

# HOMECARE

# connection

A PUBLICATION OF THE RUTLAND AREA VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION & HOSPICE AND DORSET NURSING

## Irene Couldn't Deter RAVNAH Staff

*The mission of the Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice (RAVNAH) is to bring medically necessary health care where it is needed, regardless of a client's ability to pay, location of residence or complexity of health issues.*



Devastating damage to Route 4, Killington

Never in the agency's 65 years of serving local communities has this mission been tested as it was in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene. RAVNAH's team of nurses, therapists and support staff did whatever was necessary to make sure home care patients in the Rutland County, Dorset and Rupert areas received medical services.

"The VNA is an essential service in our communities," says Ron Cioffi, Executive Director of RAVNAH. "We made arrangements with local officials, recovery teams and community representatives to make sure our services were not interrupted and that the population we serve was getting whatever services were needed."

Several of RAVNAH's clinicians, stranded by the storm, focused their efforts on their own communities to help clean up, deliver water, food, medicines and medical care when needed. "We had staff stranded in Pittsfield, Killington,

Mendon, Proctor - all over," adds Cioffi. "And many of those who did make it into work went through enormous strain and effort to do so."

Some of our staff hiked miles to check on staff and tend to patients. Others, evacuated from their homes, used their skills and training to comfort and care for others. Still others volunteered at emergency food stations, worked alongside emergency response teams or provided medical care to their neighbors.

Cioffi summarized, "I'm pleased to say there was no break in service to our patients and families. Our staff took extraordinary measures to make sure our patients and our communities were taken care of and for that they deserve our thanks, admiration and appreciation."

Inside are some of the stories shared by members of RAVNAH's staff as they and their communities began the arduous task of recovering from the destruction left by the storm.



Jamie Belchak, Rehab Manager, checking out flooding in Killington

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# The Director's

Corner

## Fundraising Events Show Support for RAVNAH

Fund-raising is essential to the health of RAVNAH. Not only does it raise necessary funds to support us, it also increases awareness of the good work this agency does and brings us new friends and supporters. This year, thanks to the hard work of the Rutland Health Foundation and the fundraising volunteers, RAVNAH was the beneficiary of four highly successful fund-raising events.

**Hospice Golf Tournament.** Every June for the past 23 years, Ken Lee and members of the Killington-Pico Rotary Club have hosted a golf tournament at Green Mountain National Golf Course in Killington. Thanks to their generosity, the tournament has raised over \$120,000 in total support of the Hospice program.

**Bella Notte: A Beautiful Night for Giving** was a magical evening for hospice. This fundraiser, held September 18<sup>th</sup> at Three Tomatoes Trattoria hosted more than 140 community supporters who enjoyed authentic Italian cuisine and spirited bidding on dozens of live and silent auction items. The event raised over \$33,000 for our hospice program.

**Rutland Health Foundation Golf Tournament.** The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Rutland Health Foundation Golf Invitational was held at the beautiful Rutland Country Club on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The tournament raised over \$19,000 in much needed funds for Kids on the Move and the Pediatric High Tech program.

**Dancing with the Rutland Stars** was the hit of the season at

the Paramount Theatre on October 8<sup>th</sup>. This first-ever popular event paired professional dancers with local celebrities in an exciting dance competition to raise funds for Kids on the Move. A nearly full house contributed to the more than \$13,000 that was raised.

As home health care reimbursements continue to decline, these money-raising events are more important than ever to the financial health of RAVNAH.

The people who make these events happen are the soul and spirit of RAVNAH. We are fortunate to have a very dedicated core of volunteers. Along with those who serve on our board of directors and committees, volunteers work at our flu clinics and assist hospice patients and families. These people donate their talent, expertise, time and money to make these events and programs successful.

We are also blessed with great staff, both at the Rutland Health Foundation and at RAVNAH who provide support to these dedicated volunteers.

