

# COMMUNITY FOCUS

NEWSLETTER OF VISITING NURSE SERVICE & HOSPICE OF SUFFOLK, INC.



VISITING NURSE SERVICE &  
HOSPICE OF SUFFOLK, INC.



## JOSEPH RECCHIA ~ OUR HIGH FLYING FLAG

by Barbara Colatosti



Pictured with Joseph Recchia (right) is his twin brother Peter, also an Eagle Scout with Troop 52.

Thanks to an extraordinary young man, the Hospice House proudly displays a newly erected flagpole, flying the American flag amidst the beautiful landscaping of the Memorial Garden. How the flag came to be is the work and

dedication of the remarkable 2017 Northport High School graduate and Eagle Scout, Joseph Recchia.

Joseph's scouting career began at the age of 5. A member of Troop 52, he has earned 29 Merit Badges,

all culminating in achieving the high honor of Eagle Scout in May of 2017.

Joseph's Eagle Project was the installation of a 20-foot flagpole at the Hospice House, located at 101 Laurel Road in East Northport. His inspiration for the project came from long-time family friend Bob Cogliati, now President of VNSHS Board of Trustees, who aspired to see this vision come to fruition.

The specific idea to fundraise for the project came to him when he saw a neighbor cutting down trees on his property. Joseph politely asked the gentleman if he would donate some of the wood, deciding he could sell firewood in bundles to raise money for the flag. The fundraiser turned into a huge endeavor in and of itself. The uncut trees were deposited on the Recchia's front lawn where they sat for quite some time. Joseph and his family then cut each and every tree, split them, and ultimately

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERYDAY

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## 13th Annual Golf Classic

by Barbara Colatosti

The 13th annual Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk's Golf Classic was held on Monday, August 7, 2017, at Indian Hills Country Club. All attendees enjoyed a fabulous round of golf, dinner, and raffles, despite the rain. Eighty-one golfers participated, and all major sponsorships were sold. At this year's event, Robert Cogliati, Board President of VNSHS was named Outstanding Community Service Honoree.

Robert P. Cogliati, CPA, partner of Caminiti & Cogliati, is an accomplished accounting professional with 30 years of expertise in managing accounting and consulting services for a diverse group of clients in a variety of industries, as well as tax and succession planning for businesses and individuals.

In addition to his successful career, Bob is a member of both the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants (NYSSCPA). The Association has recognized his expertise in review and compilation, accounting and auditing issues and he has lectured on these topics as well. Additionally, his involvement with various charitable organizations and community groups is remarkable.

Bob has served as the Board President for the second time now and also previously as Treasurer of VNSHS. He has chaired numerous committees, raising funds and awareness for the organization, and has dedicated countless hours serving this great organization. Good sport that he is, Bob has even modeled at the annual fashion show many times.

An original member of the East Northport Chamber of Commerce, serving as Treasurer and Vice President, Bob also served on the Northport-East Northport School District's Audit Committee. As if all of that didn't fill his schedule to the brim, he also manages to volunteer by coaching his children in various sports such as soccer, basketball, softball, and baseball.

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Pictured from left are VNSHS CEO Linda Taylor, Robert Cogliati, Golf Classic Honoree and VNSHS Board President and Ronald J. Duswalt, VNSHS Board Member



## HEART to HEART

From our hearts to yours,  
Linda Taylor, MA, BSN, RN  
Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friend,

