

Community of Caring

News for Friends of the VNA & Hospice Foundation

Kindness and Gratitude



Michelle Deschane

Gratitude, thankfulness or gratefulness is regarded as a feeling of appreciation by a recipient of another's kindness. Kindness comes in many forms in our everyday life.

A smile from a stranger, a kind word from a friend, a hug from a beloved family member.

The patients and staff at the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) are grateful for you, our donors, volunteers and amazing community partners. Your devotion and support of our mission allows the VNA to provide residents in our community with high quality and compassionate home health and hospice care, regardless of their ability to afford their care. This is especially true for the 18,030 community residents who are uninsured and the 12,570 seniors living alone.

Your support of our mission allows VNA nurses, therapists, APRNs, CNAs and bereavement staff to provide home health and hospice care, disease management, respite care, fall prevention education, music therapy and grief counseling to patients and families. We are all deeply appreciative of your generous philanthropic support.

VNA Hospice Nurse Goes Above and Beyond



Daniel Huber, RN, started working as a home hospice nurse for the VNA just over two years ago, switching gears from an intense job as an emergency room nurse - and he's never looked back. "It's the first time in my nursing career that I can give my patients 100% of my nursing ability and attention because in the emergency room they give you 5, 6, 7, 8 patients (at once), and the only time I get to see my patients is when I'm sticking them with a needle or giving them paperwork to discharge," said Daniel. "In hospice, if the patient needs two hours of my time, they have two hours."

Daniel wasn't always so optimistic about being a hospice nurse. Initially, he had concerns about the unique emotional challenges that treating

patients with terminal illnesses might entail, but once he began, those concerns were quelled, at least as far as the patients were concerned. "The dying process doesn't bother me as much as the patient's family; sometimes it's hard to watch the family struggle," he noted.

And the patients greatly appreciate Daniel's commitment and compassion. "I had a patient tell me a couple of weeks ago that this is the first time a nurse has ever given him 100% of their time and attention, and that's because we're hospice...we get to say, 'You need more of our time, I can do it,' said Daniel. "For instance, this morning I saw one of my patients, it's a 15-minute visit. She's a very lovely lady. She's 79 years old and she's got shortness of breath, COPD, and she's on oxygen and lives alone, so I try to spend extra time with her because really, we're the only interaction she gets. She doesn't drive, and her family all lives up north, so the only time she talks to them is on video chat; I'm really the only outside person she gets to talk to."

Daniel recalls how recently this same patient had a mouse in her house and his 15-minute appointment turned into a much longer one as he arranged for a pest control company to come out to the house and trap the rodent. "It feels good to help," he said.

Please Welcome Our Newest Board Member, Eva Gurley



Eva Gurley

Eva and Bill Gurley have been Florida residents for sixteen years, spending the summer months in Connecticut.

Eva grew up in Connecticut; after high school graduation, Eva attended Manchester Community College, obtaining an associate degree.

Eva worked a year for the Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce, then from 1973 to 1998 she worked for the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA). She started as an administrative assistant, advanced to office manager, and then director of personnel. She was elected to the position of corporate assistant secretary, communicating and coordinating between senior management, the Board of

Directors and the Executive Committee.

CBIA is a membership organization of Connecticut-based companies in various sectors of business. CBIA provides lobbying representation at the state legislature on issues affecting business while providing products and services to help businesses grow and succeed. CBIA has over 6,000 member companies.

She and Bill, a retired president & CEO of a worldwide manufacturing company, were donors and involved in Hartford Stage Company and Connecticut Opera. Eva was a member of the Connecticut Opera Guild, the fund-raising arm of Connecticut Opera, chairing and co-chairing numerous events. She also served as co-president and then president. As president she represented the Guild on the Connecticut Opera Board.

