

Caring Neighbors

Volunteers in Medicine Winter News 2018/19

Patient Care Coordinator

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring; all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

—Leo Buscaglia

Patients that register with VIM receive free quality primary care, specialist care when available and prescription medicine assistance. Perhaps more importantly, VIM becomes their advocate to ensure continuity of care.

Advocate is a powerful word but what does it really mean? As a noun, an advocate is a person who represents another person's interests, like a lawyer. In fact, the word comes from the courtroom: it's from Latin *advocare*, to "add" a "voice." Another word for advocate is champion, which is exactly what our nurses are!

This year we are pioneering a new program called Patient Care Coordinator, thanks to generous funding from the Borgata Hotel, Casino & Spa and the OceanFirst Charitable Foundation.

The concept is simple: a dedicated resource whose sole task is to break down barriers for our patients. Complex cases require lots of follow-up and advocacy and they deserve a dedicated resource. We are very

grateful to Borgata and OceanFirst for understanding this critical need.



We had a patient this year with suspected leukemia. She had an inconclusive bone marrow biopsy yet her white cell counts continued to drop. She was weak and fatigued. VIM's Barbara Harvey, RN called her to explain that doctor really wanted to

admit her to the hospital. And then Barb said something you rarely hear in the compensated care system "what can I do for you to help make this happen?"

It turns out this patient was a single woman with two dogs. Not just dogs, but fur-babies. She feared going to the hospital because she had no one to care for her dogs. Charity care would help with her medical bills but certainly not kenneling fees.

Barbara calmly said "leave it to me. I'll figure that out; let's get you to the hospital." And she did. Barbara is a fierce advocate for our patients.



Another fierce advocate, Helen Macchiavelli, RN, had a patient with 2 grown disabled children. The 3 of them were living in a one room apartment with one bed. They took turns sleeping on the sofa. Helen would not rest until she got **Boscov's** to donate a set of bunk beds. Our patient and her children now sleep easier.

2018 opened with a new patient and a new suspicion of cancer. George was an artist. He lived off-the grid. He did OK; some years better than others. He literally lived hand to mouth. When he sold his creations, he was able to buy things and pay bills. He



hadn't filed a tax return in years.

He was eligible for Medicaid but never applied. He told us "those programs are for people who really need them. I'm OK."

So what to do about George? The advance tests required for his cancer diagnosis could not be scheduled as self-pay; we needed to get him Charity Care. But first we needed to connect him with an accountant who would help him prepare a preliminary financial statement and ultimately a tax return. We needed to help him through the Medicaid Application process, all while managing his symptoms and health issues.

Barbara was George's personal advocate. He stopped by the clinic almost daily with bits of paper, bills of sale, health inquiries, questions, etc. Barbara always made time for him. No matter how busy or hectic her day, she would stop and listen.

Our patients respond very well to what we refer to as our Culture of Caring – as we take a greater interest in their lives; they become a more proactive partner in the management of their health.



VIM: a volunteer powered solution to the health care crisis



Spotlight on Nurses



We have such a wonderful and diverse team of nurses who come from many different backgrounds.

Shown here are just a few of our stars!



Eileen Argoe, RN helps our patients access medicine at the lowest price possible. Through a multitude of programs, we secure almost \$1,000,000 of meds each year. Volunteers like Eileen keep track of it all!

VIM of Atlantic County
3073 English Creek Ave.
Egg Harbor Township
Open Mon and Wed 10-4
Thurs from 10-1
609-867-6384

VIM Cape May County
423 North Route 9
Cape May Court House
Open Mon-Thurs 9-5, Fri 9-1
609-463-2846



Lynn Pancoast, RN has done it all. We rely on her for QA and to keep us organized. We always enjoy when she wears her original nurses uniform from 50+ years ago!



Nancy Juellis, RN is our Energizer Bunny. Someone calls out sick, call Nancy. Have a special project, call Nancy. Closets or supplies need to be organized – nope, Nancy already did that.



Sue Antczak, RN (shown left) works behind the scenes. She spends several months each year in Sedona, but she never stops volunteering for VIM. She researches and finds programs and charities that are disease or case specific. This year was colostomy supplies. Another case involved a feeding tube. Sue found a national network of caregivers who shared/exchanged excess supplies.

RECYCLE YOUR GENTLY USED CLOTHING AND HOUSEWARES AND GIVE THE GIFT OF HEALTH!

VIM operates two thrift stores to support clinic operations. Your tax deductible donations provide care for our neighbors in need. Our Cape May County store is a popular destination for thrifters. Our Atlantic County store is now accepting donations and will officially open on December 8. We rely on the success of these stores for almost one third of all clinic expenses.

