It Takes a Community to Change

“My initial response after I heard ‘hospice’ was death and dying,” says Debby Heyer. But, her reaction changed after her mother started receiving hospice care. She realized that hospice was “living until the point you die.”

Like Debby, others who have experienced the loving care of a hospice team recognize the benefits of this high quality end-of-life care. Hospice allows families to enjoy their time together without the need to be a caregiver, as well. There are many benefits for everyone in the family, personal and financial.

So, it was with disbelief when Stephen Kiernan shared with a packed ballroom this past fall that Vermont is currently ranked at 48th in hospice utilization. Why are so few Vermonters using hospice?

This is the subject of the Vermont Hospice Study, commissioned by VNA’s Madison-Deane Initiative, with support from the VNA of Vermont and Covey’s Community Healthcare Foundation, to gain a deeper understanding of the state’s hospice utilization. This research will shift the focus from how to increase hospice use toward understanding why hospice use is low, why people choose hospice, and what are the unique aspects of Vermont that affect these decisions.

Although difficult to accept, end-of-life care decisions are something that every person will eventually face. “When you consider hospice, it is different than other types of care. Not everyone will get cancer in his or her lifetime. Everyone will at some point die. And that means this is a topic that matters to everyone,” said Kevin Veller, a consultant and contracted project manager for this study.

Until recently, conversations about one’s end of life have been reserved for health care professionals and primarily in health care settings. One project goal will be to engage communities and add new voices to the conversation.

A Study Advisory Committee has been formed of volunteers representing a variety of perspectives, including faith communities, communications, health care, aging and disabilities, economics, and policy. Their role is to ask questions, and to offer a collective community perspective drawn from their personal lives, experiences, and professional expertise.

“Vermont is well known for our excellent quality of life. End-of-life care should be included in that. This challenge can be shared with our communities, and can invite participation from beyond those in health care,” said Holly Miller, Study Advisory Committee member and Hospice volunteer.

The study will gather input from every region of Vermont and will take a comprehensive view of perspectives, including state administrators and lawmakers, advocacy organizations, nursing homes, hospitals, health care providers, hospice agencies, and the Vermonters who live in our communities.

The research, being conducted by the University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service, will occur throughout the spring and summer and is expected to be complete by September.
VNA Welcomes New Board Members

Three members of the community and friends of the VNA have recently joined the VNA’s Board of Directors.

Beverly Coloton

Joe Hameline III

Evan Goldsmith

Beverly Coloton is the Director of the ALANA Student Center (ASC) at the University of Vermont. The ASC supports ALANA (African, Latinx, Asian and Native American) and bi/multiracial students to attain their goals for academic achievement, personal growth, identity formation and cultural development. Beverly also serves on the Burkey Museum Board.

Evan Goldsmith is the Founder of Hope 4 Women, a Fair Trade company whose mission is to create opportunities for economically disadvantaged women artisans. Evan has served on the board of the Intervale Community Farm, was a King Street Youth Center big brother, and is a Four Winds Science volunteer in his son’s classroom.

Joe Hameline III is the Senior Vice President of Hameline Wealth Management – UBS Financial Services, Inc. in Burlington. Joe has more than 10 years experience in areas of Financial Planning and Human Resources Benefits counseling. His past non-profit experience includes the Make-a-Wish Foundation, Vermont Champlain Valley Crime Stoppers, Leadership Champlain and the United Way of King County.

The VNA also welcomes former VNA President and CEO J. Churchill Hindes to the Honorary Board. At the fall board retreat, the following officers for 2014-2015 were elected: John Masiand, Chair; Franks Harris, Vice Chair; Sandy McDowell, Treasurer; and Barbara Martin, Secretary.

Your Support Counts

THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY of our donors and foundations, the VNA raises $8 million each year to subsidize the cost of home health care and early intervention services birth to end of life. Research shows that early intervention, supportive family environment and healthy social networks decreases the likelihood a child will be abused or neglected and is linked to better health outcomes later in life. The Family Room is an example of a VNA program that integrates multiple support services for the entire family.

