

Caring Neighbors

VIM ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2015/16

VIM's Culture of Caring is celebrated annually at our Gala. This "must attend" September 2015 event was a tremendous success and honored three very special people.

Marie Sluberski was recognized as Volunteer of the Year. Marie is easily one of the busiest and most generous woman in Cape May County. She has volunteered at VIM for nearly 5 years, primarily in Appointment Services and as a translator for VIM's Spanish speaking patients. Known for being willing to do more -- be it helping with a fund-raiser, offering coverage for another volunteer or baking something delicious for the clinic -- Marie always goes the extra mile for VIM.

Lynn Helmer, MD, MBA, FACP, was celebrated as VIM's 2015 Volunteer Doctor of the Year. Dr. Helmer was part of VIM's original care team when the clinic first



opened. She later volunteered at the VIM in Red Bank, NJ, and founded a VIM clinic in Pennsville, NJ. She has worked as an internist in private practice and is currently president of DRD Consulting, an executive training firm specializing in the healthcare field, located in Haddon Heights, NJ.

Dr. Helmer was formerly vice-president of medical affairs and chief medical officer at Shore Memorial Hospital in Somers

Point, NJ, as well as senior vice-president of medical affairs at Riverview Medical Center in Red Bank, NJ. In addition to her very impressive credentials, she is a much beloved and wonderfully caring physician at VIM of Cape May County.

The Charles A. Meyers Private Foundation was declared VIM's Community Partner of 2015. This honor is bestowed annually to an organization that is a true friend and financial supporter to VIM. Previous recipients include Cape Regional Medical Center, Reef Family Pharmacy and the J. Byrne Insurance Agency. Foundation Trustee Jacqui Sullivan has been supporting VIM since 2008. She is known for her heart of gold and generosity to many local charities. VIM of Cape May County is proud of its long relationship with the Charles A. Meyers Private Foundation and was pleased to honor them.

The Fabulous Doctor's of VIM



Pictured from left: Dave Perry, PA (2014 Provider of the Year), Elizabeth Crowley, MD (Medical Director), Divo Messori, MD (2012 Provider of the Year), D. Lynn Helmer, MD (2015 Provider of the Year), Ken Cramer, MD (2013 Provider of the Year), and John Middleton, MD

Not pictured: Tom Dierkes, MD (2010 Provider of the Year), Chuck Dunn, MD, Gina Maloney, APN-C, Nancy Sudal, APN-C, Martin Carney, DPM (2011 Provider of the Year), Jong Choi, MD, John Gottlieb, MD, Jacqueline Hendrickson, LSCW-C, Stephen Kornberg, MD, Melind Pandya, DO and Joseph Salvatore, MD (2009 Outstanding Caring Neighbor)

Behind this fabulous team of doctors, is an equally wonderful team of volunteer nurses and administrative professionals!

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Dear Caring Neighbor,

VIM will soon celebrate 15 years of providing free care to the working poor of Cape May County. Our original mission "to understand and serve the health and wellness needs of the uninsured and underserved living and working in Cape May County" is more true today than ever. Although, our formative years were focused on providing quality primary care and access to specialist care, today we probably spend just as much time helping our patients access care as actually providing care. Allow me to explain what I mean by way of an example.

George, not his real name, had been a VIM patient but qualified for Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Like many of our patients, it took some time to get his application processed and approved. VIM volunteers assisted him with his paperwork, made phone calls, and advocated. Ultimately he was insured with Medicaid. VIM volunteers helped him become established with a provider that accepted his insurance and helped him understand how to use this new insurance. Shortly thereafter, George was diagnosed with bladder cancer. Unfortunately, for George there is no local urologist who accepts Medicaid and to make matters worse, Medicaid does not cover the required chemotherapy.

