Home Health Aide Specialist Program

by Barbara Colatosti

The Home Health Aide Specialist Program is newly implemented at VNSHS and is taking health aide care to a new level. The Health Aide Specialist visits patients in need of assisted transportation to medical appointments. VNSHS has purchased a Subaru Forester specifically for this purpose. The vehicle is a hatchback and can carry patient’s equipment, such as walker/wheelchair.

Awilda Rosario, a Home Health Aide (HHA), was hand-selected from many applicants within VNSHS. Awilda received a promotion from HHA to Driver/Home Health Aide Specialist and is doing fabulous work in her new role.

The program began in June and currently does 3 to 7 transports per week. The time involved for each transport takes 3 to 4 hours; therefore, 2 transports are the maximum the enhanced aide can do per day.

There are criteria for patients to meet before they can be accepted into the program. VNSHS works with the families of patients to assess their ability to participate, and then appointments are set up.

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This year’s annual golf classic was held at Indian Hills Country Club on August 1st and was sold out to a crowd of 120 golfers, and even more attendees joined in the festivities afterwards.

The day did not disappoint as golfers took to the course and enjoyed a full day on the green. After the 18th hole, they returned to the club and were refreshed with an open bar, a full array of delicious hors d’oeuvres and raw bar as well. Awards were presented and exciting prizes were won for best game in different categories. In addition, wine baskets, jewelry, tickets to sporting and theater events, and much more were won from the raffles. All the while, a gourmet buffet dinner was served in the dining room.

As is every year, a community member is honored by VNSHS, and at this year’s 12th annual golfing event, VNSHS proudly selected Ralph Lambert, President and CEO of Axis Construction Corporation.

Ralph is near and dear to VNSHS’s heart. Not only is he a business leader and philanthropist in our community for over 25 years, Ralph, was former President of VNSHS Board of Trustees for 4 years, and has been a board member for more than 10 years. Along with the late beloved Jay Walsh, Ralph’s input and business experience were integral to the vision of the Hospice House in its infancy becoming a reality. The beautiful structure of the Hospice House has now stood and successfully served those in our community and beyond for over 12 years and Ralph has been there since its inception.

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Pictured from left are John J. Lynch, VNSHS Board President, Barbara Sorelle, VNSHS Event Planner, Ralph Lambert, President & CEO of Axis Construction Corp. and this year’s golf classic honoree, VNSHS CEO Linda Taylor and Ron Duswalt, VNSHS Board 1st Vice President.
Dear Friend,

As we approach the end of another calendar year, I am reminded it is an opportunity to address any unattended charitable contributions I want to make in support of my favorite charities. It goes without saying that even as my employer, Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk is among my favorite charities! VNSHS receives and is especially appreciative of charitable donations we receive ongoing throughout the year, for they enable us to provide home health and hospice services in the home, as well as at our Hospice House 365 days a year. In fact it is because of these donations – which are thanks to YOU - that we have proudly met operational deficits head on and don’t carry over any debt year to year. Such donations take various form, including cash, stock, or bequests by example. One such form not familiar to some however, is the Qualified Charitable Donation from an IRA via direct rollover of funds. This is an especially attractive option to individuals who, once over the age 70 1/2, are required to take minimum distributions that are taxable to them when taken. Qualified Charitable Donations count toward satisfying any required minimum distribution that you would otherwise have to receive from your IRA, however it is not taxed. Of course you don’t get to deduct the Qualified Charitable Donation on your federal income tax, since you already received the benefit of not having the distribution taxed had it been distributed directly to you.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 first allowed taxpayers age 70 1/2 or older to make tax free charitable donations directly from their IRAs in amounts up to $100,000. This law was originally scheduled to expire in 2007 but was made permanent in 2015. Without this special rule, taking a distribution from your IRA and donating the proceeds to a charity would be more cumbersome, and possibly more expensive. If you took the required distribution first, and paid taxes on it, and then made a contribution to the charity, you would be able to take a charitable deduction when filing your income tax, but it is possible the tax from the distribution might be more than the charitable deduction due to the limits that apply to charitable contributions.

