



The VNA Voice

Edition 40 - Summer 2023 - kansasvna.org

From Our House to Yours



3.D CASINO NIGHT

For the Visiting Nurses' staff tasked with planning the 3.d Casino Night Fundraiser, there was a great deal of uncertainty around the event. After four years without the event between it's biennial schedule and the pandemic, it was uncertain how much support the community would be able to provide, but the community showed up in a big way. Through the incredible support of the community in the form of sponsors, volunteers, donors, and in-kind donors, we raised over:

\$56,000

Thank you for your support!

OUR MISSION

Improving quality of life through
compassionate patient care
wherever you call **home.**



VISITING NURSES

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Patient Spotlight: Perspective, Positivity Promote Progress for Patient

"When he called me, I was sitting there at the sewing machine. It was perfectly clear, a perfectly normal voice. By the time I came around the corner, I could see him drooling, I could see his mouth sagging and he said something about his arm and I knew immediately," Ginny said about her husband, Keith, and the stroke he suffered on May 14th.

"She took one look at me and grabbed the phone," Keith said of the frightening moment. Fortunately, a quick response from EMS and quality care from the hospital meant that Keith survived his stroke, but he still faced a long road to recovery. In a situation like Keith's, perspective is everything. After having heart issues, stage four colon cancer, a tough bout of COVID-19, intestinal blockage, and most recently the stroke, it would be understandable for him to feel defeated, but he just keeps going with an appreciation for what he has. A stroke alone is a very serious condition to face and recover from, especially for an 85 year-old, but Keith says he is blessed. With help and support from his wife, Ginny, and Visiting Nurses, he just keeps going. "You can't give up. If you do, you die," Keith said.

It hasn't been easy or without frustration, but the motivation of people needing him and his commitment to keep going helped Keith make excellent progress in the month following his stroke. "Nobody expected

him to be where he is today, and I think it's that never give up attitude," Ginny said. While Keith's attitude has been incredibly important to his recovery, his progress has also been aided by support and encouragement from his wife and the Visiting Nurses staff that work with him. They've helped him maintain perspective in moments of challenge. Ginny has documented his progress along the way to show him and their family how far he has come.

When Keith still struggles with things he used to do with ease, like playing the piano or guitar, his Occupational Therapist, Kari, is quick to remind him of the progress he has made. "Wow, huge difference from when we played a week ago. It's all the exercises, the coordination, everything you're doing to get there," she said after Keith finished playing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" on the piano.

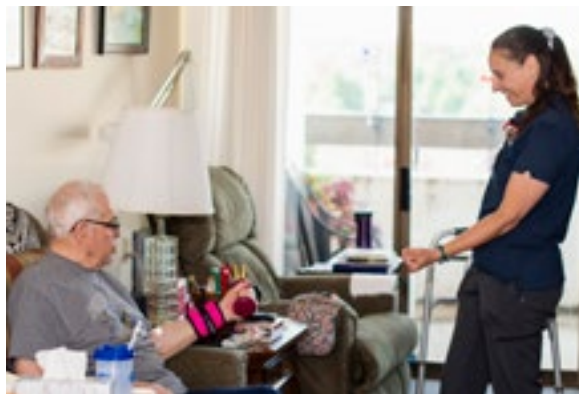
Kari led Keith through many exercises during her visits to help him regain functionality, after the stroke left him without

feeling on the left side of his body. She also gave Keith and Ginny various exercises to complete between visits, which he diligently completed with Ginny's encouragement. Throughout Keith's recovery, Ginny has been by his side to support him however she can, just as she has for the last 33 years of their marriage. While she has been supporting Keith through his recovery, Ginny has relied on the support of Visiting Nurses' staff. "It's a comfort to me as a caretaker to know that somebody is going to be there so that I could ask questions and feel like I had the answers that I needed. It's been a great experience," she said.

It is clear to see how much Keith's attitude and Ginny's support have benefited his recovery, but they are also quick to point out how much VNA has done for them. "If you need care, you can't do without them. Look what they've done for me," Keith said about his experience with VNA.

"Kudos to Visiting Nurses," Ginny said. "Such a comfort to me, and I can see how much he has improved in the time he has been home. I couldn't ask for anything better."

While Keith's recovery is ongoing, there is no doubt he will continue to improve thanks to his hard work, Ginny's support, and care from VNA.



