

Coming Home



A Publication of Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County



Phyllis Tousey and Volunteer, Roseann Spengler.

Photo by Bruce Ando

Friendship and Fun at Home

by Roseann Spengler

I don't remember what led me to volunteer at Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County although volunteerism wasn't new to me.

I cooked meals for Bread & Roses in Redding and for the Gillespie Center in Westport but neither of those volunteer opportunities

afforded me the chance to get to know anyone; I never formed any relationships.

Phyllis Tousey was the second home care patient I volunteered to visit for Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County. We have been together now for years.

At 96, the longtime Wiltonite, who was once the tax collector for the town, is impressive. She is smart, sweet, laughs easily and is beyond sharp. Enviably, she has no wrinkles!

Phyllis is fortunate to have a loving family - two daughters, a son, two sons-in-law, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. They are in constant contact with Phyllis and visit her often. As I've gotten to know her, I realize why they are so devoted to her.

“Our love of family is the foundation of our bond.”

Phyllis married a former Navy man and together they moved to Wilton in 1954. They raised their three children here and Phyllis remains in the family home to this day. Her husband, Tom, passed away in 1975 and she still wears her engagement and wedding rings proudly.

Phyllis feels very connected to the town of Wilton and to those friends who are still here. On occasion, some of her children's friends, who never left Wilton,

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Thank You for Sharing

At Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County, we are grateful for the privilege of caring for our patients and their loved ones. It is gratifying to receive letters from those who have been touched by our care and we'd like to share

excerpts from two of these letters so that you will know the difference your support makes in the lives of our patients and their families. Thanks for joining in our mission to bring healing and comfort to our community. ■

Dear Friends,

I wanted to let you know what a wonderful experience I had with the physical therapy I received at home from your agency. I recently had a hip replaced and the physical therapist you assigned to me knew exactly what she was doing. She was professional and personable and always on time. I know that I am walking as well as I am because I had such great physical therapy.

Thank you!!

*Sincerely,
Kerry*

Dear Friends,

My mother had back surgery after a recent fall and I just want to thank you all so much for taking such good care of her. The staff at Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County are the kindest, most respectful and well-informed caregivers I have ever encountered. My family and I are truly grateful.

*Thank You,
Marie*



Friendship and Fun at Home *(continued)*

Continued from page 1

stop by to see her. She smiles as she tells me how much she loves to chat about old times. “It makes me feel so good that they still remember me and we share memories,” she says.

Healthy for most of her life, Phyllis had a bad bout with a late diagnosis of Lyme Disease and it took a toll on her body -- but not her spirits. She experiences some pain but she has regular visits from a nurse from Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County along with virtual nursing visits via the agency’s Telehealth system. Phyllis also gets physical and occupational therapy at home and she participates in chair yoga.

“I’m determined to help myself in every way I can,” she says. Then she laughs as she shows me something called “YogaToes,” a new device which helps to stretch her toes and relieve cramps in her feet.

When I first met Phyllis, she lived independently with the help of a home health aide twice a day. She used a walker but still managed to enjoy her many social outings by using Wilton Dial-A-Ride.

Recently, however, she has become homebound and a full-time home health aide now lives with her. She shows no sign of discontent, however, and she understands the transition. “It is what it is,” she says.



Photo by Bruce Ando

We don’t play cards or games or listen to music when we are together. Our weekly visits are just about talking – about her week and mine. I make her laugh and it delights me because I never thought of myself as particularly funny. But because she laughs at my stories or how I tell them, I think I have actually become a bit funnier.

We share photos of our children and grandchildren (in her case great-grandchildren) on our smart phones. Yes, Phyllis has a smart phone that she bought just last year at the age of 95. She texts her family regularly and sends accompanying emojis. She’s on top of her game.

Our love of family is the foundation of our bond. We feel gratitude and we express it. “Aren’t we so fortunate,” she will often say.

Although my four children and 12 grandchildren have never met Phyllis, everyone knows about her from my stories -- stories of her tenacity, positive outlook, and good humor. I am very proud that we are friends.

Because she often tells me of the joy I bring to her and how much she loves hearing stories about my life, she makes me want to be a better person. I continually strive to be that person.

“I think an angel brought you to me,” Phyllis once said. I believe that an angel brought us to each other.

If you have the time and the desire to become a Patient Care Volunteer and bring joy to a homebound neighbor, call our Volunteer Coordinator, Laura Rundell, at 203-762-8958, ext. 316. ■

Going the Distance



Ironman competitor, Julie Weiss, RN



On July 28th, athletes from around the world descended on the Adirondack village of Lake Placid, New York to test their limits in the Ironman Lake Placid. Our hospice nurse, Julie Weiss, was one of those remarkable and intrepid individuals.

An Ironman event is a series of long-distance triathlon races consisting of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bicycle ride and a 26.22-mile marathon run, in that order. It is considered one of the most difficult and demanding one-day sporting events in the world.