Eva and her husband have been generous benefactors of the VNA & Hospice

Foundation for several years, and in the past year, Eva became even more involved as a volunteer. For the past several months, Eva's generously donated her time, helping out in the VNA & Hospice Foundation office as well as 'sitting' with hospice patients, offering them solace when there is no relative to do so. "I think it's a good cause and much needed in the community," said Eva humbly.

In addition to the VNA & Hospice Foundation, Eva and Bill support the Riverside Theatre, Senior Resource Association and numerous animal welfare organizations, including the Vero Beach Dog Park. Eva is also on the Riverside Theatre Board of Directors. Eva and Bill are members of Quail Valley Golf Club.

Outside interests include working in the yard, playing bridge and recently mah-jongg.

VNA Hospice Nurse Goes Above and Beyond

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Another positive aspect of being a hospice nurse for Daniel is the man in charge, VNA's Hospice Medical Director, Dr. Venazio. "It's having the autonomy and the faith that Dr. Venazio has in the nurses, and you just can't beat this job," he said.

VNA Hospice is provided wherever a patient calls home, whether that's a skilled nursing facility, assisted living facility, memory care or patient's own home. And when a patient's care can no longer be managed at home, they can stay at VNA Hospice House, an elegant yet cozy state-of-the-art facility with 12 well-appointed private rooms, a private chef, relaxing space for family and friends, and 24/7 nursing care.

Special Thanks to Local Supporter Wheels & Keels Foundation, Inc.

Thank you very much to the Vero Beach-based Wheels & Keels Foundation, Inc. who provided Platinum level funding to the VNA & Hospice Foundation in support of our charitable programs, including Hospice House, Community Health Services and Music Therapy. Wheels & Keels Foundation CEO, Gavin Ruotolo, and President, Vincent DeTurris, presented the donation to Michelle Deschane, Director of Development, at The Moorings Yacht & Country Club in Vero Beach on March 22, 2023.

Wheels & Keels Foundation provides funding to local non-profit organizations whose activities strive to improve the lives of adults and children in the Treasure Coast community. Donations are targeted for programs directly supporting



Gavin Ruotolo, Michelle Deschane and Vincent DeTurris

the clients of each charity. Since its inception, Wheels & Keels Foundation has donated over \$600,000 to Treasure Coast charities, including grants to the VNA & Hospice Foundation, Camp Haven, Youth Sailing Foundation, The Arc Oyster Reef Restoration Project, Vero Beach Rowing, Navy SEAL Trident House Charities, Crossover Mission, Special Equestrians of the Treasure Coast and Lines in the Lagoon.

Navy Seal Museum Volunteer's Wish Comes True Through Project Wish

Every Sunday for the past several years, retiree Bill Lloyd volunteered at his favorite place in the world, the Navy Seal Museum, in Fort Pierce, Florida. Although not a veteran, he was the military's biggest fan, explained his wife, Enedina: "We have a lot of family that's in the military, and when we lived in (New) Jersey, we used to host veterans for Thanksgiving dinner. We always did things like that."

When Bill became sick with cancer, all that changed. He became too weak to make the weekly sojourn and thought he'd never have the opportunity to visit again. Fortunately, he turned out to be wrong, but at the time, he couldn't know that as all his energy was going into his fight to survive.

Initially, he was admitted to the hospital for treatment, and his health improved. He was then discharged, but his symptoms recurred, and he returned to the hospital. His oncologist wanted to try chemotherapy, but all Bill wanted to do was go home. After a few tests, his oncologist realized he was not a good candidate for this aggressive type of therapy and authorized his final discharge.

When Bill returned home, he went on hospice with the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA). "The VNA came to help me take care of him," said Enedina. "It was unbelievable. There were aides and a social worker and even the doctor came the first time. Everybody was so nice."

Bill's hospice care included pain management, which is a cornerstone of VNA Hospice and was of the utmost importance to him – and his wife. "Bill could not swallow pills anymore, and they had to give him liquid morphine, and they told us what to do and how



Bill Lloyd and his daughter, Helen, enjoy a chat with a Navy Seal Museum volunteer.



