



House Calls

SUMMER 2008 VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL JERSEY VOLUME 19 NO. 2



BELFORD
Registered Dietician
Karen Campbell
recently enrolled the
Davis family in the
WIC program.

VNACJ Responds to Economic Stress

When Judy Davis returned to her job two months after having her second son, Jaedon, she was ready for "work as usual." She had been employed as a marketing coordinator for a national home builder for seven years and knew what was expected in her job. What she didn't expect was a nationwide housing crisis that resulted in her being laid off immediately upon her return to work. And she didn't expect to be sitting, four months later, at the VNA of Central Jersey Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutritional Program site waiting to qualify for formula and supplemental food vouchers.

"Before I lost my job, we were doing pretty well," says Judy. "We were able to pay our bills and make ends meet. Now we're watching every penny, living paycheck to paycheck. The baby's formula costs \$50 a week," she adds. "With only one paycheck coming in, that's a big expense."

Making ends meet

Judy's husband Demery works for a car lube service in Old Bridge. The couple has made significant adjustments in their lifestyle since Judy's layoff. They purchase gas for the car as they need it and try to drive as little as possible. The family recently moved from the house they were renting into a less expensive apartment where utilities are included.

"We try to watch our expenses and make good decisions," said Demery. "We have a six-year old in the first grade. He wants to do the same things his other friends are doing, but those extra activities cost money. It's not easy to explain that to a little boy."

For Judy, losing her job meant more than losing just a weekly paycheck. She also lost the family's healthcare benefits. "We just qualified for New Jersey KidCare [government-funded children's health insurance] for the two boys," said Judy. "I was really worried, especially with the baby so young. Demery and I are doing without insurance, so we just have to stay healthy and hope nothing happens."

Continued on page 4

INSIDE



Thrift Shop Goes Over the Top
Thrift shop honors volunteers and announces its 2007 proceeds.

4



VNACJ Opens New Office in Monroe Twp.
Monroe resident is glad to have her nurse just around the corner.

5



VNAA Award for Home Health Aide
VNACJ's John McCarthy receives national recognition.

6



Here to Help in Hard Times

A depressed real estate market, rising food prices and higher fuel costs affect everyone. The young family profiled on the first page of this issue is one of thousands who are relying on WIC and other VNACJ programs to help make ends meet.

Our agency has been part of a humanitarian safety net since its founding. On her national radio program in the 1940s, Eleanor Roosevelt commended our organization for doing "an exceptionally fine job" in meeting the health needs of the community, including its seasonal farm workers. When patients of Marlboro Psychiatric Hospital were transitioned into the community in the years prior to the hospital's closing in 1996, nurses of our Mobile Outreach Program were there to provide first line health care. When rising health care and insurance costs began to put health services out of reach for people with lower incomes, VNACJ founded a primary care center that has become an independent Federally Qualified Health Center with four locations.

We continue to foster an environment where flexibility and innovation are not only encouraged but expected. Our course has always been determined by the needs of the community and its people, and we have stayed true to that vision.

Sincerely,

Judith Stanley Coleman
Chairman

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House Calls

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www.vnacj.org

Thrift Shop Announces Record Gift



The VNACJ Thrift Shop announced its 2007 net proceeds at the annual luncheon honoring shop volunteers. Celebrating the record-setting gift are (l to r) Vita Leach, thrift shop vice chair; Kevin Rogers, VNACJ chief financial officer; Jacqueline Zurla, thrift shop chair; Mary Ann Christopher, VNACJ president and CEO; and Joy Hermsen, thrift shop treasurer.

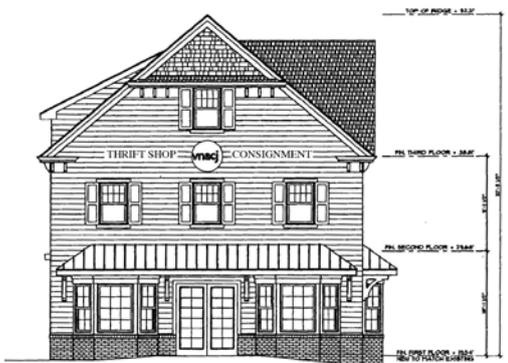
The VNACJ Thrift Shop in Manasquan celebrated an all-time record gift to the VNA of Central Jersey in the amount of \$212,000. The donation was announced at the thrift shop's 48th annual volunteer luncheon held at Doolan's, Spring Lake Heights.

"I thank all of you for your tremendous effort in giving more than 18,800 hours in volunteer time to the VNACJ Thrift Shop," said VNACJ President and CEO Mary Ann Christopher in accepting the check. "Last year VNACJ served more than 104,000 people throughout the community. It is becoming increasingly difficult for many to afford the health care they need. We are able to be the safety net provider for many of these people because of your work."