Julie started competing in triathlons four years ago and says the rigorous training helps keep her disciplined and focused. And she says it's fun! She also feels gratified when certain of the races she competes in are for charity -- she likes the feeling of giving back.

Great Job Julie! You really do go the distance -- for your patients and in your athletic endeavors. ■



...and with a patient.



Do Something Meaningful this Fall

We are seeking caring and sensitive adults to serve as hospice volunteers. Hospice volunteers visit patients with life-limiting illnesses in the communities where they live and provide emotional support, respite care and companionship.

Hospice volunteers receive training and they develop the skills they will need to work with patients and families. All volunteers are provided with ongoing support and supervision.

“Hospice volunteers play a vital role in supporting our patients and their families,” said agency Volunteer Coordinator, Laura Rundell. “They help patients live in peace, with dignity and grace.”

“Hospice volunteers also work closely with grieving families to help them through the bereavement process,” continued Laura. “There is a great sense of satisfaction in becoming a hospice volunteer.”

Those who are interested in becoming a hospice volunteer may register to participate in a five-session

hospice volunteer training course beginning Monday, September 23 and continuing through Friday, September 27. Training will be held from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. each day at the offices of Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County, 22 Danbury Road (Route 7), in Wilton.

For more information, or to register for the training course to become a hospice volunteer, contact Laura Rundell at 203-834-6341, ext. 316 or email her at lrundell@visitingnurse.net. ■



A Celebration of Life Memorial Service for Loved Ones

Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County honored the patients and families it has served during the past year with a *Celebration of Life* memorial service on June 9th at the Carriage Barn Arts Center at Waveny Park in New Canaan.

The interfaith service included readings, music, and acts of remembrance as well as a candle-lighting ceremony conducted by the agency’s team of nurses, counselors and caregivers. A reception followed the service.



“We celebrate the lives of the loved ones we have lost and give thanks for everything that they have meant to us,” said Hospice

Director, Christine Pfeffer. “We express our gratitude and know that our loved ones will remain in our hearts as long as we live.” ■



Your generosity can live on through a bequest to Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County. For more information call: 800-898-HOME

Bereavement Support for Grieving Adults

Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County is committed to providing bereavement support to anyone who is grieving the loss of a loved one. Our professional grief and bereavement counselors and social workers are trained

to provide comfort and promote healing after a loss.

Our bereavement support groups are open to anyone who has experienced a loss. Participation offers the opportunity to grieve in a supportive and therapeutic

environment with others who have also suffered a loss.

For more information, contact our Bereavement Coordinator at 203-762-8958. Check our website for periodic updates to our schedule of bereavement support groups. ■

AUTUMN SCHEDULE OF BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS

at Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County – 22 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT



Loss of a Spouse

*for those grieving the loss of a spouse
with Nanette Greene, MA, LPC*

Weekly on Wednesdays
9/18/19 – 11/13/19

1:00 – 2:30 pm

Loss of a Parent

*for adults grieving the loss of a parent
Laurie Petrasanta, MS, BSW*

Weekly on Tuesdays
9/10/19 - 10/29/19

1:00 – 2:30 pm

Loss of a Child

*for adults grieving the loss of a child
with Laurie Petrasanta, MS, BSW*

Weekly on Tuesdays
9/10/19 - 10/29/19

3:00 – 4:30 pm

Caregiver Support

*for those who are caring for an ill loved one
with Jenn Pool, MSW*

Weekly on Thursdays
9/19/19 – 11/7/19

3:00 – 4:30 pm

Loss of a Loved One

*for adults grieving the loss of a loved one
with Sheila Russo, MSW*

Weekly on Wednesdays
9/18/19 – 11/6/19

6:00 – 7:30 pm



Helping others – now and forever. A charitable gift in your will could be the most important and lasting gift you ever make.

For more information about how your generosity can live on through a bequest to Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County, call 203-834-6341, extension 304.

Private Care Services: Assisted Living at Home

We all cherish our independence so if you are older, or care about someone who is, then you should know about Assisted Living at Home.

This private care service enables individuals to maintain their independence at home and provides a satisfying and affordable alternative to a long-term care facility.

Assisted Living at Home offers the support many people need to remain at home safely and comfortably, including help with bathing, dressing, cleaning, cooking, driving, shopping, and even companionship, with 24-hour access to homemakers, home health aides and companions. Individuals can make their own choices about which services they need and want and can set their own schedule.



If there is ever a need for nursing care, we can, of course, provide that too. The agency offers a full range of home health care services including skilled nursing, home health aides, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, dietitians, medical social workers,

care managers and respite caregivers as well as a compassionate team of hospice caregivers.

With Assisted Living at Home, family members will enjoy peace of mind, secure in the knowledge that their loved one is safe at home and receiving the best care possible. ■



Sharon Bradley Celebrates 20 Years

Sharon Bradley is celebrating her 20th year as President and CEO of Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County. Sharon joined the agency in 1995 as Clinical Director. She was promoted to President and CEO in 1999 and has remained at the helm for the last 20 years.

