

FrontLine FOCUS

A Newsletter from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York

Summer
2007

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Building Relationships

It begins the very moment someone becomes a patient of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. Whether it's the first time one of our home care consultants meets a patient in the hospital or when one of our nurses, rehabilitation therapists, social workers, or home health aides greets a patient at his or her door, we immediately start to build a relationship.

More often than not, patients feel worried, anxious and afraid during their initial meeting with a member of our home health care team. They're also filled with questions and, many times, in despair about the condition of their health. For these reasons, we provide much more than expert and compassionate care; we strive to put every patient at ease and to build each individual's trust. Since a patient's family is often involved, we work to relieve the minds of loved ones and gain their confidence in us, too. By our last visit, we've often gained something else: a friendship with our patients and their families.

In this issue of *FrontLine Focus*, which features excerpts from our 2006 Annual Report, we share some of the many relationships between members of our dedicated home health care team and our patients. These relationships are just another example of the many ways we bring the caring home.



Building Relationships

When Annette met Maria...

Maria was young, pregnant,
and having grown up in
foster homes, had no family
around to support her.



With the unwavering support of Annette Maldonado, a nurse in our new Nurse-Family Partnership program, Maria has learned how to be an attentive and caring mom, and her baby girl, Violet, is thriving.

“Growing up, I really wanted a family,” says Maria, who bounced from foster home to foster home as a young girl. “I didn’t have a mom, and I really want to give my daughter what I didn’t have.” “What she gives her is a lot of love,” says nurse Annette Maldonado.

Introduced in May 2006 as part of a remarkably successful national program, the Nurse-Family Partnership offers intensive nursing assistance, guidance and support to low-income, first-time mothers like Maria who live in the South Bronx. The thirty-year-old national program has a history of documented success at improving pregnancy outcomes and enhancing the long-term health and well-being of young, impoverished mothers and their children.

“I feel good that Annette is in my life,” says Maria. “A lot of girls like me don’t get this kind of opportunity. Annette just makes me so happy.” During Annette’s biweekly visits, she weighs baby and mother, checks vital signs, discusses nutrition, and fields any concerns Maria might have about her baby or being a mom. She also eagerly listens to stories about Violet’s latest milestones.

“The goal of the program,” says associate director M.J. Murphy, “is to create an environment in which the child is appreciated and valued, learning and growing from day one.”

That nurturing environment is alive and well in the South Bronx apartment Maria shares with Violet’s father, Tito, as Maria holds, feeds and dotes on Violet until the baby drifts off to sleep.

“What stage is she in?” M.J. asks. Maria peeks into Violet’s bassinet and answers, “She’s in quiet sleep.”

M.J.: “What could you do now?”

Maria: “I could cook, I could clean.”

M.J.: “How about when she’s alert?”



Maria: “I could talk to her or sing to her.” And what do mother and daughter talk about? “I tell her that she’s beautiful,” says Maria, “and that she’s my little angel, my miracle baby.”

“She’s a natural,” says Annette. “She has that motherly instinct. I can already imagine Violet years from now, running, talking, sharing all her little ideas — and bringing a lot of joy to Maria.”

Building Relationships

When Amy met Mr. Liu...

Mr. Liu had concerns about the side effects of Western medicine for treating his diabetes, but cultural barriers made him reluctant to ask for help.



After getting an initial blood-sugar test at our Chinatown Community Center, where our Chinatown Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community program is headquartered, Mr. Liu grew to trust VNSNY nurse Amy Mung and social worker Hing-Lin (Helen) Sit, who help him to manage his diet, exercise, medication and psychological issues.

Mr. Liu, who has lived in Chinatown for nearly forty years, came into the Chinatown Community Center last year for a free blood-glucose screening. He knew he had diabetes and even had a glucometer to measure his blood-sugar, but he didn't know how to use the glucometer and had long since abandoned his medication.

"Before he came to the Center, he didn't know much about diabetes," says Amy, the director of VNSNY's Chinatown Community Services. "Now he knows more. Mr. Liu told us that his primary care doctor would talk about the illness but did not have time to give details. We're the teachers, and he's built up trust in us. He even brought a friend over to get tested."

Launched in August, the Chinatown Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community program (NNOBC) serves a 22-block area in Chinatown. From our Chinatown Community Center, located in the heart of the neighborhood, VNSNY offers seniors myriad services, including blood-sugar and blood-pressure screenings; discussions of health-related issues, from Medicare Part D to diabetes and heart disease; assistance with medications and free flu shots. The Center also provides weekly recreation classes in English and handcraft, and provides a place for seniors to meet friends and neighbors and stay in touch. In addition, our NNOBC nurses and social workers make visits to home-bound seniors to assess their individual needs and provide care.

Mr. Liu is one of thousands of seniors who are aging in place in the thriving Chinatown community, where cultural and language barriers can sometimes stand in the way of maintaining good health. "I just want to be healthy, then I'll be happy," says Mr. Liu, speaking in Cantonese. "The most important thing is not money, it's good health."



"We want to make Chinatown a great place to grow old," says Helen, the VNSNY social worker, who helps Mr. Liu with health and family issues as well as his approaching retirement. "These seniors want to take care of their health, but they need assistance. Our Chinatown Community Center and Chinatown NNOBC both play important roles in their lives."

Building Relationships

When Aphrodite met Bette...

Bette was suffering from Alzheimer's,
and her family, living out of state,
didn't know where to turn.



Now, a team of Partners in Care experts, including nurse Aphrodite Fletcher, case manager Betty Jaiswal and home health aide Helen Anderson, coordinate care with relatives in Missouri so Bette can remain in the home she loves.

