



VISITING NURSE  
HEALTH SYSTEM

2016 Iss.02

# LOOK HOMEWARD

*A publication for the supporters of*  
Visiting Nurse Health System / Hospice Atlanta



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings!

I am very excited to be part of Visiting Nurse Health System, working alongside such an incredible team of professionals.

Since I moved to Atlanta and joined the organization in June, I've been amazed at the dedicated support I've witnessed among staff, volunteers and members of the community. Clearly, Visiting Nurse possesses a rich history that I look forward to honoring as we move into the New Year and continue our steadfast commitment to improve the lives of those we serve.

Our success as a nonprofit health organization is based on building strong relationships – internally and with our community. Nowhere is that more evident than in how we interact with our patients. Our clinicians are practiced at engaging patients in a partnership to understand their individual needs. This “person-centered” approach considers factors that go beyond the medical condition. Emotional, spiritual and community support greatly impact the overall wellness of the individual. Plus, countless variables related to cultural, religious, socioeconomic and educational factors must be respected as we serve metro Atlanta’s diverse population.

This extraordinary level of care is never a cookie-cutter approach, and it's consistently delivered across all levels of our organization.

Another element of our success is the continued generosity of our donors, who make it possible for us to serve every individual patient with dignity, respect and the right to self-determination – all of which promotes positive well-being.

This person-centered approach to healthcare is the topic of this issue of Look Homeward, and I hope you enjoy it and possibly take away something that may be helpful to you and your family.

I also hope this holiday season brings you and yours a time of celebration and peace.

Sincerely,

Norene Mostkoff  
President & CEO

FEATURE

## Person-Centered Care How Providing Individualized Support on a Consistent Basis Benefits Everyone

The person-centered approach to care reflects a gradual, but steady shift away from the traditional model of medical treatment. Rather than treating physical symptoms only, individualized or “person-centered” care considers factors like emotional, spiritual and community support – all of which contribute to a positive health outcome. This approach also reduces healthcare costs – providing relief to hospitals and long-term care facilities that are already stretched for resources.

Visiting Nurse has been on the forefront of this trend. Whether we're implementing emotional support during physical therapy in our home health program, tapping community resources for long-term care patients, respecting the wishes of a hospice patient to opt out of medical treatment or delivering spiritual support to patients and families of all faiths, we are always focused on each individual patient's needs.

In the following pages, you'll see diverse examples of this approach in action.

MEDICAL CARE

SPIRITUAL COMFORT

SOCIAL RESOURCES

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT



Rob W. and Chintan P., PT, bond after a therapy session

### How Emotional Support Enhances Physical Therapy

When Rob W. had his left knee replaced in July of this year, he knew exactly which physical therapist to request – Chintan P. Rob. “Chin” worked with Rob earlier this year when he had his right knee replaced. It was Chin’s holistic approach to Rob’s care and rehabilitation that Rob credits to his speedy recovery.

“Chin has a perfect balance of professional and interpersonal skills, and he has a knack for motivating me to work hard!” Rob’s acknowledgement of Chintan’s successful approach has been validated. “When I started physical therapy outside of my home, the physical therapist marveled at how far ahead I was in flexibility and strength – this was largely due to Chintan’s efforts!”

*continued on next page*

FEATURE

About his approach, Chintan says, “My satisfaction starts with giving patients 100%. I listen to them, understanding their emotional issues, as well as the physical. It makes a huge difference to be empathetic.”

Chintan talks about helping them with the little things that go a long way. “A small thing like calling ahead to see if the patient needs me to pick something up or taking the mail in from the bottom of their driveway can mean the world to someone who lives alone and may be unable to walk, let alone drive.”

“**Person-centered care considers what’s important to this particular patient at this time. What assistance might he need? What recommendations should we make to ensure his safety and wellness outside the home?**”

*Andrea S., RN, BSN, MPH  
Executive Director, Home Health Services*

Clearly, his approach is working, as Rob reiterates how grateful he is for all of Chintan’s efforts. “His positive attitude, the way he motivated me to do more than I ever thought possible. I can’t say enough good things about Chin. To me he’s become like family.” ||||

**Long-Term Care at Home  
Relies on Sustaining Community Resources**

The very nature of “long-term care” at home necessitates a person-centered approach. Our team of clinicians and social workers are trained to manage health care for two groups – those who need nursing home level care and those who can live independently with a little support. Both groups are reliant on Visiting Nurse to ensure we’re managing healthcare resources appropriately for a sustained length of time.