We cannot say thank you enough. These events not only raise much needed funding, but also advance the mission of RAVNAH. ☪



Ron Cioffi, CEO

## Employee Recognition

Each year, RAVNAH recognizes the outstanding service of staff through its annual HEALTH Matters Awards and the naming of RAVNAH's Employee of the Year. In May, employees were chosen by their peers for their dedication to the agency and the community members we serve. The employees recognized for service excellence representing our HEALTH acronym are:

- Honesty** Kathy Romano
- Excellence** Heather Baker
- Accountability** Marylou Brooks
- Leadership** Jennifer Beers
- Teamwork** Ann LaRocque
- Helpfulness** Rayne Brileya

### 2011 Employee of the Year

**Sandy Eddy, Manager, Clinical Services**

Sandy has been with RAVNAH for 36 years, and this may arguably be her best yet. She helps with therapy, leads in nursing, and is always cheerful, always there, always looking for solutions to the daily care needs of our patients. Sandy, like RAVNAH, faces the challenges of tomorrow with an enthusiasm and youthful energy that positively impacts the people she interacts with. ☪



Sandy Eddy with Manager Laura Driscoll

### Employees Honored For Years of Service

The following employees are recognized for their milestone years of service to RAVNAH and Dorset Nursing

#### 5 Years of Service

- JoAnn Adams
- Sally Lambert
- Patricia Tracey

#### 10 Years of Service

- Gail Bush
- Stacie Eaton
- Barbara Herrick
- Fe Jones
- Jeanne Schmelzenbach
- Janet Williamson

#### 15 Years of Service

- Kim McCullough
- Amy Pfenning
- Cynthia Wilcox

#### 20 Years of Service

- Ann Pollock
- Patricia Tripp
- Louise (Teri) Zimmer

## Susan LaPorte 2010 Humanitarian of the Year



Congratulations to Susan LaPorte, RAVNAH Board Member, who received the 2010 Community Humanitarian of the Year Award from Rutland Regional Health Services. Susan was honored by her coworkers at Rutland Regional Medical Center for her work in promoting healthcare in her community. Susan lives in Pawlet and has been an RN at Rutland Regional since 1986.

Susan has served on the Dorset Nursing Association Board of Directors and was a key player in their merger with RAVNAH. She has continued in a leadership role on the RAVNAH Board of Directors, providing great insight regarding transition from acute care to home care for rural Vermonters. ❀

Sue Laporte with RAVNAH CEO, Ron Cioffi, and then Board President Win Thomas

## RAVNAH Visits the State House

RAVNAH was honored by the Vermont Legislature on April 29 for being named one of the top 500 home health agencies in the United States in 2010, the only Vermont agency ranked in the upper 5%. Thanks to Representative Peg Andrews, the group attended the reading of the resolution in the House chamber and was introduced to members of the Rutland County delegation. ❀



Nancy Birdsall, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, and Trillium singers with Governor Schumlin.

## Hospice Singing Group Honored for Outstanding Community Service

The RAVNAH Trillium Singers received the 2011 Governor's Award for Outstanding Community Service. Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin presented the award at a special awards ceremony at the State House in Montpelier on June 4. The award honors individuals, groups and businesses that best exemplify the spirit of volunteerism and community service in Vermont. ❀

## New Board Members



**Bill Carris**  
*Rutland County Senator*

I've had several friends and relatives use RAVNAH services. It is a great organization that satisfies a basic need in health care.



**Mark Patten**  
*Founder and President Patten Oil*

I live to give my all in things of such great importance. As a board member I will be involved with many great people who are also passionate about what RAVNAH stands for and provides. I have a great feeling about being part of such an important cause in Rutland County.



**Tom Dowling, Esquire**  
*Ryan Smith & Carbine, Ltd.*

RAVNAH is such a tremendous organization, providing personal assistance and help to so many people. It is wonderful to be a part of it.



**Carrie Allen**  
*AVP of Business Development at Heritage Family Credit Union*

I am very interested in home care and I'm committed to being an active participant in my community.

# RAVNAH Employees Weather Irene

## Jamie Belchak Puts Patients First

On the day Hurricane Irene came roaring in, RAVNAH's Rehab Manager, Jamie Belchak and his wife Nicole, watched as the rain poured down outside their home in Killington. "When we got up Monday morning, we discovered we had no power so we decided to check out the condition of the area," said Jamie.

What they found was widespread damage. Roads had completely washed away and buildings were demolished. "We quickly realized we were stranded," recalled Jamie.

Concerned that he couldn't get to the RAVNAH office to tend to his patients and check in on his staff, Jamie, along with Nicole, packed up a few personal belongings and drove until they reached the spot where Route 4 had collapsed. At that point, the pair started the five

mile hike into Rutland. "I was back to work by 3:30pm Monday afternoon," Jamie said.