Bette spent much of her life as a caregiver for infirm or elderly clients. But when she fell ill with Alzheimer's, her family was scattered across the country and was worried that she would have no one to take care of her.

Thanks to the At Home...Where I Belong program, run by Partners in Care, YSNYS's private care division, Bette, 88, can remain in her Upper West Side apartment while getting the round-the-clock support she needs. The Partners in Care team coordinates her daily care down to the last detail, even ordering groceries online (always bearing in mind Bette's favorite, strawberry shortcake) or replacing her broken air-conditioner during a heat wave.

"Without Partners in Care, I don't know what we would have done," says her stepson Lee, who lives in Missouri and has siblings in San Francisco and Atlanta. "The most positive part of all this is that Bette is living in a building that she has a thirty-year history with."

Aphrodite, who visits Bette daily to dispense medications, check vital signs and assess her general well-being, says that remaining in familiar surroundings is especially important to someone with Alzheimer's. "She recognizes things," says Aphrodite. "She feels safer."

Bette's team also includes split-shift home health aides and case manager Betty Jaiswal, who coordinates the care, makes sure it runs smoothly, and handles any unexpected needs.

If Bette needs additional care or day-to-day supplies, Betty e-mails or calls Lee, and together they take action.



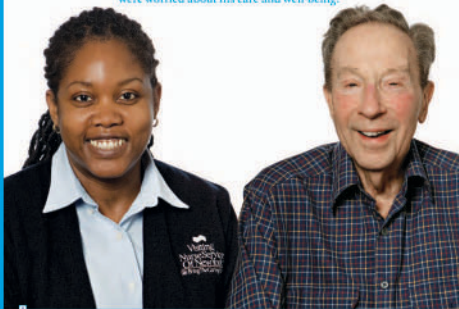
"The communication with me has been beautiful," Lee says. "Here's someone with a very complicated life, and Partners in Care makes it possible for her to function."

Says Betty, "We provide such intensive services for our patients that it's almost like they have a family member bent looking out for them."

Building Relationships

When *Natalie* met *Bill's* family...

Bill was in the final months of his life, living in a nursing home, and his twin brother, Harry, and sister-in-law, Margot, were worried about his care and well-being.



After Bill moved into VNSNY's new Shirley Goodman and Himan Brown Hospice Residence and met nurses like Natalie Sutherland, his loved ones noticed almost immediately that he had regained his spirit and his passion for good conversation, baseball and song.

Suffering from congestive heart failure and the aftereffects of several strokes, Bill had been deteriorating in a nursing home. "We'd visit at 1:30 in the afternoon, and he still wouldn't be dressed," recalls Bill's sister-in-law, Margot. "We just couldn't recognize the Bill we knew."

When the VNSNY hospice residence at Carnegie East House opened in June 2006, the family knew they'd found the right place for Bill. "Two days after he moved in," says Margot, "he was holding court for the staff and other patients."

Natalie, the nurse, can attest to that: "Bill wanted to be as active as he possibly could," she says, adding that he was always engaging visitors, staff and volunteers in a friendly chat or song. "He had that magic. You felt like you'd known him your whole life."

"Every time I saw Bill, we would end up singing a couple of duets," says hospice volunteer Debe Broadwater, who visits the residence once a week. "It always brought a lot of joy to him. Even toward the very end, when he was feeling so tired, he would brighten up when we were singing."

Homely and comfortable, with a terrace overlooking the East River and eight cheerfully decorated private rooms, the hospice residence provides expert care in an uplifting atmosphere for patients nearing their final days. "It was like he was home," says Harry, Bill's brother. "He was very comfortable. We were so happy about that."

"I can't say enough good things about the care he received," says Margot. She remembers one visit when Bill was not doing so well. "Natalie and I sat with him," she says. "I stroked one arm, she stroked the other."

Adds Natalie, "Our main goals are to make our residents feel at home and to enrich their lives for as long as they are with us."



Harry with a portrait of Bill

Building Relationships

When *Nadhia* met *Dorothy*...

Dorothy was weakened by a stroke, unsteady on her feet and unsure of herself.



Since occupational therapist Benito Flores and physical therapist Nadhia Robbins began working with her, Dorothy has been regaining her independence and hopes to return to volunteer work at the local kindergarten.

Dorothy is many things: an avid walker, passionate volunteer, president of her apartment building's board, church-goer, card player, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and even great-great-grandmother. One thing she is not is a quitter.

So when Dorothy suffered a stroke in December, she vowed that she would be back on her feet soon. "My goal is to be walking as I've walked all my life," says Dorothy, a retired teacher's aide who, at 79, is full of vigor, opinions and hearty laughter. "You've got to keep on keeping on," she declares.

After Dorothy returned home from a rehabilitation facility, Nadhia came to her Bronx apartment to assess her needs and work on building her strength, balance and ability to walk. "We make sure she's safe," says Nadhia, who visits three times a week. "We want to help her become more independent and confident."

"I was very nervous at first," says Dorothy, "but now I'm home, I'm back to my life." Rehabilitation is often most effective in the patient's home, where the therapist and patient have to work around the real challenges of daily life, such as climbing stairs and showering. At home, Dorothy's daughter Genevieve, who is staying with her mother while she recovers, can also learn and reinforce the exercise program.

"She's highly motivated and independent and has progressed so well," says occupational therapist Benito Flores, who helped Dorothy regain her fine-motor skills and ability to perform self-care and activities of daily living.