George is scrappy and knew not to give up hope. He also knew the team at VIM performed miracles every day. So he made an appointment with VIM Clinic Director Barbara Harvey to see if there was any way VIM could help. Barbara contacted the local urologist. Nurse Dana was very helpful but confirmed that Dr. Kimmel did not accept Medicaid. After some pleading, Dr. Kimmel's office agreed that if VIM could get the appropriate medication (a type of chemotherapy infused over 6 treatments) he would do the infusions at no charge. Barbara, VIM Volunteer Nurse Sue Antczak and Scott Reef of Reef Family Pharmacy researched the drugs. Reef's cost would be more than \$1000. Sue continued to plug away. Ultimately we were able to purchase the drugs direct from the manufacturer for a cost of \$775, which thanks to Sue's hard-work and determination will be reimbursed by the South Jersey Cancer Fund.

George has now had two treatments. He and Dr. Kimmel are confident, thanks in no small part to VIM, George will beat this cancer. Barbara and Sue continue to log hours in follow-up. The VIM doctors had very little to do for George this year as technically he is not our patient. George is however, a perfect example of the underserved in our community who rely on VIM. There are many more George's in the community, all of whom are blessed to have access to a tireless safety net like VIM. VIM relies on the talent and hard work of almost 100 angels like Sue but we also rely on you, our annual supporters, who ensure we are able to continue to provide much needed service to our community.

I urge you to discover more about VIM and the difference we make in Cape May County. If you are a regular contributor, **thank you for your support**. Hopefully this newsletter will give you confidence that your investment is well worth it. If you have never contributed, **please consider a donation**. Your gift, no matter how big or small will make a difference. A difference perhaps of life or death.

On behalf of our Board of Trustees, Medical Director Elizabeth Crowley and our grateful patients, best wishes for a joyous Holiday Season and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Jackie

Jacqueline Meiluta
Executive Director



United Way
of Greater Philadelphia
and Southern New Jersey



5K Chair Lindsey DeLollis, Doug Burke and VIM Volunteer and Vietnam Veteran Sponsor, Rick Kraus



VIM Chair Mary Tighe, Trustee Micki Goldberg and Medical Director Elizabeth Crowley, MD



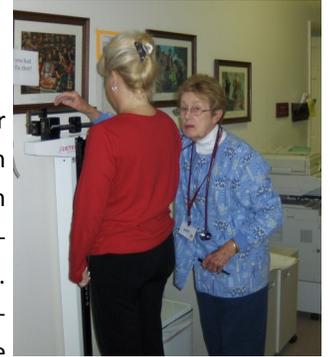
Left: Volunteer Coordinator Anne Marie Jackson

Below: Clinic Director, Barbara Harvey, RN



VIM Patient Success

Anne has been with VIM a number of years. She works as a home health aide. She is typical of our patients in that she earns too much for Medicaid but barely enough to survive. Anne is an alcoholic and has Hepatitis C. When she came to VIM she looked and felt terrible. Her drinking was adversely affecting her life, her work and her health.



At her first appointment, Dr. Helmer told Anne that she was drinking herself to an early grave. Anne committed to "cut back." Six months later she was back at VIM looking and feeling worse than ever. This time she was ready to hear what Dr. Helmer said. Dr. Helmer made Anne cry that day. Dr. Helmer spoke frankly about the effects of Hep C and drinking. She explained that Anne would soon die unless a change was made.

Dr. Helmer may have made Anne cry that day but more importantly she made Anne hear. Anne has been sober for a year now. As a result of her sobriety Dr. Divo was able to treat her Hep C. She is no longer yellow. She looks 10 years younger. At a recent appointment, one of our regular volunteers did not recognize her. When she was told that was Anne, her response was "Wow, she looks so *healthy*."

Anne has made a stunning recovery and truly turned her life around. She looks fantastic and feels better. She no longer misses work (and pay) because she is too sick to work. She credits her recovery to Dr. Helmer and the marvelous team of volunteers. We believe Anne is a shining example of the difference VIM makes in peoples lives every day.