As we approach the end of another year, it is one that marked a milestone anniversary for VNSHS - 65 years providing home health care in our community. In 65 years we grew from one single nurse in 1952 to over 225 employees today, representing multiple professional disciplines and related support staff - all focused from their respective positions on our mission to provide the highest quality of health care to people in their homes and the community as a whole. Through that growth our caring staff have consistently defined us, and despite inevitable and predictable turnover through the years, we are keenly aware and appreciative of the special commitment from long term employees who have weathered the challenge of an ever changing health care system in the interest of promoting health and well-being of those who face health care crises and personal loss. In this issue we present one example of such change highlighting Mary Ellen Hornik who retired from multiple and varied roles at VNSHS over a span of more than 20 years. As we honor Mary Ellen's long career and dedication to the mission of VNSHS, we welcome Beth Rosenfeld to fill her shoes to carry on the tradition of quality care in the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Department. This year we also recognize and honor two long time employees who between them have served the agency a combined 37 years. From their supportive positions of Chief Finance Officer, Steven Moller retires after 20 years, and Office Manager and Event Planner, Barbara Sorelle is relocating after 17 years. I along with all at VNSHS acknowledge and thank both for their respective commitment and unique contributions to the growth and stability of VNSHS over their tenure, whether behind the scenes where Steven managed all aspects of financial operations, or interacting with the community where you might have met Barbara when attending events she orchestrated with skill and ease. We anticipate our own loss of their everyday presence and participation even as we wish them well in their new adventures - we will surely miss them. As we begin a new year, may our VNSHS family welcome "newbies" to fill the void of those who move on, just as we have done for 65 years, and may we learn from each other - the old and the new. The thread we trust will remain constant is the caring commitment of all who work here, for however long and in whatever role, with empathy and understanding reflected in our daily work - and always in service to our mission. ❤️



# Welcome Beth Rosenfeld!

## Director of Performance Improvement and Education

VNSHS welcomes Beth Rosenfeld to her new position as Director of Performance Improvement and Education. Beth, a Setauket resident, is married with three grown children, and joins the team at VNSHS with extensive credentials. Previously, as RN Case Manager with Gurwin Jewish Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Beth was responsible for clinical oversight and care management of critically ill members enrolled in Aetna's Managed Long Term Care Program, including comprehensive Medicaid work as well. Coordination of care included nursing, home health aides, personal emergency response systems, day care programs, transportation and more. In addition, she worked with hospitals, sub-acute rehabilitation nursing care facilities, respite, certified home health agencies, and hospice to provide care as per members' needs. This position, born out of a contractual agreement with Aetna, expired after 3 ½ years, and Beth had many opportunities both within and out of Gurwin and Aetna. With all of her options, she chose VNSHS to fulfill her first love and passion in the field of home care.



Beth began her career after graduating college, an RN at Southside Hospital as Staff Nurse. Southside Hospital's Home Health Care Agency was growing, and within a few years Beth took on a new role as Community Health Nurse in the field where she enjoyed working with families and patients, and coordinating staff with a caseload between 25-30 patients. Duties included assessing and managing disease entities, education, coordination of care including all involved disciplines, and supervision of paraprofessional staff in the home until she was promoted in 1988 to Health Nurse Supervisor and was responsible for promoting clinical integrity and quality of care for Long Term Home Health Care Program patients. Beth remained working in this position for Southside Hospital Home Care until 1992 when she was hired at St. Charles Hospital and Rehabilitation Center LTHHCP. As Home Care Administrator/Director of Patient Services, she was responsible for management of their home health care agency including development of and compliance with policies and procedures, compliance with accrediting body standards of care, human resources management, fiscal management performance improvement and marketing. Direct oversight of community health nurse supervisor and 5 full-time community health nurses, as well as dozens of fee-for-service staff. In addition, Beth chaired Long Island-based LTHHCP Directors' Forum St. Charles Hospital department head responsibilities until 2001.

After taking a hiatus to raise and enjoy her children, Beth resumed work in home care. When asked why home care is her passion, Beth explains that she believes in cost-effective alternatives for long-term nursing care, and what better place as we age than to be at home with loved ones around us. Working in home care provides the medical professionalism and care needed in a safe and nourishing environment and equates to an all-encompassing and most effective health care plan for loved ones.

In her spare time, Beth enjoys her waterfront community and relishes time at the beach even in the off-season, where she relaxes, takes in the beauty of the landscape, and finds time for reflection.

VNSHS optimistically looks forward to working with Beth Rosenfeld, an accomplished and seasoned professional aboard as their new Director of Performance Improvement and Education. ❤️



# JOSEPH RECCHIA ~ OUR HIGH FLYING FLAG

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ties them into bundles. The fruits of his labor raised approximately \$1,000 that enabled him to purchase the flagpole.

It was erected at the Hospice House where it proudly stands and is illuminated 24 hours a day. There was a ceremony to celebrate this momentous occasion at the Hospice House on June 1, 2017.

Joseph is studying at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Isenberg School of Business, where he will continue to serve others in the community. Joseph will actively participate helping in Troop 52 as an Adult Leader when he returns from school breaks. ❤️

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Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk is pleased to announce that recent Northport High School graduates, Emily Briggs and Brianna Boccia, have been selected as the 2017 recipients of the Helen Strobl Memorial Scholarship Award.

