Building a New House

Since 1991, Vermont Respite House has been a home away from home for individuals facing a terminal illness, where they can spend their remaining days surrounded by family and friends. For the Hersey family, Respite House was a safe haven when being at home was no longer an option.

Don’s brain, it became clear that caring for Don at home was no longer an option.

A Growing Need
More and more people are expressing a desire to die at home. Hospice care can help make that happen, offering benefits to all family members. Sometimes, caring for a loved one in the home can become too much to handle, physically and emotionally. It is essential to have an inpatient hospice residence like Respite House, where people can receive the care they need 24 hours a day in a home-like setting—so families like Don’s are free to focus on being a family.

Don’s daughter Marlys recalled when Respite House was there for them. “Dad’s compassionate oncologist, Dr. Steven Ades of UVM Medical Center, called the ongoing crisis he faced breathtaking.” On Dr. Ades’ recommendation, Don entered Respite House. “That’s when everything changed,” said Marlys.

Don’s smile returned, and with it a sense of calm. He listened to music, reminisced with loved ones, and played piano. Shifting the caregiving role to Respite House’s staff allowed the family to spend time with Don, focusing on what was meaningful to him.

Time with Don was a gift for the family, a gift VNA feels should be available to more families. Given our aging population and increasing acceptance of hospice, VNA sees a growing need to care for more people and a need for more resident space.

While the current location has served us well for 25 years, limited capacity and acreage for growth have made it necessary for VNA to design a larger home at a new location.

In September, the new McClure Miller VNA Respite House, named for benefactors Lois McClure and Holly and Bob Miller, opens in Colchester. The larger 21-room house will ensure more families will have access to the compassionate, medically-complex care our hospice team provided to the Hersey’s.

Story continued inside. Learn more about the new House.
A Family Affair at the Fashion Show

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT:
VNA Board Chair
John Maitland with niece Julia; Mayor
Miro Weinberger and
daughters Li Lin and
Ada; Eileen Whalen
with Dr. Claude
Deschamps of UVM
Medical Center; VNA
CEO Judy Peterson and
Mayor Weinberger;
Brian Boardman with
daughter Lilly;
Family Room mom
Kendra Barber-Smith
and son Jonas;
Cliff Deetjen from
Peregrine Build/
Design with son Ben;
Family Room’s
Jackie Reno with
daughter Josie.

More than $25,000 was raised at this year’s Spring Blooms! Fashion Show and Dinner. This fundraiser celebrating the work of Janet S. Munt Family Room, VNA’s Parent Child Center, featured fashions from SportStyle, Ecco Clothes, Spellbound, Orvis, Carter’s and OshKosh. Guests were entertained with live jazz by In the Pocket and local comedian and writer Autumn Spencer as emcee and auctioneer.

Thank you to this year’s models, featured family members Jennifer, Jon and Amelia Ayers; Kendra and Jonesy Barber-Smith; Brian and Lilly Boardman, Hal Colston, Cliff and Ben Deetjen, Dr. Claude Deschamps, J. Churchill Hindes, Benjamin and Rye Yousey-Hindes, John Maitland and Julia Shrier, Judy Peterson, Jackie Reno and Josie van Gulden, Eileen Whalen, and Mayor Miro Weinberger and Li Lin and Ada Weinberger.

Mayor Weinberger received the 2016 VNA Cares for Children award, an award that recognizes individuals, organizations or groups who demonstrate a passionate commitment to better the lives of our community’s children.

A special thanks to our 2016 sponsors led by Peregrine Design/Build and Hanson & Doremus Investment Management and including major support from Bergeron, Paradis and Fitzpatrick, Dinse Knapp and McAndrew, National Life Group, Northfield Savings Bank, PC Construction Company, Pines Senior Living Community, Queen City Printers and Wake Robin.

What’s Happening at the Family Room?

New Family Room Manager
We’re pleased to announce that Toki Eley has been named the new Family Room Manager. A long-time VNA leader, she began her new role full-time on July 1.

Toki’s understanding of the program will be a great asset to the Family Room as we plan for the transition from VNA to either a standalone organization or part of another organization.

Transition Team is Formed
We have formed a Transition Team that includes VNA and Family Room staff, parents, and community members who will be working together with a consultant from Noonmark Non-Profit Services over the next year to identify the best option for ensuring the Family Room will continue to support families in our community for years to come.

We are fortunate to have Toki’s experience, leadership and commitment to children and families during this time of change.
Expanding the Space

While Don was a resident, he welcomed friends and family to spend time sharing stories and memories. But, it was often in cramped and tiny spaces. The new Respite House will support residents and their families with enhanced amenities and the latest technology, while preserving the home-like atmosphere.