Time and time again, we are reminded that our Culture of Caring is the difference. As we show an interest in our patient's lives, as we treat them with compassion and dignity, they are inspired. They no longer feel they are battling their demons alone, they find the strength to actively participate in their well-being.



Vietnam Veterans for VIM Annual 5k

May 21, 2015

Register on-line at www.vimcmc.org

Schedule of Events:

8:00 AM Registration Opens

9:00 AM 5K Run Begins

9:15AM Walk Begins

9:45 AM Awards Ceremony

Entry Fees

Adults (Ages 13+) \$25

Pre-Registration \$20 (closes 5/13/15)

Kids (Ages 12 and Under) \$15

Pre-Registration \$12 (closes 5/13/15)

- _____ **\$1000 Gold Sponsor** Top billing with name and logo on back of complimentary race t-shirt, company name included in all press releases, Featured Listing in Care of the Week*
- _____ **\$ 500 Silver Sponsor** Name and logo prominently displayed on back of complimentary race t-shirt, listing in Care of the Week*
- _____ **\$ 300 Bronze Sponsor** Name and logo displayed on back of complimentary race t-shirt, listing in Care of the Week*
- _____ **\$ 100 T-Shirt Sponsor** Company Listing on back of complimentary race t-shirt
- _____ **Food and Beverage Sponsor** Recognized at event

Business Name: _____

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Please send logo's via email to development@vimcmc.org.

Return this page in the enclosed envelope or mail to VIM 423 N. Rt 9, CMCH, NJ 08210

Please make checks payable to: Volunteers in Medicine

To safely pay on line, visit www.vimcmc.org

*Care of the Week: acknowledgment in the Cape May Herald, Gazette and Ocean City Sentinel

It Takes a Community

Early in the year, we got a call from a patient regarding her cousin. She explained this young man had been ill all winter and gone to the ER at least 5 times. Each time, they stabilized him and sent him home. Yet his symptoms kept returning.

Her cousin, Joe is an adult but mentally still a child. His is friendly and personable Joe's parents are hard-working immigrants. He has a large extended family. He is loved very much. He was a happy young man. Until he got sick. And did not get better.

When Dr. Crowley and Dr. Divo Messori, our volunteer gastroenterologist, evaluated Joe they ordered some tests and unfortunately their suspicions were confirmed. Joe had cancer of the esophagus. His mother wailed when we told her. Imagine for a moment a mother's anguish upon hearing this type of news. Everyone at VIM that

day shared her pain.

VIM and our entire extended network pitched in to care for Joe. Volunteer Marie Sluberski translated every nuance of Joe's care to a scared and emotional family. Atlanticare did his initial chemotherapy. Cooper Hospital stabilized his weight loss and implanted a feeding tube. VIM volunteers advocated and made phone calls to medical supply companies and cancer support groups. Medcare Medical Supply supplied a free Joey pump, Lincoln Medical Supplies donated tubing, members of the cancer community donated the specialized food.

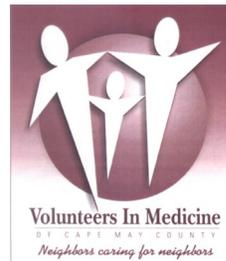
Ultimately Joe became too sick to continue chemotherapy. Journey Hospice provided a free hospice care. The care team of nurses from Journey were exemplary. Dr. Crowley supervised his care plan. We all were involved. The VIM volunteers started each shift with

"how is Joe doing this week?"

Joe's journey recently ended. Again the community stepped in as the First Baptist Church of Wildwood ensured Joe had a proper burial.

Joe touched all of our lives and we can only hope that the VIM community was able to ease his journey and his family's pain.

For a family barely making ends meet, a cancer diagnosis or any major medical condition is debilitating. Joe's family, like all of VIM's patient are good people, doing the best they can to survive. Our patients say, "I do not know what I would do, without VIM."