Under her leadership, the Agency has expanded its home care and hospice programs to serve hundreds of individuals and families throughout Fairfield County. Most recently, Sharon spearheaded the

design and construction of the agency's beautiful new home in Wilton.

Many thanks to Sharon for her leadership and congratulations on 20 great years! ■



Sharon M. Bradley,
RN, MSN, DNP



Photo by Bruce Ando



Flu Season is Just Around the Corner!

Flu spreads quickly among people of all ages in the fall and winter months. While hand-washing and avoiding contact with people who are sick helps to reduce the risk of infection, being vaccinated prior to flu season is the single, most effective way to avoid contracting influenza.

This year, the flu vaccine will be available at a number of flu clinics offered by Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County.



Anyone four years of age or older may receive a seasonal flu shot. Persons under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

The cost of the vaccine is \$50. We will bill it directly to Medicare Part B, Aetna, Anthem, Connecticare, Harvard Pilgrim, Multi Plan or Wellcare. Cash or check will also be accepted. Please bring your insurance card with you and wear short sleeves or sleeves that can be easily rolled up. For more info, call 203-762-8958. ■

Schedule of Fall Flu Clinics

Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County is here to help.



Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County 22 Danbury Road Wilton	Wednesday	October 2	12 noon – 2:00 pm
	Wednesday	October 9	12 noon – 2:00 pm
	Wednesday	October 16	12 noon – 2:00 pm
	Wednesday	October 30	12 noon – 2:00 pm
	Wednesday	November 6	12 noon – 2:00 pm
	Wednesday	November 13	12 noon – 2:00 pm
Wilton Library 137 Old Ridgefield Road, Wilton	Monday	October 7	3:30 pm – 5:00 pm
	Saturday	November 2	10:00 am – 11:30 am
Wilton Senior Center 180 School Road, Wilton	Monday	September 23	10:00 am – 11:30 am
	Wednesday	October 30	10:00 am – 11:30 am
Our Lady of Fatima 229 Danbury Road, Wilton	Sunday	October 6	8:30 a.m. – 12 noon
Wilton Town Hall 238 Danbury Road, Wilton	Tuesday	October 15	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

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Schedule of Fall Flu Clinics *(continued)*

Sacred Heart Catholic Church 30 Church Street, Georgetown	Sunday	October 20	9:30 am – 11:00 am
Darien Library 1441 Post Road, Darien	Tuesday Thursday	October 8 November 7	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Darien Senior Center 2 Renshaw Road, Darien	Tuesday	November 19	12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
Darien YMCA 2420 Post Road, Darien	Friday Saturday	October 18 November 9	9:00 am – 12 noon 9:00 am – 12 noon
Norwalk Senior Center 11 Allen Road, Norwalk	Wednesday Thursday	September 25 October 10	10:00 am – 12 noon 10:00 am – 12 noon
St. Thomas the Apostle 203 East Avenue, Norwalk	Tuesday Sunday	October 8 October 27	11:00 am – 12 noon 9:30 am – 12 noon
Stamford Senior Center 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford	Monday	September 30	10:00 am – 12 noon
St. John's Church <i>(Over 60 Club 2nd Fl)</i> St. John's Church 628 Main Street, Stamford	Monday Sunday	September 23 October 27	10:30 am – 12:30 pm 11:30 am – 1:00 pm
St Francis of Assisi 35 Norfield Road, Weston	Sunday	November 10	9:00 am – 12:30 pm
Weston Kiwanis Club Norfield Congregational Church 64 Norfield Road, Weston	Saturday	October 5	10:00 am following meeting
Wilton Kiwanis Club WEPCO 48 New Canaan Road, Wilton	Wednesday	October 16	11:30 am – 12:30 pm



Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County wishes to thank all those who have so generously given their support from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

Your generous contributions enable us to touch the lives of those in need of home health and hospice care. It is because of your spirit of giving that we are able to bring healing and comfort to those in our care. ■

THANK YOU



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no one need wait
a single moment to
improve the world.”*

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no matter how
small, is ever wasted.”*

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great legacy, and
inspire others, by
giving to a
worthy cause.”*

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is a stepping stone
towards heaven.”*

Henry Ward Beecher

*“Help thy brother's boat
across and lo!
thine own has reached
the shore.”*

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hundred people,
then help just one."*

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is rich but he who
gives much.”*

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*“Nothing brings more
happiness than
trying to help the most
vulnerable people
in society.”*

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*“Being no stranger
to suffering, I have
learned to relieve the
sufferings of others.”*

Virgil

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(from 7/1/18 to 6/30/19)

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*“No one is useless in
this world
who lightens the
burdens of another.”*

Charles Dickens

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*“Do what you can,
with what you have,
where you are.”*

Theodore Roosevelt

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Coming Home is a publication of Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please write to Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County, 22 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT 06897.
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