She is eager to get back to her active life, especially to the kindergarten students, who flooded her mailbox with cards addressed to "Grandma." "But even if I can't go back to the kids," Dorothy says with a smile, "I'll still volunteer somewhere...maybe at the hospital. I'll always do something."



With Nadhia's help, Dorothy is well on her way. "At first, she was apprehensive. Even getting up from the couch made her nervous," says Nadhia. "Now she takes the initiative and feels more confident. She's doing so much better."

Board Member Mathy Mezey Salutes Our Award-Winning Staff at 2007 National Nurses Week Celebration

By S. Rita Reed, Communications Manager, Human Resources

Our 23 newest ESPRIT winners and more than 30 outstanding VNSNY nurses and other staff members who've won regional awards, served our agency for 30+ years, or been recognized for a range of other professional distinctions were honored May 30th at our 2007 National Nurses Week celebration.

Mathy Mezey, EdD, RN, FAAN, VNSNY Board member and Chair of the Executive Committee, addressed some 300 staff members and guests attending the celebration at the CUNY Center in midtown Manhattan. A nationally recognized nursing expert who serves on the faculty of New York University College of Nursing, Dr. Mezey shared that in 1960, her very first job was as a VNSNY nurse in the Bronx.

Board members who accompany staff members on home visits often find themselves "blown away," she said, adding that a board member who spent time at our agency's new hospice residence told her husband it was the "most profound experience of her life."

Staff members recognized at the event and presented awards by President and Chief Executive Officer **Gariel Raphael**, Chief Operating Officer **Juan Marrero**, and other agency leaders included:

- **Manhattan Acute Care Team 77**, winners of the highly competitive 2007 Home Care Association of New York State Caring Award and the 2007 ADVANCE Best Nursing Team Editor's Choice Award for compassionate and professional handling of the sudden death of beloved Patient Service Manager **Judy Ferry** in November 2006.
- **Carol O'Grada**, Director, Maternity Newborn Pediatrics and the Nurse-Family Partnership, NY/NJ regional finalist for SPECTRUM Nursing Excellence Award/Community Service.
- 23 new ESPRIT Awardees, including a Russian-speaking nurse who cared for a 96-year-old skating medalist from the 1938 Olympics; a nurse who



Mathy Mezey addressing staff members and guests at the CUNY Center in midtown Manhattan

helped a dying Filipino patient move enough to travel back to the Philippines so he could spend his final days at home; and a nurse from Trinidad whose open, tolerant manner makes her a hit with patients from Asia, Russia, Latin America and elsewhere.

• 30- and 35-year Service Milestone Awards to **Carol Rizzantello**, a Patient Service Manager, Bronx Acute Care, who joined our agency in 1972; and 30-year veterans **Neria Fernandez**, Team Facilitator, Queens Acute Care, and **Kathy Poreaud**, Public Health Nurse, Referral Services.

- More than 30 other staff members who were recognized for special academic achievements, professional publications, or media appearances.



Inclusion ESPRIT winners



VNS CHOICE ESPRIT winners



Acute Care and Congregate Care ESPRIT winners



ESPRIT Winners for Nursing

- **Megan Bailey**
Nurse Consultant, VNS CHOICE, Manhattan
- **Sara Baroff**
Professional Nurse, Long Term Home Health Care
- **Norma Patricia Byfield**
Nurse Consultant, VNS CHOICE, Queens
- **Theodora Cervantes**
Clinical Manager, Private Care Services, Patrons in Care
- **Ragnere Coffey**
RN Professional Nurse, Acute Care, Manhattan
- **Carol D'Amato**
Public Health Nurse, Referral Services
Disease Found Program Coordinator, Infection Care
- **Maura Ferguson**
Nurse Supervisor, Customer Care Center
- **Jayne Galagan**
Clinical Systems Specialist, VNS CHOICE
- **Jamillah Hagan**
Team Facilitator, Congregate Care
- **Arletha Hazel Jordan**
Public Health Nurse, Acute Care, Nassau
- **Margery Kirsch**
Clinical Nurse Specialist, Quality Management Services
- **Felicia Kravchinsky**
Nurse Consultant, VNS CHOICE, Brooklyn
- **Grace McQueen**
Patient Service Manager, Acute Care, Bronx
- **Jane Nash**
Public Health Nurse, Hospice Care
- **Juan Patricia Brown**
Public Health Nurse, Acute Care, Staten Island
- **Greeda Palkot**
Nurse Consultant, VNS CHOICE, Bronx
- **Alexis Parke**
Public Health Nurse, Acute Care, Brooklyn
- **Harris Roy**
Home Care Consultant, Business Development
- **Veronica Solloway**
Professional Nurse, Maternity Newborn Pediatrics,
Children & Family Services
- **Barbara Sparr**
Public Health Nurse, Visiting MD Program
- **Renee Webb-Duane**
Professional Nurse, Acute Care, Queens
- **Paula Wilson**
Hypertension Study Clinical Coordinator, Research Center



ESPRIT Award winners from Business Development and Referral Services, Pediatrics in Care and Clinical Support Services, Customer Care Center, Quality Management, Seniors and Research

VNSNY News



Chris Palkovik, Janice Goldberg, Eric Merson and Timothy Lynn were first place at the Silvercrest 3rd Annual Golf Classic.