The first thing Jamie did when he arrived at RAVNAH was to check on staff and determine who was available to visit patients. Fortunately, they were able to contact the majority of patients and rearrange schedules to accommodate their patients' needs. The bad news was that 25% of the rehab staff were stranded in their communities.

Thankfully, RAVNAH's home care team had prepared prior to the storm. Jamie added, "Thanks to our advance planning and the extra effort put in by staff, all of our patients received the care and services they needed." ❀



Route 4, Mendon



Bridgewater Corners

## Physical Therapist, Suanna Bicek, Helps her Pittsfield Neighbors Weather the Storm

The town of Pittsfield was one of the hardest hit communities by Hurricane Irene. The storm devastated the town and left it cut off from the rest of the world – an island with no way in and no way out.

Bridges and roads were completely destroyed. There was no power and phone or cell service. For days, residents couldn't shower, bathe or even do dishes. Suanna Bicek, a Pittsfield resident and one of RAVNAH's physical therapists, had to wash dishes in a nearby brook in the first days following the storm.

Suanna spent every day working at the emergency food station. "I went down every morning," said Suanna, "to give out food and

water to anyone who needed it." Each day, food and supplies were flown in by FEMA helicopters or driven in by the Chittenden Fire Department. "What helped make it okay was that everybody was pitching in," said Suanna.

"There are so many stories," said Suanna. "Two people had to be air-lifted out – one with severe asthma and one pregnant woman."

Rebuilding continues and vehicles can finally get in and out of town. Suanna is back to work at RAVNAH taking care of her patients and continues to volunteer in her community to help those who've suffered such significant loss. ❀

## Traveling PT Grateful for Vermont Hospitality

**R**AVNAH traveling physical therapist, Janice Goulet, learned first-hand about the generosity and big-heartedness of her co-workers and neighbors in Vermont.

Janice has been working at RAVNAH since June and staying at Killington Gateway condominiums. She and her husband, Bill, were at home when Tropical Storm Irene hit. “It was an uneventful day until we lost power late that night. The next morning we discovered that the highway had been completely washed out.”

With no power and no internet, Janice was unable to transfer her patient files. “It was important to me to make sure my patients’ data was up to date,” said Janice. “So, I loaded my computer in my backpack, recruited my husband and together we walked down to RAVNAH.” When clinical manager Sandy Eddy gave the pair a ride later that day, they realized they couldn’t return home. “When we

reached the roadblock, police told us we couldn’t even walk back through. We had no choice but to stay at the Best Western Monday night and try to return home on Tuesday morning.”

By Wednesday, the road between Killington and Woodstock had reopened, but in order for Janice to get to work, she had to travel four hours in the opposite direction to get back to RAVNAH. For the next several days, Janice drove to the walking path off Helvi Hill in Mendon, hiked to the other side to get home, then did it all over again in reverse to get back to Rutland.

“I can’t believe how wonderful everyone was. My co-workers, people in the community, everyone was fabulous. I was really stressed and exhausted when it was all over, but I experienced great hospitality and overall it was a good experience.”

Probably one Janice doesn’t want to repeat any time soon! 🍀

## RAVNAH’s Hospice Chaplain Comforts Storm Victims

**D**uring the evening of Tropical Storm Irene, hospice chaplain, Cindy Yee, heard banging at her door. It was the police ordering her out, evacuating her to a shelter at Rutland High School.

“As I went with my stuff out my door I, for some reason, grabbed my RAVNAH name tag,” recalled Cindy. After checking in at the shelter, Cindy mentioned to the Red Cross workers that she was the hospice chaplain at Rutland Area VNA and offered to help.

“There were so many people there who were devastated and I listened to their stories. Some told me what they lost and how concerned they

were about what they were going to find when they returned home.

“I felt that just by listening I could help people calm down. I couldn’t fix anything the way a nurse could, but maybe I did a little bit to help people feel a little better – at least for a while – until they had to face all the problems that would come roaring in after they left the shelter,” said Cindy.

By 8:00 am Monday morning, Cindy was back at work where she and members of the hospice team spent the morning checking on patients to ensure they were safe and secure. 🍀

## A WOW! Well-Deserved

**O**n the afternoon that Irene hit, CarePlus PCA Terri Nestle, who lives in Ludlow, was scheduled to work an overnight shift at The Gables to care for a hospice patient. But the road into Rutland had been washed out, so she called CarePlus manager, Heather Baker to let her know she was stranded.

