



The VNA Voice

Edition 42 - Winter 2024 - kansasnva.org

From Our House to Yours: 2023 Ends...2024 Begins

2023 was another busy year for Visiting Nurses. In February, VNA celebrated 54 years of providing in-home care to the community. Our biennial 3.d Casino Night Fundraiser returned better than ever in May after a four-year break due to the COVID pandemic. VNA fleet cars hit the streets in July. Our staff continued to care for hundreds of patients in our community, and our community continued to support us. Thank you to everyone who supported VNA, our staff, and our patients in 2023!



OUR MISSION

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



VISITING NURSES

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Development Corner: VNA's 2023-2024 Annual Appeal

In almost 55 years, VNA has made over **1.7 million visits to more than 45,000 patients**, but for the last two years, expenses outweigh revenues. With cuts in Medicare reimbursement, inflation, increased charity care need, and staffing shortages, costs are rising and funding isn't keeping up.

Visiting Nurses needs your help to ensure care for all who need it. You can make a difference in the life of someone in our community today by providing support at **KansasVNA.org/donate**



Patient Spotlight: Kay Allen- Author, Queen of Cribbage, and Centenarian

“Age is just a number.” It’s an adage that many people are familiar with, and an important reminder that while there are certain inevitabilities in life and aging, age is not a determinant of spirit, intelligence, humor, kindness, gratitude, or other characteristics. However, if Kay Allen is any indication, these characteristics may increase the likelihood that someone makes it



Pictured above: Kay Allen walks through her house with VNA PT, Audrey, close behind.

to 102 years old.

Kay Allen, who turned 102 in September, came into the care of Visiting Nurses after

having a stroke. However, she doesn’t let her age or her stroke stop her from doing the things she loves, like playing cribbage and writing. In fact, as Kay has received care from VNA, she has continued to write her second book. Kay’s first book, “IF...” was published in 2016 when Kay was 94 years old.

Kay said that ‘desperation’ brought



Patient Spotlight: Kay Allen- Author, Queen of Cribbage, and Centenarian



Pictured above: Kay with her book, *IF...*

her to writing her first book. She was a travel agent for 40 years and spent her life traveling. She ended up following her daughter Cathie to Lawrence, but continued to travel. Before publishing her book, Kay spent several years writing for travel magazines.

Since coming to VNA, the care she has received from the staff have put her worries to ease.

"All the things that were going through my head while I was in the hospital, am I going to be able to do it? Can I do it on my own? They are proving to me that I can do it on my own," Kay said.



Pictured above: Audrey, VNA PT, leads Kay through some exercises to build her strength to help with balance and mobility.

But all the credit can't be given to Visiting Nurses.

"You put in the effort with everything to get back to doing it, so you have to pat yourself on the back too, Kay," Audrey, Kay's physical therapist reminds her.

Audrey works with Kay twice a week, helping Kay exercise and walk around the house. Kay's family is also thankful for the time Visiting Nurses' staff has spent with her.

"We felt that it's been a big help to us," Kay's daughter Cathie said. She is Kay's only family in town, and she appreciates the Visiting Nurses staff checking in with Kay throughout the day.

"I would be the first person to vouch that [VNA] has made a difference in my life," Kay said.

Audrey and VNA staff will continue working to ensure Kay can continue writing her second book and playing cribbage.



Pictured above: Kay proudly displays her "Queen of Cribbage" trophy.

Did you know... there are End-of-Life Doulas?



When most people hear the word doula, they probably think about birth doulas. However, there is another type of doula as well. Just as birth doulas help plan for, prepare for, and provide support through childbirth, end-of-life doulas help similarly relating to death. Former volunteer End-of-Life (EOL) Doula and current VNA Spiritual Care Provider/ Bereavement Coordinator, Kevin Lee described the role of EOL Doulas: ***"You can think of us in a similar way to birth doulas. Birth Doulas walk with someone, kind of guide them, help them understand what is happening, but it really is a relationship, a companionship, and I like to think of it as a friendship. Two people walking this last stage of life together."***

Kevin's words help express the unique impact that an End-of-Life Doula can have for someone nearing the last phase of their life. Visit our website, KansasVNA.org, or call (785) 843-3738 to learn more about Visiting Nurses' End-of-Life Doula services.

Volunteer Spotlight: Volunteers Vital to VNA

Volunteers have always been an important part of VNA. Whether it is in a patient's home, an assisted or independent-living facility, or in VNA's office, their impact is immense and easy to see. VNA's volunteers serve in a variety of ways. Hospice Patient Companions work directly with patients and their families to provide companionship and respite for caregivers. Facility Friendly Visitors visit Hospice patients in local nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Music volunteers provide one-on-one music or play for residents of local facilities. One of these volunteers, "Ukulele Sue" played a special holiday-themed



performance to provide festive fun for the residents of Neuvant House. She was joined by VNA Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, Sarah, who joined in on the singing and encouraged audience participation.

Animal Companions are another VNA volunteer role. Therapy

or Good Citizen Dogs, as well as other well-behaved animal companions, visit local facilities with their owners to bring joy to those they visit. These volunteers always bring smiles to those they visit. Monica and her dog, Lucy, also spread holiday spirit in December at Presbyterian Manor.

If you'd like to volunteer for VNA,



please call (785) 843-3738, visit our website, or email sarah.rooney@kansasvna.org.

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