VIM Thrift Store

Our Thrift Store is entering its second year of operation and continues to do well at 20 S. Main St, Cape May Court House. The store is open from 10AM - 6PM Monday through Saturday and 11AM - 3PM on Sunday. Donations are gratefully accepted during store hours. Merchandise changes daily so stop in often. We are always in need of donations and volunteers. Thank you for your support!



YOUR INVESTMENT IN VIM

All services at VIM are free to patients. We receive no State or Federal funds. We operate solely from donations, grants and the proceeds from our thrift store. We are truly fortunate to have the talents of an extraordinary team of volunteer medical professionals. We are grateful to Cape Regional Medical Center for our rent free building.

Our clinic operates as efficiently as possible. Your generous tax deductible gift will be used to provide high quality health services for your neighbors in need. 100% of your donation will remain right in this county and more than 85% go direct to patient care.

Providing the gift of good health is one of the most profound ways you can help your neighbors in need.

- \$265,000 Annual Operating Costs
- \$500 average cost per patient per year
- \$95 average cost per patient visit
- \$50 price of quarterly in house A1c tests for one patient
- \$7.50/month cost of diabetic blood sugar test strips
- Quality of care... Priceless



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**Mark your calendars for the
Ocean Drive Marathon on
3/20/16**

VIM is a proud beneficiary of
the 17th running of the
marathon on Ocean Drive.



Upstream Care *by Dr. Crowley*

If you were to look at VIM's updated New Patient questionnaire, you would see the usual questions regarding allergies, surgeries, family history. But you would also see some questions you might not expect: "How long have you lived in your home? Do you have a refrigerator? Do you need help with your heat or electric payments?" Wait, what does someone's electric bill have to do with their health?

I heard a TED talk a while ago by Rishi Mancanda, in it he relates this parable. Three friends were walking in the woods and came across a stream that lead to a waterfall. Suddenly they heard the cries of children in the water. The first friend immediately dove in to rescue the children that were rapidly hurtling toward the waterfall, and saved as many as he could. The second friend quickly gathered supplies and began building a raft, to be able to get groups of children out of danger before they approached the waterfall. As they worked frantically to prevent harm to the children, they looked for the third friend and saw her swimming upstream, grabbing whatever children she could on the way. They asked what she was doing, and she answered

"I'm going to find out why the kids are falling in the water!"

Last winter I saw a patient at VIM with bad asthma that wasn't getting better. We gave her a nebulizer (an electric machine that aerosolizes medicine to be inhaled) to take home, and medication and tubing, and specific instructions to use it four times a day. Yet she came in week after week still wheezing. After a month of this, I asked her why she wasn't using her nebulizer. Turns out her electric, heat, and water had been off for 2 months. I was giving her the medication she needed to try to keep her from going over the waterfall, but she couldn't use it. I was not addressing the upstream problem.

In a clinic full of high risk patients, we are not doing the whole job if all we do is order tests and write prescriptions. We have a responsibility to look upstream for the source of the problems. At VIM, we strive to do exactly that. We encourage good food choices. Many volunteers share the bounty of their summer gardens which we display on a table in the waiting room with a sign stating "free vegetables, please take some". We remind patients of the importance of exercise and active life-

style, and try to lead by example. We ask about patient's housing, transportation, and food status, and we have systems in place to help our patients find the tools and resources in our community to improve their situation.

At the National Association of Free Clinics Conference in October, the keynote speaker was Dr Regina Benjamin, the 18th US Surgeon General. Dr Benjamin challenged free clinics to be leaders in the path to healthy communities. She reminded us that health does not happen in the clinic or doctor's office. It happens where we live and study, where we work, play and pray. To address the health of our patients, we must also address the barriers to their health. Barriers like inadequate housing, lack of employment, limited access to food, low literacy, and unsafe neighborhoods. VIM has accepted her challenge.

For more information about how you can help, contact the Clinic at 609-463-2846 or on the web at www.vimcmc.org or even on Facebook.