Both young ladies began college this fall and are majoring in nursing.

Emily is attending The Marion Peckham Egan School of Nursing at Fairfield University in Fairfield, CT. Her goal is to go on to graduate school and pursue a career as a Nurse Practitioner in the field of pediatric oncology/hematology.

Brianna is attending the Decker School of Nursing at Binghamton University and would like to pursue a career as a Nurse Practitioner in the field of oncology/hematology.

Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk awards two students each year, who have demonstrated academic achievement and are pursuing careers in the field of nursing. These scholarships are awarded in honor and memory of Helen Strobl, the first Executive Director of Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk, who was a Baccalaureate and Masters nursing graduate herself and proponent of higher education for nurses.

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## 13th Annual Golf Classic

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He earned his Bachelor of Business Administration degree in accounting from Pace University. In addition to being a licensed Certified Public Accountant in both New York and Florida, he holds a New York State life and health insurance license.

Bob has been a resident of Northport and East Northport for over 45 years and enjoys spending time with his wife Sloane and his four children. When asked what has been his inspiration to volunteer and give of his time as much as he does, Bob shared that he grew up and went to school in the community of Northport, and that it has always been a wonderful place to live. He even met his wife while volunteering at the Northport Rotary Club, so that when it came time to raise a family he and his wife actually began volunteering more. They wanted to share their family values with their children by example and teach them that giving back is an important life tenet.

With his full resume and extensive volunteer work, Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk is happy to acknowledge Bob's exemplary continued and dedicated service to the organization. It is an honor well deserved. ❤️

# Mary Ellen Hornik – The Evolution of a Career

by Barbara Colatosti



Long-time employee Mary Ellen Hornik retires after a long and multifaceted career at VNS & Hospice of Suffolk. Mary Ellen began her nursing career in 1984 and joined the VNSHS team in 1994 as a field nurse. Working with home health aides, families, and patients in their homes, she nursed them back to health.

She did this for many years until 2002 when she became a Home Health Aide Supervisor and had approximately 30-35 aides in her charge. In this role, she learned a great deal about management, among many other responsibilities. “This was a wonderful time,” Mary Ellen recollects. She enjoyed getting to know the aides, making sure they were fulfilling their responsibilities, and also coordinating the aides duties with patients and their specific needs. Other aspects of her job included scheduling and educating the aides, as well as learning the intricacies of Medicare, Medicaid, and insurance coverage within the industry. In doing so, she familiarized herself with the varied aspects of the field. She also enjoyed traveling to every area the agency serviced and says this position offered her the opportunity to guide people to get the specific help that they needed.

“The greatest part of this job,” Mary Ellen says, “was learning from her patients.” By tending to their needs, watching them struggle with serious medical conditions without complaint, and living with dignity, Mary Ellen learned about handling adversity with grace from the many wonderful patients with whom she worked. Serving as liaison between aides and patients helped her fine-tune her skills to accurately assess, treat, and oversee the medical care of her patients with acuity, and later led to her next position at VNSNS.

Mary Ellen left the company for a brief period in 2007 but returned in 2008 when a position for Performance Improvement & Education Coordinator became available. Her role in this position was to review an industry standard OASIS Medicare-required assessment questionnaire that is given to patients by clinicians in the field. As Performance Improvement & Education Coordinator, Mary Ellen reviewed clinicians’ assessments, making sure that each question was answered internally and accurately. This process can be very complicated and requires critical scrutiny of each case.

In 2013, Mary Ellen became Director of Performance Improvement & Education, where she worked diligently until her recent retirement this past June of 2017. Both of her previous positions, as Home Health Aide Supervisor and Performance Improvement & Education Coordinator, taught her the skills that enabled her to intensely and accurately review data with a well-rounded understanding of the field. Mary Ellen created intricate analysis spreadsheets and presentations of all the assessments to be analyzed and reviewed consistently. In this way the department was able to gauge areas in the field so that the quality of healthcare VNSHS provided not only surpassed standards, but ultimately exceeded expectations for the best possible in the industry.