With so many factors to consider – physical and emotional well-being, living situation, family dynamics, level of income and access to resources like groceries and transportation – our clinicians are educated to assess and recommend services both internally at Visiting Nurse and within the community.

Here are a few examples of how factors outside of medical care can impact an individual’s well-being and why it’s so important for our clinicians to consider such factors when connecting patients to the right resources.

One patient faced **financial difficulties** and was on the verge of losing his home, which would have left him homeless and without any type of care. Our social worker identified and directed our patient to affordable housing. Not only was the patient able to move comfortably into his new apartment, his care was uninterrupted and his health was minimally impacted.

**Family dynamics** – positive or negative – can have an enormous impact on the well-being of a patient. In one instance, our RN noticed a lot of tension among family members living in a patient’s household, so she referred the relatives to a counselor. The patient’s family members benefitted from counseling, which reduced tension in the home, put the patient at ease and promoted a quicker road to recovery.



Care Coordinator Demetria D. meets weekly with social workers and case managers to discuss person-centered care

**Cultural sensitivities** must be considered, as we serve Atlanta’s diverse population. Our staff are taught to consider and respect different religions, cultures and customs when directing care. Respect for all individuals is the driving force behind our success as an organization.

**Positive nutrition** can be difficult to attain when someone has limited resources, awareness or access to healthy foods appropriate for their medical condition. In addition to referring patients to meals programs, we help educate them around these issues.

As we continue to meet the needs of the 4,000 patients cared for in our Long-Term Care at Home division, we’re constantly checking to be sure we’re serving well. We are administering patient surveys to capture and respond to feedback so that we never stop improving the lives of our in-home patients. ||||

**Why One Woman Declined Medical Treatment to Fulfill Her Final Wishes**

In 2011, Karen H. was diagnosed with colon cancer. An incredibly strong survivor, she underwent four major surgeries and multiple rounds of chemotherapy, but in late 2015, she stopped responding to treatment. In early 2016, she and her husband, Gary, became painfully aware that time was running out. “We could sense what was happening,” Gary says.

Yet, there were things Karen wanted to attend to relating to the couple’s two daughters. In May, her youngest daughter, Camille, would graduate high school and in July, her oldest daughter, Catherine, was going to be married. In fact, Karen had been heavily involved in planning the wedding. Karen and her husband made the decision to forgo further treatments, so she would have the energy and quality of life to continue her involvement.

FEATURE



A cherished memory captured; Karen and family on her daughter’s wedding day.

When Karen was admitted to the hospice program she was in a lot of pain. “From the first day, the team asked us very specifically what our objectives were,” Gary recalls. The staff at Hospice Atlanta quickly understood that for Karen, the most important thing to her during this time was to be there for her daughters’ important milestones. That objective became the staff’s directive.

“**A misconception people have is that hospice care is about dying. Instead, it’s about LIVING fully to the end.**”

*Barbara M.,  
Manager of Volunteer/Support Services, Hospice Atlanta*

In May, Karen did attend her daughter’s graduation, but soon after her condition deteriorated and the family grew concerned that she may not have the strength to continue.

The pastor to officiate the wedding shared his experience of losing his wife’s mother to illness before he and his wife were married and encouraged the couple to push their wedding date up. Karen was adamantly against it. In fact, she insisted on tending to every important detail related to the wedding up until the date.

On the morning of Saturday, July 17, Kathy, the nurse from Hospice Atlanta who had been coming to the family’s home for months, arrived to ensure Karen had everything she needed to minimize her pain and make it through the day before Karen left for the wedding.

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MEDICAL CARE  
SPIRITUAL COMFORT  
SOCIAL RESOURCES  
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

FEATURE

It was a beautiful, meaningful day for everyone who attended. And throughout the weekend of festivities, Karen was joyful to be with those closest to her – memories that would be deeply cherished by all.

On Sunday, July 24, one week after the wedding, Karen passed at Hospice Atlanta Center surrounded by family.

As Gary considers those final months of Karen’s life he says, “She was driven to have a regular, ordinary life. When she really became sick, she didn’t want a big fuss. What she wanted, she got. To go to the graduation, the wedding, to be with her friends. She got everything she wanted.” ||||

**Hospice Chaplains Deliver Spiritual Comfort to Those of All Faiths and Beliefs**



L to R: Lee S., Elaine H., Zeena R., and James H. are the chaplains who provide spiritual support to patients and families of Hospice Atlanta

Elaine H. has been a chaplain with Hospice Atlanta for three years and never ceases to be amazed by how quickly she gains a connection to people at the end of life. “That kind of intimacy makes this incredibly meaningful work,” says Elaine.