Fare! — On Monday May 14th, **Eric Merson** (Manager, Operations, Business Development), **Chris Palkovik** (Executive Director, VNS CHOICE Select), **Timothy Lynn** (Director, Corporate Finance) and **Janice Goldberg** (Inspire Liaison, VNSNY Hospice Care) won first place at the Silvercrest 3rd Annual Golf Classic at the Mill River Club in Oyster Bay. The fundraising event, which raised more than \$100,000 and involved 100-plus golfers, was sponsored by Silvercrest Center, a 320-bed skilled facility in Bitherswood, Queens at which VNSNY provides care. Proceeds from the event will be used to support technology enhancements that will improve patient and nursing home resident safety, care and quality of life.

Gallery Show — New York University's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service is featuring artwork by **Jacob Victory**, Director of Operations for Rehabilitation Services. Influenced heavily by abstract expressionism, the exhibit, titled "Seeing Through Moments", is comprised of 10 acrylic and oil paintings of Jacob's portrait and landscape series. The pieces explore and challenge the distinction between the act of merely "looking" at faces and nature versus actually "seeing" or truly understanding what lies beneath the surface. The show, which runs until September 7th, is at the Gallery Space of the Wagner Graduate School, 295 Lafayette Street, in the Park Building, 2nd floor.

Honored — On May 17, **James O'Neal**, Associate Director of Marketing, VNS CHOICE, was presented the Community Service Award by the United Honda Cultural Council for service and healthcare education.



"Components" by Jacob Victory

Volunteer Department News



Volunteering awards at the luncheon were presented by Dorothy R. Hidalgo, President, Volunteer Council and a member of the VNSNY Board of Directors.

Volunteer Luncheon — In 2006, more than 1,050 people, including 300 students, volunteered their time and energy to help us bring the caring home to our patients and their families. Our volunteers donated more than 96,000 hours that, in dollar value, was worth \$1,425,000. To honor our volunteers, the Volunteer Department held its annual luncheon on May 30th at Bridgeway's restaurant at South Street Seaport.

The following volunteers received awards at the luncheon:



Hesterite Tan proudly accepts the 2006 VNSNY Mrs. Arthur S. Lakach Award for Distinguished Volunteer Service from Arthur Lakach, VNSNY Board member.

Hesterite Tan received the Mrs. Arthur S. Lakach Distinguished Volunteer Service Award.

Mal Lattin was presented the VNSNY Hospice Care Award for Commitment and Dedication.

The following volunteers received VNSNY Appreciation Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service:

Georgia Sager (CIVIL Street)

Mary Kelly and **Victoria Warkentin** (Brooklyn)

Confucius Pharmacy (Chinatown)

Jose Hernandez (Manhattan - 1250 Broadway)

Carol Fields (Bronx)

Aaron Frankel (Queens)

The **Community Spirit Award** was presented to **Vincent A. Fontana**, **CD Richard Ellis** for their ongoing support of our Annual Toy and Gift Drive.

Luna Around the World - On June 8th, volunteers from Goldman Sachs held a Luna Day for 55 senior patients at our VNS-CHOICE Adult Day Care Center. The Luna Around the World featured music, art projects and a Luna themed lunch. Everyone had a wonderful time.



Volunteers from Goldman Sachs held a Luna Day for 55 senior patients at our VNS-CHOICE Adult Day Care Center.

Early Head Start Golf Benefit - On June 14th, the Douglass Volunteer Fundraising Committee sponsored an 18-Hole Golf Outing to benefit the Early Head Start Program in the Rockaway community. The event was held at Towns Country Club at North Shore Towns and was attended by 49 enthusiastic golfers who supported VNSNY. Thank you to our Douglass volunteer co-chairs,

Linda Abers and **Mimi Aligant**:



Four of our 49 golfer fundraisers, from left to right: Inge Peters, Mimi Aligant (Co-Chair), Dr. Wendy Stepan, and Linda Abers (Co-Chair). Thanks for your participation!

VNSNY *In the News*

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, *Courier Life Publications*, and *The Jewish Press* all recently covered the announcement that the State Hospital Review and Planning Council and Public Health Council approved the Visiting Nurse Service of New York's acquisition of Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center's Certified Home Health Agency and Long Term Home Health Care Program. You can read these and other recent articles by going to the "VNSNY In The News" section that's on the home page of our Intranet.



Corporate Challenge - Back on June 21, nearly 150 VNSNY employees participated in the 3rd Morgan Corporate Challenge, a 5.1 mile road race in Central Park. It rained off and on throughout the evening, but that didn't stop our star athletes. Congratulations to all who participated.

News from Children and Family Services

Children and Family Services Awarded Three New Grants

By Judy Farrell, Administrator, Children and Family Services

Children and Family Services recently received three New York City grants. The first came in June when the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development awarded Children and Family Services a three-year \$195,000 annual grant for our Bronx Fatherhood Program (BFP).

The new Bronx Fatherhood Program will provide an opportunity for Children and Family Services to continue its tradition of leadership and innovation in its work with fathers. It will mirror the Father's First Initiative (FFI) in our Early Head Start Program in Rockaway, Queens, that's headed by **David Jones, MSW**, Director of Family Support Services. David will also direct the Bronx Fatherhood Program.



In another piece of exciting news, VNSNY recently received two new grants from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The first grant, which is for more than \$4.9 million, is to expand our Nurse-Family Partnership in the Bronx. The program, which currently serves 400 first-time, low-income moms in the South Bronx, will now serve an additional 300 moms in the Bronx who live in Community Districts 11 and 12 (zip codes 10461, 62, 66, 67 & 68). The second grant, also for more than \$4.9

million, will allow us to launch a NFP program in the Lower East Side of Manhattan that will serve 300 moms and their children.

