; the national benchmark is 75.5%
- **100% of all respondents to surveys for all three divisions said that they would recommend the agency to others.**

Next, staff satisfaction. We are capping the first-year implementation of our Cross-Functional Team, with representation from all areas. The Team's goal is improved communication and cooperation across the board. Its initiatives have been received enthusiastically as an enhancement to morale and, ultimately, to patient care. We have fully implemented a Coaching Supervision Model – again, to bring about improvement in internal communication which ultimately benefits all of our patients.

Our low staff turnover says it best. With an agency-wide turnover

rate of less than 5%, we are clearly recruiting and retaining experienced and talented employees. It is also worth noting that when employees do leave for other positions, they frequently return to the VNA after a short time.

Finally, the fourth pillar of financial stability. We continue to face the ever-challenging environment of 68 (and counting) different payors. We successfully transitioned to a new Medicare payment model. We also negotiated more favorable reimbursements from our three largest payors. The current economic turmoil makes it difficult to foresee any growth in the near future for the VNA. But we have to grow, because so many more people will need us in the coming years. In these uncertain financial times, we recognize how tenuous our circumstances are and how vigilant we must be. Looking ahead, we take to heart Eleanor Roosevelt's sentiment:

"Surely, in the light of history, it is more intelligent to hope than to fear, to try rather than not to try. For one thing we know beyond all doubt:

Nothing has ever been achieved by the person who says, 'It can't be done.'"

I thank our entire staff, our Board of Directors, our volunteers, and the community for determining it can be done each and every day, so that we can keep patients at home where they wish to be, with the patient-centered care they wish to have.

*Wishing you all the best
this holiday season!*

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GIFTS-IN-KIND
JULY 1, 2007 –
JUNE 30, 2008**

In addition to memorial and honor gifts, the following donors supported the VNA last year with contributions to the 2007 Tree of Lights; to the 2008 Mad Hatter's Tea-Party; in response to the At Your Door newsletter; for restricted purposes, including foundation and government grants; and for general support.

Multiple gifts are indicated parenthetically (2); memorial gifts are not included in this listing.

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A good choice in a turbulent economy

We recognize as *Friends for Life* the individuals who have informed us that they have made a charitable provision for the VNA in their estate planning. *Friends for Life* will carry on our compassionate mission long into the future.

Dr. Diane Duntley
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This year, the VNA was the grateful beneficiary of bequest provisions from two loyal and longstanding friends. Ruth Neal Anderson included a \$1,000 provision for the agency in her will. Helen Plouse named the VNA for a residual distribution which eventually totaled \$15,907. These generous and visionary women live on in the compassionate services they made possible through their estate planning.

For donors who want to contribute to the VNA's progress but feel they cannot make a significant gift today, a charitable bequest intention may be a solution. You will have the satisfaction now of knowing that you will benefit the VNA tomorrow, without disrupting your current finances.

If you would like to be included among the *Friends for Life*, or would like more information, give us a call at 724/463-6340.



The perfect gift for last-minute shoppers



Are you wishing you had started your holiday shopping a little earlier? Or are there people on your list who are difficult to buy for, because they don't seem to need anything? Here's an easy solution: A gift to the VNA in honor of those special people on your list, or in celebration of a milestone.

Simply use the tear-off form below to send a donation in the name of a friend, family member, or co-worker. We will send them an attractive card telling them about your gift. (No amount will be mentioned.) You can give any amount, with a minimum of \$10 per honoree, and you can give as many as you want; you need not be limited by the three gift forms below. Use the Tree of Lights reply envelope inside this newsletter to send it our office in advance of the occasion you are celebrating – e.g., December 9, Eid al Adha; December 21, Hanukkah; December 25th, Christmas; December 26th, Kwanzaa.

A donation to the VNA in the name of a friend is perfect for...

- Someone who cares deeply about the elderly, the sick, and the lonely.
- Someone who has "everything."
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Inside this special Annual Report issue:

*The 21st Annual Tree of Lights
bringing light to lives overshadowed by illness*

A special message from Christine Creps Hudson

