

News from West River Valley Senior Housing



Spring 2018

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Dear Friends A word from Susanne Shapiro, RN, ED

Happy Spring! Soon Dawn will host her Volunteer Appreciation Tea, and it has inspired me to admire the beauty in spirit of all those who volunteer for Valley Cares. Residents of our independent living building lead programs or drive others to appointments. Residents of the assisted living volunteer to set the tables, water plants or other tasks around the house. Students from Leland and Gray assist with our activities program or cleaning up the grounds at our housing. Many other community members volunteer with our activities program or Meals on Wheels program. There are so many ways volunteers are involved with our organization, and each one has its own beauty. Thank you, volunteers!

I also want to thank those community members who volunteer with other organizations - such as the local fire departments and Rescue Inc. - for their immense benefit to Valley Cares and the community at large. You are all to be commended for the way you share your time and efforts. We appreciate you!

Support And Services at Home By Alicia Moyer

SASH is thriving in the West River Valley. We are so happy to have hired a new SASH Wellness nurse, Cynthia Channing, who also works part time in the Assisted Living building. Cyndy is wrapping up her initial SASH training, and is eager to dive into the community of 80 or so SASH participants, completing health assessments and helping develop Healthy Living Plans. It is so good to have her here!

Claire Bemis, Nurse Outreach Coordinator for the GCH Community Health Team, and Alicia were both recently certified by the Alzheimer's Association to both provide educational presentations to the surrounding community, as well as to facilitate a much need caregiver's support group. We will be co-facilitating an Alzheimer's/Dementia Caregiver's Support Group in the Holt Conference room at Grace Cottage on the first Thursday of each month, from 11-12:30, starting on May 3rd. This news is hot off the press! Formal advertisement will appear shortly.

SASH® a caring partnership
SUPPORT AND SERVICES AT HOME

Alicia continues to facilitate a lively, and sometimes emotional Living Alone group each third Wednesday of the month in the Heins Building, from 10:15-11:45. Currently, a steady group of seven or eight women participate and support one another in the varied challenges of living alone as we age.

Alicia offers three Tai Chi for Falls Prevention classes at Grace Cottage, with a brand new one that began April 3rd. Two physical therapists from Grace Cottage are also about to receive certification to teach, which will free Alicia up to bring these classes into surrounding towns. Wardsboro is likely to be next!

Collaboration with Grafton Cares continues each Wednesday. After attending the weekly senior meal and meeting informally with people, Alicia provides the opportunity to meet individually with people at the nearby Community Church, between 1:00-2:30. Cyndy has already been a help participants during that timeframe as well.

As always, there are many unique situations that Alicia and Cyndy are assisting individuals with, by visiting them in their homes, interfacing with providers, discussing at SASH Team, and more.

Resident Highlight: Emilia Bruce By Jean Allbee

"I spent my life on vacation reading books!" Emilia said.

Her father owned a bookstore in Madrid, Spain, and her mother was also very well read. She would tell Emilia and her siblings Shakespeare's stories such as Romeo and Juliet, Othello, and A Midsummer Night's Dream. Thus Emilia was exposed to the world of books and literature at a very early age. Emilia remembered,

"One day, when I was about eight years old, my friends and I came upon a book of anatomy in the bookstore. It showed the internal systems such as bones, muscles, the nervous system, but also the external organs. All my friends from school came to look in this book."

When her father became aware that many little girls from the school were drawn to the book he told Emilia in a fatherly and kind way, "It's good to learn about the human body, but don't look too closely and don't bring the whole school to see the book."

Besides books and literature another major influence in Emilia's life was that Spain was under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco during her childhood in the 1930s and 40s.

"My family didn't suffer as much as some during Franco's rule. We still had a hard time getting food because the carabinieri (police) would take food from anyone they pleased and there was nothing anyone could do about it. My mother devised an apron with many deep pockets. We would go to

the country farm market and the vendors would rush to greet us and hug my mother while stuffing her deep apron pockets with various foods. This way we were able to escape from the notice of the carabinieri."

In 1951, partly to escape the Franco regime, and partly because she loved to travel, Emilia went to live in Mexico with her sister and brother-in-law. In Mexico City she got a job in a bookstore.

"The Mexican woman who ran the store didn't like me at first," Emilia said. "My sister told me to be patient. 'She will get to know you and then she will like you.' There was a native Indian who came to work at the store. He had only sandals, no sweater. I bought him a sweater and some other clothes. After that the bookstore lady liked me."

When the bookstore in Mexico relocated to Texas, Emilia also came to the United States. A circuitous route took her, first, to Brown University, then, to New York City before she ended up at Marlboro College where she met her future husband. Emilia became the first foreign student at Marlboro and one of the first women to graduate from Marlboro College.

After graduation Emilia taught at Northfield School for Girls and later, for many years, at The Putney School. Her love of books, and eagerness to travel and learn have served Emilia well. She exhibits a curiosity first nourished in her father's bookstore and by

traveling with her mother and listening to her stories. Emilia's eyes sparkled as she generously shared her memories and her lifetime of multicultural and literary experiences.



