



# HouseCalls

FALL 2008 VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL JERSEY VOLUME 19 NO. 3

## Palliative Care: 'A Blessing' to Patients and Families

**D**orothy Callahan embraced life. A retired nurse with a warm and engaging personality, she was an active community volunteer who served on VNACJ's board of trustees in Ocean County.

It was clear to all who knew "Dottie" Callahan that her first priority was her family — four daughters and 11 grandchildren of whom she was immensely proud. When she was diagnosed with lung cancer last January, her family surrounded her with their love and support.

Mrs. Callahan was not ready to enroll in hospice care. She wanted active treatment for her illness. She was determined to stay at home and to remain as physically active as possible.

Her family encouraged her to seek out VNACJ palliative care, an approach that improves the quality of life for patients and families who face the problems associated with life-threatening illness.

"Our mother was a fiercely independent person, and her first instinct was to cope with the disease on her own," says Lynn Hastings, Dottie's youngest daughter. "But we as a family needed the support of health professionals. Palliative care was the right choice."

### Treating the whole patient

The VNACJ Palliative Care Program offers support at any stage of illness to people whose quality of life is suffering, regardless

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**A LIGHT OF THEIR LIVES**—The annual Tree of Lights celebrates the lives of VNACJ hospice and palliative care patients. Daughters and grandchildren of the late Dorothy Callahan gathered at the tree to place a light to honor her memory. They were assisted by Fred Ledger, VNACJ's manager of maintenance and purchasing (on ladder). Members of the Callahan family pictured are (l to r) Michael Shine, 19; Matt Hastings, 9; Thomas Hastings, 7; Lynn Hastings; Julie Hastings, 5; Molly Shine, 13; and Kathy Fenimore. Mrs. Callahan received VNACJ palliative care services.

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# Pain Management: the Science and the Art

Pain management is a specialty, and health professionals believe that effective pain management is fundamental to the quality of care a patient receives. Many clinicians believe that good control of pain speeds the way to recovery.

The health professionals in the VNACJ Hospice and Palliative Care programs are experts at both the science and the art of caring for those whose quality of life is affected by illness. They treat the whole patient by addressing pain and other problems — physical, psychological and spiritual. And they know that their patients are often most comfortable when they are in familiar surroundings, amid “the comforts of home.” As we observe National Home Care and Hospice Month, we are proud to recognize our staff for their compassionate care to the individuals we serve at home and in our communities.

Sincerely,

Judith Stanley Coleman  
Chairman

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## House Calls

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## N. J. Hospice Association Honors Korb

Jo Ann Korb, a registered nurse with the VNA of Central Jersey Hospice Program, has been named 2008 Nurse of the Year by the New Jersey Hospice and Palliative Care Association.



"In her 17 years as a hospice nurse, Mrs. Korb has displayed superb clinical skills, vigorous advocacy for her patients, and sensitivity to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of her patients and their families," says Marjorie Forgang, director of hospice. "She is a great

role model and mentor for her colleagues."

Hospice families have praised Mrs. Korb for her compassion and sensitivity. One family wrote: "We would like to thank Jo Ann for the wonderful way she explained and handled everything. It was the hardest time of our lives, and she understood completely. She was there for us the whole time, and we thank her from the bottom of our hearts."

Mrs. Korb was also named VNACJ's Nurse of the Year in 1999.

## Palliative Care: 'A Blessing' to Patients and Families

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of their life expectancy. The approach treats the whole person with the management of physical, mental and emotional pain. It is provided in conjunction with the physician's program of care and other therapies.

At VNACJ, the palliative care team builds a care plan that begins with a comprehensive assessment to understand the patient's symptoms and their severity. The plan centers on what is most important to the patient, and develops a interdisciplinary approach to meet patient goals.

For Dottie Callahan, symptom management was a priority. Her nurse, Jo Ann Korb, helped her manage fatigue and other side effects of chemotherapy. The presence of Fiona Conway, a live-in caregiver, meant Dottie could remain in her own home.

The multi-disciplinary palliative care team includes the patient and his or her family, the personal physician and a nurse. Other team members available to a patient include a social worker, spiritual care counselor, dietician, pharmacist and rehabilitative therapists. Complementary therapies, such as music therapy, pet therapy, massage and Reiki are available.

Jo Ann Korb was wonderful," says Kathleen Fenimore, Dottie's oldest daughter. "She and the team handled everything — it was 'coordination central.' It brought great comfort to mom but it was just as big a help to me and my sisters."

Dottie retained her role as decision-maker, with Mrs. Korb, hospice director Marjorie Forgang and other VNACJ clinicians constantly available by telephone to provide a high level of support for the family in advanced care planning.

