

# AT YOUR DOOR

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



## Hope Takes Flight

### ***Memorial Butterfly Release***

Sunday, August 22, 2010

at 2:00 p.m.

Eagle's Nest Pavilion

(top of the hill above the playground  
and soccer fields)

White Township Recreation Complex

487 East Pike, Indiana

We invite you to support the compassionate services of the VNA's Family Hospice and Palliative Care, along with Family Hospice of Punxsutawney, by releasing a butterfly at "Hope Takes Flight." This is a unique way to remember and/or honor your loved ones. For each \$25 donation, you will receive a butterfly to hold and set free. If you are unable to attend, a volunteer will release your butterfly while whispering your loved one's name. Imagine hundreds of beautiful Monarch and Red Admiral butterflies released together in remembrance and love!

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## *Hope Takes Flight*

(continued from page 1)

Join us on Sunday, August 22nd, for music, readings, children's crafts, and light refreshments at the spacious Eagle's Nest Picnic Area at the White Township Recreation Complex.

**Use the envelope enclosed with this issue of *At Your Door* to reserve your butterfly or make a donation. Please send your gift by July 20th.** A very limited number of butterflies will be available on the day of the event for a \$30 donation **You are welcome to attend even if you do not sponsor a butterfly.**

To make a secure online donation, visit our website at [www.vnaindianacounty.com](http://www.vnaindianacounty.com).

### *What will happen at Hope Takes Flight?*

The butterflies for *Hope Takes Flight* will be sent with extra special care from a farm in New Castle. Cool temperatures make the butterflies sleepy but do not harm them. After

participants receive their butterflies at registration, the warmth of their hands will "wake them up" so that, at the designated time, all of them will rise up together as a living symbol of the transformation from one life to another, from the seemingly dead caterpillar to the vibrant winged beauty.

### *Where will the butterflies go?*

Although *Hope Takes Flight* is the VNA's first butterfly release, private memorial releases have resulted in the Monarchs seeking one of the plentiful stands of milkweeds in the Indiana area. Monarchs released in the late summer, as ours will be, tend to live the longest and to complete the butterflies' iconic migration to Mexico.

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*Although release events account for a only a fraction of the butterfly population, conscientious commercial butterfly breeders serve important roles in public butterfly exposure and education, and in reality, they significantly contribute to habitat restoration, pesticide-usage reduction, and the overall well-being of butterflies nationwide.*

*Wildlife Biologist Sheri Moreau, Director of The Butterfly Conservancy.*

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# “Compassion at work”

*If you wonder how the VNA uses your gifts*



Next time you ask yourself what happens to your donation, think of these two women:

**In January of this year,** we admitted a woman to Hospice whose cancer had spread. She needed extensive medication for pain. Her paltry insurance policy would not cover Hospice care, but because of the policy, Medicaid would not cover her care. She had no money and did not own her home.

Nevertheless, we admitted her the day she was referred to us. Hospice was eventually able to obtain Medicaid coverage for her. Until then, the cost of her care was underwritten by charitable donations.

Some Hospice services and supplies are *always* underwritten with gifts, because no insurers cover

certain comfort supplies, nor do they pay for bereavement services. We can only admit patients like this with the help of friends like you, allowing the agency to apply unrestricted gifts to needy cases. Because of you, this woman passed her last days free of pain, with daily company, spiritual support, and dignity.

**More recently,** a 59-year-old woman became our Home Care patient in March, after treatment for a stroke at a Pittsburgh hospital. We share the details of her progress with permission. She had uncontrolled high blood pressure and, by her own admission, had not managed her Type 2 diabetes. She was the ideal candidate for the VNA’s Telehealth Monitoring program.

With the daily transmission of her vital signs from the monitoring

unit in her home – blood pressure, blood sugar, weight – she was in touch with a nurse every day. Because the Telehealth nurse could respond immediately to subtle changes, she was able to show this patient, over time, the diet, medication, and lifestyle choices which *helped* and those which *did not*. She said what so many of our Telehealth patients report: “I finally *got it*.” She lost 36 pounds in eight weeks, brought her blood sugars under control, and maintained a healthy blood pressure.

Telehealth monitoring is not currently covered by any insurance. Much of the equipment was purchased with government and foundation grants, but ongoing charitable support is needed to maintain the program.

**We put your gifts to work every day!**

**Thank you!**



# The caring doesn't end: The Stevenson legacy



In their lifetimes, Charles (“Steve”) and Sally Stevenson were among the VNA’s most loyal supporters. Their long history of giving included all three divisions of the VNA family of services: Home Care, Family Hospice and Palliative Care, and Extended Home Care. Knowing the Stevensons’ many charitable commitments, we were honored to be one of them.