All is food for thought and discussion with your tax preparer/consultant or attorney. I know from your history of giving that you are committed to supporting our mission of service, and hope this helps you to continue to do so in a way that helps us both! 😊

From our hearts to yours,
Linda Taylor, MA, BSN, RN
Chief Executive Officer
Helen Strobl Memorial Scholarship

Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk is pleased to announce that Victoria McNeill has been selected as the 2016 recipient of the Helen Strobl Memorial Scholarship Award. Victoria is the eighth Northport High School graduate to receive this award. She is attending the School of Nursing at Northeastern University in Boston. Her goal is to attend graduate school and pursue a career as a Nurse Practitioner.

Pictured with Victoria are her mom, VNSHS CEO Linda Taylor and John J. Lynch, President of the VNSHS Board of Trustees.

The Good Neighbor Fund ~ Where The Giving Has No Limits

by Barbara Colatosti

Sometimes it’s the little miracles that make the difference. When folks run into financial arrears due to mounting medical bills, the stress of their illness and the worry of where the next dollar is coming from, it can be harrowing. Countering the rise in their cost of living can be overwhelming, and it may lead to financial ruin in the midst of a medical crisis.

Mary Mooney, PT, DPT, is a dedicated Utilization and Therapy Manager at VNSHS who has been involved with the Good Neighbor Fund for many years, and is a parishioner at the church where the GNF is operated.

Established in 2009, the Good Neighbor Fund was born out of the inspiration of parishioners at St. Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Church in Greenlawn, NY. It is a collective effort that provides assistance to those experiencing difficult times within the parish, as well as in the community. Funds come largely from fundraisers, where over $150,000 has been raised and given back to the community they serve. The GNF has helped individuals and families with an average financial contribution of approximately $1,500. The impact these contributions have made on the individual lives of the recipients has been enormous. Here are some examples of people they have helped.

• A man with cancer was recently placed on COBRA. GNF was able to pay one month’s premium for COBRA to help bridge the gap until he was eligible for Medicare.

• An unemployed man was diagnosed with lymphoma. GNF paid his LIPA bill while he was waiting for Social Security Disability coverage.

• A person diagnosed with cancer was receiving chemotherapy and radiation. He received $16/month in food stamps and had asked for financial assistance for food. GNF gave him food cards for groceries for four months.

The list of examples of helping people in need continues, as these are just a few of the stories. There are countless others, and the GNF is committed to being there for them. GNF receives support from people like you in and around our community. With support, the giving at GNF is never finite!

Since 2012, the Good Neighbor Fund has helped 17 families who received care from VNSHS. As a community based agency itself, VNSHS welcomes the opportunity to work with such resources who share our mission of community service. It is also no wonder that a VNSHS employee who has committed her career to helping others, extends that philosophy in her personal life and continues to reach out to others in need. ❤️
Awilda begins her day by arriving at the patient’s home an hour before the scheduled doctor’s appointment. She provides aid in their bathing and getting dressed and then helps them out to the car. She stays with them at the doctor’s office for the duration of the medical visit and then brings them home.

The appointments vary from outpatient surgery, such as eye surgery, to numerous other medical appointments. These visits require time, gentle care, and patience, as the events are time-consuming for patients who are not able to fully care for themselves.

In addition, Awilda fills in for the regular Home Health Aide schedule covering Suffolk County, and she also installs Telehealth Monitors on the job. There has been an abundance of extremely positive feedback to this new program, thanks to Awilda’s professional care and exemplary work as VNSHS’ new Home Health Aide Specialist.

The program is so successful, that there is hope to eventually expand this service to anyone in the community who needs transport services. Individuals would have to meet the same criteria in order to participate in the program. For a fee they would have door-to-door service and medical assistance to and from doctor’s appointments provided by a certified Home Health Aide Specialist.