"We will always be grateful for the support we received from the palliative care team," Mrs. Fenimore says. "They alleviated the element of surprise and made sure we knew what to expect. They gave us great peace of mind. It was a blessing."

***For more information on VNACJ Palliative Care Services, please call 800-862-3330 or see our Website at [www.vnacj.org](http://www.vnacj.org).***

Honoring the Lives they Lived

### HOSPICE TREE OF LIGHTS

December 2, 2008 • 5:30 PM  
176 Riverside Avenue • Red Bank

Presented by the VNACJ Hospice Program

For more information, or to designate a light in memory of a loved one, please call 732-224-6791.

# Three Cheers for Jamie!

## Specialized pediatric care helps teen lead an active life



Jamie has been a cheerleader since kindergarten.

Frank and Iverlee joyfully welcomed Jamie, their first child, in March 1994. She seemed to be perfectly healthy until she experienced a bout of pneumonia at age 6.

After a second episode, Jamie's parents took her to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia where Dr. Kathleen Sullivan diagnosed Jamie as having an immune deficiency disease and recommended that it be treated with a monthly infusion of infection-fighting antibodies.

The infusion stabilized her condition. But it also required the family to make a costly trip to Philadelphia each month.

After several months, the hospital suggested the family try home care.

### Specialized care at home

That's when Ellynn Kahle entered Jamie's life. A certified pediatric nurse and a member of VNACJ's specialized care team, Ellynn visited Jamie each month to oversee the four-hour infusion process and monitor her for side effects. "Ellynn was fantastic from the get-go," says Iverlee.

Ellynn Kahle's goal was to help Jamie live as normal a life as possible. And one thing Jamie wanted to do was be a cheerleader. "She has cheered since kindergarten," says her mother. "She has the energy to do it, but she's wiped out afterwards."

Ellynn had been providing Jamie with monthly treatments for a period of six years, when she asked the family to consider a newly developed therapy: a once-a-week treatment that would be more controlled, less painful and less time-consuming and that Jamie, with family support, could administer independently at home. Ellynn's monthly visits would no longer be necessary. The family was hesitant at first to make such a dramatic change, but

*(continued next page)*



**WHAT A TEAM**— Jamie and her grandmother Ellen, left, now collaborate on her weekly treatment. Ellynn Kahle, center, a certified pediatric nurse with the VNACJ Specialized Care Department, helped the family become independent in providing Jamie's care.



## VNA of Central Jersey Celebrates November as National Home Care and Hospice Month

We honor all our employees, trustees and volunteers for your expertise and dedication. You make it possible for us to deliver hope and healing, kindness and compassion, every day of the year, one patient at a time.



## Three Cheers for Jamie

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Ellynn persisted in advocating the benefits. Her encouragement and confidence paid off.

“Jamie will need this treatment for the rest of her life, but now she is in control of the process,” says Ellynn. “Helping patients become independent is one of our main goals.”

“It’s a lot easier to live my life with the once-a-week injections,” says Jamie, now a freshman at Brick Memorial High School. She wants to go to college and study marine biology. In the meantime, a loving and supportive family, a dedicated nurse and an important new therapy make it possible for Jamie to keep on cheering.



### **PRESIDENT ON TOUR**

Andrew Carter (second from left), president of Visiting Nurse Associations of America, was welcomed by (l to r) Theresa Beck, vice president, community initiatives; Mary Ann Christopher, president and CEO; Kevin Rogers, chief financial officer; and Cynthia Leed, executive director, Operations.

## VNAA President Visits Red Bank

Andrew Carter, president of Visiting Nurse Associations of America, visited VNA of Central Jersey as part of a national tour to meet the organization’s 400 member VNAs. He toured the agency’s Red Bank headquarters and gave an update on issues affecting visiting nurse associations. The VNAA, based in Washington, DC, advocates for VNAs and facilitates member agency collaboration on issues facing home health care. Nationally, VNAs care for about 4 million patients annually and employ more than 90,000 clinicians.



**CONTEMPORARY FLAIR**—House tour chairs (l to r) Gwynne Sugg, Marianne Avigdor and Janice Fannan admire the spectacular, state-of-the-art kitchen in the Monmouth Beach home of Alysson and James Reid, one of the distinctive homes featured on the 2008 VNACJ Holiday House Tour.

## House Tour Heralds the Holidays

Please join us for one of the shore's most popular holiday events. Four distinctive homes in the Two Rivers area are featured on VNACJ's annual Holiday House Tour. A gift boutique and optional country club luncheon are also available on tour day.