Awards and milestones

Fifty of the more than 175 shop volunteers were recognized for reaching milestones of service, ranging from 100 to 2,000 hours. In addition, VNA of Central Jersey presented the annual Rosemary Cook Leadership Award to Vita Leach, a 14-year volunteer and Manasquan resident. She is vice chair of the thrift shop board of managers and has given more than 2,000 hours of service to the thrift shop. The award was established in memory of Rosemary Cook, a long-time volunteer and 10-year thrift shop board member. Mrs. Leach received this award in recognition of her dedication and outstanding leadership.

To volunteer, or to find out more about the VNACJ Thrift Shop, call the shop at 732-223-1923.



The thrift shop's success has it bursting at the seams. Located at 69 Main Street, Manasquan, the shop will soon expand by adding a second story.



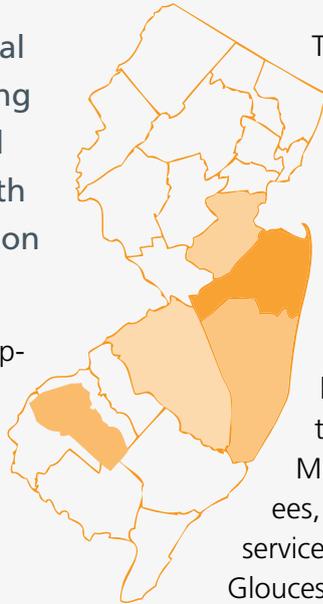
Thrift shop volunteers are all ages! Here, Barbara Collins, a thrift shop volunteer for 30 years, greets Elizabeth Bitsko, 16, the shop's youngest volunteer.

VNACJ Affiliates with South Jersey Home Care Provider

Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey has finalized a joint operating agreement with Visiting Nurse and Homemaker Services, a home health agency serving patients in Burlington and Gloucester counties.

“The VNACJ board of trustees is in full support of the affiliation with VNHS,” said Judith Stanley Coleman, VNACJ board chairman. “The agencies are a perfect complement for each other in both services and mission.”

“We are excited about joining Visiting Nurse and Homemaker Services to enhance and expand home and community-based care options for the residents of Burlington and Gloucester counties,” said Mary Ann Christopher, VNACJ president and CEO.



The VNHS Board of Trustees unanimously supported the affiliation. “We are pleased to see two fine nonprofit organizations working together to expand our services and maintain our commitment to the community,” said Robert D’Augustine, VNHS Board Chair.

Currently, VNACJ has more than 1,100 employees and provides home health, hospice and community-based care to more than 100,000 individuals annually in Monmouth, Middlesex and Ocean counties. With 80 employees, VNHS provides similar home health and hospice services to 1,300 patients annually in Burlington and Gloucester counties.

“The affiliation is a win-win for our dedicated employees, who will become part of an even stronger organization, and for the thousands of individuals and families whose lives we will touch in the months and years ahead,” said Wayne Whelan, VNHS Executive Director.

VNA of Central Jersey Responds to Economic Stress *(continued from page 1)*

A growing need

Meanwhile, Judy has been looking for employment for several months. She tries to be optimistic. “We know things will get better. We just qualified for formula and food vouchers,” Judy smiles. “That’s a big help, believe me.” On average, formula-fed infants receive \$120 a month in formula vouchers and women and children receive \$48 per month in food vouchers. This can be used to purchase milk, cheese, eggs, peanut butter or dried beans, juice, and cereal.

The Davises are not alone. “We’re hearing stories like these more and more,” says Robin McRoberts, manager of the VNACJ WIC program. “It’s been busier than I can ever remember.” The number of family units participating in the VNACJ program increased by nearly 1,000 in a year—from 18,564 in March 2007 to 19,538 in March 2008.

WIC is a federally funded nutrition program open to children from birth to age five, and to pregnant women and those who have recently delivered. VNACJ administers WIC in Middlesex and Monmouth counties, and part of Somerset County. Eligibility is determined based on family income and the number of people in the family.

WIC participants receive anemia screening and vouchers for the purchase of selected nutritious foods, such as formula,

milk, cereal, cheese and eggs. One of WIC’s goals is to decrease the rate of childhood obesity through sound nutrition counseling and education.

The program also encourages breastfeeding and offers the services of a lactation consultant. The Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program at the Asbury Park WIC site has resulted in an increased percentage of breastfeeding mothers and led to healthier mothers and babies. In 2007 more than 32,000 mothers and children received WIC services through the VNACJ program.