CDR (SEAL) Grant Mann, USN (Ret), Executive Director, thanks Bill Lloyd for his years of dedication to the museum.

to keep him comfortable," said a grateful Enedina.

During one visit, his nurse learned about his passion for the Navy Seal Museum and relayed that to the VNA Volunteer Department. In only a few days, the department organized a lovely afternoon at the museum for Bill that included transportation to and from the museum, a luncheon and an unexpected surprise. "All the guys that knew him were there and they had a little ceremony," said Enedina. "It was beautiful."

Amanda Morgan, the VNA Volunteer Services Manager who helped organize the day, concurred. "The sparkle he had in his eyes when he arrived made for a great experience. The Navy Museum

honored him and gave him a beautiful challenge coin that brought tears to everyone's eyes," said Amanda.

The afternoon was made possible through Project Wish, a VNA & Hospice Foundation supported program that grants wishes to end-of-life patients, and it was undoubtedly a huge success. According to Enedina, Bill, who passed away a week after the outing, couldn't have been happier, as was she. "It was amazing. And I couldn't have done it without you guys," she said. "People ask me who would you recommend. I'm like, the VNA. Everyone that walks through that door from the VNA is totally awesome."

A Legacy Project for Many to Enjoy



The VNA & Hospice Foundation would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to The Hill Group, a local construction company that donated their time and materials to renovate the beautiful bridge located on the grounds of the VNA Hospice House.

We'd also like to thank Tuny Hill, wife of the late James Patrick "Toby" Hill, Founder of The Hill Group, who donated the funds in her late husband's memory to make this wonderful project possible.

Since 1984, The Hill Group has been a leading builder in the region and their name is synonymous with the finest custom homes in Vero Beach's most prestigious communities.

Currently at the helm is Toby's son, Chris Hill, who is carrying on his father's legacy by maintaining the highest standards that were set for him. These include completing projects in a timely manner, controlling costs, and providing these services with business practices based on uncompromising integrity.

This integrity is at the cornerstone of something else The Hill Group is committed to, helping the residents of Indian River County in a volunteer capacity; the bridge is a perfect example of this. "I teach to our employees we are part of a community, and we have talents for a reason. We should use our personal strengths to give back to the community," said Chris.

Many Thanks to the Indian River Community Foundation



The Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) & Hospice Foundation is thrilled to announce that we are the proud recipients of a program grant in the amount of \$50,000 from the Indian River Community Foundation. The grant will benefit the VNA Mobile Health Clinic that visits different neighborhoods throughout our community to bring affordable healthcare to those who are underinsured or uninsured. Advance Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) aboard the VNA Mobile Health Clinic can examine, diagnose and prescribe medications for illnesses such as respiratory infections, flu, strep, eye and ear infections and minor cuts, rashes and skin infections.

The VNA & Hospice Foundation is extremely grateful for this grant and to the Indian River Community Foundation who made it possible. "The VNA is incredibly honored to have been awarded grant funding from the Indian River Community Foundation. Their support, in conjunction with the Hospital Taxing District, will ensure the VNA's "Health Care on Wheels" continues its mission of serving the vulnerable

patients throughout Indian River County," said the Director of Development for the VNA & Hospice Foundation, Michelle Deschane.

The President and CEO of Indian River Community Foundation, Jeffrey R. Pickering, couldn't be more thrilled to have provided this very special grant. "Indian River Community Foundation is proud to support the VNA with a grant from the Community Enrichment Fund of \$50,000 for the VNA Mobile Health Clinic," said Jeffrey. "Our decision to do so was influenced by data from our most recent community needs assessment which indicates that almost 50 percent of Indian River County's population live either in poverty or one paycheck away from it and that 12 percent of the adult population lacks health insurance. The VNA has a long history as a good steward of charitable investments like this one. I am confident that these dollars will be used effectively to increase access to medical care and other health services for many of these vulnerable members of the community whose needs would otherwise go unmet."

