

News from West River Valley Senior Housing



FALL/WINTER 2015

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Dear Friends

At this time of year, when the weather gets cooler and the days get shorter, I find myself reflecting on what is truly important: relationships with all the wonderful people in my life...family, friends, neighbors, and the people I am fortunate to serve every day in my work at Valley Cares. I often say, "It is an honor to work with the senior population," and I mean that from the bottom of my heart. When you love what you do, there is good to be found in every day.

The months since our last newsletter have been eventful ones. As you may have heard, our assisted living caught fire after being struck by lightning in early August. No residents were hurt, and the building was safely evacuated – thanks to the emergency procedures we practice and the immediate aid we received from many first responders. Although most residents were able to return in August, those whose apartments were in the affected wing have been staying with family members or at Bradley House, Thompson House or Pine Heights in Brattleboro until building renovations are complete.

Thank you to all of you who have offered your prayers and well-wishes. We have been overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of this community. Thank you to those who attended and supported the Benefit Concert in August. We received many donations toward the resident relief fund for residents who lost belongings due to smoke and water damage. Thanks also to the fantastic performers: Hungrytown, The Bondville Boys, Gene Morrison, Cathy Martin, Ralph Sherman & Friends, and The Tuesday Night Town Hall Boys. We are thrilled that they have offered to make this concert an annual event and look forward to next year!



Renovated Apartment—Ready for Residents to Return!

Brunelle & Son is the general contractor for renovations to our building. As stated by our Maintenance Technician, Martin Bozetarnik, "They have done a stand-up job!" We have been very pleased to watch the building come back together. The number one goal for all has been getting our displaced residents back. I am pleased to report that construction is wrapping up at this very moment. Belongings are being moved back into apartments, with residents soon to follow. We couldn't be happier!

As this eventful year draws to a close, I thank all of you for being a part of our community. Thank you for the care you have shown your neighbors. Thank you for your support. I wish you, and those dear to you, a wonderful holiday season!

-Susanne Shapiro, RN, ED

Resident Highlight: Dot Bush By Jean Allbee

Dot Bush's family has roots as deep as the roots of the farm on which she was born. Dot's family name is Wright; a name well known in the Grafton area a century ago and still a prominent name today. Approaching Grafton from Townshend are a few miles of wide farmland holding several farms firmly planted in their surroundings, enclosed and protected by hand built stone walls a couple of centuries old. There are three white farmhouses along this stretch of road. The first one is where Dot Bush was born, January 31, 1921. It was her great-grandfather's house with whom her parents were living at the time, and had most likely been a sheep farm, in its earlier days. (Dot says the farmhouse is over the Grafton/Townshend line and is actually in Townshend.) The next farmhouse belonged to Dot's grandfather, and the third one became her father's farm. It is still known as the Wright Farm to many of the local residents.

Dot attended elementary school in Grafton and remembers being transported to school by automobile though there were still many horses and buggies being used in the 1920s. She attended Leland and Gray Seminary in Townshend, the nearest high-school, where she played basketball, but she also attended some games at Vermont

Academy in Saxton's River where her future husband was in school. Dot graduated from Leland and Gray in 1938 and went on to graduate from Vermont Junior College in Montpelier (now The Vermont College of Fine Arts) where she studied Guest House Management.

Soon after graduating from college, Dot and Bradford Bush were married and moved in with his parents in the center of Newfane village where Dot worked for Brad's mother in her Guest House, putting her education to practical and immediate use. The family name of Bush is as well recognized in the Newfane area as Wright is in the Grafton area. Dot's father-in-law, Bradford Bush Senior, was

the mail carrier for the town of Newfane for many years. His brother owned the Williamsville General Store (now The Eatery, a classy pizza parlor).

After awhile Dot and her husband moved to Saxton's River where they lived for ten years. They then moved to Brookline after the town finally was connected to the electric power grid, and later they moved "up on the hill" in Townshend.

Although she misses living in her own home, Dot feels her new home is a good alternative. She enjoys the musical events and other activities offered at Valley Cares, and looks forward to card games and Bingo and occasional attendance at various local events. Dot especially enjoyed the benefit concert for Valley Cares given by several local bands on the Townshend common this past August in the aftermath of a lightning strike earlier in the month.

Dot's apartment overlooks the woods where she occasionally sees small wildlife emerge from their protective cover. She also loves watching the many birds come and go from the well stocked bird feeder she keeps outside her living room window. Her residence at Valley Cares is convenient for the many family members and friends who visit often. It seems it both reflects and incorporates the essence of Dot's deeply rooted connection to the area.