The 21 larger, thoughtfully-designed resident rooms all look out to the beautifully landscaped space surrounding the building. Each room is large enough for families to visit comfortably and offers in-room accommodations for overnight stays and fully accessible bathrooms with showers.

Families and friends can also choose to gather in the larger, communal spaces. The bigger kitchen and dining areas allow families to prepare and enjoy a meal together. There are also more intimate gathering spaces to give loved ones a chance to talk privately, relax and reflect quietly.

Staff and volunteers will now have dedicated areas designed for interdisciplinary team meetings, medication storage, care planning, and confidential meetings with families.

Staying the Same

One thing that remains the same, though, is the continued high-level of care that people have come to expect from our dedicated staff and volunteers. They provide a safe space for our friends and neighbors to live the last chapter of their lives to the fullest in a setting filled with compassion, dignity and respect.

It is exactly that atmosphere and the care received by the dedicated staff and volunteers that made it possible for Don to remain comfortable and able to say goodbye on his own terms.

Don died on May 30, 2016. As Jude related, “If you could pick a way to go, this would definitely be it.”

The new VNA Respite House will build on our legacy of love, quality care and connection, supporting Vermont families in the decades to come.

Our Respite House Capital Campaign

How You Can Help

From its inception, community support has played a vital role in making the care and support of Respite House possible. This support covers the cost left from insufficient reimbursement, and when families can’t pay their portion of the care.

We now ask for your support of our VNA Respite House Capital Campaign. To date, our community has made gifts totaling $5.4 million towards our $8.6 million goal to make the new house a reality.

Our goal includes the cost of construction, land acquisition, site work, building design, fit-up, a small endowment and campaign costs.

Please visit vnacares.org/campaign for more information or contact Ann Irwin, Campaign Director, at 802 860-4437 or irwin@vnacares.org.
A Collaboration is Formed

VNA, Champlain Valley Area Agency on Aging, Cathedral Square, UVM Medical Center, Howard Center, and Vermont Ethics Network have formed a new collaboration to improve end-of-life care in Vermont by making advance care planning and conversations about death a regular occurrence in our everyday lives. The launch of this project is supported in part by a $100,000 Collective Impact Grant from the University of Vermont Community Health Investment Fund.

This initiative was inspired by a collective desire to address Vermont’s chronically low hospice use and a growing recognition of the value of hospice. A 2013 national survey of 2,100 adult Americans found that 90% believe having family conversations about wishes at the end of life is important, however fewer than 30% have actually done so. (The Conversation Project, 2013)

Our collaboration will address the cultural shift necessary to prioritize advance care planning, which includes knowing the patient’s wishes, identifying goals, documenting those wishes, and having a health care agent. This planning is important to delivering quality patient-centered care. The collaborative plans to expand upon existing efforts in health care settings, and engage new organizations, businesses, and community leaders in making advance care planning more commonplace.

A broad-based, street level campaign will seek to normalize conversations about death and dying, and opportunities will be expanded for individuals to discuss and document their wishes. The collaborative recognizes that this change will require a multi-pronged approach and take several years to fully operationalize and imbed into the community and the system of care delivery. Each organization is committed to this long-term work.

A Good Day For a Run

On an early, sunny morning this spring, 200 people gathered at the Allen Brook School in Williston to show their support for Vermont Respite House by participating in the 5K Fun Run & Jiggety Jog. Thanks to participants and our corporate and individual sponsors, more than $43,500 was raised for Vermont’s only Medicare-certified hospice home.

Pat Myette was the top individual fundraiser, having raised $2,025. Team Donna’s Divas was the top team fundraiser, bringing in $2,195.

Top running prizes went to (male) Jamie Shearer with a time of 18:36 and (female) Sadie Holmes with a time of 23:35.

To see race results and a photo gallery of the event, visit vna-cares.org/run.

Every dollar raised helps us care for residents at Respite House. Last year, Respite House served 230 people with terminal illness, providing them a home-away-from-home to live out their remaining days in dignity, surrounded by friends.

Special thanks to our 2016 sponsors: Lamoureux & Dickinson Consulting Engineers, Inc., REM Development Company, LLC, and University of Vermont Medical Center. They are joined by Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of Northern New England, Downs Rachlin & Martin, NFP Property & Casualty, SecurShred, Birchwood North Building Services, Hannaford Food and Drug Store #398, New England Air Systems, Inc., Snyder Homes, Sterling Construction, Inc., Union Mutual of Vermont and Willie Racine’s, Inc.
Applause

Tara Graham, BS, LICSW, NHA joined the VNA this spring as the Executive Director of Hospice and Palliative Care. Previously, she was the Executive Director of Benchmark Senior Living (The Arbors at Shelburne) and, most recently, ICB Senior Living (The Residence at Quarry Hill). “It’s truly an honor to help people make informed decisions about their lives and ensure they receive the very highest quality of care,” says Graham.