VNA's 33rd Annual Fundraiser - A Huge Success!

On Monday, May 1st, 2023, 13 local golf pros teed off at Indian River Club to participate in the 33rd Annual VNA & Hospice Foundation Golf-A-Thon. The benefit was a resounding success, raising over \$500,000! The entire Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) family, including the VNA & Hospice Foundation Director of Development, Michelle Deschane, CFRE, could not be more thrilled, thankful and appreciative of all who helped make the event such a success. "We are incredibly grateful for the dedication and hard work of the 13 participating golf pros and the Golf-A-Thon Committee who ensure the event is a success. We are also grateful for the outpouring of support from our donors whose support allows the VNA to continue its mission in our community," said Michelle.

The 13 golf pros who participated in the event were: Matthew Challenor (Windsor Club), David Champagne (Orchid Island Golf Club), Drew DiSesa (Riomar Country Club), Randy Hedgecock (Vero Beach Country Club), Steve Hudson (John's Island Club), Ian Killen (Indian River Club), Don Meadows (Quail Valley Golf Club),

Frank Mentzer (Oak Harbor Golf Club), Bela Nagy (Sandridge Golf Club), Troy Pare (Grand Harbor Golf & Beach Club), A.J. Petrulak (The Moorings Yacht & Country Club), Ryan Zug (Pointe West Country Club), and Eddie Suchora (Bent Pine Golf Club). In addition, Jason Berchtold from Bent Pine Golf Club subbed in for Eddie Suchora for part of the day.

Michelle and the VNA would like to once again thank the participating golf pros and everyone else who helped make this year's event not only a fun day but a record-breaking day as well. This includes co-chairs and Indian River Club members, Linda Braun and Deb Lockwood, who were instrumental in making the event run smoothly. Both women were thrilled to be part of the event.

"It was awesome," said Deb. "And we're excited about the results," said Linda.

And a very heartfelt thank you to Indian River Club for hosting the event this year. Head Golf Pro Ian Killen did an amazing job organizing the golf-related aspects of this event, and the staff at Indian River Club were instrumental in making sure



2023 Golf-A-Thon Golf Pros

the event, including the post-event reception, ran smoothly.

The VNA would also like to thank all of the VNA & Hospice Foundation's committee members and volunteers who helped with all aspects of the Golf-A-Thon. This event wouldn't have been successful without their help. Finally, the VNA would like to say a special thank you to Pat Gorman. Pat retired from Bent Pine Golf Club last year and has participated in the Golf-A-Thon since its inaugural event in 1991. The VNA was thrilled to have him MC the shootout contest at the end of the day.

Tax Savvy Ways to Support the VNA & Hospice Foundation

Every day, people of all ages use the services provided by the VNA. When you give a gift to the VNA & Hospice Foundation, you are helping us provide compassionate care of the highest quality for patients and caregivers needing home health, hospice and community health services, and we extend this care to the uninsured and underinsured in our community, ensuring healthcare equity for all. As you are planning your year-end support, the options below could benefit you while providing the necessary funding needed for our programs.

Which way would work best for you?

- *Gifts of appreciated stock*
- *Giving a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) through an IRA*
- *Join the Sustaining Champions Monthly Giving Society*

A donation of appreciated stock may offer you significant tax benefits. Contributions of appreciated securities held for more than one year are tax-deductible at market value. This may provide you with capital gains savings, as well as a charitable income tax deduction.

Giving a QCD through your IRA is a wonderful way to make a tax-free gift to the VNA. You can now transfer up

to \$100,000 from your IRA to fund a Charitable Gift Annuity.

Join the Sustaining Champions Monthly Giving Society, it is an easy and convenient way to support the VNA throughout the year.

Your gifts to the VNA & Hospice Foundation ensure that the most vulnerable in our community have access to high-quality home health and hospice care that they deserve regardless of their ability to afford their care. When we work together, the entire community benefits!