Sally passed away in 2005, and Steve in 2009, but because of his estate planning, their extraordinary support will continue. His bequest of \$32,000, received this past April, has established the Sally and Charles Stevenson Fund, the income from which will support both Family Hospice and Extended Home Care.

## *Could this be an option for you?*

People don’t wake up on a sunny summer morning eager to draft a will! Research shows that it’s usually a specific event which prompts people to *make* a will – a trip abroad, the arrival of children, or new financial circumstances. The same events lead people to *change* their wills.

If and when you find yourself working with an attorney to make or revise your will, consider the impact which even a small portion of your estate could have on strengthening the VNA for years to come. You might want to tear out this page and keep it with your planning folder:

## *Essential information*

**Legal name:** The Visiting Nurse Association of

Indiana County, Inc.

**Official address:**

850 Hospital Road, Suite 3000, Indiana, PA 15701

**Agency contact:** Director of Funds Development -  
*Currently* Betsy DeGory  
724/463-6340

**Website:** [www.vnaindianacounty.com](http://www.vnaindianacounty.com)

**EIN:** 23-7042932

## **Sample language:**

“I give, devise, and bequeath the sum of \$XX,XXX (or a percentage or the residue) to the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) of Indiana County, Federal Tax Identification Number 23-704932, or any successor thereto, currently located at 850 Hospital Road, Suite 3000, Indiana, PA 15701, for the general support of the VNA.”

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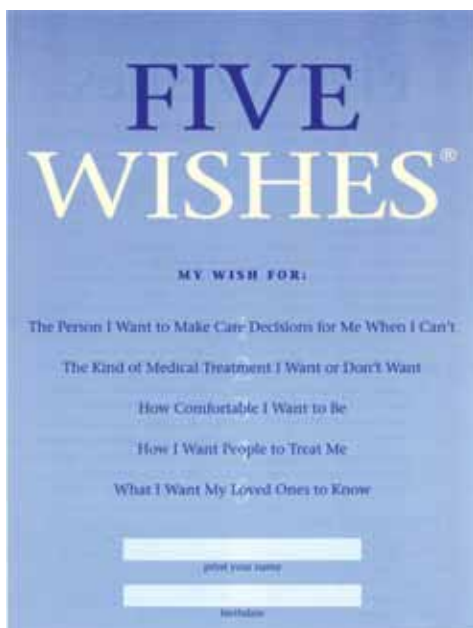
*Have you thought about the legacy you want to leave?*

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## *Not just dollars and cents*

As much as we seek and appreciate bequests of cash or property, we understand that much more than money gets transferred from generation to generation. In an HSBC Group study of more than 11,000 people worldwide, money ranked *sixth* in answer to the question “What would I most like to hand down to my heirs?” What were the first five?

1. Spirit/sense of humor
2. Religion
3. Knowledge/advice
4. Home/property
5. Way of giving/supporting the community



Courage does not always roar.  
Sometimes courage is the quiet voice  
at the end of the day saying,  
“I will try again tomorrow.”

—Anonymous

*The VNA team raised more than \$3,000 for the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life in Indiana, helping to put the event over the goal. Fundraising involved not only sponsors for the Relay walkers but also a lot of friendly competition in the office, especially votes for cutest baby pictures and the best of the outrageous “Bras for the Cause.” The VNA’s team T-shirt featured the inspiration shown here.*

## *The Five Wishes*

To help you with other crucial aspects of life planning, the VNA’s Family Hospice and Palliative Care is pleased to make available *Five Wishes*, a workbook from the Florida nonprofit, Aging with Dignity. We have already put over 1,000 copies of *Five Wishes* in use. It allows you to say, in one document, how you want to be treated if you become seriously ill. It is recognized in 39 other states and the District of Columbia. Call for your copy – free of charge thanks to underwriting by the Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

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*“Your services cannot be measured in dollars. Those in Hospice who helped my dad in 2001, and all those who helped my mother this year — they truly have some special gifts to deal with patients and their families.”*

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*A Hospice patient’s daughter*

# Better than we could have said it

Don't take our word for it. Trust the folks who know us best: Current patients and clients, former patients, and Hospice families.

We strive to improve in literally every area of service, and we are required by Medicare to measure hundreds of trends and outcomes. Beyond the numbers, though, we look to those who have experienced our care first-hand. Their responses affirm our efforts to be the agency of choice for Indiana County and the surrounding communities we serve.

