

# The *Caring* CONNECTION

VNA Care NETWORK & HOSPICE

Spring 2009

## KEEP WELL CLINICS AMONG WAYS SENIORS MANAGE THEIR HEALTH

Area seniors can add a monthly visit to VNA Care Network & Hospice's Keep Well clinics to their list of ways to stay healthy and active.

Clinic nurses offer health assessments, including blood pressure, blood sugar, and weight monitoring, as well as education and referrals to community resources at locations in 19 cities and towns.

"The nurse gives me good advice, reassurance, and encouragement that keeps me going," said 87-year-old Mona Kuczun.

When Kuczun's doctor told her she was in danger of developing diabetes, she was scared, unsure what to eat, and began losing weight. Kuczun learned how to manage her new diet with help from Faith Theokas, RN, who meets with seniors at a clinic in Boxford. Kuczun gained back the weight and feels confident planning healthy meals. She continues seeing Theokas for monthly blood sugar checks, medication management, and more.



Faith Theokas, RN, (left) and Mona Kuczun

The clinics are free to seniors age 60 and over thanks to support and funding from local boards of health, Greater Worcester Community Foundation, Marblehead Female Humane Society, North Shore United Way, St. Vincent Community Health Care Fund, Topsfield-Boxford Community Club, United Way of Central Massachusetts, WHEAT Community Services, and other foundations. The clinics were also supported through the 2008 Business Campaign and by individual donors.

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## GOVERNOR APPOINTS CEO KAREN GREEN TO NURSING BOARD

Karen Green, RN, president and CEO of VNA Care Network & Hospice, was recently appointed to the Board of Registration in Nursing by Governor Deval Patrick.

The Board of Registration in Nursing leads in the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth through the fair and consistent application of the statutes and regulations governing nursing practice and nursing education.

Green is the first representative from the field of home health and hospice care to be appointed to the board. Home health care brings nursing, rehabilitation therapy, and other services into patients' homes to help them cope with illness and injury. Hospice offers physical, emotional, spiritual, and practical support for the terminally ill and their loved ones.

"I'm very pleased to see that Governor Patrick and his team value community-based care and have taken a giant step forward in giving the specialty of home care and hospice a seat on the board," said Green.

As president and CEO of VNA Care Network & Hospice, Green oversees nonprofit home health care, palliative care, and hospice services in more than 200 Eastern and Central



Left to right: Karen Green, Linda Chenevert, and Donna Layton

Massachusetts communities as well as hospice residences in Cambridge, Needham, and Worcester; inpatient hospice in Worcester; child care centers in Dedham and Worcester; and a variety of wellness programs.

Green was sworn in for her three-year term on the Board of Registration in Nursing by Commissioners Donna Layton and Linda Chenevert.

For more information, contact VNA Care Network & Hospice at 800-728-1862 or [info@vnacarenetwork.org](mailto:info@vnacarenetwork.org) or visit [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org).

## HUSBAND AND WIFE FIND LOVE AND COMFORT AT HOSPICE HOME FOR TERMINALLY ILL

Janice Tupaj awoke one spring morning to find her speech wasn't quite right. Fearing a stroke, her husband John brought her to the hospital.

A CAT scan revealed a mass in her brain. She was sent to another hospital for further tests. An MRI showed a large, embedded, inoperable brain tumor, and a biopsy confirmed it was cancerous.

Radiation and chemotherapy did little, and Janice's health deteriorated. She was unable to write and had difficulty speaking. Janice spent much of her life caring for others, as a mother to her two children and volunteer ministering to the sick and elderly at a local nursing and rehabilitation center.

It was time for her to let others return the care and compassion she had always so generously given to others. At the recommendation of her oncologist, John brought Janice to live at the Rose Monahan Hospice Home in Worcester.

The residence, part of VNA Care Network & Hospice, is a home-away-from-home for people facing a terminal illness. Patients and families receive physical, emotional, spiritual, and practical support with an emphasis on pain and symptom management for patients. Hospice care helps patients and their loved ones focus on life and making the most of their time together. (VNA Care Network & Hospice also offers hospice care in patients' homes and at hospice residences in Cambridge and Needham.)

“ I can't say enough about the care...it was superb,” said John. “Janice had total peace at the house. There was so much love there.”

John and Janice found a supportive community at the Monahan Home. “There's such warmth and comfort there. And so much love from the aides, volunteers, and nurses,” said John, who visited daily.

The months at the residence brought old friends back into their lives. They discovered a hospice volunteer had been their neighbor over 40 years ago when they were newlyweds. Another patient's cousin had been the bridesmaid at a relative's wedding. A clergyman who had played an important part in



Janice and John Tupaj

their life returned to Central Massachusetts to spend time with them.

They developed new relationships as well. John recalled helping a patient make his wish to go fishing one last time a reality. John brought his fishing gear to the house, and the two men spent time on Coes Pond, which is located behind the Monahan Home. Another patient shared the book *90 Minutes in Heaven* to bolster John's spirits after a tiring day.

