

Caring & Giving

A Publication of
Connecticut VNA
Home Healthcare and Hospice by Masonicare

In Mother's Memory

Family Makes Generous Donation to Connecticut VNA's Hospice Program



Gertrude Esposito and her daughters

When Gertrude Esposito was diagnosed with cardiopulmonary disease last December, her family was faced with a difficult decision. The nurses at her assisted living facility in Hamden were recommending Hospice care. It was a reality the family had faced the year before with Gertrude's husband, and it was a call they were reluctant to make. Eventually, Gertrude's daughters Carol Stefura, Trudy Monahan and Rose Shule and her husband Bill, arranged a meeting with Roseanne Corning, a nurse with Connecticut VNA's hospice program. Together, they made the choice to begin hospice care for

Gertrude. "There was no pressure from Connecticut VNA," says Bill. "It was our decision."

Just a few days later, Gertrude required hospitalization, and was admitted to the acute care unit at Masonic Healthcare Center in Wallingford. The facility, along with Connecticut VNA, is part of the Masonicare continuum and is often used by hospice for inpatient services. "Everyone there was fantastic," recalls Bill. But Gertrude was pleased to be home a few weeks later, and Bill agrees it was a great thing having her in her home. "Connecticut VNA allowed us to keep her in a place she wanted to be and keep her comfortable. It gave her time with the grandkids, who could visit anytime, and the most important thing is that she was happy. We have heard wonderful things regarding Connecticut VNA's hospice program, and now we can honestly say that the care not only for the ill is wonderful, but the care and support for the family is truly above and beyond what is expected."

In Gertrude's final months, Connecticut VNA often came to tend to her in the very late or early morning hours, showing the family how to make her more comfortable, all the while providing invaluable emotional support and guidance. When Gertrude passed away in the acute care unit at Masonic Healthcare Center, her family decided to make a very generous donation to Connecticut VNA in her memory. "I would highly recommend Connecticut VNA's hospice care," Bill concludes. "What it came down to was what was best for her...to go through the loss of someone and know you did everything possible."

As he sums it up in his thoughtful letter to Connecticut VNA accompanying the family's gift...
"You truly showed compassion when needed but also guidance in a manner that allowed the family to make difficult decisions with confidence that we were doing the best for Gertrude. And in the end, that is all that we cared about."

A Giving Heart

Masonicare's Connecticut VNA Befriends Transplant Patient



Juana Power and her daughter Monica

When Juana Power left her home country of Bolivia, South America in 1988, it was to discover a new country and new culture, and as luck would have it, to meet her future husband. In her new Connecticut home, she began a practice as a marriage and family therapist and started her own family, never dreaming that by age 40, she would be diagnosed with congestive heart failure.

Because her symptoms could not be controlled with medication, Juana's only hope was the implantation of a Bi-VAD (Bilateral Ventricular Assisted Device). She ultimately became the first patient of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston to be released and sent home with the machine, which works as an external heart

pump, bypassing the heart to provide blood circulation. She would require constant assistance while on the device, prompting her sister to come north from South America. In-home medical care would also be a necessity, and Masonicare's Connecticut VNA entered the picture. "They needed just the right nurse to operate the sophisticated device," says Juana, "They chose Jennifer Williams. She wasn't afraid of the machine." More importantly, she became a friend to the Power family, even checking up on the health of Juana's sister and entertaining Juana's daughters, Monica and Jessica. For nearly a year, Juana remained on the machine, as her doctors were forced to reject dozens of potential donor organs due to incompatibility.

In May of 2005, Juana was admitted to the hospital for a lengthy procedure which would lower her defenses and improve her body's chances of accepting a donor heart. Miraculously, the procedure never had to take place. She awoke in the hospital that first morning to discover the physicians had finally found her perfect

match. With continued medical support from Connecticut VNA, she has recovered from her transplant beautifully, and happily admits she is "nonstop now... all over the place and living life again!"

Juana can't say enough about the generosity and kindness of Connecticut VNA. "The whole team has come to us and supported us as a family. They care very much about the patients, and go beyond what is expected, not just with the medical aspect of care, but the whole person and the family as well. I never felt like a patient. I felt like they were my extended family." She was so moved by their care, she penned several poems reflecting on the generosity of her caregivers and included them in her book of poetry, "While Waiting for a Heart."

"I never felt like a patient."