This connection spans all religious and spiritual beliefs. Elaine is one of four full-time chaplains who provide spiritual support to patients and families of Hospice

Atlanta in their homes, at Hospice Atlanta Center and at Hospice Atlanta’s in-patient hospice units of Emory and Piedmont Hospitals.

The pastoral support is based on an individual’s personal beliefs. Elaine is Christian, but is experienced working with patients and family members from all faiths and with those who have no spiritual beliefs. “The important thing is that we are there to listen at a critical time.”

“It is always my hope and prayer that as a chaplain I can be a source of comfort and reassurance for a patient and family no matter what their spiritual or religious background. It’s my job to meet people where they are and I always feel like I am walking on holy ground.”

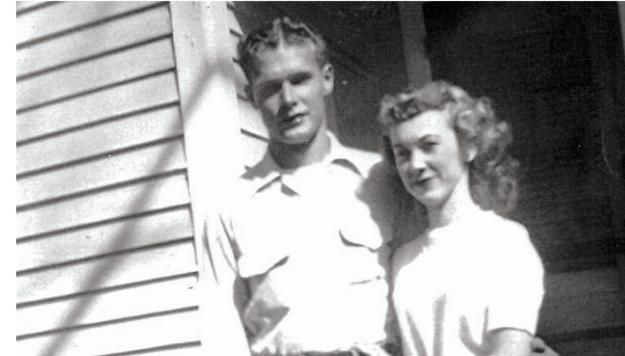
*Rev. Elaine H.,  
Hospice Chaplain*

If a patient is connected to a local faith community the hospice chaplains encourage family to reach out to their spiritual advisor for additional support. Since not all local clergy are familiar with end-of-life issues, hospice chaplains can be a special help during this final transition, bridging the gap between the spiritual and the physical.

“I find it’s helpful to explain symptoms of the dying process. This isn’t something to be afraid of,” says Elaine. She often draws the analogy of how a mid-wife is there to bring a new life into this world. “In our work, we’re there to accompany someone leaving this world. We stand by and provide comfort and support during the transition of the soul.” ||||

FEATURE

Donor John K. with his wife Doris, whom he honored with a gift to Visiting Nurse



**One Man’s Generous Gift to Hospice Atlanta Honors His Wife’s Legacy**

When hospice nurse Wendy G. first met her, Doris K.’s condition was frail. But what struck Wendy was how Doris seemed to be at peace with her prognosis, accepting her condition and clear about how she wanted to spend her remaining life – at home. In fact, when Doris was transferred from the hospital to Hospice Atlanta Center, Doris’ husband John insisted that this be a transitional stay, so that Doris could be moved back home. That was their preference and that decision was respected. Understandably, a lot of families resist what they perceive as a final transition to hospice care.

John was fiercely protective of his wife. Frustrated that the progression of her illness was outside of his control, John was initially wary of the hospice doctors, nurses and case managers on hand to support Doris. It was up to Wendy to bridge the gap between John and the hospice team.

Known for her wonderful sense of humor, Wendy could make Doris laugh and THAT made a big difference to John. He recognized that his wife was benefiting from the laughter, along with this new connection to Wendy.

Having broken through, Wendy conveyed that everyone at Hospice Atlanta was there for Doris AND her family – extending a person-centered approach that entailed doing all they could to make her limited time as enjoyable and meaningful as possible.

John in particular was counseled on what to expect during the grieving process, not only in the final time

with his wife, but throughout the entire process. Keith R., the couple’s grandson who was close to John, witnessed the support given to his family.

One of the greatest gifts from the staff was enabling Doris and John to travel to their second home on the South Carolina coast. When John rented a Winnebago, Wendy was there to ensure the vehicle was fully equipped with all the supplies and medications needed for their trip. Those times spent by the ocean were cherished by the couple and their family.

Several months after Doris passed, Keith’s grandfather mentioned he was planning to leave a significant gift to Hospice Atlanta in memory of Doris. “I asked him to consider making the donation while he was still alive, so he could see and share in the benefits of his generosity,” Keith recalls. John liked the idea and followed his grandson’s advice. He did so quietly and humbly, thanking Hospice Atlanta for everything they had done to ensure Doris lived out her life as she wished.