In looking back, Mary Ellen is amazed at how much she has learned and hopes others have learned with her. She so believes in the mission of VNSHS, in making people’s lives better. Mary Ellen says, “it all begins with the fairly basic things: nursing and caring for patients.” Her job was to assess the intricacies of that care and in so doing, allowed VNSNS to consistently and critically improve the welfare of their patients.

Mary Ellen has thoroughly enjoyed her many years at VNSHS. Her diligent work proved her to be an essential asset to the organization and she will be greatly missed by all! ❤️



# PUTTING PAWS TO THE CAUSE

by Barbara Colatosti



Lauren's award winning costume dressed as an iPhone and her family of apps

Lauren Lavoie, a junior at Northport High School, hopes to work with children with special needs when she graduates college. Lauren is a talented girl with a very big heart, and has a very big plan to go along with it. An animal lover, Lauren and her family who have three golden retrievers quite naturally became part of that plan.

When one of her three dogs died, Lauren first learned about hospice. She contemplated the brevity of loss as she mourned the passing of one of her beloved dogs. As the Hospice House was being built, Lauren often saw the Hospice House sign in passing as the house underwent construction. She knew then that she wanted to get her dogs involved somehow. As time passed, her family adopted another golden retriever, and once again, the family owned three happy dogs.

Subsequently, Lauren's grandmother was admitted to the Hospice House. Lauren was impressed at how wonderful it was at the house and how well the nurses treated her grandmother; she felt the inclination to give back.

The following year her grandfather was treated by VNSHS for an illness, and Lauren was greatly comforted by the care given to him as VNSHS nursed him back to health, that she

again felt the impetus to get involved. Lauren says that VNSHS and the staff at Hospice House were amazing!

At the young age of 13, when Lauren heard about Paws for a Cause, she knew that she might have found a way to give back and to do so with her Goldens! The first year, she decided to raise money and donate to VNSHS, by collecting funds at family events. She raised enough to join the costume contest. She put a lot of thought and time into creating a costume that would be unique as well as a contender for "best costume." Part of the ingenuity of her costumes is the planning and getting the whole family involved in the process. The costume was entitled Tic Tac Paws and won the contest!

Lauren was intent on planning for the next year's Paws for a Cause. She set a goal to raise \$500 by going door-to-door to fundraise and ended up collecting \$700. She won first place again, dressed up as an iPhone, and her dogs and family were apps. The following year, she set another goal to raise \$1,000 and she managed to fundraise \$1,400.

This year, Lauren's creativity has even topped her previous year's costumes. She had the goal of raising a record-breaking amount of \$1,700, and well surpassed that by raising a total of \$3,500. Lauren was the Cat in the Hat from Seussical the Musical. Along with Lauren in costume, dressed up with her were the characters from the play, "Things I-9," four of who were dogs, and the rest family members.

This year's Paws for a Cause turned out another great success! Lauren won the costume contest, and then everyone enjoyed the walk down to Northport Village Park. Despite inclement weather, it was a fun-filled event for the whole family to raise money for Hospice House.



Lauren and her beloved golden retriever dressed as Scarecrows

As Lauren continues to raise the bar and generate funds for VNSHS, she does so inspired by her love of family, pets, and the wonderful care her family has experienced at Visiting Nurse Service & Hospice of Suffolk. ❤️



**Visiting Nurse Service &  
Hospice of Suffolk, Inc.**

Linda Taylor, MA, BSN, RN  
Chief Executive Officer

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **A Taste of Long Island – Food, Wine and Beer Tasting**

Thursday, April 19, 2018 – The Larkfield, East Northport - 6:30 pm-10:00 pm

## **18th Annual Mother's Day 5K Race/Walk & Kids Fun Run – Run for the Health of It**

Saturday, May 12, 2018 – 505 Main Street, Northport  
8:30 am Kids Fun Run, 9:00 am Race

## **14th Annual Golf Classic**

Monday, August 6, 2018 - Indian Hills Country Club, Northport – 12:00 pm Shotgun Start

## **Paws for a Cause Halloween Charity Dog Walk & Costume Contest**

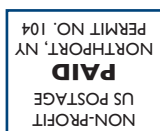
Sunday, October 28, 2018 – Walk begins at 12:00 pm - 505 Main Street, Northport

For more information please call 631.261.7200  
Visit us online at [visitingnurseservice.org](http://visitingnurseservice.org)



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