

News from West River Valley Senior Housing



SUMMER 2015

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Dear Friends

We are committed to providing quality care and service to our residents. Each year, we conduct a satisfaction survey of our assisted living to see how we are doing. Happily, results from our recent survey show that EVERY resident at West River Valley Assisted Living would recommend our facility as either "excellent" or "good." This high level of satisfaction is something we strive for.

Annual satisfaction surveys are required at all Vermont assisted living facilities. My InnerView, a third-party applied research company, conducted the confidential survey at our facility and nine others in Vermont (and at a total of 1,260 facilities across the country). Surveys were completed by residents of West River Valley Assisted Living and their primary family contacts. The feedback we obtained from this survey allows us to identify our strengths and opportunities so that we can provide a safe, positive and caring environment for our residents.

As we have been using this survey for 5 years, we can compare results and identify patterns. Our staff tends to score very well and receive much praise in the "what we do best" comment area. Our activities programming also receives accolades from residents and families, alike. This year we scored very well in cleanliness, thanks to the addition of two fulltime housekeepers. We have identified food as an area where we have opportunity for improvements and are strategizing with our food service company, Health Services Group, on how to accomplish this. We take into consideration each comment and each response. Everyone's opinion matters to us.

In a statement by My Innerview's chief executive officer, Neil Gulsvig, he states, "West River Valley Assisted Living's survey results serve as a strong testimony of the good work they are doing. Certainly there is always room for improvement, but satisfaction is high and at the end of the day, the resident is what matters."

I couldn't agree more. I would like to thank all survey participants for taking the time to share their thoughts and feelings. To deliver the quality of care and service you expect, it is important we know how you feel about us.

For more information about these survey results - or any topic of Valley Cares - please contact me at (802) 365-7190 ext.102.

-Susanne Shapiro, RN, ED

"I just love it here.
That's all. To get rid of
me they would have to
throw me out!"

- resident comment from
the Satisfaction Survey

Resident & Family Overall Satisfaction



Resident Highlight: Patsy Hope By Jean Allbee

Patsy O'Connor was stopped at the U.S./Canadian border for lack of sufficient funds while attempting to enter Canada to be with her mother. Although she already had her train ticket she was asked how much money she had with which to support herself while in Canada.

"One fifty," she replied.

"One hundred fifty dollars?" the customs official asked (this was 1946).

"You've got the decimal in the wrong place, she corrected. "One dollar and fifty cents." Patsy had worked at a bank in New York City, but she figured she wouldn't need any money living with her mother, so she spent it all before arriving in Buffalo. She was told by the customs officials that she had to stay in Buffalo while they got in touch with her mother and straightened things out, not wanting to allow her into the country to be a drain on the government.

Patsy stayed at The Virginian, a dilapidated hotel in Buffalo, for two weeks. The hotel had been run by two older sisters who had retired. Since

Patsy would only need a room for a couple of weeks they opened up a room just for her. Patsy remembers that the sisters were both 'deaf as posts.' There was very little water at the hotel and she had to use rain water for her bath.

Every day at lunchtime Patsy would eat at the White Tower across the street from her hotel. She would order a burger and read a mystery novel. A young employee began to take notice, and finally, one day got up the courage to approach her.

"I see you sitting here every day reading your book. I wonder if you'd like to go out with me?"

Patsy and her date, Raymond Hope, went out to dinner and to see a Bing Crosby movie. He then escorted her back to her hotel. They dated several more times, and by the end of the week he wanted to marry Patsy.

When her waiting time was up Patsy was able to enter Canada and be with her mother in London, Ontario. Her young man soon followed and met her mother who approved of the

courtship. They had met in November and were married in Canada the following August, 1947.

Patsy's new husband wanted to move to Baltimore. She said,

"He wanted to move to Baltimore, so I wanted to move there, too."

Patsy worked as a telephone operator in Baltimore for twenty years. She didn't particularly like the job, but wouldn't give the telephone company the satisfaction of robbing her of the time she had already put in.

After her husband died in 1986 Patsy moved to Vermont to live with her brother and his family. Eventually she got her own place. She never had any children of her own but said her brother had eight children so there were enough for both of them.

This November Patsy will be 98 years old. She has been a resident of Valley Cares for several years. Patsy enjoys the company of her cat and visits from her friends. It was fun to see her face light up as she recalled many past events from her fully lived life.