The Tupajs' faith was a central part of their life, and VNA Care Network & Hospice's chaplain became a supportive presence during Janice's time at the Monahan Home. Our chaplains are available to patients and families — regardless of beliefs, cultures, and values — to talk, listen, comfort, assist with memorial or funeral service arrangements, and more.

Janice planned her own funeral service, choosing songs and scriptures that she loved. John was at her side when she passed away just three days before their 47th wedding anniversary.

“I can't say enough about the care...it was superb,” said John. “Janice had total peace at the house. There was so much love there.”

### INFORMATION

If you or a loved one are facing a terminal illness, contact VNA Care Network & Hospice to see how we can help. Call 800-728-1862 or e-mail [info@vnacarenetwork.org](mailto:info@vnacarenetwork.org). More information is also available at [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org).

## MAKING COLON CANCER PERSONAL: A FRIEND REMEMBERED



Carol Jones, RN, CWOCN,  
senior enterostomal therapist

*By Carol Jones, RN, CWOCN,  
Senior Enterostomal Therapist*

My friend Beth was 55 years old when she was diagnosed with colon cancer. It was stage four, the worst kind.

She was a woman who loved life and lived it to the fullest. She played soccer three nights a week and rode her bike 20 miles twice a week. She was bright,

strong, and capable, but she didn't have a colonoscopy at age 50 as recommended.

She died, and I miss her terribly. So I want to give you some basic information on colon cancer in hopes that your friends and family will not have to go through the pain that I have in losing a treasured friend.

Colon cancer is the second leading cancer death in America. But, if found in the early stages, colon cancer has a five-year survival rate of 90 percent. If the cancer spreads out of the colon to other organs, it only has a five-year survival rate of 10 percent. The key is to find it early.

### **RISK FACTORS FOR COLON CANCER INCLUDE:**

- Family history of colon/rectal cancer
- Personal history of cancer of the colon, ovary, endometrium, or breast
- Polyps in the colon
- History of ulcerative colitis or diagnosis of Crohn's disease

### **EARLY SYMPTOMS OF COLON CANCER INCLUDE:**

- Change in bowel habits such as constipation or diarrhea
- Blood in stool
- Stools that are narrower than usual
- Abdominal discomfort
- Weight loss that is without known cause
- Vomiting

### **YOU CAN LOWER YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING COLON CANCER BY:**

- Exercising and maintaining a healthy weight
- Eating a healthy diet that's low in fat, especially saturated fat, and high in fruits and vegetables
- Stop smoking
- Limiting alcohol consumption

Please get your colonoscopy at age 50, or earlier if you have the above risk factors. Your friends and family will love you for it!

Talk to your doctor for advice tailored to your medical history and needs.

## VOLUNTEER HONORED FOR OVER THREE DECADES OF SUPPORT

VNA Care Network & Hospice recently named Danvers resident Mollie Taylor recipient of the annual Barbara G. Flagg Volunteer of the Year Award for her support of the agency's nonprofit home health care, hospice for the terminally ill, and wellness services.

The Barbara G. Flagg Award was established by VNA Care Network in 1986 in memory of a dedicated volunteer who worked tirelessly to support the agency's mission of compassionate health care.

For more than three decades, Taylor has been an active volunteer, donor, and advisor. A resident of Danvers, she served on the board of the Danvers VNA and, in 1979, played an important role in the creation of VNA North Shore, now part of VNA Care Network & Hospice.

Jane Woodbury, vice president of business and fund development, told a gathering of the North Shore Friends of VNA Care Network & Hospice, "Mollie supports our fundraising

efforts by always being on the lookout for grant opportunities and other sources of assistance for our mission of caring. The help she provides our Danvers office staff is invaluable — assembling patient admission folders, reviewing new materials, and helping wherever she's needed. We are grateful to have Mollie as a volunteer and supporter for so many years."



Mollie Taylor

# CHILTON HOUSE RENOVATIONS STARTED THANKS TO DONOR SUPPORT

Renovations are under way at Chilton House and are expected to be completed later this year.

The former two-family home has been completely gutted and structural elements repaired and strengthened. Rooms are beginning to take shape, with frames in place for the kitchen, bathrooms, dining room, two of the five bedrooms, some of the closets, and nurses stations. View photos of the progress at [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org).

As *The Caring Connection* went to press, geothermal wells were being drilled for the heating/cooling system. Soon after, excavation will begin for the addition and elevator shaft foundation.

## CONSTRUCTION AND CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Follow the changes at Chilton House and get campaign updates by signing up for VNA Care Network & Hospice's eNewsletter at [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org).



Breaking ground at Chilton House are (left to right) Karen Green, president and CEO, VNA Care Network & Hospice; Jane Woodbury, VP, Business and Fund Development, VNA Care Network & Hospice; Pat Thornton, chair, Hospice of Cambridge Development Committee; Joe Roller, president and CEO, Cambridge Trust Company; Joanna Scott, Hospice of Cambridge Development Committee; and Carol VanDeusen Lukas, VNA Care Network Foundation Board of Directors.



S+H Construction moves in equipment.  
Chan Mock Architects are also involved with the project.



The porch and ramp were removed to make way for an addition.