Heather, in a scramble to get the visit covered, called Deb Galiano to ask if she could cover the visit scheduled to start at 7:30 pm that evening. Deb said she could make it, but later that afternoon, at 4 o’clock, Deb called to say that she and her family were being

evacuated and were preparing to stay out-of-town until they could return home.

Heather checked in with Deb again about an hour later to offer her a ride but when she reached her, Deb was already sitting in the lobby of The Gables at 5:30 pm waiting for her shift to start.

Despite her own personal adversity, Deb Galiano put the needs of her client first. Her commitment and concern for others is to be applauded. 🍀

# Dorset Nursing News

## DNA Visions Camp Boosts Self-Confidence in Adolescent Girls

This summer, Dorset Nursing Association hosted a successful Visions Camp for adolescent girls ages eleven to fourteen. Sixteen girls attended the two-week day camp where they experienced a wide array of physical and creative activities designed to help them recognize and develop their personal strengths, build their sense of self-worth and learn how to make healthy choices in their lives.

"Visions Camp not only exposes the girls to professional women, but provides them a nurturing environment with other girls like themselves without being judged and talked about," explained Dora Cecchini, Visions Camp Coordinator.

Partial funding for Visions Camp was provided by a grant from the Stratton Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and sense of community in sixteen southern Vermont towns. ❀



Visions Campers at the Climbing Wall in Rutland



## Happy Birthday, Goldie!

Goldie Nelson, a long time donor to RAVNAH, celebrated her 106<sup>th</sup> birthday in May. ❀

## Beating the Odds with Love, Hospice and Community

As RAVNAH's longest-surviving hospice patient, Sallie Barber survived the odds and lived with the support of RAVNAH's Hospice care for three years. Unknown to most, terminally ill patients on hospice care live an average of 29 days longer than those who did not choose hospice.

Eighty-four year old hospice patient Sallie Barber lived in the same two-story home in Dorset for nearly sixty years.

A native of Syracuse, NY, Sallie moved as a child with her mother to Vermont. Her mother's employment with best-selling American author and educational reformer Dorothy Canfield Fisher would positively influence Sallie in the years to come. "I am named after Dorothy Fisher's daughter, Sallie," she said, and gratefully acknowledged that it was Fisher who paid her tuition to the College of St. Rose where she received a degree in English. In the years that followed, Sallie devoted her time to caring for children in their homes.

It was twenty years ago, when she was in her early sixties, that Sallie discovered a lump in her breast. At first, her doctor said she had Cystic Mastitis, a common, benign disorder of the breast. "But I knew better," remembered Sallie. "The lump was squishy." Eventually, the diagnosis was breast cancer and her doctor recommended that Sallie have a mastectomy along with chemotherapy, but she refused. "I didn't want that poison in my body and it was a very slow growing type of cancer," said Sallie. Eight years ago, when cancer symptoms worsened, Sallie admitted, "I ignored them."

For three years, Sally and her husband of 45 years, Michael, counted on hospice for end-of-life care as they confronted Sallie's terminal prognosis together. "I seem to reach plateaus. For a while, I could



get around with a cane – and when I was in a store, I would lean on the cart to hold me up, but now my legs go out from under me," she explained. Eventually Sallie was unable to leave home at all. She confessed to being weaker and more tired.

As her primary caregiver, Michael was by her side every day to transfer her from her bed to the couch where she often spent her days. He also took over the responsibilities of Sallie's personal needs, did the shopping, cleaning, cooking and outside work. "I'm paying her back for all the years she had to put up with me," Michael said.

Thankfully, the couple did not wage this battle alone. They relied on assistance from RAVNAH's hospice team. A hospice aide visited once a week. For three years, Nancy McKenzie, Sallie's hospice nurse visited two times a week to tend to Sallie's physical needs, managing her medicines to control her pain and symptoms. Bereavement counselor Ann LaRocque, social worker Tracey Busony and hospice chaplain Cindy Yee helped with coping and support.

The Barbers were fortunate to receive help from their church community, as well. Nancy Norris, Sue Lawlor and Sue Banford, volunteers from the Dorset United Church "Neighbors to Neighbors" program checked in frequently, did laundry and drove Michael to the store.

