

COMMUNITY FOCUS

NEWSLETTER OF VISITING NURSE SERVICE & HOSPICE OF SUFFOLK, INC.



VISITING NURSE SERVICE &
HOSPICE OF SUFFOLK, INC.



FEATURE ARTICLE: 60 YEARS OF CARING 1952-2012



This past fall, Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk celebrated its 60th anniversary with a gala casino night at the Larkfield Manor. Since its inception in 1952 originating under the name Visiting Nurse Service of Huntington Township, the agency has grown surely and steadily, expanding into the multi-faceted organization that it is today.

This was a celebration not just for the agency but for everyone in the community who has been a part of Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk throughout the years. Over 200 people came out to share this milestone with us, including donors, staff, past and present board members, volunteers, as well as patients and families.

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As stated by the founding president of the Visiting Nurse Service of Huntington Township, Inc. in 1952, H. Stuart Ortloff aptly summed up the dedication that Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk is built upon.

“Time is not of the clock or the calendar in these days, but of the essence. No one has it to spare, but there is an art in using it. The nursing profession, which is the art of caring for the sick and preventing illness, thus promoting health, is one of the greatest arts and most valuable use of time in this scientific age. The growth of the Visiting Nurse Service is but a reflection of the universal growth in the demand for more and better health services.”

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HEART to HEART
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Hospice House kitchen became clinical work station.

ANGELS IN THE STORM

While Hurricane Sandy was barreling up the east coast with great fury, most of us were taking the necessary precautions to secure our homes; stocking up on food, water and storm supplies, the entire VNSHS staff was also on high alert

working to ensure patient safety. The day before the storm hit, field clinicians were busy preparing Home Care and Hospice patients for the storm – making sure they knew what to do, where to go, and had enough medication to weather

the aftermath.

The exceptional patient care that Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk provides emanates from the everyday heroes who work here. The events of Hurricane Sandy barred no exception and the dedication and commitment of the VNSHS staff throughout the crisis was proof of that.

Power was lost immediately at our main office at 505 Main Street and at Hospice House, but thanks to a back-up generator at Hospice House, operations kept running and house became the temporary command center until power was restored at the main office. With power being out at the main office, the IT department physically moved the computer system to Hospice House so staff could have access to all clinical programs and electronic files.

Staff graciously pitched in to cover areas normally unfamiliar to them. They gathered together at the house – nurses, therapists, aides, as well as administrative, billing, and clerical staff – to help out, wear different hats, and do whatever was necessary to operate under the unusual circumstances.

The challenges were numerous, with top priority being the safety and welfare of all patients and field clinicians. Another obstacle was maintaining communication with patients while the answering service was inoperable because of downed cell towers, spotty texting, and poor road conditions. Finding gasoline became a secondary problem very quickly during that week, and thanks to many gas stations our staff was permitted to get gas discretely to make sure they could reach



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To Our Staff,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank you for your dedication, professional work ethic, and passion for this organization and the patients we serve. Hurricane Sandy brought tremendous devastation to Long Island and the surrounding areas. In the midst of the approaching storm, you insured that our patients were instructed on how to prepare for the storm, letting all of them know our first priority was their care and safety. Our staff went above and beyond to insure that we had adequate staffing at the house which was filled to capacity. You also put your own homes and traveling debris filled roads with limited gas, to make sure your patients were cared for.

Again, thank you for your dedication to the patients and to this organization. An organization is only as good as its staff and this is why year after year we are recognized to be among the very best in the country. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy and its aftermath, this year it is also because you were committed to your patients under extraordinary circumstances.

With best wishes for a Happy New Year, thank you so much.



Robert Cogliati, President
VNSHS Board of Trustees

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERYDAY
 CHRP COMMUNITY HEALTH ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

patients and the Hospice House to continue to perform their duties.

Throughout the week-long emergency, more than 400 patients in Home Care and Hospice were contacted and cared for during the storm. Staff shared and swapped responsibilities and mobilized where needed. Before, during and after the storm staff dealt with dangerous situations, working through treacherous conditions all to ensure that patients had medications and provisions, but most importantly, were safe and cared for.

Overall, it was a learning experience that resulted in a new and improved Emergency Contingency Planning Policy Manual to better handle future catastrophes.

Rising to the occasion, all agency employees contributed extraordinary effort during a time of unforeseen complications. Working together, they were able to overcome obstacles and continue to render the professional service on which VNSHS sets its uncompromising standards. As a result, every patient was well attended to and accounted for proficiently by the unparalleled work ethic the staff displayed throughout the events of the harrowing storm. ❤️



Temporary command center in lower level of Hospice House.