# FREE KEEP WELL CLINICS OFFER A VARIETY OF HEALTH SCREENINGS

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Michael Cronin began attending the Keep Well clinic at Canterbury Towers in Worcester about five months ago after seeing an announcement in the complex's newsletter. He said it was months since he'd seen a doctor or had any medical care and had stopped taking his blood pressure medication. Cathy Blatchley, RN, helped Cronin get back on track by arranging for him to see a doctor. Cronin is now a regular at the clinic, where the nurse monitors his blood pressure, blood sugar, and general condition between doctor's visits.

For a complete schedule of Keep Well clinics, visit [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://www.vnacarenetwork.org) or call 800-728-1862.



Cathy Blatchley, RN, and Michael Cronin

## BEQUEST SOCIETY GIVES DONOR FLEXIBILITY, OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE A LEGACY

Helen Wayland describes herself as the “type of person who always likes to be doing something,” and VNA Care Network & Hospice has helped the 96-year-old stay active for 45 years.

“The VNA has been a wonderful part of my life — mentally, physically, and socially,” said Wayland.

She first learned about the nonprofit’s mission of caring in 1964 as a volunteer for the Topsfield/Boxford Community Club, which runs a consignment shop that supports VNA Care Network & Hospice and other charities. She later served on the board of directors of VNA North Shore, now part of VNA Care Network, guiding the agency’s work and making lifelong friends.

The difference VNA Care Network makes in people’s lives hit home when Wayland became a patient for the first time several decades ago. She was recovering from a burst kidney and said the nurse who cared for her at home was a “lifesaver.”

Wayland has turned to VNA Care Network & Hospice at other times in her life, most recently while dealing with pneumonia. Her nurse got her back on her feet so she could return to the activities she enjoys.

### ESTABLISHING A LEGACY OF CARING

Wayland wanted to help VNA Care Network & Hospice continue caring for the community, “but I didn’t know how much money I’d need for my retirement.”

She opted to leave a charitable gift to VNA Care Network & Hospice in her will. Known as a bequest, individuals may leave a specific dollar amount, percentage or residual of their estate, or an asset, such as real estate, to a nonprofit organization. Donors may also designate how their gift is to be used, such as for hospice, or make an unrestricted gift, which allows VNA Care Network & Hospice to use the funds where most needed.

Donors who tell VNA Care Network & Hospice about their bequest are honored during their lifetime with membership in the Caring Connection Bequest Society.



Karen Green, president and CEO of VNA Care Network & Hospice, (left) and Helen Wayland, both members of the Caring Connection Bequest Society

### GUIDELINES FOR MAKING A BEQUEST

To make a bequest:

1. Contact your attorney about establishing or amending a will to include a bequest.
2. Designate VNA Care Network or VNA Care Hospice as the recipient.
3. Note whether the gift is unrestricted or marked for a specific service, such as hospice. Unrestricted gifts will be used wherever needed most.
4. Indicate the amount or percentage of the gift and list any specific property.
5. If you desire, notify VNA Care Network & Hospice of the bequest so you can be included as a member in the Bequest Society and thanked for your generosity.

### INFORMATION

To learn more about making a bequest, contact Jane Woodbury, vice president of business and fund development, at 888-663-3688, ext. 1360 or [jwoodbury@vnacarenetwork.org](mailto:jwoodbury@vnacarenetwork.org).

## 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](http://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

## GIFTS TO CHILTON HOUSE NEEDED TO MEET FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE, HELP TERMINALLY ILL

VNA Care Network & Hospice has been challenged to raise \$500,000 in new gifts to the Campaign for Chilton House by an anonymous philanthropist. Once the challenge is met, the anonymous donor will contribute \$500,000 towards the campaign goal of \$1.8 million.

“Every gift gets us closer to providing compassionate care for the terminally ill in homelike surroundings,” said Jane Woodbury, vice president of business and fund development for VNA Care Network & Hospice. “By making a donation now, you will help us meet this challenge and bring us closer to the overall campaign goal.”

Chilton House, located in Cambridge, was the first residence of its kind in Massachusetts. Since 1991, individuals with cancer, pulmonary disease, cardiac disease, Alzheimer’s, AIDS, and other terminal conditions have moved to the residence when they could no longer remain in their own homes. Staff and volunteers at Chilton offer a combination of physical, emotional, practical, and spiritual support. Loved ones also receive support, and care helps both patients and families focus on life.

### HOW YOUR DONATION HELPS

The residence is in need of repairs and renovations after



Chilton House has helped over 2,000 patients and families.

nearly two decades of community service. Donations to the Campaign for Chilton House will be used to create five bedrooms each with a private bath, add nurses stations on the first and second floors, enlarge the living area, make other updates and renovations, and establish a patient care fund for grief and bereavement services and provision of hospice care for those in need. Naming opportunities are available.

Donations may be made online at [www.vnacarenetwork.org](http://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](mailto:jwoodbury@vnacarenetwork.org) for more information.

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- Reduce your risk for colon cancer
- Bequest Society a flexible way for retirees to make a difference
- Keep Well clinics help seniors stay healthy

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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