Help for Families

WIC Nutrition Program

Monmouth County: 732-471-9301

Middlesex County

Perth Amboy Area: 732-376-1188

New Brunswick Area: 732-249-3513

VNACJ Community Health Centers

Asbury Park: 732-774-6333

Red Bank: 732-219-6620

Keyport: 732-888-4149

Keansburg: 732-787-1250



New Regional Office in Monroe

VNACJ has opened a regional office in Monroe Township, at 7 Centre Drive, Suite 10. “Our new office gives us a welcome presence in the community,” says Eileen Fay, clinical director. She notes that a local office enhances her staff’s ability to present talks and participate in health fairs at the region’s senior communities, as well as to interact with health care professionals in the area.

One of them is Stephanie Fitzsimmons, a nursing manager who coordinates and manages services to five adult communities for Saint Peter’s University Hospital, New Brunswick. She confers with VNACJ nurses about mutual clients and includes the agency in educational program offerings.

“The wonderful characteristic of VNACJ is the level of service they bring to the community,” Ms. Fitzsimmons says. “They offer nurses, home health aides, rehab therapists, and a hospice program. It’s a full-service professional organization with a longstanding reputation in the area.”

To reach the Monroe Regional Office, call 732-224-7782. For patient referrals, please call toll-free at 800-862-3330.

Glad to Have a Nurse Around the Corner

Arline Kornfeld, a Monroe Township resident and widow of a World War II veteran, remains a woman of sparkling wit despite years of coping with complex medical problems. The most recent episode began in February.

“I walked from the kitchen to the bedroom, and like a leaf falls from a tree, I just floated down to the floor,” Mrs. Kornfeld vividly recalls. Fortunately, she wears a medical response device, and help arrived a few moments after she pressed the button.

The decision was made not to take her to the hospital. Instead, Arline’s physician called VNACJ, who placed her care in the capable hands of Kim Pahira, RN. Visiting twice a week, Kim helps her patient manage a daunting group of



Kim Pahira, RN, updates Arline Kornfeld’s record on a specially programmed, hand-held computer. Like her patient, Kim is a Monroe Township resident.

illnesses that have hospitalized Arline Kornfeld many times. They include serious cardiac and respiratory problems, asthma, diabetes and sleep apnea.

One of Kim’s first decisions was to link Mrs. Kornfeld to the VNACJ Connect Program, designed to monitor patients with highly unstable conditions such as congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and diabetes. Using her Viterion 100 Telehealth Monitor, Arline Kornfeld is able to transmit her weight, temperature, blood pressure, blood oxygen and blood glucose to VNACJ for daily review. A sudden, significant change in any of these vital signs triggers an alarm to indicate the change in condition and the need for appropriate intervention. If necessary, a nurse will be sent to her door.

Kim keeps a careful eye on her patient’s diet. On a recent visit she reviewed the basics of a proper breakfast, reminding Arline always to include grain, dairy and fruit. “I stay in touch with her physicians constantly, especially the endocrinologist, because of her issues with blood sugar,” Kim says.

Kim also called on the VNACJ palliative care program in March to provide special pain management services for Arline who experienced chronic pain in her shoulder. “It did wonders for me,” Arline says. “For the first time I was able to sleep through the night.”

For Arline, the best medicine may be the reassurance that there’s a nurse just around the corner—especially this nurse. Smiling at Kim, she says, “We have a great rapport. I can tell her anything.”

A Celebration of Nurses



VNACJ honored more than 450 nurses at the agency's annual Nurse's Day celebration, held at PNC Bank Arts Center, Holmdel. Suzanne Reynolds was named 2008 Nurse of the Year. Each year, Mrs. Reynolds coordinates the care of more than 660 people in Middlesex, Mercer, Hunterdon

Suzanne Reynolds, Nurse of the Year and Somerset counties, offering them an alternative to nursing home placement. Most of her patients present complex health and/or socioeconomic challenges and their care represents "the longest of long-term care."

Barbara Smith received the Marcia Granucci Award, presented annually to a registered nurse who possesses a powerful vision of all that community-based nursing can accomplish among highly vulnerable populations. She is manager of VNACJ Community Care Alternatives Programs—19 programs serving more than 4,000 patients annually. They include community care for the elderly and disabled; school-based services; and HIV/AIDS services.

Nursing scholarships

VNACJ awards scholarships annually to high school students attending college in pursuit of a bachelor's degree in nursing. The 2008 award recipients were Joseanne Dura, Howell, Rutgers College of Nursing, New Brunswick; Jennifer Kline, Middletown, St. Mary's College School of Nursing, Notre Dame, Ind.; and Christina Necci, Old Bridge, Fairfield University School of Nursing, Fairfield, Conn. A new VNACJ nursing scholarship, established in memory of Violet A. Yurowski, was awarded to two Brookdale Community College nursing students, Kris Ann Ruscil, Long Branch, and Kathleen Anne Toomey, Neptune. Ms. Toomey is a VNACJ Certified Home Health Aide.



