



The VNA Voice

Edition 28 - Summer 2020 - kansasvna.org

From Our House to Yours

Much has changed since we published our last community newsletter with our evolving world that is COVID-19. Like many other organizations, we have been hit with our fair share of challenges. From everything between obtaining enough PPE for our staff and patients to the funding challenges that COVID-19 has brought, I'm proud of how seamlessly our team has worked to seek solutions and assure VNA is able to continue our mission through this pandemic.

This time is unlike any other moment in the 51-year history of our agency. However, many great things have come from the challenges. The communities we serve

have rallied around us. They have provided funding, PPE, homemade masks and gowns, infection control supplies and wonderful words of kindness and gratitude! You see a small sample of those in the graphic below.

Your acts of kindness have energized our clinical and administrative staff who have worked tirelessly to ensure we continue to care for those in need. I am humbled by your ongoing support! Thank you to the people of the wonderful communities we serve. We continue to do so through this pandemic and beyond.

STAY HEALTHY!
WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOU!
Thank you all for ALWAYS taking care of our community.

PRAYING FOR YOU ALL!
I wanted you and your staff to know how inspired I am with your continued care for our community.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXCELLENT WORK WITH CARE, DILIGENCE, EXPERTISE AND COURAGE, ESPECIALLY DURING THESE THESE TRYING TIMES. You are angels among us!

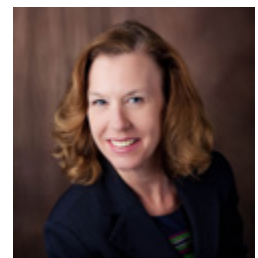
My husband and I really appreciate your help. I know this is a hard time right now, but you were here for us, so we want to be here for you, even if it's just doing a small thing like making masks. What you do is important!

YOU ARE **HEROES** IN OUR EYES!!!! THANK YOU!!!
Thinking of you all and keeping the staff in my heart and prayers.
THANK YOU ALL FOR WHAT YOU DO!
#RISE LAWRENCE
Thank you all for your service to our community!

Thank you

STAY SAFE! STAY STRONG! <3 <3 <3 THANK YOU!
VNA love! Thank you to every single one of you!

Stay safe and be well my friends, you are all ROCK STARS !!!!



Cynthia Lewis
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

OUR MISSION

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



VISITING NURSES

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The Heart of VNA: Community Support During COVID-19

COVID-19 has presented tremendous challenges throughout our community and the world, but many people have risen to face these challenges. Here are some of the ways our amazing community has supported VNA throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

VNA has received

1,322

Homemade Masks



3,165

Gloves



72

N-95 Respirators



1,497

Surgical Masks



47

Homemade Gowns



\$7,250

in Monetary Donations



\$13,000

in Grant Funding from the Douglas County Disaster Response Fund and the Mabel A. Woodyard Memorial Fund at DCCF

350

Van Go Thank You Cards



Thank you for your support!

The Heart of VNA: Jarek's Journey

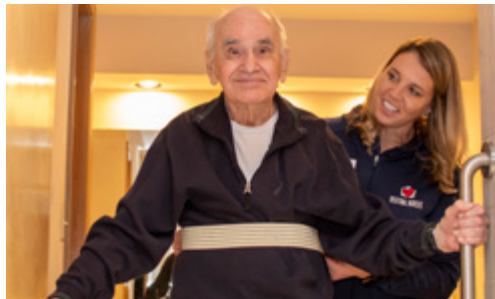
The sentiment of “rising above adversity” has never rung truer than when describing 93-year-old Jaroslaw “Jarek” Piekalkiewicz. At only 15 years old, he joined The Underground in Poland fighting the Nazis in World War II. He became a corporal at 18 years old and in 1944 staged an uprising in Poland against the Germans. After fighting for 63 days, they capitulated and Jarek became a prisoner of war (POW). They were forced to march over 500 miles through Germany starting in November and ending in March at the River Rhine. “How I survived, I don’t know. I had just one blanket. I made a little sleeping bag out of it, but it was still one blanket. The group I started with were 100 of us, but only 30 of us made it all the way to the Rhine.” As a POW, Jarek escaped three times. His third attempt was successful and he and a buddy ended up working for two farmers in a nearby town until the American soldiers arrived. “I think the (most) beautiful picture I saw in my life was the line of American troops,” recalls Jarek.