Tea Party Cucumber Sandwiches

- 1 package mini rye bread slices
- 1 - 8oz package cream cheese, at room temp
- 1 packet Ranch seasoning mix
- 2 cucumbers, peeled and sliced
- ★ In a bowl mix the cream cheese and Ranch seasoning mix.
- ★ With a knife spread a thin layer on a piece of bread, then top with a slice of cucumber
- ★ Repeat until all sandwiches have been made

Employee Highlight: Kathy Krasnow By Becca Schaefer

If you've met Kathy Krasnow, you know that spreading joy is her forte! So it might not come as a surprise that her first job out of high school was as the Clown at The Ground Round restaurant.

"That was a little embarrassing," she laughs. "I don't think anyone knew it was me in the costume, but when I saw people I knew, I was blushing underneath all the makeup."

Despite the clown gig and several food service jobs, Kathy always knew she was destined to be a nurse. She is a natural caregiver. Kathy grew up in a big family and was always inclined to take care of everyone. She remembers visiting her grandmother in the hospital as her health was failing. "She told me angels were tickling her toes. She believed it, and so did I," Kathy beams.

Kathy loves being a nurse. She is the Assistant Nurse Manager at Valley Cares' assisted living and has a part-time job as a home health nurse.

Kathy met her husband of 18 years when they were both nursing assistants in Burlington. They shared the sincere belief that every person deserves kindness and compassion. Together they traveled around as she became a nurse and he a doctor. Kathy counts off on her hands all the states she has lived in – 9 – but southern Vermont is "home."

Throughout her life, Kathy has learned to be flexible, resilient and open to new experiences. She is not averse to learning a new skill when the opportunity presents itself, and she maintains just the right "can-do" attitude to take on any challenge. Case in point: Last year when Kathy wanted to clean up a fallen tree in her backyard, she bought a chainsaw and taught herself how to use it (with a little help from YouTube videos and the guys at True Value)!

But Kathy's favorite pastimes are spending time with her 7-year-old son, Luke, and photography. She has been taking pictures since she was about Luke's age and has a lifetime collection of over 25,000 photos! Her favorite photograph? A close up she took of a sweet pea flower that looks like a beautiful pink bird. Actually photography is a hobby that she and her son share. "It's nice to have something we both love to do." Together she and Luke explore the beauty and wonder of everyday scenes and moments, and that brings her the greatest joy of all.



Cheers to You, Volunteers!

We really appreciate the caring community members who volunteer their time for Valley Cares. We rely on volunteers both from within our housing and from out in the greater community. Our volunteers assist with or lead resident programs, take on tasks around the house, and serve seniors out the surrounding communities.

On May 6, our Recreation & Volunteer Coordinator, Dawn, is hosting a Volunteer Appreciation Tea Party to celebrate these kind folks. We hope all our volunteers will be able to join us as we raise our teacups to you!

Walking Path Improvements By Becca Schaefer

As spring settles upon us, isn't it wonderful to enjoy a little fresh air and sunshine? Time outdoors is well documented to lift moods and provide relief from anxiety or grief. After the New England winter, time outdoors is "just what the doctor ordered!"

Thanks to benefit concerts held over the past few years, Valley Cares has been making improvements to our outdoor living spaces to help residents enjoy the beauty and the benefits of spending time outside. We have resurfaced the walking paths and added several benches around the property. Now we are in the process of ordering and installing distance markers along the paths.

Walking and other outdoor exercises are extremely beneficial to health and well-being – at any age. We look forward to seeing you outside!

Special Remembrance: The new distance markers will be installed in loving memory of Tom Morris of the Bondville Boys, who helped inspire and coordinate Valley Cares' annual benefit concert since its inception three years ago. What a kind soul!



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“Yes, we have a Waitlist...But you may get right in!” By Becca Schaefer

I recently overheard our Executive Director, Susanne Shapiro, say these words to someone who inquired about our housing. How is it possible to get right in when there is a waitlist? When we have a vacancy, we contact everyone on the waitlist to let them know, but not everyone on the list is ready to move yet. Some people might need to sell their house first but sign up for the waitlist in preparation for when that happens. Also a certain number of our apartments have restricted income qualifications, so we must determine whether any interested applicants are income-eligible for the vacancy at hand. If you are not ready or do not meet the income/care needs qualifications for the particular vacancy, we move on to the next person on the list. Sometimes that means a new applicant will get right in!

There is NO fee to get on a waitlist for our housing, and there is no obligation to move in once you are on the waitlist. You are always welcome to pass on a vacancy if the timing is not right for you. So if you or someone you know might be interested in living at West River Valley Senior Housing, we encourage you to come for a visit, ask us questions, and submit a housing application. To learn more, call Jen Gagliardi at (802) 365-4115 ext.104 or find our housing application on our website, www.valleycares.org.