If you have any questions, contact Maurika Reed, Principal Gift Officer, mreed@vnatc.com or 772.978.5574.

Determination and a Positive Outlook are a Recipe for Success with Home Health Care

The first time Cora Lou Harris knew something was seriously wrong, she was only 14 years old and part of a cheerleading squad participating in a parade in Melbourne Beach, Florida, her hometown. “We just waved our arms around and walked in the parade, and when we got done with that, we got back and my arms were hurting so bad. I had, up until that time, thought that I was normal, like I thought everyone’s arms hurt that much and everyone’s arms feel like they weigh 100 pounds each,” she recalled. “But for some reason, it really hurt after the parade, and I thought, ‘Let me ask the other girls and see what they think,’ so I would go up to one of my fellow cheerleaders (and) I would say, ‘Are your arms hurting you now?’ And they would be like ‘no.’ And then I’d go up to another one, and they’d be like ‘no,’ and then another one, so that was the day that I really realized that this isn’t normal to feel like this, and that’s when I started trying to find doctors.”

Her quest to find a doctor who could diagnose her condition turned out to be a long one, 21 years. Only then did she learn she had been suffering from suprascapular nerve impingement (not due to a cyst) with nerve atrophy in both shoulders. By that point, she had severe paralysis in both arms and suffered an enormous amount of chronic pain throughout most of her upper body.

While Cora did not have total paralysis in her arms, she probably would develop it if the issue was left unaddressed. The remedy, Cora learned, was to get a nerve transplant, a procedure whose results typically take a few years before materializing as it takes that long for nerves to start to revitalize and for muscles to grow back. However, before she could have that surgery, Cora’s doctors told her that she should first get a nerve and muscle release surgery in her

shoulders which would address her pain. “They wanted to see if my muscles and nerves would repair on their own after doing these,” she explained.

Cora agreed, and recently, she had the nerve and muscle shoulder surgery at the world-renowned Mass General Paralysis Center in Boston. “I do feel not as tight and painful in that one area, although I can’t tell a huge difference,” she said, adding a qualifier that her body’s response was normal. “I won’t really know for a while because nerves especially take years to heal.”

After her shoulder surgery, Cora convalesced at her aunt’s home, just outside of Boston, “a real blessing,” she said. When she was strong enough, Cora returned to her home in Florida to begin post-surgical care; that’s when she called the VNA.

Cora’s VNA Home Health care team consisted of an occupational and physical therapist who both visited three times a week and a group of rotating nurses once a week who checked her vitals, a standard part of any home health care at the VNA. The nurses also checked Cora’s post-surgical sutures, which she greatly appreciated. “I was really kind of nervous about the sutures, and the nurses were really helpful and keeping an eye on them, making sure they didn’t get infected,” she said, “and they also kept a good eye on my vitals.”

Cora was equally thrilled with the quality of care from her occupational and physical therapists. “My Occupational Therapist, Mike, was really awesome and he gave me some good shower tips that I did not know about, tips on washing my hair and my back and my body. They were



*Photo credit:
Beverly Bennett Photography*

invaluable and I will forever have them in my toolbox, and I’m very grateful for that,” she said.

Cora also was very fond of her Physical Therapist, Rachel Moatts, PT, DPT, who she formed a special bond with. “She was the sweetest, kindest person, and she just was so patient with me, and you can tell she loves her job, and she just wants people to get better,” said Cora, “and you know she really is professional at her job. She takes it very seriously. I think she really loves it, and she was just really, really awesome.”

Rachel feels likewise about her patient: “It was such a pleasure working with Cora. Every session she came ready to put in the work and was very determined to make progress. I admire the physical, mental, and emotional strength that she had throughout her entire rehab process. It’s not easy, but Cora never gave up!”