Pictured above: Jarek with his Polish Corp. uniform and medals.

Jarek joined the Polish Corp., a part of the British Army, and received several medals. When the war ended, he received asylum in Great Britain. His military career ended and

he used the British GI Bill to attend Trinity College in Dublin. He met and married his wife while going to school in Ireland. He wanted to become a professor and came to the United States to work on his Ph.D. at Indiana University. “I got my Ph.D. from Indiana in three years, normally it’s six. I was the shortest period in the history of the department, but I did it.” He applied for a professor position in the newly developed Soviet and East European department at the University of Kansas. He received the job and taught for 37 years at KU.



Pictured above: Jarek does physical therapy exercises with VNA PT, Audrey Welch.

While residing in Lawrence, KS, Jarek and his wife, a Registered Nurse, heard about Visiting Nurses through their attorney, Fred Six. “We advocated to every place we went to. We would say that this new organization is starting.” It wasn’t until years later that Jarek would go from being an advocate and supporter of Visiting Nurses to needing the services himself. “After my wife died, I had a bad time. I had six minor strokes and was hospitalized. That’s where I was introduced to Visiting Nurses from the other side, from the side of the patient.” Jarek had also experienced several falls which lead to a decrease in his mobility and increase of pain in his spine, “first I was walking with a cane, then walker, because I was falling.

I decided to use the wheelchair.” After several past treatments of acupuncture to help with the pain, Visiting Nurses came in to provide physical therapy to help him maintain his physical abilities, regain his strength and alleviate the pain. He says he is keeping his strength up and is healthy because of the physical therapy he’s been getting from Visiting Nurses. Audrey, VNA’s Physical Therapist, started working with Jarek over 3 years ago, and they have developed a very special bond. “She’s special for me. She’s a Physical Therapist and a very good one. She has empathy for me, which I feel. But also, she is a nice person. She’s humorous. She’s a friend. When she comes, when I’m waiting for her, waiting for physical therapy, but also for the friend.”

Jarek is a true inspiration. He recently published a book, *Dance with Death – A Holistic View of Saving Polish Jews During the Holocaust*, based on his experiences while in the military. He is an advocate for causes close to him, and over the years he has continuously supported VNA. In his time of need, VNA’s Home Health and Help at Home staff are there providing the care and support he needs to be able to stay in his home where he holds so many precious memories.



Pictured above: Jarek poses with his book: *Dance with Death - A Holistic View of Saving Polish Jews During the Holocaust*.

Employee Spotlight: Melinda Reyes Receives Margo Award

"She is very respectful to and patient with all staff, patients, and their families and understands her role really well and does what she is supposed to do. Her positivity towards her role is indeed contagious and cannot go unnoticed. Her nonjudgmental attitude and her wisdom in handling issues is admirable."

These are just some of the words Grace, a VNA Social Work Intern, used to describe her Preceptor and VNA Social Worker, Melinda Reyes, in her nomination for the Margo Award for Excellence in

Field Education. Melinda received the award, which celebrates social work excellence, in her first year teaching a student. The Margo Awards are named for Margaret Schutz Gordon, Professor Emeritus who served with distinction as Professor and



Pictured above: Melinda Reyes, VNA Social Worker.

Director of Field Education at the KU School of Social Welfare from 1970 to 1983.

VNA's staff is proud of Melinda and thrilled to see her receive this well-deserved recognition. Melinda's supervisor and VNA's Hospice Manager, Monica Rose, shared her thoughts on Melinda. "I am so proud of the work that Melinda has accomplished in such a short time. Melinda constantly strives to provide the very best to her patients, families, and colleagues. She is a fierce advocate for patients, and works to instill that fire in her students. I feel privileged to have Melinda as part of the Hospice Team."

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