HEART to HEART

From our hearts to yours,
Linda Taylor, RN, BSN, MA
Chief Executive Officer

This is an open letter of sincere thanks to all for the exceptional cooperation and caring that I witnessed first-hand over the last four months, beginning from the celebratory time in October when our agency marked 60 years of professional yet personalized service in our community. Well-deserved accolades for reaching this milestone were subsequently tested to the max when we were all challenged by Hurricane Sandy and Winter Storm Nemo that followed. Gratefully, all came together to help each other – families, professionals, and volunteers alike – recognizing that we were truly in these crises together, and that individual roles only mattered to the extent that each was able to contribute to the solution as a group – a larger family of all working together to help each other. Staff and volunteers not only did what they do every day, but did more under extraordinary circumstances and at times when their own personal situations compromised their respective normal routines. Even now, 4 months after Sandy, and as we continue to dig out from under Nemo, we have begun to recognize the more subtle impact of the weather, as patients present with new and/or complications of previous health issues that surfaced following the stress of their experiences.

With that as background this is also an open letter of sincere thanks for the help I received in my own personal crisis during that same period of time when my sister passed peacefully at our Hospice House on Christmas Eve Day. It has always been my philosophy both personally and professionally to treat others as you would like to be treated yourself, and when it comes to health care at all levels, especially at the end of life, this could not be more important. Our staff and volunteers are to be commended for their loving care and compassion, and respect for families that demonstrates they live this philosophy daily. At a time when my professional and personal roles merged at the Hospice House, I was privileged to be permitted to focus on my personal role, to be the sister, thanks to the professionalism of all who surrounded me there. The best endorsement I can offer anyone considering Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk for home care or hospice is to tell you that I personally have used both for my own family members, who, as do yours, deserve the very best. ❤️

A yippity-yapping good time was had by all.



CONGRATS TO OUR WINNERS:

Owner/Dog Look Alike ~ Denise Nocella and Andre
Funniest Dog ~ Susan Lenihan and Bugsy & Murphy
Cutest Puppy ~ Paul Permakoff and April Rose

Most Original ~ Pat Puente Matos and Max & Lyka
Children & Dog Dress Up ~ Christopher O'Leary and Dante
Best in Show ~ Debra Puznacle-Olsen and her pooch Gina

OUR 2ND ANNUAL "PAWS FOR A CAUSE"

While the entire Northeast was bearing down and buckling up for the impending "super storm," nearly 100 dogs and their owners arrived in full costume, and spirit, to participate in VNSHS' 2nd annual Paws for a Cause Halloween Charity Dog Walk & Contest. It was definitely a day out of "Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day," but folks didn't

let the weather stop them and we managed a terrific turnout for the Halloween Costume Contest and parade to benefit Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk.

Owners and their pooches began the day at our main office, located at 505 Main Street in Northport, where the fun and festivities kept everyone busy. First order of business was the costume contest.

Contest winners were:

Owner/Dog Look Alike ~ Denise Nocella and Andre
Funniest Dog ~ Susan Lenihan and Bugsy & Murphy
Cutest Puppy ~ Paul Permakoff and April Rose
Most Original ~ Pat Puente Matos and Max & Lyka
Children & Dog Dress Up ~ Christopher O'Leary and Dante

Best in Show ~ For the second year in a row, Debra Puznacle-Olsen and her pooch Gina raised the most funds and won Best in Show at the event. They were awarded the grand prize of an 11"x14" charcoal animal portrait donated by Marlene E. Bezich, Studio of Fine Art.

After the contest, the pooch brigade headed to Northport Village Park, where dogs and owners alike enjoyed the unusually gusty walk through town.



A big thank you to the staff at North Shore Veterinarian Hospital for judging the costume contest – people's creativity really shined through.

**13th Annual
Run For The Health Of It**

5K Race/Walk & Kids Fun Run (Saturday, May 11th 2013)

Fun for the whole family

- Games • Face Painting • Children's Characters • 100's of Giveaways • Massage & Chiropractic Tent

Course:

USATF Sanctioned Race,* starting at 505 Main Street in Northport
A challenging rolling hills course includes 1.6K of the historic Cow Harbor course.

Results posted at www.flrrt.com

* USATF competition rules DO NOT permit strollers, baby joggers, bicycles, roller skates/blades or animals in the race.

Race Entry Fee:

\$25 – 5K Race/Walk (on-site)
\$20 – Pre-race Entry Fee
\$10 – Kids Fun Run

For More Information:

Call 631.930.9310

www.visitingnurseservice.org

PROCEEDS SUPPORT OUR ANNUAL BEREAVEMENT RETREAT FOR CHILDREN

WITH JUST UNDER 100 PARTICIPANTS!

Top Dog Sponsors:

Pet Port

Northport Animal Clinic

Clifford Sponsors:

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All Island Media

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Dr. Gregory Letica,

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Hoops of Northport

Additional sponsors: *All Island Media, Big Bear Pizzelli, Champion Car Wash, Doggie Don's Pet Center of East Northport, Elise and Alan Pearlman, Just Dogs of East Northport, Marlene E. Bezich Studio of Fine Art, Northport Fire Department, North Shore Veterinary Hospital, The Kitchen by Waterside Caterers, and The Peticular Pet of Huntington.*

Once again, we are grateful to all of the businesses that contributed to this event and helped to make the day a success.

Thank you to all who came out to have a yippity-yapping good

time with their pets while simultaneously helping to support VNSHS. We look forward to seeing you again next year with the same joyful enthusiasm... all for a great cause and for the love of our pets! ❤️



BE IN THE KNOW:

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PATIENT

Patients have the right to control what treatment(s) they do or do not want in the event they should become ill. The 1990 Patient Self-Determination Act (PDSA) encourages all people to make choices and decisions now about the types and extent of medical care they want to accept or refuse should they become unable to make those decisions due to illness. This means that if you become ill, the doctor or nurse will explain treatment options, and you have the right to accept or refuse treatment. If you are unable to make decisions, a family member and/or friend can make these decisions for you if you have an Advance Directive. Advance Directives are legal documents that allow you to convey your decisions about end-of-life care ahead of time. They provide a way for you to communicate your wishes to family, friends, and health care professionals, as well as avoiding confusion later on. The two most common types of advance directives are the durable power of attorney for health care/health care proxy and the living will.

Durable power of attorney for health care/health care proxy - The durable power of attorney/health care proxy is a document in which you direct your chosen surrogate or proxy (agent) to make all of your health care decisions if you become unable to do so. This proxy (agent) whom you choose can decide which specific kinds of treatments or procedures you do or do not want. If your wishes in a certain situation are not known by your agent, that agent will make decisions based on what he or she thinks you would want. This person should be someone



you trust to carry out your wishes. New York State laws require that this all be put in writing, signed by you, and witnessed by two people.

Living Will - The living will is a document designed to control future health care decisions when you become unable to make these decisions on your own. The living will is a formal document that must be written and signed by you, the patient. In addition, the document must be witnessed. This living will gives written instructions about certain medical conditions and the treatment(s) that you would want. The living will may allow life-sustaining treatment to be stopped in the case of terminal illness or permanent unconsciousness. If a person has hope of recovery, the living will may not apply. You may terminate or revoke a living will at any time.

It is very important to not only have a health care proxy, but a living will should you become unable to consciously make those decisions, and to protect surviving heirs from undue stress and financial burden. ❤️

FEATURE CONTINUED:

60 YEARS OF CARING 1952-2012

Along with a lavish cocktail hour, dinner, and dessert, the evening held many other delights for its guests. Casino tables opened after the cocktail hour and gaming went on into the night while live entertainment kept the party going.

A focal point of the evening came when Assemblyman Andrew Raia awarded a proclamation from the Town of Huntington for providing 60 years of exemplary service to the community. The agency proudly accepted.

Katherine 'Cissy' Moffat, honorary chairperson and former board president (1988 -1994), was also honored for her years of dedication to the organization. She is still an active volunteer for VNSHS & the Community Thrift Shop

of Huntington, and is just as passionate now as when she first joined the organization in its earlier years.

60 years strong, and we are very grateful to all who have supported us



ABOVE: Linda Taylor, Chief Executive Officer accepts a proclamation from Huntington Town Assemblyman Andrew Raia for providing 60 years of exemplary service to the community.

LEFT: Hospice volunteer Ed Basche takes home his winnings.



over the years – our donors, staff, volunteers, and “angels” along the way who have helped us grow and prosper, as well as enabled us to continue to provide the highest level of care to those who need us most.

Learn more about how Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk began, download our 16-page booklet ‘A History of Caring and Community’ online at www.visitingnurseservice.org 

**THANKS TO
ALL WHO
SUPPORT
OUR EFFORTS.**

Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk, Inc.

Linda Taylor, RN, BSN, MA
Chief Executive Officer

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UPDATE: UPCOMING EVENTS

A Taste of Long Island

Thursday, April 18, 2013 – The Chateau at Coindre Hall

A unique food & spirits tasting event held at the Chateau at Coindre Hall in Huntington from 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm. Advance tickets are \$75 per person (\$85 at door) and includes tastings from Long Island restaurants, breweries and vineyards, along with live entertainment and a 50/50 raffle.

13th Annual Run for the Health of It!

5K Race/Walk & Kids Fun Run – Saturday, May 11, 2013

To benefit our Annual Children’s Bereavement Retreat for Children. Fun for the whole family! Part of the 2013 USATF-LI Grand Prix Road Race Series.

9th Annual Charity Golf Classic

Monday, August 5, 2013 – Indian Hills Country Club

\$1,000,000 Hole in One Shootout, Awards and Chinese Auction. 10:30 am check in and breakfast, 12:00 noon shotgun start, followed by a full day of golf on the beautiful course of the Indian Hills Country Club. Cocktails, dinner and awards presentation.

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Visit us online at visitingnurseservice.org

The Townwide Fund of Huntington and the United Way of Long Island.
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