



1529 White Mountain Highway
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North Conway, NH 03860

www.VNHCH.org

Inside — Our 2024 Report to the Community



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HOSPICE WISH FULFILLMENT PROGRAM RECEIVES GRANTS, DONATIONS

We'd like to thank the many donors and foundations who supported our Hospice Wish Fulfillment Program in 2024. We raised \$20,785 with donations from 62 donors and a grant from The Pequawket Foundation.

This program acknowledges that care and comfort in hospice extends beyond just the physical needs of each person.

During this sensitive season in a person's life, there may be one last wish they are waiting to fulfill. VNHCH's Hospice Wish Fulfillment Program works to grant reasonable local wishes that help inspire and heal the soul while adding life to the time a hospice patient has left.

Making these wishes a reality takes money and resources that are not generally covered through insurance, Medicaid or VA benefits. Despite this, VNHCH regularly makes these wishes come true for hospice patients. Community members who want to help make hospice wishes a reality are encouraged to make donations to VNHCH and indicate their donation is for this specific program.



Visiting Nurse Home Care & Hospice

of Carroll County and Western Maine

2024 **REPORT TO
THE COMMUNITY**



Executive Director Sandy Ruka, shown here at the summer employee party with a super soaker!

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As we approach the end of the year, it's a great time to reflect on our achievements and look forward to the opportunities ahead.

Recently, we collaborated with our Board of Directors to develop and approve our FY2025 Strategic Plan. While our Mission and Vision remain unchanged, we have adjusted certain strategic priorities to better align with the evolving needs of our agency and the community we serve. You can read it here: <https://tinyurl.com/VNHCH2024>

We remain fully committed to providing quality care, an outstanding patient experience, and a strong community focus. We are also anticipating future needs, such as ensuring our team has the resources to continue delivering excellent care. This includes supporting strong leadership, as several senior managers, myself included, approach retirement age, and addressing our agency's physical space requirements.

Maintaining financial stability is essential, especially as our payment model transitions from Fee-For-Service to Value-Based Purchasing.

Our Hospice services continue to expand, reflecting both the health needs of our aging community and the quality of care we provide. Our outreach efforts around hospice and our emphasis on Palliative Care serve as important steps in helping our community understand the value of these services.

All of this work is made possible through the support and generosity of our donors and local foundations. As you look through the list of the hundreds of community members who donated in 2024, we hope you'll consider joining them in supporting our mission.

Sincerely,
Sandy L. Ruka, MS, RN
Executive Director



Our dedicated board of directors. Shown here, from left to right, Patricia Mason, Nancy Lohmiller, Andrea Masters, Gail Paine, Myles Crowe (Complete list of Directors, at right).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Myles Crowe,
President

Andrea Masters,
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Dawn Morrison,
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Theresa "Tracy" Grisez

Nancy Lohmiller

James Love

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PsyD, FNP-BC

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WE APPRECIATE THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR DONORS.

Make Your Gift Online at www.VNHCH.org or Return the Enclosed Courtesy Envelope with Your Donation.



Ashlee Chaine introduces Keynote Speaker Kyurim Kang, PhD., LPMT, MT-BC, NMT

CAREGIVERS SUPPORTED AT ANNUAL EVENT

This year's MWV Caregivers Expo focused on supporting those caring for loved ones with neurodegenerative, cognitive, and movement disorders. The event returned to the Mt. Washington Valley Adult Day Center which generously provided a beautiful venue for the day.

VNHCH Executive Director Sandy Ruka stated, "Caregiving in general is not easy but caring for someone with a neurodegenerative or movement disorder means not always knowing what will come next. Michael J. Fox once said about his Parkinson's Disease 'It's about being comfortable functioning on a day-to-day basis.' We hope to give caregivers tools and resources to help them improve the quality of life of their loved ones while improving the quality of their own caregiving experience."

Keynote speaker was Kyurim Kang, PhD., LPMT, MT-BC, NMT, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, at the Center for Music and Medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.



Julie Lanoie, RN discussed home safety.

Kang’s presentation explored the role of music therapy in enhancing the quality of life for individuals with neurodegenerative diseases, such as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s, and their caregivers. It highlighted the therapeutic techniques used to address cognitive, emotional, and motor challenges while emphasizing how music therapy fosters connection and emotional support for both patients and caregivers.

Occupational Therapist Hannah Sparks discussed how communication is crucial to any healthy relationship. She discussed proactive planning for a decline in communication abilities.

Angela Nelson, Physical Therapy Assistant and Julie Lanoie, RN, Executive Director of the Tamworth Nursing Association discussed home safety and the emotions that come with it.

The expo wrapped up with a round table discussion on how to make the decision to keep loved ones home and when is the right time to look into a facility.

We are deeply thankful to Merrill Lynch and MaineHealth Memorial Hospital for their generous sponsorship of this year’s Expo. Their support makes this meaningful gathering possible, helping caregivers find strength, knowledge, and community.