The VIM Thrift stores are open Monday thru Saturday from 10AM–6PM and Sundays from 11AM-3PM. Donations are gratefully accepted during store hours.

20 S. Main St, Cape May Court House, NJ 609-465-3680

6825 Tilton Road, EHT (in Produce Junction Plaza) 609-277-7075

DONATE * SHOP * VOLUNTEER

Pickles by Brian Crane



Many years ago, VIM started a Partnership of Caring with area churches and charitable organizations.

Our many partners now span both counties. The organizations listed below support us financially, refer patients to us and are our best source of volunteers. We are so thankful for their support. They are all shining examples of **Neighbors Caring for Neighbors!**

AARP # 710 - Sea Isle City
Anglesea Fire Company No. 1
Atlanticare
Avalon Lions Club Charities Foundation
Bethel Commandment Church of the Living, Whitesboro
Cape May County Emerald Society
Cape May Lutheran Church
Cape May Point Civic Club
Cape Regional Medical Center
Cape Trinity Catholic, No. Wildwood
Central United Methodist, Linwood
Church of the Advent, Cape May
Cold Spring Presbyterian
Dennisville United Methodist
First Presbyterian Church of Cape May
Historic Townbank Inc. / Cape May Beach POA
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Villas
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Egg Harbor Twp.
IMPACT Club of Cape May County
Knights of Columbus #3546, Erma
Knights of Columbus Council #12184, Cape May Ct Hs
North Wildwood Flea Market Committee
Red Hat Cherry Tarts, Cape May County
Sons of the American Legion Post #331, Stone Harbor
South Seaville United Methodist Women
St. Brendan The Navigator Parish, Avalon
St. Peter's By The Sea, Cape May Point
Stone Harbor Lions Charities, Inc.
VFW Absecon Memorial Post 9462 Auxiliary
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 602, No. Cape May
Wells Memorial Presbyterian Church, Avalon
Wildwoods Chapter of AARP

Keep our community healthy, invest in VIM.

VIM was organized as a 501c(3) in 2001. The VIM clinics are the only free clinics in South Jersey.

VIM patients earn too much for Medicaid but not enough to afford the high cost of premiums, co-pays and deductibles.

VIM receives no State or Federal funds, but relies on a generous community to provide care at two clinics.

NEIGHBORS CARING FOR NEIGHBORS.

**Save the Date
September 19, 2019
The Flanders, OC
for
VIM's Annual
Thanksgiving**

This CMC tradition now includes Atlantic County. Our Annual Thanksgiving celebrates VIM's Culture of Caring.



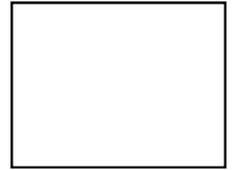
*2018 presenting sponsor the
AVALON LIONS*

Dr. Crowley, Jackie Meiluta, Mary Tighe,
Lion Mike Matt, Marty Kindsvatter and
Volunteer of the Year Suzi Gallagher.



2018 Doctor of the Year John Middleton,
MD and Community Partner, Bill
Weisberg, MD are flanked by Congressman
Van Drew and Assemblyman Andrzejczak

**Sponsors are needed for our
2019 celebration. Contact
Jackie Meiluta at 609-463-2846
or www.vimsj.org**



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Carolyn Peterson

Right At Home

Matthew Piskun, PharmD, MBA

Shore Medical Center

Lorraine Thayer, RN, MSN, APN

Atlanticare

Mary Tighe,

CMC Dept of Health

www.vimsj.org

Dear Friend,

As we look forward to a New Year, we often count our blessings. VIM is so blessed to have a wonderful team of volunteers, supporters and partners in caring. We are also thankful for new Trustees Dan Nugent, Sue Adams, Meghan Fortmann, and Trina McSorley, shown here flanked by incoming Board Chair Carol Harris on the left and immediate past Chair, Mary Tighe, on the right.



Our Cape May County Clinic will soon celebrate its' 18th Anniversary; our Atlantic County clinic its' 2nd. Today almost 700 people consider the VIM clinics their primary care doctor and medical home.

VIM patients tend to work long hours for little pay, many of them supporting young children as well as multi-generational families with aging parents. Food and shelter take priority to the expense of health. Without access to the care provided at VIM, they would do without life-saving medicine and crucial care.

This holiday season, please consider the gift of health to your neighbors in need. Your gift to VIM will remain local in your home community and ensure our patients receive the care they need in a safe, warm and nurturing environment. Together we are neighbors caring for neighbors! Thank you!

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Meiluta
Executive Director