Congratulations to **Carol Odehok**, Director of the Nurse-Family Partnership program at VNSNY, and her **NFP team in the Bronx** for providing a successful program for us to build upon. We anticipate expanding the Bronx NFP and launching the new Manhattan NFP this fall.

VNSNY Children and Family Services Launch First Annual Parent Day Luncheon

By Laura Enker, Director, Community Development
and Outreach, Children and Family Services

On May 23rd, a gloriously beautiful, sunny day, VNSNY's Children and Family Services honored parents from each of its programs — Nurse-Family Partnership, Maternity Newborn Pediatrics, Early Intervention, Early Head Start and Community Care for Children — for being the best parents they could be.

In addition to the parents, the event, which was held at our corporate office at 70th Street, included staff, board members and volunteers, public officials and private foundation sponsors. Together, they celebrated and proclaimed the importance and significance of parents in the lives of their children. Over seltzer and pasta, **Joan Marrow**, VNSNY's Chief Operating Officer, opened the event and, **Jennifer Austin Jones**, Special Advisor to Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs, presented a Pro-

clamation from Mayor Michael Bloomberg declaring May 23, 2007, "VNSNY Children and Family Services Parent Day". Rob Morrison, co-anchor of NBC's popular weekday morning show, "Today in New York," emceed the event. Staff and parents spoke at the podium about the strong bonds that exist between program and family. Parents who addressed the group were passionate, brave, and insightful. They told a range of emotional stories. Sometimes devastating, sometimes overwhelming, the stories were always authentic, heroic, and very moving. One parent said that her relationship with VNSNY has been a "beacon of hope", giving her and her children the opportunity to move their lives forward.

Several of our Children and Family Services Advisory Board members underwrote the event and Nicholasukon, Donna Karan, and others provided items for a gorgeous goodie bag that was presented beautifully by VNSNY volunteers and given to each family. Children and Family Services graciously thanks everyone for their participation and gives the incredibly positive response to the event. Children and Family Services is delighted to announce this as an annual event!

News from Children and Family Services

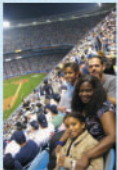
Bringing the Boys Home Conference — On June 1st, the VNSNY Early Head Start Program, Fathers' First Initiative, held the Third Annual "Bringing the Boys Home" Conference. Led by Children and Family Services' Director of Family Support Services, **David James**. More than 50 people attended the event, which was held at one of the program's most significant community partners, Full Gospel Tabernacle Church in Far Rockaway, Queens. Participants included community-based organizations — Cornell Cooperative Extension and Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center, city agencies — NYC Administration for Children Services and the Department of Education, along with EHS staff and parents from the program and community. The morning started with a lively discussion among a panel of fathers and mothers, followed by a debate between the fathers and local female social service providers. Two father awards were given: the Father of the Year Award was given to Horace Brown, who is involved in the EHS program and the Albert Hecks Award (in honor of an inaugural father who passed away in 2007) was presented to Mahamedh Gannon, whose family recently transitioned out of the program. As one participant stated, "Everyone needs to come to a conference like this to really understand what it's like for fathers!"

Senator Charles Schumer Receives the VNAA Senator of the Year Award



Judy DeH, VNSNY Government Affairs Director, (not with Senator Charles Schumer in Washington is June) to urge him to advocate to protect Medicare funding for home health care. Judy was joined by staff of the Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA) as she presented the Senator with the VNAA Senator of the Year Award. Judy is third from right.

Go Yankees!



On Tuesday, June 12, nearly 100 VNSNY employees, their families and friends, spent the evening watching the Yankees defeat the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Honored — **James Avery, MD, FCCP**, VNSNY Hospice Care, has been selected by the CHEST Foundation to receive the prestigious 2007 Roger C. Bone Advances in End-of-Life Care Award. The CHEST Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the American College of Chest Physicians, a 16,000-member, international medical specialty society. Dr. Avery will be honored on October 24 in Chicago and VNSNY Hospice Care will receive a grant for \$10,000.



Letters

to the Visiting Nurse Service of New York

Manhattan

The Kindness of Others

I am writing to express my deep appreciation for the efforts you (**Ruth Mitchell**) and your staff made to obtain a PR Screen on short notice several weeks ago to qualify my aunt for admission to a nursing home. I am overcome with gratitude for your spontaneous kindness and thankful for your professional skill.

Bonnie said in *Straw Hat and Blue Dress*: "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." In the play, it is an ironic comment. In life, we all depend on the kindness of strangers, usually to be disappointed. Not so, this time, not so, this time.

I am enclosing a contribution to the Visiting MD Program in appreciation and in the memory of my aunt.

At age 97 her kidneys quit on her and she died early and with little distress. She was a splendid woman and lived a good life, by her own testimony. That is the most we can ask.

Sincerely,
Leonard L. and Family, Washington, DC

Helped So Very Much

I would like to write a letter of commendation to the people who helped John so very much:

Nicole Atanasio – The VNSNY nurse who was very professional and on top of Mr. E's condition and actually told me to get him into a hospital.

Russell Cohen – Physical therapist who worked with John on his legs and had infinite patience with a sometimes uncooperative patient.

Lou Yau – The social worker who came to the apartment and was working on getting John on Medicaid. Lou was most intelligent and knowledgeable and kind.

Many thanks to all the above.

Caregiver and friend,
Ann W. Manhattan

Truly Blessed

My husband was discharged from New York Downtown Hospital last Wednesday. He had been admitted the previous Friday with a serious lung-infection of the groin. A surgical procedure to drain and clean the abscess was performed the following day. The Visiting Nurse Service of New York at the hospital arranged for home visits to dress the wound and teach me how to proceed.

