LOIS LOVES coming to the Memory Care program at the Adult Day in South Burlington. While reluctant at first, she quickly found comfort after visiting the program. “This place is like home,” she said. “Everyone is nice and the staff is great.”

For Lois, who was diagnosed with dementia, it’s a time to socialize and eat with friends, participate in activities like armchair tai chi, and listen to music. “I love country music, the kind of songs my Dad played on his violin.”

“I’m happy my son found this program,” says her husband, John. “Lois enjoys going and it gives me time to run errands and get other work done.”

The program has given John peace of mind because she is receiving the same care that he provides at home. While at Adult Day, Lois’ medications and vital signs are monitored by a nurse, and staff makes sure she has nutritious meals and maintains her safety. Specialized activities and therapeutic exercises support both physical and mental health, all designed around the unique needs of persons with memory impairment.

“We are the eyes and ears for the families,” said Diane Olechna, Manager of VNA’s Adult Day Program. “We provide that peace of mind. We monitor eating, vital signs and personal hygiene. Because we know these clients so well, we can pick up on any issues or health changes that might arise, such as weight loss or gain or a reaction to a medication.”

As people live longer and are at home longer, we are seeing increasingly complex needs of our clients, says Diane. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 117 million older Americans have at least one chronic condition such as heart disease, diabetes or cancer. This requires a higher level of care. Carole, an Adult Day nurse, says that in addition to blood pressure, weight, medication management, and assessing their skin, she also does a lot of listening and offering advice.

“We have helped to get glucose levels down for some of our clients through medication management, offering nutritional food and education on eating healthy,” says Diane.

VNA’s Adult Day and Memory Care Programs have also seen an increase in the number of New American clients like Chandra, who recently suffered a stroke. Having him at the Adult Day program offers his sister, who cares for him, respite to take care of other things in her life while knowing that someone is caring for Chandra. Being around others has helped him work on his speaking and to socialize more. The staff and Chandra have overcome language barriers by working on alternative ways to communicate with each other. As a result, he has become more talkative at home.

Staff use their talents to bring stimulating activities to the participant’s days, whether it is a painting club, horticultural therapy, gardening or daily exercises. Music is also a daily activity. Sometimes, a volunteer comes in to play guitar and lead singing. Other times, clients listen to music on an iPod as part of the Music & Memory program. Research has shown that music can have a calming effect on people, help a person focus, and awaken memories thought to be lost.

Lois is aware her memory is going now and appreciates these types of activities that help stimulate her mind. “We are busy, busy, busy every day,” says Lois. “But it’s good. It makes my mind rotate.”
New VNA Board Members

VNA WELCOMES four new members to the Board of Directors.

Brian Harwood is the retired CEO of HMC, a marketing firm that began in Stowe in 1976 and is now located in Richmond. He began his broadcasting career at WDEV in 1954 and was a founding partner of a radio station that broadcast from Mt. Mansfield. He was inducted into the Vermont Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2005 and has chaired several boards including Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Vermont Public Television, and Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice.

Tara Pacy is Director of Emergency Care, Access and Patient Transitions at the University of Vermont Medical Center. She oversees the Emergency Department, Patient Transfer Center, Patient Support Services, Critical Care Transport Ambulance Services, Palliative Medicine, Telemedicine, Integrative Medicine, Administrative Nurse Coordinators, Language Access and Interpreters, and Case Management and Social Work departments.

Jim Reardon is Director of Finance for the City of Burlington Electric Department. He was Commissioner of the Department of Finance & Management for the State of Vermont from 2005 to 2015. In this capacity, he was the chief financial officer responsible for the oversight, development and monitoring of the state budget. Jim was employed in state service for more than 29 years in various fiscal leadership roles.

Erika Schramm is Director of Administrative Services at Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, leading the human resources, information technology, facilities and continuous improvement teams. She has over 15 years of experience in human resources management, helping organizations tackle tough challenges and work toward a common good. Erika serves on the Lake Champlain Workforce Collaborative.

At the fall Board Retreat, the following officers for 2016-2017 were elected: Barbara Martin, Chair; Jeanne Hutchins, Vice Chair; Joe Hameline, Treasurer; and Frank Harris, Secretary.
VNA Family Room to Become Freestanding Non-Profit

VNA announced last month that the Janet S. Munt VNA Family Room will transition from being a program of the VNA to a newly created freestanding non-profit organization in July 2017. Family Room has been a vital and beloved resource for families in our community since its founding in 1988 and we look forward to seeing the program's continued success in the future under the new leadership. The successor organization will be led by a Board of Directors with representation from community leaders and current Family Room parents, who together bring expertise and skills that will benefit Family Room as they move forward under this new structure.