“VNA nurses have been tremendously helpful with (navigating) WIC, DCE and health and educational services that my family depends on every day,” says Truc Tienker, who brought her children to the Family Room’s drop-in playgroup while she attended English classes after moving from Vietnam to Burma. Today, Tienker is a Family Room employee who shares her experiences with other recently resettled refugee families.

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Sustainable Gift Giving

Sustainable gifts provide a valuable funding source for the agency and an easy way to provide ongoing support to your VNA. Please consider a monetary gift to the VNA Annual Fund or designate your gift to a specific program. Call 802-660-4478.

“My son was born, my partner Dana and I were desperate for healthy parent-connection moments, a safe place outside of our home to relax and let our son be a kid without worrying about being judged, opportunities to meet other parents, caring providers to ask simple health and behavior questions, as well as chances for our son to play with other kids of different ages and backgrounds. The Family Room meets all of those needs and more.”

“We donate money monthly to the Family Room because it is the only resource that has effectively met our family’s needs since our son was born.”

More than 100 guests and volunteers celebrated the wonderful work of the VNA’s Janet S. Munt Family Room at this year’s Spring Blooms! Fashion Show and Luncheon. This annual fundraising event to benefit the VNA’s Parent-Child Center was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Burlington.

Thanks to event sponsors, raffle prize donors and our guests, more than $5,000 was raised to benefit the many Family Room programs offered for free to over 400 at-risk families and their children from birth to age six. Families were modeled by friends of the VNA from local clothiers: SportyFash, Ecco Clothes, Spellbund, Men’s Warehouse and Wylie Sophia Garcia. A special thanks to this year’s models: Nancy Barnes, Jillian Barcelo, Kristin Carlson, Hal Coloton, Pat Donohue, Evan Goldsmith, Mikey van Gulden, Hannah Kirkpatrick, Michelle Langlais, Dale Leblanc, Steve MacQueen, Lori McBride, Judy Peterson, Ellen Kane, Hawa Siwik and Kevin Villett.

The 2013 VNA Cares for Children award was given to Rick Davis and The Permanent Fund for Vermont’s Children for their support of the Family Room’s mission to prepare kids for school, build strong families and enrich our community.

We are especially thankful to our sponsors:


To learn more about our Family Room programs, please visit www.vnacares.org/familyroom.

Grow with Me

Take the “Grow with Me” $10,000 challenge and help us provide 50 families with children birth to six years old the chance to access gardens at Ellen Kane Homestead supported by a $5,000 grant from the Permanent Fund. Our goal is to raise an additional $5,000 by June. Funding supports 24 kids in the gardens and allows families to gather together and take home vegetables they harvest. Many participants are New Americans and recently resettled refugees. “Gardening is profoundly therapeutic. Families can literally put down roots, come to a new land, being homeless or moving across lawns,” says Sarah Sinnett, family homeless parent educator. To donate, visit www.vnacares.org/donate.
VNA's Role in Health Care Reform

The triple aim of health care reform is not a new concept to the VNA. Since our creation in 1906, our work has centered on improving the health of our community through patient-centered care at home and being able to provide that care at a low cost. Our strategy is to be the home and community-based provider within an integrated health care system in order to create value by improving health outcomes, enhancing the patient experience and decreasing costs for Vermonters.

How will we achieve this? Today's VNA is embracing technology and enhancing our depth of services to ensure that home is the place to heal. We are actively collaborating with our hospital system and community-based partners to avoid duplication of programs and to identify gaps in care where the VNA could help reduce hospitalizations.

Through these collaborations, we will continue to play an integral role in creating a more comprehensive and effective system of care while controlling costs—a concept that has been at the heart of the VNA mission since its inception.

