

HOMECARE

connection

A PUBLICATION OF THE RUTLAND AREA VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION & HOSPICE AND DORSET NURSING

RAVNAH Patient is a True Example of a Life Well Lived

As a self-proclaimed people person, Leo Pomainville's life was filled with friends, family, church and community. When he needed care at home, he looked forward to the visits from RAVNAH's team of nurses, aides, and therapists who enabled Leo to remain in his beloved home he built with his own hands 60 years ago.

Eighty-nine year old Leo Pomainville had been struggling with multiple chronic health problems for some time, then last fall, he suffered a debilitating stroke. His doctor recommended home care for his rehabilitation and RAVNAH was called in to help with his recovery.

After weeks of skilled nursing care with RAVNAH nurse Carol Randall, Leo had made progress toward improving his strength and physical health, but he still had problems with his speech. He needed extensive therapy for a condition known as aphasia, common in adults who have suffered a stroke. Primary signs of the disorder include difficulty in expressing oneself when speaking, trouble understanding speech, and difficulty with reading and writing.

Speech therapist Nancy Waitkus visited Leo in his home two times a week to help him regain his ability to talk. Nancy gave him speech and reading exercises—reciting words and phrases that would enable him to recognize and retrieve common words. Each therapy session improved his language and communication skills.

Leo looked forward to his home care visits and happily agreed to talk about the care he received from RAVNAH. He wanted to share his success and the progress he had made, but mostly he just enjoyed meeting and talking with people. And so we were invited into his home and quickly discovered that this

89-year-old RAVNAH patient had much more to share.

On the day we visited, Leo was practicing simple phrases, such as *"I hope to see you again," "How are you?," "How's it going?,"* and *"I'm pleased to meet you."* When asked how his therapy was going, Leo replied, "I enjoy the work, and she (Nancy) is good." Nancy added, "He's been working hard and participating in his own care. He's doing word searches on his own and practicing taking good breaths."

Since 1951, Leo lived in his home in Proctor, just up the road from where he grew up. "I built this house myself," he said. "My wife Anna drew up the plans and I built it from the ground up." Leo lost Anna in 1991, but he continued to live in the home he had shared with her.

With the many health problems Leo was facing and the extensive care he needed from the effects of the stroke, he could have easily been moved to a nursing home, but he was determined to remain in the home that meant so much to him. Because of the medical care and support he received from RAVNAH's team of professional nurses and therapists, Leo was able to stay in the home where he had lived for 60 years.



Speech therapist Nancy Waitkus (right) visits with Leo

Inside the Homecare Connection

- 2 Director's Corner
- 3 Employee Profile—Up Close and Personal
- 4 A Life Well Lived (continued)
Dorest Nursing News
- 5 RAVNAH Staff Dances for Breast Cancer Awareness
Hospice Remembrance Service Held
RAVNAH Employee Satisfaction
- 6 RAVNAH's Commitment to Community Needs
- 7 Focus on Philanthropy
- 8 Calendar of Events

RAVNAH Excels Despite Financial Cutbacks

This is the time of year when all health care providers in Vermont hold their breaths while awaiting the outcome of the governor's budget! On top of that is President Obama's budget and the uncertainties of how health care reform will affect home care.

There's no denying it: this is a tough, uncertain time for home health agencies. Faced with continued budget cuts, RAVNAH gets closer and closer to that breaking point when we have to make tough decisions—about whether we can continue to subsidize state and Medicaid programs, yet maintain a financially responsible organization with sufficient resources to meet the health care needs of our patients.

We want community members and supporters of RAVNAH, to know and understand the fiscal and regulatory challenges we face. We also want you to know that, in spite of budgeting pressure, RAVNAH has excelled in many areas. So let me start with the challenges—aptly named....

The Bad News

On the state level from the governor's budget:

- Increase in our Medicaid tax from \$295,000 to \$320,000
Impact on RAVNAH: \$25,000 tax increase
- Reduction in instrumental activities of daily living (ADLs) in the Choices for Care program (CFC) from 4.5 hours per week to 2 hours per week
Impact on RAVNAH: Approximately \$1,000, affecting 28 patients
- Reduce cap on respite companion services in CFC from 720 hours per year to 360 hours per year
Impact on RAVNAH: \$7,500, affecting 2 patients

On the federal level:

- 7% proposed Medicare cut
Impact on RAVNAH: \$350,000 loss

We know these cuts could have been worse and for that we're grateful. In the meantime, we will continue to work persistently to minimize the impact on patient care. Now, for...