We have so far been visited by three of your valued staff – Nurse **Carmen Santini Colao**, who interviewed my husband, Nurse **Tae Nhy Lee** and Nurse **Gandy Helm**, the weekend visitor.

You need to know that these three women have earned and deserve the very highest praise I can write. One and all, they are skilled, efficient, reliable, sensible, kind and gentle to the patient, and they have been patience personified with me, a somewhat awkward student. In addition, each has demonstrated a delightful sense of humor that makes a most relaxing situation for both my husband and me.

I can only add that I think you are truly blessed to have such people on your team and, without question, their excellence reflects beautifully on the standards you (**Genny Field**) and your manager, **Amy Wain**, establish for your practice.

Sincerely,
Hyge A. Manhattan

Outstanding Examples of Quality Personnel

This letter is to acknowledge my gratitude for the professionalism and courtesy shown to me by your organization.

I underwent a kidney stone operation and was visited several times by your representatives to change dressings and observe my progress. They came to my home and helped me enormously.

Two individuals stand out: **Nick Chen** and **Nancy Washburn**. Both were so helpful and solicitous and I consider them outstanding examples of quality personnel.

Respectfully,
Robert E. Manhattan

Terrific!

I am writing to tell you of the very special and very professional care I am receiving from Nurse **Neille Hawkins**, who has been treating me for a recent ileostomy. Neille has come early in the morning and late in the afternoon to fit into my scheduled doctor visits. She has even come on her day off when I was in pain.

She has consulted with the VNSNY wound specialist because my stoma was not protruding and discussed various treatments with the specialist and me. Neille has remained calm and soothing when I got upset. She has explained everything very thoroughly. She is working with me to make me independent and able to handle my ileostomy all on my own.

In short, Neille Hawkins is terrific!

Cordially,
Joan M. Manhattan

Staten Island

Always Had A Smile on Her Face

I would like to write this letter to commend **Lauren Duke** for the wonderful way she has treated my daughter Corinne.

Lauren always had a smile on her face and immediately put my daughter at ease the first time we met her. Lauren made a very trying time for my daughter much easier. If all of your nurses are as wonderful as Lauren then all patients of VNSNY are very lucky.

Thank you,
Mrs. Debbie M., Staten Island



Outstanding Quality of Home Care Services

I am taking the opportunity to write to you about the outstanding quality of home care services that I recently received from your staff. I was hospitalized in Manhattan due to the total replacement of my left hip. Upon my release from the hospital, I began receiving nursing, physical therapy and laboratory/technician blood test services from your organization.

Although I have never received home care services for myself prior to this time, I do consider myself an authority on the provision of this type of care. Prior to my retirement from the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS), I was the Director of Contract Relations for the NYC Home Care Services Program. I had an extensive and varied career in the Home Care Services Program and am very familiar with quality care issues.

Two VNSNY people that were assigned to my care were: Nurse **Pita Mavlija**, and Physical Therapist **Mosny Virata**. Each was extremely professional, very knowledgeable about their job responsibilities, very caring and considerate of me, and they were all responsive to my special needs and specific recovery issues. They both took the time to notify me in advance of the time and date of their scheduled visits. Despite adverse weather conditions (snow and ice), they managed to arrive at my home on schedule with a positive and pleasant attitude. I don't believe that I could have put together a better support team even if I had interviewed and hired them myself.

Please extend my sincere appreciation to the above named staff members. Congratulations to the Visiting Nurse Service of New York Home Care program on the quality of your commitment to your patients, and to the high standards you set (and achieve) from your staff.

Very truly,
Helene W

Diligent Care

My father is 84 years old and is declining health due much to the deterioration inflicted by Alzheimer's disease. He just recently was suffering from some very stubborn pressure sores on his ankles and buttocks. As often as we moved him and as many different recommended creams and ointments we applied, we couldn't seem to make any headway. It was

at this time that we had the good fortune to be assigned to one of your employees, Nurse **Wicent Brigande**. Mr. Brigande's diligent care prevented what could have become a life-threatening infection and instead my dad enjoyed a complete recovery from his wounds. Nurse Brigande earned my respect and gratitude for his dedication to his work. He should be praised for his knowledge, professionalism, and compassion. He is truly an asset to your team in the difficult work that you perform.

Respectfully yours,
James B., Staten Island

Nassau

Exceptional

As I mentioned to you today in a phone call, my husband and I have had several illnesses that required home nursing care.

We have never come across a more pleasant, reliable, and professional group than your **Team 2**. We started with **Arlette (Lisa) Jordan** and she and every other nurse was exceptional.

Thank you again,
Audrey L. Nassau

Deepest Gratitude and Appreciation

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to VNSNY for sending **Lisa Patone** to my home for physical therapy following my total hip replacement. I truly believe caring and concern along with her highly developed physical therapy skills were a critical factor in my speedy recovery. I am grateful for Lisa and credit her technique and dedication with bringing me along in such a short time.

Sincerest thanks!
Mona S., Nassau

Grateful for Your Care and Concern

Please know that as of this date my wound is completely cared and my cancer is in clinical remission and so much of that is thanks to you all especially, **Roni Chastain, RN**, and **Gail DeLoas, RN**. I am grateful for your care and concern and friendship.