In Memoriam

We deeply appreciate that the VNA and its programs were named to receive memorial gifts between July 1, 2015, and January 1, 2016, in remembrance of the following people. We thank their families for honoring their loved ones in this meaningful way.

VNA

Adult Day Williston
George Maheux
Gerard Murphy

Home Care

Whitney Reed
Karen Sosland

Respite Program

Pamela Printz
Deborah Cote

Newspaper Program

Pamela Printz
Deborah Cote

TV

Pamela Printz
Deborah Cote

Appraise

Sally Drudi
Barb McKennedy

Hal Gelston, former chair of the VNA Board of Directors and current member of the VNA's Honorary Board, was recently selected Vermont’s of the Year by the Burlington Free Press. Best known as the founder of the Good News Garage, Hal also launched Neighbor-to-Neighbor, an initiative to help families in need connect to those who can help provide support. He currently serves as director of Partnership for Change, a collaboration between Burlington and Winooski's school districts to help students from diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds succeed in school and in the community.

Butterbury

Sally Drudi
Barb McKennedy

Hill Hinder Community Service Award was given to the University of Vermont Medical Group's U-Turn team for their dedicated work with the VNA in an effort to reduce repeat emergency department visits and avoid hospitalizations.

The VNA Richard H. Wadhams Award was presented to Jim Madison, immediate past chair of the VNA Board of Directors. This award is given to individuals who provide outstanding support to VNA programs and help increase public awareness of home care and related services to our community. In addition to his board work, Jim also supports the Family Room and has hosted many apple-picking excursions to his family orchard.

NEW FACES AT THE VNA

The VNA is excited to welcome two new faces to senior manager positions.

Director of Information Technology and CEO, has been selected to serve as a member of the VNA’s Board of Directors. This group will help VNA and the National Research Corporation develop a comprehensive database to provide evidence-based information that will assist research and advocacy efforts.

On Sunday,

January 18, more than 150 people gathered for the Vermont Reptile House Memorial Tree Lighting and Remembrance Ceremony held at the William St ober House of Remembrance. Dr. Joseph Haddick of St. John’s Regional Health Center and Karen Trombley, an LNA at Vermont Reptile House, also spoke.

UNION COUNTY HOSPITAL

Jennifer Archambault, MSM, PHR, is the new Human Resources Manager. Jennifer comes to us from CargoHealth Systems in Waterbury. She previously spent six years at Director of Human Resources at Franklin County Home Health Agency in St. Albans and has worked in Human Resources at the University of Vermont Medical Center.

In addition to her extensive human resources experience in health care settings, Jennifer has a personal understanding of the value of home health services, having recently cared for a loved one at home on hospice. “It’s truly a gift to be able to help someone at the end of their life and I feel honored to have been able to do so,” Jennifer says. “I am happy to support the caregivers in the agency in their day to day work providing care to the community.”
Join us for our
Vermont Respite House
5K Fun Run & Jiggety Jog
May 9, 2015

Allen Brook School, Williston. Registration opens at 8 am. Run starts at 9 am.

Run, walk, jog, bike and stroll to raise money for the VNA's Vermont Respite House, Vermont's Medicare-certified hospice home. This family-friendly event allows you to participate in memory of or in honor of a loved one while raising money for the Respite House. For more information, please visit www.vnacares.org/run or contact Crystal Vendrell at 802 860-4435 or vendrell@vnacares.org.

VNA Calendar

Please visit www.vnacares.org for more information about these and other upcoming VNA activities.

May 29-31, 2015
Camp Knock Knock
Weekend Family Bereavement Camp
YMCA Camp Abnaki, North Hero. For more information, please call 802 860-4499 x 3405.

June 10 and 11, 2015
PCA Informational Meetings
Attend one of our meeting times to learn more about becoming a Personal Care Attendant or Homemaker. VNA, 1110 Prim Road, Colchester. 9:30 am. For more information, please call 802 860-4499.