Understanding his privacy, but wanting to show a gesture of gratitude, the staff held a small luncheon for John at Hospice Atlanta Center where he toured the newly opened residential wing, which housed a nurses’ station renamed in honor of his wife.

John passed several months after he lost Doris, but not before witnessing the difference he had made to Hospice Atlanta, who he credited for helping him and his wife get through a difficult transition on their own terms. ||||

“Our patients and families are very special to us. They are all individuals with different stories, different needs and different expectations.”

*Wendy W., Hospice Case Manager RN,  
Hospice Atlanta*

- MEDICAL CARE
- SPIRITUAL COMFORT
- SOCIAL RESOURCES
- EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

## Fall Gala Honors Co-Founders of Hospice Atlanta Center Caps Off Center's 20th Anniversary Year

The energy and compassion was strong in the Stave Room at American Spirit Works as more than 300 attendees enjoyed a chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones, while raising more than \$365,000 and emotionally supporting the work of Hospice Atlanta. The annual fall gala, *In the Moment—A Celebration of Life*, was held on October 27th and honored the dedication and passion of the four

founders of Hospice Atlanta Center and their families: **Mary Gellerstedt, Warren Jobe, the late Dr. Arthur Booth and the late Eula Carlos.**

Guests took a step back into the 1920s with live music provided by Peachtree Jazz Edition, beginning the festivities with whiskey tastings and tours of the distillery. Emceed by WABE radio host Amy Kiley, the celebration included a touching



Visiting Nurse leadership with members of Hospice Atlanta Center's four founding families

video that visually connected the founders' original vision for Atlanta's first hospice facility with the present-day crown jewel that the Center has become for Visiting Nurse. Moved to give the founders a standing ovation, generous donors participated in a spirited live auction to demonstrate

their support and appreciation for the care given to those facing end-of-life, regardless of their financial situation.

Thank you to all who sponsored, volunteered and attended to make this memorable evening a rousing success! We are grateful for your continued support of our important work. ■

Contact our Advancement department at 404-215-6010 to learn how you can advance our mission to improve the lives of those we serve.

To see many more photos of the evening's festivities visit our [Facebook page](#).

To watch the video tribute to the Center's founding families, visit: [vnhs.org/Hospice-Atlanta-Center](http://vnhs.org/Hospice-Atlanta-Center).

## In Remembrance: Dr. Arthur Booth, Jr. Co-Founder of Hospice Atlanta Center



Dr. Arthur Stovall Booth, Jr., passed away on Saturday, June 18, 2016. Recognizing the need for an organization in metro Atlanta to provide expert care for the terminally ill, Dr. Booth co-founded the Andrew and Eula Carlos Hospice Atlanta Center in 1996, where he was Medical Director from 1996-2003. He also served on the Board of Trustees of Hospice Atlanta from 1992-2003. An active member in many medical organizations and a general surgeon in Atlanta for more than 30 years, he practiced at Piedmont Hospital, Northside Hospital and St. Joseph's.

A deeply religious and humble man, Dr. Booth was the recipient of many community and alumni awards, as well as one of President George H. W. Bush's 1000 Points of Light, for his involvement with the Center.

Upon retiring in 2004, he and his wife Linda moved to Kiawah Island, SC, where he opened a free clinic for underprivileged people. After learning that it was his time to face the end-of-life, he told Linda he "wanted to collect his soft landing" in hospice. His wish was to die in Hospice Atlanta Center, where he was surrounded by family, friends and former co-workers.

## Thank You to Our Fall Gala Sponsors

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A Special Thanks to Honorary Chairs Dr. Gwynne Brunt, Jr. and Dr. Martin Moran

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## Volunteers and Sponsors Share What They Get from “Giving Back”

Without ongoing help from our corporate sponsors and volunteers, it would not be possible to fulfill our mission to improve the lives of those we serve, so we're always eager to acknowledge their support.

The following are just a few of those who make a real difference, as they share their reflections on the benefits of “giving back.”

To find out how your company can support Visiting Nurse and Hospice Atlanta through volunteer or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Anne Serrie at 404-848-7955.

“Northside Hospital is proud to support Visiting Nurse Health System and their mission of celebrating life with dignity and integrity. We have been a Partner in Care for more than 10 years. As one of the largest health care providers in Georgia, Northside Hospital is committed to balancing clinical excellence with compassionate care, and we applaud Visiting Nurse Health System for their dedication to serving the Atlanta community.”

