

# News from West River Valley Senior Housing



WINTER 2016

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## Valley Cares, Inc. Board of Directors

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## Dear Friends

A word from Susanne Shapiro, RN, ED



Happy Holidays from our “family” to yours! This year Valley Cares turned 10 years old! It is incredible to think about what has been accomplished in that time (and dream about what might in the next ten years). As the year comes to a close, I’d like to take few moments to reflect...

As you may know, our nonprofit organization was incorporated in 2006, but of course work to create the organization started long before that. Valley Cares grew out of a local community effort – which you may have been a part of – following the close of a local nursing home in 2002. We owe much gratitude to the founders and community members who worked so hard to create this organization. In particular, I’d like to recognize Valley Cares’ founding Executive Director, Bob Crego, and founding Board President, John Nopper, for all the countless hours they put into getting the organization off the ground. Thanks also to Grace Cottage Hospital, the Valley Health Council, and all the community members who participated in this process, including the founding Board of Directors: (John Nopper), Stacey Rheume, Al LaRoche, Jean Allbee, Edith Serke, Charlie Marchant, Bucky Pel-sue, Kit Martin and Effie Chamberlin (dec.). You should all be proud of your accomplishment!



Since the doors of West River Valley Senior Housing opened in the fall of 2007, this has been a safe, supportive, worry-free home for over 200 residents. Our other supportive services continue to be very appreciated too. Our kitchen has produced over 54,000 meals for the Meals-on-

Wheels program, and our medical equipment loan program has provided approximately 1,400 walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs, etc., free of charge to anyone who needs to borrow them. Even our newest program, SASH, is reaching the milestone of benefitting 100 older adults who live at home in the surrounding communities.

Valley Cares has come a long way in 10 years thanks to all the people who created this organization, live here, work here, volunteer here and visit. Some of you have been here since day one; others are newer additions to our community. It is all of you who have made, and continue to make, this organization what it is.

So as this holiday season is upon us, it is my honor to share this gratitude with you. Please do not hesitate to call me at (802) 365-7190 ext.102 if you have any questions or suggestions, and know that my “door is always open” if you would like to come for a visit or meet with me one-on-one.

I wish you joy, peace and a wonderful New Year!



## SASH Program Receives Good News

By Alicia Moyer

This fall, we received good news about the future of the SASH (Support And Services at Home) program. The Green Mountain Care Board voted unanimously in favor of the All Payer Model which includes continued funding for SASH beyond 2016. SASH is no longer a “demonstration”- it is embedded in the State’s health care reform model with continued funding for the next 6 years! This is a very welcome change from the 2- and 3-year funding awarded during the first 5 years of the program, when SASH was viewed as a temporary demonstration.



## Resident Highlight: Susan Hunt By Jean Allbee

Susan Hunt welcomed me into her living room at Valley Cares. Susan is a fairly new resident, and I was told she had some interesting stories to tell. We chatted for awhile and the more we talked the more I struggled to wrap my brain around the skills and education she commanded in her life as an engineer.

"The best years of my life were working with Draper Lab teams, testing gyroscopes made at the lab for the accuracy required for missile delivery systems," Susan said, when asked what she had done that she was most proud of. After graduating from UVM with a degree in physics, Susan worked for Draper Laboratories in Cambridge, MA between 1955 and 1975. "At first I worked in an unheated hallway dressed in my winter clothes. I watched movies that showed a retreating fighter plane. My job was to look through a telescope to calibrate the accuracy of crosshairs fixed on the retreating plane. I would stop the movie every few frames and re-adjust the crosshairs to correct the accuracy."

Oh, I said, feigning comprehension. Another job Susan did was to work with Dr. Max Petersen, a well know physicist in the Boston area.

"We worked in the cellar where we laid out lines to the North Star to calibrate gyroscopes." The gyroscopes were later used to stabilize the flights of the Mercury intercontinental ballistic missiles. I concentrated on her words as Susan attempted to explain triangulation

and fixed points in language I could understand.

What else did you do at Draper?

"I was a gopher," she told me.

A gopher? I was picturing a glorified secretary fetching coffee for her bosses.

"I was somewhat of a slippery character, like "Radar" in MASH (the TV show), who could get anything anyone needed," Susan explained. "One time I had to smuggle our whole system out of a Honeywell facility before the next morning (a system to which that company would no longer have access). When going through security I handed the "zero box" (a locked aluminum box) in question to an employee nearby. I told him it was a bit heavy and asked if he would hold it while I went through security. I picked it up on the other side and that was that!"

Susan also told a humorous story of when she and some fellow engineers were at a Holloman test site (near Albuquerque) to test some of the Draper components. "We were a team of six people, and we had rented cheap rooms just for sleeping which we furnished on a very slim budget. The budget didn't allow for dishes, so one night we collected and washed all the ashtrays from the various rooms and served our 'take out' spaghetti in the ashtrays."

In 1969 Susan bought ten acres of land in Saxton's River that included a covered foundation. With some professional

building help, lots of knowhow and, it seems, sheer willpower, Susan made it into a home for herself and her mother.

"I am stubborn," she told me. She pulled out a photograph album showing the many stages of the construction of her house. Susan pointed out a picture of a vehicle's tracks on her snow covered driveway with the car disappearing up the hill. "I made it up that driveway with no snow tires in a vehicle with no four wheel drive," she boasted. "Now that's stubborn!"

