



VNA at Home

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LAKE SUNAPEE REGION
VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION

VOL 1 • NO 3
SPRING 2007

A Legacy of Learning

Gerry and Susan Mayer are special friends with a long history of involvement at Lake Sunapee Region VNA. Susan was an active member of the Development Committee for many years and is currently the Honorary Chair of the 2007 Designer Showhouse event. Gerry, who passed away in June 2006, was a long-time Board member and, of course, a patient.

Gerry Mayer was first diagnosed with cancer several years ago. Following surgery, the Mayer family looked to the VNA for help with Gerry's recovery. After three cancer-free years, the disease reoccurred and the VNA team was once again there for Gerry and his family. Also suffering from Parkinson's Disease, Gerry became incapable of doing many day-to-day activities himself. Gerry's illnesses also put an enormous strain on Susan, the family, and their long time private care giver, Kryisia. "We stretched ourselves as far as we could". But there was no way Gerry could have remained at home without the help of professionals like the VNA supporting Susan and Kryisia. She recalls that Kryisia would actually "dance" with Gerry to move him from place to place. "It was just amazing how she



Mayer Family

was able to get him around."

VNA staff were always in and out of the house, helping Gerry move around, get dressed, eat and function on a daily basis. The nurses and other staff became like family not only to Gerry and Susan, but also to their eight children ...and 20 grandchildren. "We had everything, really - Homemakers, nurses and aides, lots of block time including overnights. They all became a part of our family. We knew each caregiver by name and it was hard to let go of them after Gerry's death" said Susan. As he was in every aspect of his life, Gerry did not miss opportunities to express his gratitude. "Gerry was a completely gracious patient who never complained and was deeply thankful for the care he received. He thanked the staff for everything, everyday. I think he probably thanked them for breathing!" said Susan.

At the end of Gerry's life, the Hospice team served as

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Learning to Care

Continuing education for all staff is a high priority at the Lake Sunapee Region VNA, and plays a vital role in its success with the communities it serves. Educational programs allow staff to stay on top of their subject matter, which in turn translates into quality, meaningful service. Areas where staff have received certification or advanced training include wound care, hospice, advance care planning, bereavement support, spiritual care, diabetes, patient assessment and heart disease. Additionally, two staff members are certified hospice and home care health executives.






These individuals help educate others as well as integrate their



Laurie Bride, Wound Care Specialist

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President's Message

Our mission is to optimize health and independence for residents of the communities we serve. How do we become less reactive and interventional and more preventive? How do we provide health care in a family or community context?




Andrea Steel
President and CEO

A number of "mega-trends" are influencing health care policy including a shift to more consumer directed care, increased technology and internet use, more public dialogue about lifestyles and choices, and better understanding of causes and treatments of chronic illness. But the number one mega-trend is the aging of our population.

The Alliance for Aging Research says that the number of Americans over age 65 will double from 35 million today to over 70 million in 2030. Four and five generation families are expected to be the norm in American society. The US Administration on Aging and Forrester Research reports that 81% of people over age 50 hope to stay at home and avoid placement in a facility.

These changes present a wonderful opportunity to change the way we deliver health care. Consider a new model for health - *home-centered health care* - where care begins in the home, connects to physicians and other care teams and loops back to the home. Such a system will rely heavily on education. In order to live healthy, active lives, we must understand the components of health starting at birth. Each one of us must take an active role in managing our own health care. How do things like diet, activity and lifestyle choices influence the development of chronic illness? Once a chronic illness develops, how do we prevent acute episodes of illness, live with annoying side effects, manage our medications and conserve energy to enjoy life every day? At the end of life, how do we prepare caregivers, manage symptoms and support the patient and family?

That's where Lake Sunapee Region VNA comes in. A major component of every visit we make is education. Our goal is to work with your physician and other health care providers to teach you and your family to successfully manage your illness or injury at home, to prevent future illness, and to provide the support services that will promote your independence. Here's to your health! 

Andrea Steel, *President and CEO*



Michele Holton, Sandra Toman (standing l-r), Andrea Steel, Susan Mayer and Pearl "Pinky" Jennison (seated l-r) at an early planning meeting for the 2007 Designer Showhouse September 7 - 17.

PHILANTHROPY

A Unique Giving Opportunity in 2007

Over the past 30 years, Americans have accumulated billions of dollars in Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). With the signing of the Pension Protection Act in 2006, those assets have become an attractive way for many to make significant charitable donations to non-profit organizations such as the Lake Sunapee Region VNA.

Here's how it works: Individuals 70 1/2 years or older may contribute up to \$100,000 this year in retirement plan assets to qualifying charitable organizations. The contributed amount is not included for income tax purposes and - just as important - the full amount of the gift is preserved for use by the charitable organization. This option is currently only available until the end of 2007. Consult you advisor or the VNA Development Office for more information.

Turning a Home into Home Care

The event features the talents of local designers who will renovate the New London home of Pinky Jennison. In addition to tours of this special house, there will be a boutique, food served daily and workshops. All proceeds benefit the LSRVNA. Sincere gratitude is expressed to the event Tri-Chairs: Malora Gundy, Michele Holton, Sandra Toman.