In the eloquent words of Juana Power: *"Thanking the angels who touched us every day, including those with no wings we call friends."*

Home Sweet Home

Care From a Favorite Recliner



Frank Randal and his nurse Dana White

Relaxing in an easy chair, in his home by the lake in Brookfield, CT, Francis Randal receives the special wound care he requires at the hands of a nurse from Connecticut VNA. It's a comfort to receive this care in the familiarity of his own home, not to mention immensely convenient for Francis, who has suffered an amputation with several non-healing wounds. Referred to Connecticut VNA by his local hospital, Frank has been a patient of Connecticut VNA twice, once in 2004 and again in 2005. His nurse Dana White visits him three times a week, changing his dressings and checking his vital signs and general health. Occasionally, nurse Pat Cannizzaro visits Frank as well. The substitution is no problem for Frank, who has been cared for by Pat in the past, and has nothing but kind words for all of the Connecticut VNA staff involved in his care. "I don't think I could get by without them," he says. "Everybody is very

helpful and friendly. The quality of care is excellent, the people are terrific."

It is easy to see that Frank relates to his caregivers on both a professional and personal level, as he compares stories with Pat about the town of Danbury and how times have changed. Frank, who has lived in the Danbury area for fifty years, spent twenty-five of those years commuting to Brooklyn where he served as a New York City policeman. He then went on to serve as

"I don't think I could get by without them....We make a great team."

Vice President of International Security for Calvin Klein for seventeen years. He fondly reminisces with Pat about their favorite old New York bakeries as she tends to his needs.

"There is so much we can do in the home now," says Pat, a recipient of the Florence Nightingale award for nursing excellence. She indicates the small, humming machine at Frank's side. "The Wound-Vac® is a new technology, which helps wounds heal three times faster by using suction to promote healthy healing. I think it's such a nice opportunity to help the patients in their own home. We communicate

with the doctor, the family...we put it all together."

Thanks to the existence of Connecticut VNA, patients like Frank can avoid multiple hospital visits, often complicated by limited mobility, and recover in the serenity of their own homes. Frank has only the kindest words when asked about his nurses Dana and Pat, and the staff of Connecticut VNA. "It's easy to say nice things when they are true," he insists. "We make a great team."

Committed to excellence in providing home healthcare, Connecticut VNA offers a complete range of in-home services and specialty programs state-wide, including:

- Skilled Nursing/Case Management
- Medical Social Work
- Companion Services
- Behavioral Health
- Maternal-Child Care for Moms & Newborns
- Pediatric Homecare Program
- Wound and Ostomy Care
- Arrangement for Durable Medical Supplies & Equipment
- Homemaker & Home Health Aide Services
- Geriatric Care
- Diabetic Teaching and Monitoring
- Home Telemonitoring
- Hospice and Palliative Care
- Physical, Speech & Occupational Therapies
- Disease Management Programs



33 North Plains Industrial Road
 Wallingford, CT 06492

Non-Profit Org.
 US Postage
PAID
 New Haven, CT
 Permit 29

Connecticut VNA Quality of Life Fund

Looking out for Your Loved Ones

Every day, dollars from the Quality of Life Fund at Masonicare’s Connecticut VNA are hard at work, providing services and products to make the lives of our patients safer, easier and more worry-free.

Imagine an elderly loved one, home alone, has just taken a fall. The phone is out of reach and no one is due back for hours. With Lifeline®, an invaluable medical emergency response system, help arrives with just the push of a button. Lifeline® is a medical emergency response system that enables fragile individuals to activate a distress signal from a pendant worn around the wrist or neck. A basic speakerphone is immediately activated and dials the Lifeline Response Center, where trained associates dispatch help at

once in the form of an ambulance or family member. For eligible recipients, this invaluable service is now supplemented by the Quality of Life Fund of Connecticut VNA.

Perhaps you have a family member with congestive heart failure or diabetes living at home. Daily monitoring of this patient’s vital signs, such as weight, blood pressure and heart rate is crucial. With the telemonitors provided by Connecticut VNA, patients can easily take their own vital signs at home. The readings are then sent automatically via telephone to Connecticut VNA, to be monitored on a daily basis. Early detection of fluctuations in vital signs is critical and has been shown to reduce hospital stays and lower the frequency of emergency room visits. Thanks to Quality of Life

Fund dollars, Connecticut VNA is able to offset the cost of leasing these monitors, along with digital scales, for patients who need them.

These are only a few of the many ways Quality of Life Fund dollars are used every day to improve the lives of those served by Masonicare’s Connecticut VNA.

Connecticut VNA offices	
Brookfield	(203) 775-0675
Danielson	(860) 774-1366
Greater Hartford	(860) 528-2273
New Haven	(203) 624-6664
Norwalk	(203) 831-8882
Shelton	(203) 735-6664
Wallingford	(203) 679-5300
Waterbury	(203) 765-6664
Connecticut VNA, SE offices	
Norwich	(860) 889-7198
East Lyme	(860) 691-4630

If you would prefer not to receive any future fundraising communications from The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut, please write to us at MCF of CT, P.O. Box 70, Wallingford, CT 06492. In order to ensure that we accurately reflect your request, please provide your full name and street address. Please note that it may take six to eight weeks to make your request fully effective.