Thank you so much,
Dorothy H., Nassau

Westchester County

Completely Impressed

I was recently under the care of one of your nurses, **Escaí Laglañen-Morada**, and a physical therapist, **Jim Bonomo**. In addition, I had a couple of visits from a home assistant whose name I don't remember, and one with a social worker, **Sandra Nohewicka**.

I am writing because I was completely impressed with the superb treatment I received from each of the fine people who visited me under your auspices. My first visits were from Ms. Laglañen-Morada and Mr. Bonomo the day after I returned home from the hospital where I had undergone surgery. They were both very reassuring, highly skilled professionals. They immediately put me at ease and made me feel that I would receive excellent treatment at their hands. And I did.

It was extremely reassuring to have such pleasant, caring people in my home so soon after my surgery. Ms. Laglañen-Morada checked my vital signs and my dressings each time she visited and gave me some excellent advice. Mr. Bonomo worked with me to get me back on my feet, gave me some simple exercises designed to get me back into reasonable condition, and soon started walking with me in the neighborhood to help me get my strength back. Both of them were inevitably pleasant and reassuring.

The same was true of all of the people you sent to me. Ms. Nohewicka came only once, but her visit was extremely helpful. She passed on a considerable amount of useful, practical information for which I am most grateful.

Until this experience, I knew virtually nothing about the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. I now consider it to be one of New York's finest institutions. I can't thank you enough for being there and for providing such splendid service at an extremely difficult time in my life.

Sincerely,
Burton L. Westchester

Three Cheers!

I am writing this letter to compliment Ms. **Lucia Aguilera**. She recently cared for my brother and mother. Aside from her outstanding nursing skills in general, her

diagnostic skills combined with her "no stone left unturned" thoroughness actually saved my mother's arm, if not her life. While initially assessing my mother, who was just transferred to her care, Lucia carefully evaluated her. She discovered her arm was swollen and her hand was turning bluish. She felt that she had a DVT. She contacted her physician and described everything and then sent her to the ER. My mother did indeed have this "rarely seen" DVT and was treated accordingly.

Three cheers for Lucia Aguilera – you should consider video taping her as a learning tool for future nurses. She would be a sterling example of everything a visiting nurse should be and more!

Sincerely,
UK, Westchester

Brooklyn

An Exceptional Person and Therapist

I am a patient receiving home physical therapy with your employee, **Lisa Weister**. I wanted to write and let you know what an exceptional person and therapist she is.

She is always pleasant, helpful, knowledgeable, and I look forward to our sessions. I feel that she has helped me enormously and I feel that due to her attention and expertise I have made a great strides in my goals for recovery.

I am grateful that VNSNY has such an exceptional therapist in its staff and grateful that she was sent to help me with my recovery.

Thank you,
Rodney K. Brooklyn



Knowledge, Patience and Kindness

I am writing this to express our deepest appreciation to you for sending **Jane Gledowski**, a nutritionist in your Long Term Home Health Care Program, to give a very informative and enjoyable workshop on the subject of fiber. She made a relatively "dull" subject into an informative and pleasant meeting including questions and answers.

Jane was well prepared with materials and demonstrations of healthy eating. Suggestions were given for the best way to seek, find, and put a healthy amount of fiber in our diet.

The unanimous conclusion by the audience is that we would be very grateful and eternally indebted to VNSNY if she could come back in the future and talk to us about sugar, cholesterol, and diet for hypertension.

As a VNSNY client, with Jane as my nutritionist, I consider myself blessed by her knowledge, patience, and kindness. Jane is an excellent representative for VNSNY. She left each person in the group very curious about your services.

Sincerely yours,

Theodore M., St. Brendan House, Ivesdale, Conn.

Such Wonderful Professionals

After my recent surgery, the Visiting Nurse Service of New York sent **Miss Mihaluka**, RN, and physical therapist **Laera Niggett** to help with my recovery. I am writing to inform you how helpful and caring they each were. They not only did their jobs but tried to encourage me and boost my spirits when I felt depressed.

Thank you for sending such wonderful professionals.

Sincerely,

Blair R., Brooklyn

Bronx

Good Feelings Toward VNSNY

I have very good feelings toward VNSNY for three reasons. First, I remember my mother as a Visiting Nurse in Queens during World War II - the pride she took in her work, and how she looked in her VNSNY uniform. Second, seven years ago I had a total hip replacement. **Louis DePasquale** was my physical therapist from day-five after surgery. He worked with me and guided me back to full function. Now, at age 80, I fell and broke my other hip. At the hospital I requested VNSNY and asked that Louis DePasquale again be my physical therapist.

Sandy he is the best...a consummate professional. He again offered me a relationship that was strong and honest. He was a wise counselor and friend. He first checked my home, and advised me on precautions for my safety and comfort. He always checked my heart and blood pressure as a guide for my tolerance of the exercises. He gave me an overview of the sequence we would be following. He worked on strength and balance and fall prevention. He explained the purpose of each exercise as he worked with me on it. He advised me on which exercises I should do on my own, and which I should only do when he was with me. He taught me and monitored simple tasks of everyday life: walking, opening heavy doors or tight windows, stairs, curbs, irregular pavements, etc. He gauged my progress and discussed it with me.

Now my hip is better. I have progressed from a walker to a cane. I have overcome many of my fears, and my heart seems to be a little stronger. I can now drive my car, take a short walk outdoors, and realize that independent living is now possible. I realize that because of the large amount of arthritis in my hip my goals have to be realistic, but I am determined to pursue exercising to keep my muscles strong, but to avoid situations that could overtax me. I will always be grateful to the Visiting Nurse Service of New York and to my good fortune in again having Louis DePasquale as my therapist.