Both Sallie and Michael were grateful for the care and the help they received from hospice and the community, but they came to rely on each other. "I think it's coming soon," revealed Sallie. "And I'm scared of the unknown and where I'm going." But Michael declared, "I know where she's going. She's going up – to heaven." And that's where Sallie Barber is today. She passed away on October 15, 2011. ❀

Please join us for an evening of reflection and music to remember your loved ones at the Franklin Conference Center in Rutland. Light refreshments will be served following the ceremony. For more information, contact RAVNAH's Hospice Department at 770-1514.



## 2011 REMEMBRANCE ORNAMENTS ORDER FORM (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Remembrance Ornaments are a special way to honor someone who has touched your life. These hand-crafted, glazed porcelain ornaments can be personalized in memory of anyone you choose. The name of the person you are honoring will be written in gold ink on the back of the ornament. You may pick up your ornament(s) during the Tree of Remembrance tree lighting ceremony on Tuesday, December 6, 2011 or you may have them mailed to you. Ornaments may be ordered by filling out the following form or by calling the RAVNAH Hospice Department at (802)770-1514. All proceeds will support RAVNAH's hospice program.

Name:	Telephone:
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Address:	City:	State & Zip:
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**IN MEMORY** - Print name(s) as you would like them to appear on the ornament.  
The maximum number of letters for each ornament is twelve.

	Comet (\$12)	Bell (\$12)	Goose (\$15)
1) Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Total Number of Ornaments Ordered:</b>
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<b>Total Amount:</b>
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You can pick up your ornaments at our *Tree of Remembrance* service on Dec. 6th, or we can mail your ornaments by mid-December for a \$2 per ornament charge. If you would like ornaments shipped to a different address than what you provided above, indicate the ornament number and corresponding address below. We will enclose a card notifying the recipient that you purchased the ornaments in support of our hospice program.

<b>Postage &amp; Handling:</b> (\$2 per ornament)
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<b>Donation to Hospice:</b> (optional)
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Ornament #: Name/Address:
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<b>Total Enclosed:</b>
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Ornament #: Name/Address:
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Make checks payable to RAVNAH and mail to RAVNAH Attn: Hospice  
PO Box 787, Rutland, VT 05702.

Will pick up at Tree of Remembrance service

Will pick up at Rutland Area VNA and Hospice office

Ornament #: Name/Address:
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**ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 28.**

# Thanks to You

Throughout 2011, the Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice, Dorset Nursing Association and Kids on the Move have received an abundant outpouring of generosity for which we are tremendously appreciative and thankful.

The generosity of individuals throughout Rutland County and beyond was illustrated in many ways: through golf at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Killington Pico Rotary Golf Tournament or 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Rutland Health Foundation Golf Invitational; through the racing and walking feet of participants in the Martin Devlin Fun Run; through the generous auction donors, sponsors and spirited bidders at Bella Notte; through the dancing feet of guests at Dance the Night Away in Dorset and the dance professionals and Rutland Stars who showcased their talents at Dancing with the Rutland Stars, and the hundreds making small or large gifts independent of our events. We are thankful to our friends and supporters; without each of you, we could not achieve our vision and mission. ☪



A night of fun, food, friends and fundraising!



Susan Romano and Jen Black Alosa enjoying the night



The Rotarian organizer of the tournament, Ken Lee with his team

## RAVNAH Named to 2011 Top 500 HomeCare Elite

RAVNAH has once again been named to the 2011 HomeCare Elite™, a compilation of the top-performing home health agencies in the United States.

“We are honored to again earn this national recognition, said Cioffi. “This is RAVNAH’s 5<sup>th</sup> year in achieving this award and, reflects the dedication and commitment of our staff, board of directors and committee members in achieving this high level of performance.”

Winners are ranked by an analysis of performance measures in quality outcomes, quality improvement, and financial performance. HomeCare Elite is the only performance recognition of its kind in the home health industry. ☪



**RAVNAH's Got A New Look...**

**Check Out Our New Website! [www.ravnah.org](http://www.ravnah.org)**



Our family caring for your family since 1946

PO Box 787, Rutland, Vermont 05702

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**Executive Director**  
Ronald J. Cioffi

**Writers**  
Laura Vien  
Bernadette Robin

**Design**  
LMW Design, Inc.

**Photography**  
Shannon Reilly

**Contributing photographers:**  
Nicole Kesselring, Jamie Belchak

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