VNSHS continues to provide unparalleled health care service, and now, expanding upon this with their newly instituted Home Health Aide Specialist Program is another reason why VNSHS remains one of the top services in Suffolk County for Home Health and Hospice Care.

A pioneer in the building industry, Ralph began working in the construction for the family business as a young man alongside his father, grandfather and uncles. With a strong work ethic, Ralph graduated from Hofstra University with a degree in business and marketing. In 1992 Ralph, his father Roy, and another business associate started Axis Construction Corp. where it grew from a small local business to the large, multifaceted construction management firm that it is today. One of the most well respected companies in the industry; Axis now has multiple offices on Long Island and Westchester, and clients throughout the tri-state area.

With a deep understanding of the value of community and the importance of leading by example, Ralph not only immersed himself in his company but also donated his time and talent to many other local charities as well. As co-founder of The Lambert Family Foundation, Ralph, along with the support of his children, and wife Nicole do their part to help the Long Island area. He also serves on the fundraising committees of the Joe Namath March of Dimes organization, Winthrop University Hospital, and Northwell Health, to name a few. With all that Ralph does for the community and beyond, it was with great pleasure that VNSHS had the opportunity to honor him at their golf classic. Along with this honor, VNSHS Board of Trustees appointed Ralph Lambert with the distinction of being the first Trustee Emeritus to the VNSHS Board of Trustees.

In all, this year’s outing was another exciting and thoroughly enjoyed event by all attendees who came out to support VNSHS. Their generous contributions continue to help fund much needed services that VNSHS provides. Thank you to all who attended and helped to make the event a terrific success!
Eileen Kane-Gemmell, full-time Home Care Dietitian and Nutritionist for VNSHS has many credentials after her name. Eileen has made her career in the field of dietetics, her life’s work, and has earned each accreditation over the course of her 40-year career. Her most recent accomplishment was receiving the honor of Fellow of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (FAND). This designation recognizes her commitment to the field of dietetics and celebrates her professional accomplishment and pursuit of life-long learning. This is the highest honor one can receive in the field of dietetics. Becoming a fellow means she is recognized as an expert in her field, based on her professional accomplishments, education, and social responsibility in the area of nutrition. There are only a handful of registered dietitians on Long Island who have achieved this honor and the members of Long Island Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics LIAND (formerly LIDA) number more than 200. She is the only full-time Registered Home Care Dietitian in Suffolk County.

Eileen’s journey into dietetics came from a very personal place, after she saw first-hand the impact of nutritional care when her father was diagnosed with lung cancer. Her dedication to transforming lives through nutrition and counseling is unparalleled, and is the driving force in her career. Becoming a certified diabetic educator is her next goal.

After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree at SUNY Oneonta, Eileen went on to complete a dietetic internship at NYP/Weill Cornell Medical Center – New York- Presbyterian Hospital, where she completed administrative, as well as clinical work in many areas, giving her a broad scope of experience in her field.

Eileen married during her junior year of college, at a time when it was not as common for women to pursue a career over family. Her husband Jim Gemmell, her biggest supporter, has always stood by Eileen as she continued to grow in her career combining work, family and education. They have 3 wonderful grown children ages 36, 28 and 24 years old. While raising her children, Eileen went to graduate school, and was inducted into the Public Administration honor society based on academic achievement, at LIU. She and her son were studying at LIU at the same time, and it was one of her proudest moments to have her family attend her own graduation ceremony. In the span of Eileen’s career, she has worked in the area of developmental disabilities, long-term care and sub-acute rehabilitation. In addition, having been active in Long Island Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics since 1975, Eileen has served many positions on the board, including being elected president of LIDA during this time.

Her role at VNSHS since 2008 began with handling medically complex patients. She became full-time in 2011, and her responsibilities expanded to home care, especially in the areas of cardiac, renal, diabetes, oncology, and tube feeding as well as in the Hospice House. In addition, she has developed policies and procedures, and has had extensive public-speaking engagements. Her passion for her work has made her a valuable member of the VNSHS team.