### Holiday House Tour

Date: Friday, Dec. 5, 2008

Time: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Tickets: \$50 per person; \$40 for persons 65 and older.

Purchase tickets in advance or on the day of the tour.

Luncheon is available at Rumson Country Club and David Burke's Fromagerie Restaurant on Dec. 5 at \$30 per person. Luncheon tickets are by prepaid reservation only.

### Holiday House Tour Boutique

Bingham Hall, 40 Bingham Avenue, Rumson

Date: Friday, Dec. 5, 2008

Time: 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

For tickets and additional information, please call the VNACJ Special Events Office at 732-224-6791.

## An Event-full Summer and Fall



**CHILDREN'S DAY**—The VNACJ Hospice Program held its fourth annual Hearts of Remembrance Children's Day Aug. 9 at the home of Tom and Liz Thees. This grief support camp encourages children to express their feelings, share memories and have fun together. At left, volunteer Gaby Alvarez, 14, helps Madison, 6, to create a memory box.



**RIVERWIND COUNTRY FAIR**— Madeline, Kate and Grace Boyea of Fair Haven clown around with Timbo at the Oct. 5 Riverwind country fair sponsored by the VNA of Central Jersey Children's Auxiliary. The event, in its 17th year, drew more than 500 people and raised more than \$15,000 to benefit the agency's many programs and services for children.



**WINNING TEAM**—The 22nd Annual VNACJ Golf Classic drew 106 golfers to Deal Golf and Country Club on Aug. 11. Winners of the Robert C. Stanley Cup for low gross and net foursome were (l to r) Virginia Treacy, Somerset; Ryan and Todd Laliberte, and Kathy O'Connell, all of Wall Township. The event netted nearly \$75,000 in support of the agency's health services and programs.

## Senior Wellness Programs

VNACJ community health nursing professionals visit senior housing, senior clubs, nutrition sites, and senior centers to help adults over the age of 50 achieve and maintain productive, healthy lives.

### Services include:

- Monthly on-site nurse visits
- Medication review and instruction
- Flu shots and immunizations
- Health screenings
- Blood pressure monitoring
- Physical and psychosocial assessments
- One-on-one counseling
- Group health education

**Many services are free to eligible residents through a grant-funded program.**

For referral or additional information, call 732-224-6905 or click on Contact Us via our Website: [www.vnacj.org](http://www.vnacj.org).

For information on VNHS Gloucester County senior wellness services, please call 800-792-8603.

## VNHS Provides Senior Wellness Services in Gloucester Senior Housing

Visiting Nurse and Homemaker Services, an affiliate of Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey, will now provide senior wellness services at senior housing sites operated by the Gloucester County Housing Authority. VNHS will bring important health information and screenings to seniors at the housing authority's five locations, representing 600 housing units. The services will help persons over 50 achieve and maintain their optimal level of health by focusing on health education and illness prevention, detection, and follow-up.

"We are always looking for ways to reach out and meet the needs of the community," said Wayne Whelan, VNHS executive director. "As a result of our recent affiliation with Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey we are able to take advantage of their success in this area to implement a vital program that meets the needs of Gloucester County Housing Authority residents."

A registered VNHS nurse will visit each site on a monthly basis to provide blood pressure monitoring, health screenings and medication review and instruction. Additional services may be added at a later date based on the needs of the resident population.

VNHS became an affiliate of VNACJ earlier this year. Both VNACJ and VNHS have long histories of providing home health, hospice and community-based services to the people of New Jersey. In 2007, VNACJ celebrated its 95th anniversary; VNHS will celebrate 50 years of service in 2009. Their combined service areas include Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Gloucester and Burlington counties.



### IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR

Grace Fontana, 86, an Aberdeen resident, has been staying healthy for years by getting a flu shot from VNA of Central Jersey at the Church of St. Clement, Matawan. Ann Prentice, a senior wellness nurse, visits the church throughout the year to provide senior wellness services in addition to the annual flu shots. VNACJ flu shots are available through December by appointment. **Call the Flu Shot Hotline at 732-224-6985 for more information.**



**AN INSPIRATION**— The Judith Stanley Coleman Award, presented for exceptional contributions in the field of community health, was awarded by VNACJ to Emil Schroth III, front row, center, at the 96th Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Schroth, who has cerebral palsy, was honored for furthering a mission of hope to people living with disabilities. Offering their congratulations are Mary Ann Christopher, left, president and CEO; Judith Stanley Coleman, right, chairman of the board of trustees; and Mr. Schroth's parents, Janet Schroth and Emil Schroth Jr.

## 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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