Dot Bush enjoying a treasured pastoral pastime—a horse-drawn hayride

The Waitlist Puzzle

By Jen Gagliardi

How long is the waitlist? I've seen empty apartments, but they tell me there are none available. Why did my friend's mother get in when my mother has been on the waitlist longer?

If you have ever asked these questions, you might have found our answers a little vague. That is because there are so many factors that determine eligibility for a vacancy. Here is a bit of an explanation:

We maintain separate waitlists for all of our housing, but we use the same application. You may check one or all of the options on the application: "Independent Living," "Supportive Housing," and "Assisted Living." In fact, it is a good idea to check off multiple options if you think you *might* ever be interested in them. That will claim a spot on the waitlist.

Your "spot" on the waitlist(s) is determined by the date your application is received by our property management office.

When we have a vacancy, our Property Manager, Jen Gagliardi, sends a notice out to

everyone on the waitlist informing them of the opening. Anyone interested in that vacancy must notify her within two weeks of that letter. Jen then ranks the interested parties based on their "spot" on the waitlist (date application was received).

Since over half of our apartments have restricted income qualifications through public funding programs, Jen must evaluate whether the interested applicant on the top of the list is income-eligible for the vacancy at hand. She will also check other references at this time. If you do not meet the income/reference qualifications, she moves to the next person. (But don't worry – you will not lose your "spot" in line.)

If you do meet the qualifications: 1) In the Independent Living building, you are offered the apartment. 2) In the Assisted Living or Supportive Housing, you will be visited by our nursing staff to make sure we can appropriately assist your care needs. If we can, you will be offered an apartment. If we cannot, we will let you know what our concern is and if there

is something you can do to be deemed appropriate for our care services in the future.

Since there are many different pieces to this puzzle, the amount of time you are on the waitlist before moving in varies greatly from person to person. The reasons why one person is eligible for a vacancy while another is not are confidential in nature. However we are always willing to speak with you about your circumstances.

We want you to know that 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 without any repercussions or fear of losing your place in line. 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.

You Too Can Volunteer

By Dawn Slade

Volunteers do so much for our organization! They lead activities. They provide transportation on outings. They answer telephones. They deliver Meals-on-Wheels. They provide music and entertainment...and much more.

We have wonderful volunteers. I mean it from my heart when I say we really could not do half of what we do here at Valley Cares if it were not for all the kind community members who volunteer their time and talents with us. We really appreciate everything they do!

Volunteering is a great way to make a difference in the lives of others. It is a fulfilling, rewarding and sincere way to spend your time.

You, too, can volunteer here. Perhaps you have an idea of what you would like to do...but you do not have to know. You may volunteer as much or as little time as works for you.

To discuss volunteering opportunities, please call Dawn at (802) 365-7190 ext.107.

VALLEY CARES, INC.

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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. We really rely on our community to help us fulfill our mission. Will you consider a contribution?

- **Amaryllis Bulbs**
- **Large Print Novels**
- **Vital Signs Monitor**
- **Come Visit Us with your Pet**
- **Deliver Meals-on-Wheels**

Previous wishes granted:

- Round Picnic Table
- Aerobics Step (for vehicle access)
- Large Print Novels
- All-Purpose Greeting Cards

Thank you!

News from SASH

By Alicia Moyer

The SASH program continues to grow. Referrals are coming in from various sources: doctors, family members and other organizations. Our panel is up to 30 fully enrolled members, and an additional 16 who are automatic SASH participants due to their residence in our independent living building. Programming at that building continues to develop, with the newest activity being "A Matter of Balance", taught by Neil Carter. This class compliments the exercise class that has been going strong since August. Other regularly scheduled events include Bingo and Scrabble.

Monthly Foodbank food drops are well attended. The good-natured driver, Glenn, brings out the best in everyone as he helps distribute the food. Thanks to coordination between Alicia, Chris Thayer of the Foodbank, Grace Cottage Hospital and the local food shelf, another drop has now been added at Grace Cottage.

The SASH Team, comprised of representatives from GCH's Community Health Team, HCRS, Sr. Solutions, VNH, and Valley Cares, convened for the third time in November. Two SASH participants were presented, and all chimed in about how to address issues such as potential housing insecurity and transition from rehab to home. As the coordinator striving to bring SASH to life in this area, these meetings feel like an important milestone. The SASH gears are turning in a tangible, productive way around that table!