Being an engineer in the 1950s and '60s would indicate a different kind of stubbornness. In an era when engineering and other traditional 'mens' jobs were not options for most women Susan worked for 20 years as an engineer helping to develop history making technology for the neophyte space industry. Something to be proud of, indeed. "Now," she says, "it's all done with lasers. I don't understand it." ...I know just how she feels.

### Susanne's Chocolate Cornflake Clusters

4 c. Cornflakes

16 oz. Chocolate Chips

Zest from 1 Orange

Line two baking sheets with wax paper. Melt the chocolate in a double boiler. Mix in orange zest. Put the cornflakes in a bowl and pour the melted chocolate over them. Mix quickly & gently until coated. Arrange clusters of coated flakes on prepared baking sheets. Refrigerate for a half hour to firm up clusters. Share & Enjoy!

# ❄️ Winter is Coming ❄️

By Mary Collins

I've always loved Vermont, especially in the winter. Yes, I'm a flatlander, but Vermont has always felt like home. There's nothing like driving through the beautiful hills after a snowstorm. Winter, here, looks like every Christmas card that I ever saw when I was growing up. It's like living in a beautiful snow globe.

Of course, you'd better have good tires, or you're likely to get stuck in one of those beautiful Christmas card scenes. Traffic can be sparse in the wee hours.

Sometimes, when I'm driving home on a snowy night, I get a close look at all this beauty. I drive as slowly as possible, while still moving forward, to avoid sliding off the road. It's kind of a spiritual experience. I might see an owl fly by. I pray all the way home and give euphoric thanks when I arrive safely.

I don't have a wood stove, so I miss the experience of chopping wood and feeding the stove on chilly mornings. I can tell I'm

not a native Vermonter because I don't make my own heat. Still, I love catching the smell of wood smoke as I drive around.

Traffic becomes interesting during ski season. I generally meander along back roads and rarely encounter enough traffic to need to slow down. It always takes me by surprise when I drive somewhere on a Sunday afternoon in winter and find myself at a dead stop in a mile-long line of cars. Too late, I remember it's ski season.

I'm not a skier, so winter doesn't have that excitement for me. I can see the appeal. If I weren't so afraid of heights, I might be spending my winter weekends on the top of mountains. I imagine the view is breathtaking. Maybe I'll break out the snow shoes this year.

Meanwhile, it's time to pile on the sweaters and the long underwear. Put plastic over the windows to hold the heat. Get the flannel sheets and down

comforter on the bed. Winter is coming!



*Note about the author: Mary Collins has been a valued member of our caregiving team at West River Valley Assisted Living for over 5 years. In her spare time, she loves to write, read, work on crafts, and usually has a multitude of other projects in the works.*

## Thank You, Residents!

By Dawn Slade

This is the time of year to give thanks, and there are so many friends and volunteers who deserve such thanks. In particular, I would like to thank all the residents of Valley Cares who regularly volunteer their time and services.

Bunty—Cleaning up the dining room

David—Playing piano for programs and for the entertainment of others

Eleanor—Helping with newsletters, Setting up & cleaning up for religious services, Helping with programs

Father—Leading us in grace on holidays

Genevieve—Making & giving cards to see everyone is acknowledged, Fundraising for activities program

Mitzi—Cleaning up after programs

Nancy—Cleaning up after programs

Rudy—Donating place cards for tables

Ruth—Helping with newsletters, Sorting cards, Setting tables, Helping with programs, Serving on the Board and committees

Warren—Cleaning up after programs

Thank you to all the other residents who help throughout the year and those who I know would if they could. We couldn't do it without you!

## VALLEY CARES, INC.

P.O. Box 341  
457 Grafton Rd.  
Townshend, VT 05353

Phone: 802-365-4115  
Fax: 802-365-4910

As you plan for the future  
think of Valley Cares...

*Because the West River  
Valley is a wonderful place  
to call home!*



## Our Wish List

Thank you to all of you who have donated to Valley Cares throughout the year or made a yearend donation. If you prefer donating toward a specific item, will you consider contributing to one of these community wishes?

- **Deliver Meals-on-Wheels**
- **Kitchen Knife Block/Rack**
- **Serving Platters**
- **2 Lids for our Backyard Pro Gas Grill**
- **Bluetooth Speakers**

Previous wishes granted:

- Vital Signs Monitor
- Greeting Cards
- Visitors sharing their Classic Cars

*Thank you!*

## Senior Meals Offer Community By Alicia Moyer

For those of us whose family or social circle has diminished over time, the holidays can be difficult. I have heard from several SASH participants, however, that they find a warm sense of community and shared gratitude over one of the many senior meals offered in this area. Having attended them myself, I am familiar with how welcoming and friendly they are. The food is delicious and plentiful, home-cooked, and the tables are full of lively conversation. If you haven't been, or are somewhat shy like me, I encourage you to give one a try. Often, you will be greeted at the door by someone who would be more than happy to suggest a table to join. There is a suggested donation of \$3.50 for a meal which will leave you happily satiated!

Here is a list of some meals in our area and whom to contact:

Jamaica: Community Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays, noon,  
Ms J. Stone, 874-4847

Newfane: Congregational Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays, noon,  
Winnie Dolan, 365-7870

Townshend: Federated Church, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays, noon,  
Alice Gausch, 874-4276

Grafton: Church Chapel, every Wednesday at noon,  
Dennis Hunt, 869-2674

Dummerston Center: Evening Star Grange, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays,  
noon, Ruth Barton, 254-1128

Williamsville: Community Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Thurs, closed Dec.—March,  
Nissa Petrak, 348-6301