An essential constituent in home care work, Eileen Kane-Gemmell is dedicated to working with patients in making them adaptable to their individual circumstances and personalizing a care plan for each patient. Eileen works relentlessly in order to improve their quality of life while providing compassionate, as well as professional, and state-of-the-art dietetic and nutritional services.

On October 15, 2016, Eileen was accepted into the elite group of Fellows of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in Boston, MA.

Congratulations, Eileen, for such a well deserved and distinguished honor from everyone at VNSHS! ❤
MIMI JULIANO – SAVING LIVES IS A PRIORITY
by Barbara Colatosti

Each year, approximately 3000-4000 Americans die from choking. Very often people correlate choking victims with young children. In actuality, children, as well as the elderly, present the highest risk for choking, as Mimi Juliano, Speech Language Pathologist, knows well.

At VNSHS, Mimi’s work consists of treating patients with dysphagia, or swallowing disorders. Dysphagia treatment includes teaching compensatory strategies—aspiration precautions, appropriate diet, and caregiver training to prevent risks of choking.

Advocating prevention in her practice, Mimi would often be asked by caregivers what to do in the event of a choking occurrence of a loved one. Mimi’s advice in an emergency situation had always been to call 911, as instructed by the current medical recommendations. The well-known Heimlich maneuver performed on a frail individual who is in a wheelchair can be difficult to administer and complications can cause injury, so her advice was limited to an emergency situation.

When Mimi learned about a noninvasive apparatus called LifeVac, developed specifically to dislodge obstructions in the airway of a choking victim, she quickly got in touch with the inventor to discuss its merits. Mimi saw LifeVac as an immediate solution to an emergency choking event and envisioned its use not only in her work, but also in schools, hospitals, by EMTs, as well as in private homes of caregivers for all potential choking victims. What’s more, Lifevac does not have to be administered exclusively by a medically trained professional and virtually anyone can learn how to use it.

The one caveat that Mimi noted was that the device had not yet been approved by any accredited medical journal. Upon contacting several journals, it was explained that there was not enough medical evidence to support the device. On her own, Mimi then went on to find a research trial clinic that would allow her to create an independent study of LifeVac.

The independent study Mimi conducted found LifeVac to work in 49 of 50 trials. The findings were deemed successful and upon completion of Mimi’s study, the American Journal of Emergency Medicine accepted LifeVac as an approved anti-choking device. In addition, LifeVac, only in existence for approximately 2 years, is becoming more utilized every day and has already one officially documented case of saving a life!

As a VNSHS Speech Language Pathologist, Mimi Juliano is an example of a professional who goes over and above the call of duty in order to help those in need. The passion in her work is evident, as is exemplified through her well-documented and tested research of LifeVac. As a result, Mimi has been instrumental in bringing this anti-choking device to the forefront, not only in the hope of helping her own patients, but to also educate others throughout the community about this potentially life-saving device.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Charity Holiday Fashion Show  SOLD OUT!
Thursday, December 1, 2016 - Nocello’s Restaurant, 843 Fort Salonga Road, Northport - 12:00 pm - 2:30 pm

A Taste of Long Island, Food, Wine & Beer Tasting
Thursday, April 20, 2017 - The Larkfield, East Northport - 6:30 pm - 10:00 pm

17th Annual Mother’s Day 5K Race/Walk & Kids Fun Run – Run for the Health of It
Saturday, May 13, 2017 – 505 Main Street, Northport - 8:30 am Kids Fun Run, 9:00 am Race

13th Annual Golf Classic
Monday, August 7, 2017 - Indian Hills Country Club, Northport – 12:00 pm Shotgun Start

CONTACT BARBARA SORIELLE 631-930-9310
Visit us online at visitingnurseservice.org

The Townwide Fund of Huntington and the United Way of Long Island.
Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk is a participating agency of.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERYDAY