

The **VNA Care** NETWORK & HOSPICE *Caring* CONNECTION

Fall 2008

DONORS SUPPORT MAJOR RENOVATIONS AT STATE'S FIRST HOSPICE HOME

VNA Care Network & Hospice recently embarked on a \$1.8 million capital campaign to renovate Chilton House, the state's first hospice home for the terminally ill, as well as establish a patient care fund.

The converted two-family residence has touched the lives of more than 2,000 people since it opened in Cambridge's Huron Village in 1991. Chilton House offers a homelike setting for terminally ill patients to live and receive hospice, a combination of physical, emotional, practical, and spiritual support. Loved ones also receive support, and care helps both patients and families focus on life. (VNA Care Network & Hospice also has hospice residences in Needham and Worcester.)

"We want Chilton House to continue being a place of compassion and comfort," said Karen Green, president and CEO of VNA Care Network & Hospice. "The best way to achieve this is to make repairs and renovations that preserve the homelike setting and improve the surroundings for patients and families."

VNA Care Network & Hospice is being supported in this effort by the Hospice of Cambridge Development Committee,



Chilton House

a group of volunteers who played a pivotal role in raising funds to establish the home as well as continuing to support nonprofit hospice care in the Cambridge area.

Donations to the Chilton House capital campaign will be used to:

- Expand from four to five bedrooms each with a private bath
- Add nurses stations on the first and second floors

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FAMILY TURNS TO CHILTON HOUSE FOR LIFE-AFFIRMING HOSPICE CARE

An aggressive brain tumor was slowly taking Dr. Kenneth (Ken) Dawson from his family.

This gentle, intelligent man spent 25 years as a child psychiatrist helping troubled youths and their families. He was given nine to 18 months to live. Traditional and experimental treatments weren't working. He became more confused and paranoid. Seizures kept him in and out of the emergency room.

It was clear during his last hospital stay that he would not be able to continue living in his childhood home in Cambridge with his wife, Susan Dawson, and their three children. He was taken from the hospital to his new home, Chilton House, in June 2007.

Chilton House is one of three hospice residences operated by VNA Care Network & Hospice. The residences feel like

homes instead of medical facilities. Hospice staff from VNA Care Network & Hospice offer physical, emotional, spiritual, and practical support to help patients and their loved ones focus on life. Hospice is also available in patients' own homes, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities.

"The staff at Chilton are so kind. They have such an understanding of what people need and the desire to do it," said Connie Dawson, Ken's sister.



Dr. Kenneth Dawson

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CHILTON AIMS TO BE FIRST HOSPICE TO ACHIEVE “GREEN” DESIGNATION

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- Enlarge the living area
- Make other updates and renovations to offer even more comfort for patients and loved ones
- Establish a patient care fund for grief and bereavement services, provision of hospice care for those in need, and maintenance of the residence and grounds

TAKING THE “LEED” IN RESIDENTIAL HOSPICE DESIGN

Renovations at Chilton House will be made with the goal of becoming the first home of its kind in New England to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification in the homes category.

Making Chilton House a “greener” place will help the environment

while creating quiet, comfortable, and attractive surroundings that are more economical to operate and maintain.

SUPPORTING COMPASSIONATE CARE

You can help terminally ill patients and their families today and in the future by making a charitable gift to Chilton House. Donations may be made online at www.vnacarenetwork.org or contact Jane Woodbury, vice president of business and fund development, at 617-547-2620, ext. 1360; 888-663-3688, ext. 1360; or jwoodbury@vnacarenetwork.org.

CAMPAIGN AND CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Get updates about the capital campaign and follow the changes at Chilton House by signing up for VNA Care Network & Hospice’s e-communications at www.vnacarenetwork.org.

Tickets on sale Nov. 13 for
11th annual Holiday Pops

BENEFITING VNA CARE NETWORK & HOSPICE AND THE ROTARY CLUB OF MARBLEHEAD HARBOR

Saturday, Dec. 13
at 8 p.m.
in Abbot Hall, Marblehead

Featuring Dirk Hillyer and the Hillyer Festival Orchestra

Dessert reception at 7 p.m.

For more information, visit www.vnacarenetwork.org or contact Jodi Vigneron at 781-631-1900, ext. 1363 or jvigneron@vnacarenetwork.org. For ticket information only, call 781-631-9449.

FAMILY FEELS FORTUNATE TO HAVE SUPPORT OF CHILTON HOUSE

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Susan saw a transformation in her husband after he moved to Chilton House. “The paranoia left. ...He stopped being frantic. He was sweet, compassionate, lovely.”

The family was able to enjoy their last weeks together and even celebrated Susan and Ken’s 25th wedding anniversary at his favorite restaurant. Connie said, “Before Chilton House, all we did was worry. All of a sudden Ken was safe. We could focus on being a sister, wife, or kids again.”

During his last days, the clinicians at Chilton House kept Ken comfortable. Connie said they seemed to anticipate his needs. “We didn’t ever have to worry or start advocating for him,” she said.

The family gathered for what they knew would probably be their last time together. A nurse made sure Ken wore his

favorite Red Sox T-shirt so the children’s last memory of him wouldn’t be in a hospital gown.

Connie recalled, “We were tense and anxious, and the staff could see it. Lola (a nurse) took his hand and started singing. She calmed all of us down. She just transitioned us, and we were fine.”

Ken passed away on Aug. 27, 2007, at the age of 59. “We couldn’t keep him from dying, but we gave him the best death possible. ... We feel very lucky,” said Connie.

For more information about hospice, call 800-728-1862. Take virtual tours of VNA Care Network & Hospice’s residences in Cambridge, Needham, and Worcester at www.vnacarenetwork.org.

MEN'S CLUB DONATION WILL BRIGHTEN DAYS OF HOSPICE PATIENTS

The Retired Men's Club of Greendale, Inc. in Worcester has brought music to the ears of hospice patients.

The organization's Charities Committee donated \$1,000 to VNA Care Network & Hospice with a portion to be used for the purchase of CD players.

"A surprising number of patients don't have access to music," said Mary Anne Sullivan, hospice volunteer manager for VNA Care Network & Hospice. "Playing patients' favorite music can get them to reminisce, brighten their day by allowing them to sing along, or even help them to relax."

Hospice offers physical, emotional, practical, and spiritual support to the terminally ill and their loved ones with an emphasis on pain and symptom management for patients. VNA Care Network & Hospice provides care in patients' homes, hospice residences (Chilton House, Cambridge; Rose Monahan Hospice Home, Worcester; and Tippett Home, Needham), nursing homes, and assisted living and other facilities.

Frederick J. Gay, a member of the Retired Men's Club and a 15-year hospice volunteer, recently presented the check to Sullivan. Hospice volunteers will use the CD players with patients in Central Massachusetts including those living at the Rose Monahan Hospice Home in Worcester.



Mary Anne Sullivan, hospice volunteer manager, and Frederick J. Gay, member of the Retired Men's Club of Greendale

For more information about hospice care, call the Referral Center at 800-728-1862. To learn about charitable giving or volunteering, visit www.vnacarenetwork.org.

ARE YOU GETTING A FLU SHOT?

Vote in VNA Care Network & Hospice's first online poll at www.vnacarenetwork.org. While you're on the web site, get tips for staying healthy this flu season, and see the schedule of immunization clinics.

KEEP WELL CLINICS FOR SENIORS AIDED BY AREA COMPANIES

Area businesses are helping seniors stay healthy by supporting VNA Care Network & Hospice's Keep Well Clinics at senior housing and community centers around Eastern and Central Massachusetts.

The clinics offer seniors a chance to meet one-on-one with a nurse from VNA Care Network & Hospice for health screenings, education, and referrals to social and medical services. Nurses can help detect health problems before they escalate into larger issues and aid seniors in maintaining or improving their health so they may continue living independently.

VNA Care Network & Hospice thanks the following businesses for their generous donations to the 2008 Elder Wellness Campaign:

GOLD SPONSOR

The Protector Group Insurance Agency, Inc.

SILVER SPONSORS

Atlantic Charter Insurance Company and Gorton's Seafoods

BRONZE SPONSORS

Abbott Bioresearch Center; Cape Ann Savings Bank; Prime, Buchholz & Associates, Inc.; Robert Reiser & Co., Inc.; and Westfield Capital Management Co., LLC

CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS

Dedham Savings; Martin Bros. Contracting Co., Inc.; Nova Electronics; and Rockport National Bank

OTHER SPONSORS

Bowditch & Dewey, LLP; Cape Ann Insurance Agency, Inc.; Cape Ann Marina Corp.; E. L. Harvey & Sons, Inc.; Glover's Floor Coverings, Inc.; Good as Gold Coffee; Grand Banks Building Products, Inc.; Hutchinson Medical; J.P. Campbell, Inc.; Lee Realty Co.; Manchester Womens Club; Nichols Candies, Inc.; Secured Self-Storage, Inc.; Varian Semiconductor Equipment Associates, Inc.; and Vita Needle Company, Inc.

For a schedule of VNA Care Network & Hospice's Keep Well Clinics, visit www.vnacarenetwork.org.

WOMEN SEEKING HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES WON'T HAVE TO GO IT ALONE

VNA Care Network & Hospice recently unveiled a new program to help women at risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other diseases make long-term lifestyle changes to improve their health.

Healthy Women, Healthy Lifestyle takes a unique approach by combining health screenings with individual and group counseling over the course of one year.

“When you go for a physical, the doctor may tell you to start exercising or stop smoking and to come back in a year. That’s a big challenge for women who don’t have access to resources that will help them make permanent changes or know where to start,” said Joan Schaefer, RN, Women’s Health Program manager.

Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation, nurse educators from VNA Care Network & Hospice will work with women in Danvers, Gloucester, and Haverhill on a year-long project to help them make positive lifestyle changes. Nurses will offer screenings for blood pressure, bone density, cholesterol, body mass index, and other measurements that indicate if a woman is at risk for developing health problems.

Participants will choose one or two lifestyle changes they would like to achieve. They’ll receive personalized

recommendations and support during one-on-one sessions and attend three health education programs on topics such as increasing physical activity, nutrition, and stress reduction. As women work toward their goals, they’ll be eligible for prizes that support their new lifestyles.



Joan Schaefer, RN, Women’s Health Program manager

Women with high blood pressure or other significant risk factor(s) will be referred to a physician. Clients who are uninsured and underinsured and facing financial challenges may also be linked to their local health center for additional health care services.

Healthy Women, Healthy Lifestyle is enrolling women now for this year-long project. To learn more, contact Joan Schaefer at 888-663-3688, ext. 1264 or jschaefer@vncarenetwork.org.

W. PATRICK HUGHES ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VNA Care Network & Hospice recently welcomed W. Patrick Hughes as a member of the VNA Care Network board of directors.

Hughes brings extensive experience in sales, marketing, and strategic business planning within the insurance industry to this volunteer role guiding the agency's nonprofit home health care services. For more than 100 years, VNA Care Network's home health care programs have allowed individuals to cope with illness and injury while remaining in their own homes. Specialized disease management programs are available for asthma, cardiac disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, and wounds.

Hughes is currently division president of health plan operations for Fallon Community Health Plan (FCHP). A 10-year veteran of the National Football League, Hughes holds a bachelor’s degree from Boston University and is a

member of the university's Scarlet Key Society and the Boston University Athletic Hall of Fame. He has served on the Technical Advisory Committee of the National Health Policy Council in Washington, D.C., and is a former member of the board of trustees of the New England Baptist Hospital.



W. Patrick Hughes

HONOR LOVED ONES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON DURING THE ANNUAL LIGHT A LIFE AND HOSPICE TREE OF MEMORIES PROGRAMS

VNA Care Network & Hospice offers a meaningful way to honor caregivers, friends, family, and loved ones or memorialize those who are no longer with us during the annual Light A Life and Hospice Tree of Memories programs.

These annual festivities celebrate the joys of the holiday season while raising funds to support home health care and hospice services in local communities. Donors to Light A Life and the Hospice Tree of Memories honor a wide range of people — spouses, parents, children, teachers, and even pets. VNA Care Network & Hospice will notify the honoree or other designee of the generous gift or the donor may choose to receive cards from the agency.

DEDICATION CEREMONIES

Light A Life tree dedication ceremonies are scheduled for December. Join VNA Care Network & Hospice for complimentary refreshments and entertainment and honor people who light your life.

The sixth annual Light A Life celebration in Marblehead will feature a performance by the Village School fifth and sixth grade chorus at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, in the Marblehead Savings Bank, 21 Atlantic Ave., Marblehead.

The Hospice of Cambridge Development Committee will host the 16th annual Light A Life ceremony at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 9, at the Cambridge Trust Company, 353 Huron Ave., Cambridge.

The ceremonies are generously sponsored by the Cambridge Trust Company and the Marblehead Savings Bank.

MORE INFORMATION/MAKING A GIFT

For more information or to make a gift to either program, please visit www.vnacarenetwork.org or contact Jodi Vigneron, development associate, at 888-663-3688, ext. 1363 or jvigneron@vnacarenetwork.org.

CHILDREN'S CHOICES GROWS TO SERVE 114 CITIES AND TOWNS

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Her “lifesaver” is volunteer Barbara Lubin, who gives Erika a break from the demands of caregiving. “Just to not have to worry about anything for four hours and know he’s in good hands, being played with and cared for — it’s such a relaxing feeling,” said Erika.

Over a year later, both Brycen and Children’s Choices have grown substantially. Through an additional grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Children’s Choices recently added 28 cities and towns in suburban Boston to its service area, bringing the total to 114 communities in Massachusetts.

Brycen has defied the odds. At 17 months, he weighs 20 pounds and is nearly three feet tall. Erika added, “Children’s Choices has been wonderful. It’s my first recommendation for parents in a similar situation.”

For more information about VNA Care Network & Hospice’s home health care, palliative care, and hospice services for pediatric and adult patients, call 800-728-1862.



Children’s Choices volunteer Barbara Lubin (left) helps mom Erika Eisnor (right) by taking care of Brycen (center) a few hours each week.

HOW TO REACH VNA CARE NETWORK & HOSPICE:

Service Information
800-728-1862

Mailing List and Donations
888-663-3688, ext. 1370

Web Site
www.vnacarenetwork.org

Bequests
888-663-3688, ext. 1360

Hospice Volunteer Opportunities
Central Massachusetts/North Shore:
888-663-3688, ext. 6887
Eastern Massachusetts:
888-663-3688, ext. 4271

PEDIATRIC PALLIATIVE CARE HELPS ENTIRE FAMILY COPE WITH PREMATURE BABY'S SERIOUS MEDICAL CONDITION

Getting the care and support of Children's Choices, VNA Care Network & Hospice's pediatric palliative care program, was like "being handed a bag of gold."

"I don't think I would have made it this far without it," said Erika Eisnor. Her son, Brycen, was born prematurely in April 2007 and given a five percent chance of surviving. He spent the first four months of his life in a newborn intensive care unit before joining his parents and two sisters at their Charlton home.

Erika was managing Brycen's oxygen and extensive needs for COPD and other health problems while also caring for the rest of her family. A home health care nurse from VNA Care Network & Hospice began visiting Brycen weekly to check his lungs and monitor his health. She introduced the family to a new resource from VNA Care Network & Hospice for children with serious illnesses and their families.

Children's Choices offers a total approach to care — physical, emotional, social, and spiritual — to help children 18 years or younger and their families continue living as fully as possible during a life-limiting illness. Services are provided at no cost to families through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

In addition to nursing visits for Brycen, the Eisnors have received support from a social worker, expressive arts therapist, massage therapist, and trained volunteer. "The reassurance from everyone who comes here is just amazing," said Erica.

She credits an expressive arts therapist with helping five-year-old Faith adjust to having a seriously ill brother. The therapist used playtime, drawing, and crafts to get Faith to talk about the situation and realize "it would be okay. After a few visits, Faith was a totally different child," said Erika.

Erika received support from a social worker who "always managed to come when I was having the worst day ever. It was really good because I had her to talk to and release it all."



Brycen Eisnor, born prematurely, has defied the odds.

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