The Good News

In the face of these federal and state cuts, RAVNAH staff continue to find ways to excel by achieving high patient satisfaction, keeping expenses down and employee morale up, and ensuring that those who need it most receive the highest quality medical care.

RAVNAH Receives 2010 TOP 500 Home Care Elite Award

This distinguished designation placed us in the top 5% of 11,000 home health care agencies in the United States. RAVNAH is the

only Vermont home health agency to achieve this status. Home Care Elite is the industry standard for measuring organizational performance through an analysis of measures in quality outcomes, quality improvement, and financial performance.



Ron Cioffi, CEO

Kids on the Move Joins RAVNAH

Last October, Kids on the Move, the region's only pediatric rehabilitation program, became a program solely of RAVNAH. It delivers therapy services in the home, where patients and their families prefer to receive care.

RAVNAH Receives Grant for Children's Services

The Vermont Agency of Human Services selected RAVNAH as a recipient of a pilot project grant for Children's Integrated Services (CIS). This 20-month grant is one of only three awarded in the state. CIS is a new approach to providing coordinated child development and family support services previously provided by three separate programs.

Customer Service Program Boosts Patient Satisfaction

Development of a customer service program elevated the level of how all our employees interact with patients, families, referral sources, and co-workers. Scores on patient surveys have risen significantly and beaten the scores of the survey database and all other Vermont home health agencies.

Employee Satisfaction UP

A recently completed employee satisfaction survey reports that RAVNAH ranked in the 92nd percentile in overall employee satisfaction—which means RAVNAH employees have a higher level of satisfaction than 92% of the facilities in the country. That's up 5.5% from a survey done three years ago. In addition, 91.6% of staff would recommend RAVNAH as a place to work.

Despite the many challenges we face, we are committed to doing what's necessary to maintain RAVNAH's financial stability while continuing to provide positive outcomes for the people we serve in all our programs.

Our senior management team has formulated key strategies to manage impending cuts and the challenges confronting us. We will work hard to monitor expenses, improve productivity, decrease the cost per visit, raise our patient satisfaction survey scores, ensure staffing efficiencies, and seek more grant opportunities. ☺

Dedicated. Innovative. Trusted.

Employee Profile—Up Close and Personal

Wendy Daley, BSN
Hospice Clinical Manager



Wendy Daley is no stranger to RAVNAH or to home health care. She has been in nursing for 37 years and with RAVNAH for 23 of those years. Providing care and comfort to people at home has been her first love since her early days in nursing.

Wendy embarked on a nursing career right after graduating from the University of Rhode Island with a bachelor's degree in nursing. She

got her first introduction to home care nursing in Kent County, RI, during her clinical rotation in college and she was hooked. But being a caregiver didn't start there. She credits her commitment to nursing and caring for others to her upbringing. "I worked in a nursing home when I was 13 because my grandparents volunteered there and got me involved," explains Wendy.

Prior to moving to Vermont in 1979, Wendy worked for hospitals on the north shore of Boston, then landed a job at Rutland Regional Medical Center, where she stayed for seven years. She took a short leave to help husband Dick with his insurance business, but, in Wendy's words, "I realized this wasn't my bag. I wanted to get back to doing what I love: nursing."

In 1988, Wendy started with RAVNAH as an RN in Community Health, working at blood pressure and foot care clinics, doing cholesterol screenings and workplace wellness. Shortly after, she was asked to manage the Medicaid Waiver program (now Choices for Care) where she worked with long-term-care clients for more than 20 years. In that time, she grew the home-based Waiver program from ten clients to over 100 clients. In 2007, when RAVNAH decided to branch out into private duty services, the agency turned to Wendy to develop the CarePlus program while she continued to oversee long-term care. She laid the groundwork for CarePlus, putting into place new policies and procedures to get the program started, until it required its own manager.

Then, a new opportunity arose for Wendy to use her nursing skills. RAVNAH was looking for someone to fill the new position of clinical manager for Hospice. Wendy applied and was selected to fill the new role. She's been on the job for three months and she's happy with the fit. "I like a challenge and it was a change. I missed the medical component and now I'm much more able to use my medical skills. I love the team concept and this is an incredible group to work with." ❀

Nancy Birdsall
Hospice Volunteer Coordinator



When the Hospice program was faced with finding a new volunteer coordinator, they suspected it wouldn't be easy. What they didn't expect was that "one of their own," a 14-year Hospice volunteer herself, would step up to take on the role. And that's just what happened after Nancy Birdsall expressed interest in the Hospice volunteer coordinator position.