*Lee Echols,  
Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Northside Hospital*

“Hospice provides an ideal setting for daughters to learn from their mothers’ modeling of compassion and service. The reward is a smile or a nice note received from families of patients that appreciate the homemade touch that NCL provides.”

*Carolyn, from the National Charity League, whose mission is to foster mother-daughter relationships through charitable work. The NCL provides meals, weekend sandwiches and tray favors for patients and families at Hospice Atlanta Center.*

“The John N. Goddard Foundation ... supports and values Visiting Nurse Health System’s quality work in the area of palliative care and hospice with adults, but especially with the specialized pediatric hospice program. Visiting Nurse has stayed true to their mission to focus on living as fully as possible for as long as possible. It is an organization that brings comfort, dignity, and peace to people facing a terminal illness.”

*Blain Allen, Foundation Assistant,  
The John N. Goddard Foundation*

“Singing at Hospice Atlanta all these years is like a bridge of memories... I feel the transition hospice provides is in a small way enhanced by our gift of music and memory. It is an honor to be a volunteer. I know I get much more than I give.”

*Debbie, member of The Peach Pipes, part of the Junior League of Atlanta, a group of singers who perform regularly at Hospice Atlanta Center. Their concerts always raise the spirits of patients and families.*

“We consider it an immeasurable blessing to minister to God’s people through our handicraft skills, and are grateful for the comfort and support they can offer to patients and families during difficult times.”

*Mary, from The Yarn Angels, members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Woodstock, GA. They knit and crochet prayer shawls or “comfort shawls” for patients and families in need of solace. Often these shawls are used as baby blankets for pediatric hospice patients.*

## June 1, 2016 to September 30, 2016

Honor and memorial gifts offer a lasting, visible legacy in honor of a special loved one or in recognition of an outstanding caregiver.

We would like to thank all the people who have generously made tribute gifts. If your name has been omitted or reported incorrectly below, please accept our sincere apologies and notify the Office of Advancement at 404-215-6010.

The following people were thoughtfully remembered with a gift in their name:

**In Honor of:**

Mrs. Schaune Griffin  
Ms. Marcine Handsfield  
Ms. Lashawn Henry  
Mrs. Allison Huggins  
Ms. Carole Hyppolite  
Mr. Chandler Lanier  
Ms. Amy Meehan  
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Mr. John Williams  
Mrs. Helen Williamson  
Mr. Eugene Winograd  
Mrs. Gloria Wolford

For a complete list of the generous donors who contributed honor and memorial gifts visit [vnhs.org](http://vnhs.org).

**In Memory of:**

Ms. Joni Affatato  
Mr. Isiah Allen, Jr.  
Ms. Tracey Arnold  
Mr. Richard Mark Arnold  
Mr. James Edward Beaver  
Dr. Arthur Stovall Booth, Jr.  
Mr. Gordon Bynum, Sr.  
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Mr. Everett Lee  
Mr. Richard Maas  
Mr. James McCoy  
Mr. John Alva Myers, Jr.  
Mr. John Patrick Toohey

### Remember the Life of Someone Dear to You

Place a Memorial Paver in Hospice Atlanta Center’s Garden

With a minimum gift of \$1,000 a paver creates a lasting tribute to a friend, a favorite relative, or someone with whom you shared special memories. Additional memorial opportunities are available.

For more information, please visit [vnhs.org/Donate](http://vnhs.org/Donate) or call the Office of Advancement at 404-215-6010.





**VISITING NURSE**  
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*Look Homeward*

Bill Henagan  
Board Chair

We welcome your comments and suggestions.  
Please address all correspondence to  
Advancement@vnhs.org.

404.215.6000  
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**SAVE-THE-DATE**



**Sunday, April 23, 2017**  
**4:30pm – 7:30pm**

Join us next spring at Zoo Atlanta to support our Pediatric Hospice Program, the care we provide for our youngest terminally-ill patients at home and at Hospice Atlanta Center.

Check [www.BIGTODO.org](http://www.BIGTODO.org) for additional details in the coming weeks.

Hospice Atlanta offers Georgia's only program dedicated to pediatric hospice care.

Individual and corporate sponsorships are available!

For information call 404-527-6542 or email [Kristin.Stanley@vnhs.org](mailto:Kristin.Stanley@vnhs.org)

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