## *Family Hospice excels in nationally-benchmarked standards*

Every Hospice patient's family caregiver is given the opportunity to answer a series of questions about their experience with Family Hospice and Palliative Care. The evaluation becomes part of the statistics reported by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization; we receive quarterly reports and an annual summary.

**In FY09, Family Hospice ratings were higher than the national average in 30**

**out of 33 categories, and several were significantly higher.** More than 88% of respondents said that our care was "excellent," versus a national average of 76%. Rating the Hospice team's response on evenings and weekends, 81% called us "excellent," compared to a national average of 66%.

Fully 100% of respondents said that the VNA's Hospice team "clearly explained the plan of care," and 100% said that the family "had enough instruction on patient care." Finally, **100% said that they would recommend Hospice to others.**

## *Home Care receives high marks*

Surveys of patients following discharge from VNA Home Care are now coordinated and summarized by Fazzi and Associates. In the quarter ending March 31, 2010, overall satisfaction was 95%; 93% of respondents would recommend the VNA to others, and 97% were likely to choose the VNA again – all three above nationally benchmarked standards.

Among patients still in our care, there was 100%

satisfaction reported in the same quarter from a substantial, random sample. All Telehealth patients surveyed rated the usefulness of their monitors as either "excellent" or "very good."

## *Kudos for Extended Home Care*

Of those responding to surveys, **100% of Extended Home Care (EHC) clients answered YES to these questions** in at least one of two quarters in FY10 (Oct. – Dec., or Jan. – Mar.):

- **Are you receiving all the services you expected?**
- **Are the services meeting your needs?**
- **Are our employees courteous and respectful to you?**
- **Is everyone treating your property with respect?**

In the quarter ending March 31, **100% of respondents said they would use EHC in the future, and 100% said they would recommend EHC services.**

We view these responses as a sacred trust which we intend to earn and affirm each and every day.

# We're ready!

## CEO update

Each summer, I conduct "State of the Agency" meetings with staff. I believe it is important to keep them abreast of the trends and challenges at the national and state levels, as well as issues and opportunities here at the VNA family of services.

The healthcare event of the year was, obviously, the historic Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed into law in March. The President of our national advocacy organization, the VNA's of America (VNAA), calls healthcare insurance reform "a mixed bag" for nonprofit home health and hospice providers, and I agree. While the new Act will bolster the community-based care which has been our mission for 40 years, I have deep reservations about the level of cuts we will experience and

how that will affect our patients. Even though we stand strongly by our original mission *to care for all patients admitted to our services*, we face unprecedented competition from for-profit, non-community agencies which, I assure you, have *no such mission*.

**The VNA is well positioned to meet these challenges.** Three areas, in particular, make us strong contenders in the mix:

- Our conversion to point-of-care technology.
- Our growing Telehealth Monitoring program.
- Our Chronic Care Management services provided by excellent staff. *(See sidebar below.)*

Finally, I look to our patient and family



satisfaction surveys as the clearest affirmation of our work, day in and day out. **Our survey results get better and better, in many cases exceeding national benchmarks.** They provide the answer, loud and clear, to the question, "How are we doing?"

How do *you* think we're doing? I would love to hear from you. Thank you for your support and good wishes – they mean the world to all of us.

*Linda Bettinazzi*

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## Meet the experts

Four common and costly chronic conditions – diabetes, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, and heart failure – are on the increase. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the incidence far exceeds national rates. In order to better prepare the VNA for the challenge of caring for patients with these conditions, four nurse supervisors have enrolled in a 40-hour course leading to Chronic Care Certification. **Linda Cunningham, Mary Lady, Kim Ondrizek, and Robin Ruffner are poised to become our chronic care management experts.**

We are also pleased to report that the tuition for their training was underwritten by the Workforce and Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania.

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OF INDIANA COUNTY

850 Hospital Road  
Suite 3000  
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15701

[www.vnaindianacounty.com](http://www.vnaindianacounty.com)

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U.S. Postage  
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Permit #41  
Indiana, PA  
15701

Medical Arts Building  
Suite 3000  
850 Hospital Road  
Indiana, PA 15701  
tel 724.463.6340  
fax 724.463.8907

[www.vnaindianacounty.com](http://www.vnaindianacounty.com)

A United Way Agency



# VNA



## **Celebrating 25 years of Hospice Care in our community!**

Please join VNA Family Hospice and  
Family Hospice of Punxsutawney for

### **Hope Takes Flight**

Memorial Butterfly Release  
Sunday, August 22, 2010 at 2:00 pm