Ways to Give to the VNA

Thank you to our donors who generously give to the VNA & Hospice Foundation to ensure that everyone will have access to compassionate care when they need it most.



Annual Giving - Contributing to the annual fund supports non-reimbursed programming and charitable patient care ensuring that everyone receives the care they need and deserve.



Honor a Caregiver - The Honor a Caregiver Program allows you to celebrate VNA caregivers who provided care and comfort during a difficult time.



QCD - A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) allows people 70½ years of age to make a charitable gift directly from your IRA any time of year while avoiding paying taxes on the amount gifted.



Monthly Giving Society
As a Sustaining Champion, your tax-deductible monthly donations help provide the resources needed to support home health, hospice and community health services to patients and families in our community.



Golf-A-Thon - Support one of the many local golf pros who are committed to playing countless holes of golf from sunup to sundown at this annual fundraiser.



Vehicle Donation Program
Donate your unwanted cars, boats or motorcycles to benefit hospice. Simply call 855.500.RIDE to donate your vehicle to the VNA today!



Memorials/Honorariums
These contributions are a meaningful way to celebrate those who are living or to memorialize a loved one.



Hidden Treasures Thrift Stores - Proceeds support the VNA Hospice House and our mission of providing compassionate end-of-life care. Donations of gently used items also accepted.



VNA Hospice House Endowment Fund
Your contribution to the VNA Hospice House Endowment Fund will ensure future generations will have access to this important community resource for end-of-life support.



Tribute Plaque - Messages of commemoration are etched into granite plaques, which are displayed at A Place For Remembering at the VNA Hospice House. These donations support the Hospice House Endowment Fund.



Legacy Gifts - Secure your legacy and create a long-lasting impact in our community by including the VNA & Hospice Foundation in your will.

For more information about ways to give, please contact the VNA & Hospice Foundation at 772.978.5580.

We Couldn't Do What We Do Without Our Local Grantors ... *Thank You!*

We'd like to express our deep gratitude to Grand Harbor Community Outreach Program, John's Island Community Service League and John's Island Foundation for their many years of supporting the VNA & Hospice Foundation – and this year was no different. All three organizations made generous donations with Grand Harbor Community Outreach contributing \$7,000; John's Island Community Service League contributing

\$30,000; and John's Island Foundation contributing \$3,000. These amazing gifts will support numerous programs and services that the VNA provides for the community, helping ensure that the most vulnerable in Indian River County, the uninsured and underinsured, receive the quality healthcare they deserve.

We'd also like to give much deserved thanks to Southern Social restaurant in Vero Beach whose "Cocktails for

a Cause" fundraiser featuring "Wish Maker Margaritas" raised \$600 for a VNA & Hospice Foundation supported program, Project Wish, which provides end-of-life wishes to people on hospice. And last but not least, we'd like to thank Seahorse Lane Boutique in Vero Beach who donated three percent of January through March 2023 sales from their 'Vero Initiative' merchandise for a total of \$307. *Thank you!*

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VNA Wish List

The VNA & Hospice Foundation seeks contributions to support ongoing priorities

If you would like to contribute to the purchase of these items, please call Mish Dean at 772.978.5580.

Equipment Needed

Used to monitor bleeding and clotting for anyone taking blood thinners:
PT/INR Test strips box of 48 - \$258 each
Veteran Recognition supplies - \$25 each
Magnavox MD6924 Portable CD players for Music Therapy - \$30 each
Extra-long twin sheets for hospice patient beds - \$50 each

Project Wish Program Funding Average Wish - \$300

This program has already made an impact by making hospice patients' final wishes come true. Additional funding will help ensure that more hospice families who do not have the financial means to grant their loved one's final wish – like paying for transportation to visit their favorite beach spot – can turn to the VNA for help.



United Way of
Indian River County



EIN 59-2804739 - The VNA & Hospice Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization supporting charitable patient care, non-reimbursed services and program needs of the VNA of the Treasure Coast.