For questions related to any philanthropic activities contact Cathy Raymond @ 603.526.4077 or craymond@lakesunapeevna.org.

Lake Sunapee Region VNA Board of Trustees

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Our Mission

is to provide comprehensive health care services that support the dignity and independence of individuals and families in partnership with physicians and other health care providers.

Volunteer Focus

LIFELINE Installers Bring Technology Home



With a mission to support the independence and dignity of all its clients, the VNA remains committed to finding ways to allow people to remain safe in their own homes. Technology such as LIFELINE is an example of this commitment.

LIFELINE is an easy-to-use, affordable, push-button emergency response system. Installation of

the LIFELINE system is one of the many - and perhaps less traditional - volunteer opportunities at Lake Sunapee Region VNA. Volunteers are trained to go into the client homes to install LIFELINE and educate recipients on how the equipment works. They are well-versed on the entire process and are able to answer most questions asked by the client. As with all our volunteers, installers are carefully screened by the VNA.

LIFELINE subscribers wear a Personal Help Button which, when pressed, activates the monitoring unit, a two-way speaker phone system. A support staff member comes on the speaker and asks the individual what has happened and whether medical help is needed. In addition, a neighbor or relative is generally designated as a respondent when the button is activated, serving as an intermediary between the patient and emergency personnel. This intermediary may be a better judge to assess the situation at hand. Depending upon the situation, appropriate medical personnel are dispatched to the home. An unexpected fall or medical emergency is always a possibility. If you live alone, LIFELINE increases your sense of security knowing that quick assistance is there 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Please call the VNA for more information or about becoming a volunteer installer.

Staff News

What is a PCSP?

Personal Care Service Providers (PCSP's) are an increasingly vital part of the VNA team. PCSPs assist with non-medical activities of daily living such as meals, going to the grocery store and other errands, light cleaning, laundry, pet care and more. But unlike a Homemaker, who cannot provide any hands-on care, PCSPs can do light hands-on care such as assisting with bathing and dressing. They can remind clients to take medications and help transfer clients from bed to a chair. PCSPs provide in-home care for self-directed patients - patients who are able to articulate their own needs. They are a wonderful support for clients who need limited personal care that does not require the skills of a licensed nurse. Although this position does not require licensing or formal clinical training, which is the case for nurses or physical therapists, all candidates are interviewed, screened and, if hired, trained by the VNA before being placed in a home. According to the US Census Bureau, there are currently 22,000 people over the age of 85 in New Hampshire; that number is projected to reach 45,000 by 2030. As the aging population of our state and nation increases dramatically and the nursing shortage remains a reality, PCSPs will continue to grow in demand.



LSRVNA Services

From prenatal to end of life care:

- Skilled nursing care
- Infusion therapy
- Telemedicine & Lifeline technology
- Oncology care
- Psychiatric care
- Wound care, diabetes management and other specialty areas
- Pediatric Services including care for acutely ill children
- Cardiac assessments
- Rehabilitation
- therapy including physical, occupational, and speech
- Home safety appraisals and nursing assessments
- Health education
- Clinics including blood pressure, foot and immunization
- Medical social services
- Licensed Nursing Assistants
- PCSPs (Personal Care Service Providers)
- Homemakers and companions
- Non-Medical Assisted Living at Home services
- Respite care
- Nutrition counseling
- Hospice and Palliative care for adults and children
- Bereavement Support
- Spiritual Care
- Support Groups



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A LEGACY OF LEARNING

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a significant comfort zone by sharing their special gifts, focusing on the quality of Gerry's final weeks and days and helping the family come to grips with his death. Just as the VNA staff allowed Gerry to remain at home during his illnesses, they also made it possible for him to stay at home in his final days, where he died peacefully surrounded by a remarkable and loving family. Susan and her family are strong advocates, as was Gerry, for the Lake Sunapee Region VNA and all it does for so many in our community. As a reflection of their confidence, a significant gift was made in December 2006, at Gerry's direction, by Susan and Gerry's four children establishing the **Gerald M. Mayer, Jr. Endowed Fund for Continuing Education**.

Gerry felt passionately, as does Susan, about continually growing and seeking knowledge. As Susan simply put it, "it's always good to tickle your brain". Through this fund, which will provide additional resources for staff education in perpetuity, Gerry's hope for the VNA to provide special educational opportunities for staff is now a reality. It is also a legacy to his memory, kindness and generosity. 

"It's comforting to know you have a choice."

**Choosing a VNA is just that ... your choice.
Call us for your care needs.**

E-NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE!

The *VNA Insider* is a monthly e-newsletter that provides in-depth information, statistics, web site links and more to keep you in-the-know.

If you wish to receive this, send your email address to craymond@lakesunapeevna.org

LEARNING TO CARE

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expertise into daily efforts. As nurses and others strengthen their clinical skills in particular fields, they bring these back to also educate peers. Education is long-term investment toward which the VNA dedicates funds annually in its budget. However, there are always more demands for learning than the budget can support. "Added resources such as the Mayer endowment allow us to broaden access and pursue future opportunities over and above what might have been possible in the past. And that's good for everyone" says Andrea Steel, President and CEO. 