Sincerely,

Miriam M., Bronx

Thoughtful and Sensitive

We greatly appreciate all the work **Mary Smith**, RN, did on behalf of our mother. Her caring and dedication was above and beyond anything we could have asked for. She was thoughtful and sensitive to our mother's needs as well as ours. Thank you for all her hard work.

Sincerely,
Susan H. Brown

Warm and Personable Attitudes

I am writing to thank and commend you for services provided to me. These services helped me immensely. I would also like to thank and commend your employees, **Michelle Kramer**, RN, and **Rahul Ravipati**, physical therapist, and my home health aide. I commend your employees for their warm and personable attitudes and the fact that they seemed to enjoy doing their jobs, which as a patient helps speed recovery. Nurse Kramer seemed to be very much interested in the care of her patients, not a personality aspect one can turn on and off in my opinion. Your therapist, Rahul, provided very good care and information on how to strengthen body parts to regain independence. He got me on my feet (prosthetic). Again, I thank you and your staff for the excellent care.

Sincerely,
Bishop P. Brown

P.S.: I am adding my thanks for my brother's care to this letter. Bishop is walking using a cane thanks to VNSNY — Mike P.

Queens

Good Fortune

There is an old Yiddish saying (roughly translated): "When you have misfortune, you also need at the same time to have good fortune."

I have the misfortune to have breast cancer and heart disease but I also have the good fortune to have had **Jane Berkieri** sent by the Visiting Nurse Service of New York to dress my wounds.

I am so impressed by her expertise, her compassion, her thoughtfulness, her insight, her perception, her sincere interest, her humanity.

She is so knowledgeable about what is available in products to make wound dressings more comfortable. She spared me endless itching by changing the type of dressing on my chest wound. She used a more comfortable dressing on my husband's diabetic foot ulcers.

It has been a blessing to have her take care of our nursing needs. Thank you for our Visiting Angel.

Sincerely,
Judith W. Queen

Above and Beyond

I am writing this letter to express my sincere gratitude for the services of my former nurse, **Lois Florkin/Heater**.

Lois was my primary care nurse for several months, and I could not have asked for a kinder, more caring or professional nurse. She was always available to me, was always on time and treated me and my wound with careful attention. There were several times when Lois called me to inquire about new medication and to double check on the possible contraindications of my meds. She went above and beyond the usual care.

Lois was always cheerful and pleasant, especially when my mood was bleak. She very often made me laugh in spite of myself. She was truly a God-send to me.

I felt I had to write this letter to tell you what a wonderful nurse Lois is. She is an asset to the VNSNY organization.

Sincerely,
Rosemarie T. Queen



A Nurse in the Highest Tradition

There are not enough superlative words to describe the dedication, the compassion and the excellence of **Raina Abrams**. Her care for my wife was unparalleled.

She is a nurse in the highest tradition. Thank you for assigning her.

Very truly yours,
David R. Quarm

Kind, Caring and Informative


I am writing this letter to you because I had to tell you how very pleased I am. My mother came home from the hospital last year in June. I do not know what I would have done without the help of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. Your nurses were kind, caring and informative. They made me feel comfortable and took care of my mother with such a caring attitude. They taught me how to care for her. I thank all of them from the bottom of my heart. My thanks to **Jane Abernathy**, a special thanks to **Maria Caswell**. She is very pleasant and professional. I thank all of the nurses - it's very true: they bring the caring home.

Sincerely,
Betty E. Quarm



FrontLineFocus

FrontLine Focus, which is published by the Marketing Department, welcomes your comments, letters and articles. Please contact Michael Delaney mdelaney@vnsny.org

 Visiting Nurse Service of New York
"Bringing the Caring Home"

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New York, New York 10001

EMPLOYEE BULLETIN

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Visiting Nurse Service of New York ("VNSNY") would like to take this opportunity to affirm our commitment to equal employment opportunities.

It is the policy of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York and its subsidiaries and affiliate corporations¹ to treat all employees and applicants for employment without unlawful discrimination as to sex, gender, age, race, color, national origin or ancestry, citizenship status, marital status, genetic disorder, predisposition or carrier status, military status, status as a victim of domestic violence, sex offense or stalking, partnership status, or other protected category in all employment decisions, including recruitment, hiring, compensation, training and apprenticeship, promotion, upgrading, demotion, reassignment, transfer, lay-off and termination, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

It is also our policy to prohibit harassment of any employee on the basis of sex, gender, age, race, color, national origin or ancestry, citizenship status, marital status, genetic disorder, predisposition or carrier status, military status, status as a victim of domestic violence, sex offense or stalking, partnership status, or other protected category.

All management personnel are responsible for ensuring that these policies are communicated to, and understood by, employees reporting to them and that the policies are adhered to at all times.

If you experience or observe any conduct that you believe to be unlawful discrimination or harassment, please report it immediately to your supervisor, manager, or director, or contact:

Marion Hain, Director of Human Resources
1250 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, New York 10001
212-689-7880 Marion.Hain@vnsny.org

VNSNY prohibits retaliation of any kind against any employee for reporting unlawful discrimination or harassment, assisting in making a report, cooperating with the investigation of a report, or testifying as a witness in such matters.

Carol Righard
President and Chief Executive Officer

¹ This policy applies to subsidiaries of Visiting Nurse Service of New York and employees of its subsidiaries and affiliate corporations, including Visiting Nurse Service of New York Home Care, VNS OASIS, VNS OASIS Community Care, VNS Group Health Plans, Care and VNSNY Health Care.