Nancy first started in Hospice in 1996, when she took the volunteer training class with Bea Wells, then the Hospice director. When asked what motivated her to sign up, she explains there were two deciding factors: the first was in 1986 after a cousin passed away. "I had a very close connection with him, even after he died. One day I was feeling so sad, yet had a sense he was with me, saying, 'It's okay, Nancy.' The second was in the mid-90s when an uncle died with hospice care. "The nurses and volunteers were wonderful and made me realize there is a way to support the dying."

Shortly after that, Nancy saw an ad in the newspaper for an upcoming training class and signed up. She remembers her first assignment: an elderly man with throat cancer and his wife. In a short time, she established a bond with the couple and knew right away that she wanted to work supporting families.

"I have so many wonderful stories from my years as a hospice volunteer," says Nancy. "It's taught me to understand that what's important in these situations is that you're not supposed to fix anything, but simply be there to support the patient and the family."

This new position is just one part of Nancy's busy life. She is also the owner/operator of a residential summer camp in the Adirondacks. "It's a third-generation family business," explains Nancy. "The camp has been in our family since 1920." Nancy's husband and their daughters, along with her brother and sister, all work at the traditional full-season camp that offers hiking, canoeing, swimming, and other camp activities.

Nancy is enjoying her new job and already has plans for the future to help support the work of her volunteers as they meet the needs of their patients and families. "Meeting the needs of families and the volunteers is a challenge I look forward to as the Hospice coordinator," Nancy says. "I'm exploring ways that I can support and recognize this community of people doing remarkable work." ❀

Home and community had always been important to Leo. He didn't stray far from his roots. After working 16 years on his family's farm, he worked for 40 years at CVPS until his retirement in 1987.

Outside of work, Leo enjoyed music and painting. He was a piano player and a singer. One of his favorite pastimes was singing karaoke at the Holiday Inn, where he entertained audiences for five years. Leo's original paintings are displayed throughout his home—mostly pictures of the mountains, horses in the field, and of the home where he grew up. "I see those mountains out my back window," he said. "That one is Killington and Pico."

Leo's outgoing nature, helpfulness, and easy smile brought him many friends. His greatest satisfaction came from helping others. He was anxious to get back to his routine of attending mass at St. Dominic's Church in Proctor, where he was a lay minister. "I get along with people. I help people a lot," he said.

Sadly, Leo Pomainville passed away on March 6, 2011.

He will be remembered by his family and friends, as he will be by the staff at RAVNAH, as a kind, generous man with a strong faith, a ready smile, and a caring heart, who lived a full life. He put it best when he said during a home care visit, "I've got it made." ☪

Dorset Nursing News

Campers Present Their Own Thank-You to the Friends Group

All twelve campers who attended Dorset Nursing Association's Visions Camp were on hand at the February meeting of Friends of Dorset Nursing to present their handmade quilt to the agency. Dora Cecchini, Visions Camp Director, explained that "the quilt represents the connections and friendships the girls made while attending the camp."

Each girl created her own design on a quilt patch and the quilt was sewn together by volunteer Esther Sheldon. The quilt will be kept on display at the DNA office.

DNA's Visions Camp, held for two weeks in the summer, is for young girls ages 11 to 14 and offers opportunities for the girls to strengthen their sense of self-worth, develop new skills, and meet role models who can introduce them to new career possibilities. ☪



Campers show off the quilt they made themselves while at Visions camp

Dance the Night Away for DNA

Don't miss a full night of entertainment featuring great music, great food, and great fun. The Friends of Dorset Nursing Association is sponsoring a Barn Dance on Saturday, June 11, 2011, at 6:30 PM at the luxurious Schwindt Barn on the Dorset West Road in Dorset.

The fundraising event, "Dance the Night Away for DNA," will feature a sumptuous picnic dinner, cash bar, and an evening of dancing to the "Don't Leave" band, one of the Northshire's most popular and most respected rock 'n roll bands. Contact Susan Romano at susanromano13@gmail.com for more information.

Proceeds will benefit home health care programs of Dorset Nursing Association. ☪



The "Don't Leave" band has been rocking the Northshire for 25 years. They will perform at the DNA fundraiser on June 11th to benefit home health care services in Dorset, Rupert, and Pawlet.

RAVNAH Staff Dances for Breast Cancer Awareness

During last October's National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, RAVNAH joined dozens of health care facilities across the country to help promote breast cancer awareness by producing a "Pink Glove Dance" video intended to focus attention on breast cancer awareness and prevention.