The 2008 Marcia Granucci Award was presented to Barbara Smith, center. She accepted congratulations from (l to r) Mary Ann Christopher, president and CEO; Katie Granucci; Judith Stanley Coleman, VNACJ chairman; and Michael Granucci.



High school students receiving VNACJ scholarships on Nurse's Day were (l to r) Joseanne Dura, Christina Necci and Jennifer Kline.



Kris Ann Ruscil, left, and Kathleen Anne Toomey earned nursing scholarships to Brookdale Community College. The scholarships were established by Edward Yurowski, center, in memory of his wife, Violet, and in gratitude for the care she received from VNACJ.

Aide Earns National Honors

John McCarthy, a certified home health aide with a powerful ability to transform his patients' lives has been named Clinician of the Year by Visiting Nurse Associations of America. According to VNAA records, this may be the first time the award has been presented to a home health aide.

John McCarthy has been with VNACJ for 10 years. Most of his patients have been enrolled in the hospice program or receiving palliative care, and most are bed-bound.

"John has an indelible impact on all who cross his path," says Marjorie Forgang, director of hospice. "The members of our hospice team know that he sees the patient's needs as paramount. His keen insight into the needs of hospice patients is almost legendary."

When one grateful family member made a sizeable gift to the agency in appreciation of the extraordinary



care John had provided for her father, John requested that the funds be used to create a hospice care training video for home health aides. John coordinated the project and wrote the script, demonstrating in the video the clinical and interpersonal skills required in caring for hospice patients.

One hospice nurse recalls, "I had a patient with end-stage Parkinson's disease. He was bed-bound and could hardly speak. He was almost impossible to lift.

"One winter's day, seeing the yard blanketed in fresh-fallen snow, John said,

'It's time to take you out for a change of scenery.' He took the patient in his arms, placed him in a wheelchair, and wheeled him into the backyard to feel the snow on his face one last time. This image of compassion in providing comfort and care for a patient will forever be emblazoned in my mind."

For more information on the VNACJ Hospice Program, see www.vnacj.org or call 1-800-862-3330.

Social Worker of the Year

Melissa Rafter, MSW, second from right, accepts congratulations from President and CEO Mary Ann Christopher, second from left, and clinical managers Kathleen Rosa, left, and Marge Dishon on being named VNACJ's 2008 Social Worker of the Year. Ms. Rafter has served as a social worker in home health care for all of her 18 years in the profession, ensuring that her patients have access to the services they need regardless of their income level.



Children's Day Planned for Aug. 9

Children's Day, an annual event that offers a full day of activities for children aged 6 to 12, is planned for Aug. 9 at the Rumson home of Tom and Liz Thees. Developed by the VNACJ Hospice Program, the day offers a healing environment for children who have experienced the death of a loved one in the last year. For more information or to register a child, please call hospice headquarters at 732-493-2220. In the photo, Tobi made the acquaintance of Lyla, a pet therapy dog, at the 2007 Children's Day.

22nd Annual VNA of Central Jersey Golf Classic Monday, August 11, 2008

Deal Golf & Country Club • Deal, New Jersey
1 p.m. shotgun

For more information please call 732-224-6791.





FAREWELL TO A LANDMARK

The Geraldine L. Thompson Building, named after the agency's late founder, was razed this spring to make way for the agency's recently enlarged headquarters. Formerly a factory erected in the 1800s, the building on Bodman Place, Red Bank, was purchased and renovated by the agency (then called the Monmouth County Organization for Social Service) in 1949. The dedication was attended by Eleanor Roosevelt, who praised MCOSS and its services on her national radio program. The Thompson building served as the agency's headquarters for nearly five decades. VNACJ headquarters now occupies a larger building at 176 Riverside Avenue. Community support for the agency's "New Home for Home Care" capital campaign made the expansion possible.

VNACJ SERVICES

In-home Services

- Community Health Nursing
- Certified Hospice Services
- Bereavement Counseling
- Palliative Care
- Home Health Aides
- Home Infusion/IV Therapy
- Medical Social Work
- Nutrition Counseling
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Pathology
- Private Duty Services
- Nursing Live-in's
- Emergency Personal Response System
- Telehealth Program
- Volunteer Program

Community-based Programs

- AIDS/HIV Services
- Bereavement Counseling for Adults and Children
- Case Management Services for Long-term Care
- Community Health Education
- Faith-based Initiatives
- Immunization Programs
- Mobile Outreach Clinic Program
- Parenting/Job Readiness
- Primary Care
- Public Health
- Special Child Health Services/ Early Intervention
- Senior Wellness
- School-based Health Programs
- Services to Day Care Centers
- Speakers Bureau
- Volunteer Program
- WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program



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