VNA has been selected to receive a Governor’s Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Mature Workers for VNA’s commitment to employment practices that benefit and support the inclusion and retention of mature workers, especially in VNA’s training and skill development programs. VNA will receive this award, along with other award recipients, at a reception in September.

Diane Hebda, RN, COS-C, VNA’s Manager of Clinical Outcomes, recently received her Bachelor of Science in Health Administration.

“How much would it cost to purchase everything on your wish list website page?” This was a question posed to the VNA by a generous donor this spring looking for a meaningful way to honor his father who had died 15 years before. The donor and his wife came across VNA’s website page with a list of suggested in-kind donation items for the Family Room, the Adult Day Program, Hospice and Vermont Respite House. Costs were researched, the donors sent a check and everything was purchased for the programs. Wishes were granted!

In Memoriam

We deeply appreciate that the VNA and its programs were named to receive memorial gifts between February 1, 2016 and June 30, 2016 in remembrance of the following people. We thank their families for honoring their loved ones in this meaningful way.

VNA
Kathleen Illum
Nelson Bice
Lorraine Brigidie
Margarette Dinglas Kresser
Gary Duffy
Victor Gird
Edward Graves
Jeanne McLaren
Rebecca Newton
Rogier Pion
Henry Russell
Gail Sawyer
Jean Sherman
Gail Smith
Edmund Stave
Stephen Sweet
Donald Wider
Wesley Valyau

VNA Hospice Program
John Bachand
Gerald Blanchard
Gerard Dandurand
Donna Deforge
Robert Dillon
Thomas DiSilvio
Phyllis Everstead
John Herko
Lorraine Norful
Paul Lambertagne
Theresa Rhodes
Noreen Riley
Richard Soundiff
John Spear
Noah Thompson
Natalie Watters

Vermont Respite House
Benjamin Ames
Margaret Arthur
Mark Baker
Marie Bepoche
Mary Blanchette
George Boucher
Betty Chu
Nicole Corey
David Coseo
William Danaher
Emily Dubrow
Lea Gavlin
Phyllis Gray
Elizabeth Griffin
Donald Hersey
Sandra Hoopes
Diane LaClair
Yvette Larrow
John Lavery
Virginia Martin
John Metro
Diane Miner
Faye Pidgeon
Mary Jane Plante
Darlene Quilliam
Karen Rachlis
Margaret Reardon
Edsel Rich
Virginia Riggs
Henry Russell
Aramanda Sweet
Sally Taylor
Marion Thorpe
Randi Tomczak
Wesley Valyau

19th Annual Camp Knock Knock

VNA welcomed 10 families to the 19th annual Camp Knock Knock, held this spring at YMCA’s Camp Abnaki in North Hero. This is a weekend bereavement camp for families with children.

Many activities like recreational games and arts and crafts were offered. There are also small group sessions for children, teens and adults to provide strategies in coping with grief. A new feature this year was a Saturday evening variety show by participants and volunteers.

A special thanks to the 40 volunteers who supported the families and helped camp run smoothly, donations from community members, and financial support from local organizations: Junior League of Champlain Valley, New York Life, Santa Night, Ben and Jerry’s.

Next year marks the 20th year for Camp Knock Knock. The camp will be held June 2-4, 2017.
VNA Calendar

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


VNA Palliative Care Series
UVM Medical Center, 111 Colchester Ave., Burlington, 12 pm. For more info, please contact mdi@vnacares.org.

November 13, 2016

VNA End-of-Life Care Services Annual Memorial Service
First Unitarian Universalist Society, 152 Pearl Street, Burlington, 3-4 pm (Reception to follow). For more info, please contact Ally Parker at 802-860-4410 or parker@vnacares.org.

Respite House Community Events

We invite the community to learn more about the McClure Miller VNA Respite House and get a tour during a special Community Open House, Sept. 12, 2016, between 4:30 and 7:30 pm. The new Respite House is located at 3113 Roosevelt Highway, Colchester.

We will also say a special goodbye to our Respite House in Williston with a Closing Ceremony on Sept. 24, 2016, from 10 am-2 pm. The Respite House is located at 99 Allen Brook Lane, Williston.

To learn more about both events, please visit our website at vnacares.org.