Pictured above: Kari leads Keith through exercises to strengthen his left side.



Development Corner: VNA's Fleet Cars Hit the Road

Thanks to donors' investments, VNA was very excited to roll out new fleet cars through the Enterprise Fleet Program for its clinical staff in July. When gas prices started soaring in 2021, VNA's employees started feeling it. "Being a mobile workforce, we go to the patient in order to provide medical care. This type of care is wonderful for patients with complex medical symptoms who cannot leave their home to receive medical care, but there is a notable added expense with gas mileage reimbursement to clinicians," said Pam Morgan, VNA's Director of Finance. "We knew we had to start looking for other options."

Soar they did, an additional 22%. The devastating global struggles caused by the pandemic also affected inflation significantly. With a mobile workforce comes an expense that most healthcare organizations do not have to incur. All of this combined had a significant impact on VNA's financials. "Despite those financial challenges, however, we were and are still committed to serving our patients and employees," said Lori McSorley, VNA's Business Development Manager. VNA decided to raise the mileage reimbursement to the highest allowable by the government to support field clinicians who were struggling. This was costing VNA around \$115,000 annually. On top of that, the need for charity care kept increasing month after

month, creating the perfect storm of financial strain, and continuing to negatively affect VNA's financials. At the same time, CMS decreased payments for Home Health services, which caused further strain. "We pride ourselves on being a financially viable not-for-profit homecare organization," said Lori. "We work hard to serve so many vulnerable patients each year. The community was telling us by the number of charity care referrals we were receiving that they needed us now, more than ever. We had to come up with a creative solution." VNA immediately began fundraising to meet the increased charity care need, mileage reimbursement deficits, and decreased Medicare reimbursement for services rendered to patients. "Still, it wasn't enough," said Lori.



Pam Morgan had run a similar program at a former employer and saw firsthand the financial and branding benefits fleet cars brought to the company. It was then that VNA decided to invest in fleet cars, which provided an opportunity for return on equity. Through the Enterprise Fleet Management program, VNA

employees have an option to drive a VNA branded vehicle, with maintenance and gas paid. This program will save VNA an average of almost \$61,000 per year, compared to what was being paid for mileage reimbursement. When the vehicles reach a certain mileage, at a point when equity for the investment is high, the vehicles are traded in for new. "What's great about the program is that, in the long run, it pays for itself," said Pam.



Pictured above: Pam hands VNA RN, Dawn, the keys to her Subaru Forester.

Currently, 10 fleet vehicles have hit the road, with the potential for more to follow. VNA staff are excited about this new opportunity, which is beneficial in several ways. ***"The fleet vehicle program is a win-win! It reduces costs to VNA while adding a valuable brand-recognition opportunity to help spread the word about our services,"*** said Lori. "We are all excited for everyone to see these wheels hit the road while going around the communities we serve and helping those in need."

Intern Spotlight: A Marketing Intern Making an Impact

In other news, Visiting Nurses invited a marketing intern onto the team for the summer of 2023. Logan White is a Marketing major and Journalism minor going into her senior year at KU. Logan was born and raised in Lawrence, Kansas, where she graduated from Lawrence Free State High School in 2020.

Logan has been involved with Visiting Nurses for a long time. In fact, her mother Kari has worked at Visiting Nurses for 12 years. "I grew up hearing all about the company," Logan said. "That's how I knew it would be a great place to work."

In high school, Logan volunteered

at Visiting Nurses, so coming back to familiar faces when she began her internship was a welcomed surprise.

Logan has worked hard all summer, balancing school, the internship and work. She spends her mornings working at Target, afternoons at VNA, and evenings attending summer classes.

In her role as a marketing intern, Logan has observed on marketing visits in the community, designed materials for VNA events, and assisted in the development of the new VNA website. Her favorite part of the internship has been interviewing patients in their homes and hearing their life stories.

Logan also joined Hank Booth from KLWN on the radio for one of his last interviews.

"My internship was six weeks long but it seemed to almost fly by," Logan said. "The business development and marketing team is incredible at VNA and I really enjoy learning what I can from them."

Although her time at VNA was short, the experience she gained from the internship will stay with her forever.



Pictured above: VNA's Marketing Intern, Logan White.

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