The VNA will continue to operate Family Room programs through June 30, 2017 and anticipates transitioning these responsibilities to the successor organization in July 2017. This will include holding our annual Spring Blooms! Fashion Show, which raises funds for the Family Room, on Thursday, April 6, at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Burlington. We hope you’ll join us to show your continued support for this important resource for parents and children.

For more information or to make a donation in support of the Family Room Transition Fund, please visit vnacares.org/familyroom.
Respite House Capital Campaign Nears Completion

Your Support is Needed

It was with great anticipation, pride and tremendous Capital Campaign support from the community that the new McClure Miller VNA Respite House opened its doors in September 2016.

Through a combination of rigorous budget oversight, reduced land acquisition costs and in-kind donations, we were able to reduce our Campaign goal from $8.6 million to $7.1 million. To date, our generous community has made 542 gifts totaling $6 million.

We are honored to have the support of our friends who understand the importance of quality end-of-life care and how VNA Hospice and Respite House can provide the very best experience to patients and their families at such a challenging time in their lives.

The finish line is in sight and we now ask for your support in helping us reach our goal. A donation in any amount toward the final $1 million will allow us to retire the VNA Respite House Capital Campaign a year earlier than planned and ensure this vital and beloved resource is available to all who need it in the future, regardless of ability to pay.

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

The phrase “health care reform” has been widely used for years to describe changes in the way we receive and pay for health care. Yet, many of us still have a difficult time understanding what it all means and how it impacts us as health care consumers. As CEO and President of your VNA, I have been at the table representing community-based health care and participating in the exploration and implementation of new ways to organize, deliver, and pay for health care services for Vermonters.

At a state level, our work is guided by the national goals of health care reform that focuses on three objectives - improving health care quality, improving patient satisfaction and reducing the cost of health care—referred to as the Triple Aim. Home health is uniquely positioned to deliver outcomes on all three of these goals, making this both an exciting and challenging time for the VNA.

Continue reading at vnacares.org to hear about how your VNA is engaging in Vermont’s health care reform initiatives and working to improve the health of our community.
In Memoriam

We deeply appreciate that the VNA and its programs were named to receive memorial gifts between July 1, 2016 and January 31, 2017 in remembrance of the following people. We thank their families for honoring their loved ones in this meaningful way.

Mary Byrne Smith, RN, MBA, has joined the VNA as the Director of Community Care Services. She oversees the VNA’s long-term care, private care, adult day, hi-tech and SASH programs. Mary brings over 20 years of experience in health care administration, most recently as the Director of Care Coordination for MHM/Centurion Vermont, the company that provides health services to the Vermont Department of Corrections. Mary was also previously the nurse liaison team leader for Home Health Visiting Nurses in Maine.

The VNA received a $46,000 grant from the Community Investment Fund of the University of Vermont Medical Center, to help support the Longitudinal Care pilot program that has been recently launched. Through this program, ongoing support and assessment is given to our most frail and/or complex patients after their condition is stabilized and they no longer are eligible to receive home health services. As a result, the number of re-hospitalizations and Emergency Department visits has been greatly reduced.

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Weekend Family Bereavement Camp

Camp Knock Knock
June 2-4, 2017
YMCA Camp Abnaki
North Hero

For 20 years, this annual weekend camp has been a time of support and guidance for families with children who have experienced the death of a loved one. Throughout the weekend, campfires, arts and crafts, and recreational activities are intermixed with therapeutic group times for adults and children to provide strategies for coping with grief. If you are interested in attending or would like more information about this camp, please contact Ally Parker at 802 860-4499 ext. 3405.

Join us at our new location for our
McClure Miller VNA Respite House
5K Fun Run & Jiggety Jog
May 13, 2017
Malletts Bay School
609 Blakely Road, Colchester
Registration opens at 8 am / Run starts at 9 am

Join us at our new location as we run, walk, jog, bike and stroll to raise money for the new McClure Miller VNA 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 Bridget Conway at 802 860-4435 or conway@vnacares.org.