Nearly 100 staffers, wearing pink surgical gloves, danced to the song, "You Won't Dance Alone" in tribute to cancer survivors.

"The pink gloves are a visible reminder that early detection and prevention are key and this was an uplifting way to spread the message. Mammography screening remains the single-most effective method of detecting breast cancer in an early, treatable stage," explained Laura Driscoll, RAVNAH's Associate Director of Home Care.

Thanks go to Michael Valentine and Dom Cioffi of PEG TV, who gave generously of their time and expertise to help choreograph and produce the video. You can watch RAVNAH's Pink Glove Dance video on YouTube or on RAVNAH's website at www.ravnah.org. ☺



Home health aides dance for breast cancer awareness

Hospice Remembrance Service Held

More than 150 community members gathered on December 7th at the Franklin Conference Center in Rutland for RAVNAH's 22nd annual Tree of Remembrance tree lighting ceremony and memorial service. "The Tree of Remembrance is a beautiful ceremony where community members come together to memorialize our loved ones who have died," says Ann LaRocque, RAVNAH's Hospice Bereavement Coordinator. "Through music, readings, reflections, the reading of our deceased loved ones names, and tree lighting, we help those who are grieving hopefully hurt a little less." The ceremony included music by Rip Jackson, the Hospice Trillium singers, and harpist Florence Boutwell. ☺



RAVNAH Employee Satisfaction

An independent employee satisfaction survey, recently completed by Press Ganey, a leader in health care performance improvement, has ranked RAVNAH in the 92nd percentile in overall employee satisfaction. This means RAVNAH employees have a higher level of satisfaction than 92% of the facilities in the

country. That's up 5.5% from a survey done three years ago. When asked "Would you recommend RAVNAH as a place to work to friends and relatives?," 91.6% of those taking the survey answered a resounding YES! ☺

RAVNAH's Commitment to Community Needs

United Way Honors RAVNAH

RAVNAH received special recognition for its outstanding Employee Campaign at the 2011 United Way of Rutland County Annual Meeting and Campaign Celebration held on January 20th. RAVNAH was honored with the "Key Person of the Year Award" in the non-profit division for pledging \$15,189—the highest amount RAVNAH has ever pledged to United Way's annual campaign. ☘



RAVNAH's Adopt-a-Family Program Distributes Food and Gifts to Needy Neighbors

Every holiday season, RAVNAH staff extends their support of the community beyond providing home health care services. For more than 20 years, RAVNAH employees and community partners have distributed food and gifts to those in need during the holidays through the Adopt-a-Family program. This past holiday season, 23 families received food baskets, turkeys, hams, and gifts. ☘

Dear RAVNAH,

"I hardly know what to say. 'Thank you' just does not seem to cover everything you did for me at Christmas. December was a rough month, and then I became the recipient of a miracle, a Christmas miracle. The assortment of food was very wonderful.

I also thank you for the \$25 Price Chopper food card. I am so grateful. Thank you."

—An Adopt-a-Family recipient



Christine Morrison (second from left) of O'Brien Shortle Reynolds & Sabotka PC stopped by with their generous contribution of gifts for the Adopt-a-Family program. Christine is joined by RAVNAH staff (left to right) Sharon Bailey, Noreen Myhre, Jennifer Holdren.

Staff on MASH Halloween Float



RAVNAH staff pose for a picture on their MASH float during the 2010 Halloween Parade in downtown Rutland. RAVNAH's float earned 1st prize for "most original."

Focus on Philanthropy

Bella Notte: A Beautiful Night for Hospice

Bella Notte: A Beautiful Night for Giving, hosted recently at Three Tomatoes in Rutland, raised over \$20,000 to benefit the Hospice Program at the Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association & Dorset Nursing.

The event featured an Italian dinner and spirited bidding on silent and live auction items. Proceeds support the Hospice program's mission to provide comprehensive and compassionate support for individuals and their families facing a life-limiting illness, death, and loss.

"We are incredibly thankful to Three Tomatoes for hosting this year's Hospice benefit and for the support of many businesses and individuals in the community who donated items and services for our auctions," said Ron Cioffi, Executive Director of the Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice. "We are grateful that our many supporters and friends feel connected to the Hospice program and the life-affirming services we provide."

"Of course, the success of any event is due in large part to those who volunteer," added Cioffi, "We are extremely grateful for the efforts of our committee." ☪

Many thanks to...