Angela Nelson, Physical Therapy Assistant



Caregivers received information and resources.

CELEBRATING OUR DEDICATED STAFF

We celebrate these long-time employees who marked these years of service at VNHCH in 2024!



Tracy Ames

2024 Anniversaries	
Tracy Ames	15 Years
Paula Gillis	10 Years
Julie Lanoie	10 Years
Mary Edes	10 Years
Cynthia Hembree	10 Years
Melissa Jardine	5 Years
Sharon Kinney	5 Years

KATHLEEN SHEEHAN SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO NURSING SCHOLAR

Liz Prior is the recipient of our 2024 Kathleen Sheehan Memorial Scholarship Award. Liz is completing the Direct Entry Master of Nursing Clinical Nurse Leader program at the University of New Hampshire.

The \$2,000 award is given each year to a college student currently enrolled in an accredited health-related field of study program with a focus on nursing, physical therapy or occupational therapy, and who resides in Carroll County, NH or Western Maine. The scholarship is in honor of Kathleen Sheehan, a VNHCH nurse who passed away from cancer.

Prior’s path to her nursing studies did not come through a conventional route. Her undergraduate degree was in Business, but her career led her toward helping people. She previously worked for North Country Independent Living, and more recently as a Case Manager for the Brain Injury Association. It was in this capacity that she first worked with the caring professionals at VNHCH. Prior related, “The service they (VNHCH) provided made an incredible difference in the lives of these individuals to help them stay in the community. It was an aspect that inspired me to go to nursing school.”

Applications for the 2025 scholarship will be accepted online starting in spring 2025 at www.vnhch.org/scholarship.



Scholarship Recipient Liz Prior

REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY AT MERRIMAN HOUSE

Visiting Nurse Home Care and Hospice partnered with Merriman House at Memorial Hospital for a remembrance ceremony. The event was created to honor the memory of lost loved ones in a unique and meaningful way.

The event featured music by the Silver Lake Singers and a butterfly release. Families who had lost loved ones had the option to release a butterfly in their memory, or to have one released on their behalf. Each element of the memorial provided solace, healing and a sense of unity.

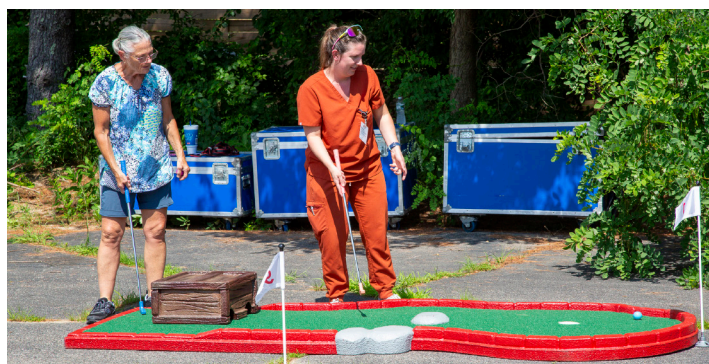


EMPLOYEE AND HOSPICE VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT

On July 8, we celebrated our incredible team with a fantastic summer appreciation party!

We'd like to extend a big thank you to Dragon Wagon Food Cart, Trails End Ice Cream, See What Sticks Axe Throwing, Seacoast Events, and Putt Putt, as well as Olivia & Kaylan with their garden table for making our Employee and Hospice Volunteer Appreciation Event memorable. Despite the heat, we were grateful for everyone who came out to enjoy the festivities.

A special shout-out to Nurse Deb Haynes for organizing a surprise super soaker water fight to help us cool down!



Mini golf fun



Axe throwing was a popular activity at the party!



Trails End supplied ice cream.



The gang's all here!

FINANCIAL REPORT - Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

Where the Money Comes From:

Medicare	\$2,704,661
Medicaid	\$198,886
Private	\$896,750
Bad Debt	(\$120,000)
Total Patient Revenue	\$3,680,297
Grants	\$148,489
Other	\$91,516
Total Operating Revenue	\$3,920,302

Where the Money Goes:

Program Expenses	\$3,173,353
Administrative and General	\$740,384
Total Operating Expenses	\$3,913,737
Gain from Operations	\$6,565
Contributions	\$65,382
Investment	\$167,711
Change in Fair Value	\$450,494
Total Non-Operating Revenues	\$683,587
Excess Revenue over Expense	\$690,152

VNHCH BY THE NUMBERS FISCAL YEAR 2024

- **Home Care Visits**
15,039
- **Home Care Patients**
875
- **Hospice Visits**
3,129
- **Hospice Patients**
131
- **Miles Driven**
219,391

GRATEFUL

2024 DONOR HONOR ROLL

Donations to VNHCH during our
2024 fiscal year - 7/1/23-6/30/24

We are deeply grateful to the generous donors and supporters in our community who enable us to carry out our mission. Your contributions make a meaningful difference, and we couldn't do it without you. Thank you!

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