Sounds of Summer By Dawn Slade

Isn't live music wonderful? There is something about the experience of music when you can hear it, see it, touch it and interact with it. When Antje and Friends were here to perform during our strawberry shortcake event in June, the whole bunch of us couldn't help but tap our feet, clap and dance along. We are fortunate to host so many talented musicians and attend wonderful performances out in the community. A few of the summer's favorite performers here include: the Grafton Coronet Band, Gin Mill Bill, Ethan Stone, the Dewalt Brothers, and Pikes Falls Chamber Music. We will also attend the Marlboro Music Festival at the college.

Of course there are other fun events and outings planned for this summer, taking advantage of the [hopefully] beautiful weather. We went to the Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne, MA, and hosted a very popular dog show with fourteen dogs of all shapes and sizes. We plan to see a show at the Weston Playhouse. At the end of the summer we will host an antique classic car show. Thank you to all the many volunteers who contribute to our fun!

SASH is Here for YOU

By Alicia Moyer

Valley Cares has a new program to help people live safe and healthy lives in their own homes. SASH (standing for "Support And Services at Home") is a free service available to anyone who has Medicare. SASH Coordinator, Alicia Moyer, and SASH Wellness Nurse, Kate Roome, welcome the opportunity to speak with anyone curious about what SASH could do for them.

SASH can provide preventative health care - such as personalized meal planning and exercise classes - and services coordination to make sure you are taking advantage of all the programs available to you. SASH staff can assist with coaching related to chronic conditions and self-management education to help you stay as healthy as possible. Alicia and Kate can provide proactive problem solving around potential needs such as an unexpected hospitalization, and assist in finding resources to overcome obstacles such as lack of transportation. They also help participants transition from a hospital stay back home, complete Advance Directives and navigate the healthcare system.

Since they came on board in April, Kate and Alicia have been busily attending a variety of trainings and meeting with prospective participants. Generally anyone interested in SASH speaks with Alicia first. She explains the program and helps you determine whether SASH can be of service to you. There is no obligation to sign up, but if you choose to participate, Kate will pay you a visit to conduct an initial wellness assessment.

Although the "home base" for our SASH program is West River Valley Independent Living residence in Townshend, the program is open to anyone living in the surrounding area. Alicia even has an office at Grace Cottage Hospital where she may meet with you.

At the time of this writing, twenty participants have enrolled. (The program may accommodate up to 100.) Some live in the Independent residence, and others live surrounding towns such as Newfane, Brookline, Jamaica, West Townshend, Cambridgeport, and Grafton. Some participants have sought us out, and others have been referred by a doctor, family or friend.

As the program grows, SASH staff will provide regular offerings such as classes focusing on diabetes, hypertension and falls-prevention. Kate and Alicia have been trained to lead blood-pressure clinics. They look forward to being able to offer Tai-Chi and programming around improving balance. This month the Vermont Foodbank started a series of monthly food drops (a free and fun opportunity to supplement what's in your pantry) at the Inde-

pendent Living residence. For more programs and opportunities, stay tuned!

To find out more about SASH or speak confidentially with Alicia, you may call her at (802) 365-4115 ext.108.



Alicia Moyer, SASH Coordinator (left) & Kate Roome, SASH Wellness Nurse (right)

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

As an affordable housing organization we do our best to operate on a slim budget. There are a few things we would really like to have, but we need a little help to get them. Will you consider making a donation?

- **All-Purpose Greeting Cards**
(other than Christmas cards)
- **Round Picnic Table**
(with hole for shade umbrella)
- **Step Aerobics Step**
(to help residents get in and out of higher vehicles)
- **Large Print Novels**
- **Vital Signs Monitor**

Previous wishes granted:

- Hair Dryer

Thank you!

Strawberry Shortcake Salute

By Becca Schaefer

Who doesn't love fresh organic local strawberries, homemade biscuits and homemade whipped cream? Smiles were widespread at our Strawberry Shortcake Salute, a June 28 event held in honor of the rescue workers who came to our aid on New Year's Eve and all the volunteers who do so much for our community. As the rain poured down outside, we enjoyed a bit of summer inside.

Although attendance was slightly less than expected due to the rain, we still had a full house. Residents, family members, volunteers and rescue workers were all gathered in our dining room and living room. Grace Cottage Hospital graciously allowed us to use their parking lot for event parking, and our board president, Richard Chapin, provided a shuttle service for dry passage from their lot to our front door. Antje and Friends played music while many of us tapped our feet or danced along.

The strawberry shortcake was delicious! Days later, we were still talking about it. Many thanks to Lilac Ridge Farm for donating the berries to us at a reduced price and to Susanne Shapiro and Catherine Fournier for picking all the berries. Thanks also to Ann Allbee for baking all the biscuits, and to Hannaford and Price Chopper for donating the napkins and cups. And, of course, a big Thank You to all volunteers and rescue workers!