Members of RAVNAH's Board of Directors

- Bill Bannerman, *Chairman*
- Mark Lawrence
- Michelle Fairbrother

Community Members

- Bryan Johnson
- Allen Frey
- Debbie Grembowicz



Attendees look over the selection of silent auction items



RAVNAH's CFO Sara King visits with Board member Dick Hittle

Celebrate the Ones You Love, Admire and Respect

Honoring a loved one through a commemorative gift is an especially meaningful way to pay tribute to someone special while supporting quality health care for our community.

Tribute gifts

Celebrate many of life's wonderful occasions: the birth of a child, an anniversary or special birthday, graduation, wedding, or other important event. A tribute gift may also be made as a unique way of thanking a special nurse, physician, or caregiver for the care you or a loved one received.

Memorial gifts

Memorial gifts may also be made in memory of a friend or loved one and are always appropriate expressions of your sympathy to grieving families. Making gifts for the benefit of others offers a wonderful way to affirm your values and priorities. Your gift enables us to provide the most comprehensive medical care possible and improve the quality of health care in our community now and for generations to come. ☪



REMEMBER a loved one...

Simply return this form in the envelope provided in the newsletter.

I/we wish to give \$ _____

- Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association Dorset Nursing Association The Hospice Program

In memory of: _____

Please fill in the information about you so we may acknowledge your gift and notify the family of your kindness:

From: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

- Cash Check Credit Card
 Visa MasterCard Discover AMEX

Calendar of Events

Hospice Volunteer Training - April 21–May 26

A free six-week, 20 hour training class for individuals who wish to become hospice and palliative care volunteers in Rutland County, Dorset and Rupert is being jointly offered by Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice (RAVNAH) and Rutland Regional Medical Center. The training will begin on Thursday, April 21 from 1:00-4:30 p.m., and continue every Thursday until May 26. The sessions will be held at RAVNAH, 7 Albert Cree Drive in Rutland. Registration is required by Friday, April 15, 2011.

In the home, hospital, and nursing facilities, hospice and palliative care volunteers provide support to people with life-limiting illnesses and their families. The volunteer training will include an introduction to hospice and palliative care, education on death, dying and grief, and the development of communication and support skills. For information and to register, contact Nancy Birdsall, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, at birdsall@ravnah.org or call (802) 770-1682.

9th Annual Grand Parada: "Vintage Affair" - Friday, April 29

Wine down... and enjoy a tribute to San Francisco, the sparkling City by the Bay, and beautiful Sonoma Valley at the 9th Annual Grand Parada. This year's theme is "Vintage Affair" and the event will once again be held at the Killington Grand Hotel on Friday, April 29, 2011.

Wine Down Hour will feature a wine and beer tasting, followed by dinner and dancing to the sounds of EnerJazz. There will be a raffle drawing for a trip to San Francisco and Sonoma and other fabulous prizes.

Theme attire is encouraged and welcomed. Tickets are \$100 each with sponsorship opportunities available.

Proceeds from the Grand Parada will benefit the Blueprint for Health Project at Rutland Regional Medical Center and the Pediatric Hi-Tech Program of the Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice.

19th Annual Vermont Sports Medicine Center's 5K Run/Walk - Saturday, April 30

One of the most popular road race events in the region, the 5K Run/Walk raises funds for Kids on the Move, RAVNAH's pediatric rehabilitation program. Registration begins at 8AM on Saturday, April 30. The Kids Fun Run starts at 10AM immediately followed by the 5K run/walk. Prizes will be awarded for 1st place in all runner age groups. For more information contact Susan MacLennan at 775-1300.

23rd Annual Killington–Pico Rotary Golf Tournament - Wednesday, June 1

Golfers will tee it up at the beautiful Green Mountain National Golf Course in Killington to raise funds for RAVNAH's Hospice program, which supports terminally ill patients and their families. Businesses are encouraged to sponsor a hole or form a team. The entry fee for each golfer is \$75.00 and includes the greens fee, golf cart, and barbecue and awards luncheon. For more information or to register, call Bernadette Robin at 747-3634.

18th Annual Rutland Health Foundation Golf Invitational - Friday, September 23

Held at the Rutland Country Club, this is one of the area's most prestigious golf tournaments. The annual invitational raises funds for programs of the Rutland Regional Medical Center and RAVNAH. The tournament features a captain and crew format, breakfast, and awards luncheon. Call Bernadette Robin at 747-3634 for sponsorship opportunities.

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