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# The Acorn

A Publication of The Valley Hospital Auxiliary



## The No-Sew Sewing Circle—Wrapping a Young Patient in Love

In early 2024, dozens of Auxiliary members came together to make over 100 no-sew fleece blankets for pediatric inpatients at The Valley Hospital. Initiated by the Franklin Lakes Branch under the direction of co-chair Barbara Mills, the No-Sew Sewing Circle was joined by the Allendale, Midland Park/Wyckoff, Ramsey, Ridgewood, and Waldwick branches. As a housewarming gift, blankets were first donated on the hospital's April 14 "Transition Day" as an expression of the Auxiliary's mission to serve the community. For more information, visit [www.valleyhealth.com/auxiliary](http://www.valleyhealth.com/auxiliary).







Donna Mainardi Singer

### Meet Donna Mainardi Singer—New Auxiliary President

Introducing our new Auxiliary President, Donna Mainardi Singer. Donna joined the Auxiliary in 2016 after being employed by Ramapo College of New Jersey for 46 years. There she served as Director of Administrative Computing and Director of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity. She developed an Emergency Preparedness Plan which was activated during COVID.

In 2018, Donna was the force behind starting Connections—a non-sectarian retired woman's group. *Connections* members number 225 and offer 18 varied activities. She has served as President of the Ramapo College Professional Staff Association and on the Board of Education in Fair Lawn; she currently serves on the Executive Board of the Ramapo College Retirees and is Past President on the Executive Board of *Connections*. Her prior positions on the Valley Hospital Auxiliary included co-treasurer and Administrative Vice President.

According to Donna, "It is an honor to follow in the shoes of the many past presidents of The Valley Hospital Auxiliary. I joined the Auxiliary in 2016, just one month after retiring, to work on rejuvenating the Fair Lawn branch and as Co-Treasurer on the Auxiliary's Central Board. It is such a rewarding experience to work with all members on the many activities and fundraisers sponsored by the Auxiliary. I am especially excited about our new hospital and all the volunteer opportunities available. Looking forward to meeting you all."

### Congratulations To The 2024 VHA Scholarship Winners



Scholarship Winners with Committee:  
Pam DeFeo, Carol Gillespie, Sharon Meyer, Barbara Mills, Alice Petkus, Jeannie Safina, Janet Shapiro, Gabrielle Winnert

Fulfilling our mission to serve the community, the Auxiliary offers \$25,000 each year in scholarships. Carol Gillespie, Chair, Gabrielle Winnert, Co-Chair and a committee of six Auxiliary members selected 22 students out of 37 applicants, all of whom are pursuing careers in healthcare.

Ten students each received \$1,500; 8 each received \$1,000 and 4 each received \$500 in scholarships. High schools represented were Glen Rock, Indian Hills, Northern Highlands, Paramus, Pascack Hills, Ramapo, Ridgewood and River Dell. Re-apply students who successfully completed their first year of college also received scholarships. In June, a reception was held at Valley's Ridgewood Campus to honor the winners.



### The Annual Auxiliary Luncheon

On June 20, 2024, more than 100 members of The Valley Hospital Auxiliary gathered at the Indian Trail Club in Franklin Lakes for VHA's annual luncheon. Following a lively cocktail hour, guests heard from Dr. Robert Brenner, System President and Chief Executive Officer, Valley Health System, Theresa Salameno, Auxiliary President (2022-2024), and Mary Calvi, anchor of INSIDE EDITION WEEK-END and the Morning and Noon News Anchor on WCBS-TV in New York. Ms. Calvi is also an author and spoke about her book, "If a Poem Could Live and Breathe: A Novel of Teddy Roosevelt's First Love."



### New Officers Installed



At the luncheon, Lesley Dinallo, Nominating Chair, installed the following officers for the 2024-2026 term:

First row, l to r: Ann Swist, Co-VP, Membership, Kathy Ambrose, Administrative VP (one-year term), Charlotte Byrne, Member-at-Large, Donna Singer, President (one-year term), and Nancy Weiss, Co-Treasurer.

Second row, l to r: Geisa Flynn, Corresponding Secretary, Elaine Heimberger, Co-VP Ways & Means.

Third row, l to r: Theresa Salameno, Co-VP, Membership, Carol Gillespie, Co-VP, Ways & Means, Lisa Beslity, Recording Secretary, Lesley Dinallo, Kathy Acocella, VP, Volunteer Services.

### Keep up with the VHA on Social Media

The VHA is on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Just do a search for "The Valley Hospital Auxiliary" on each platform. Be sure to "Like" us! Remember to email Linda Leeder, Internet Chair, at leederlj@gmail.com with information about your branch events. She will be happy to post it. Finally, for everything you ever wanted to know about the Auxiliary, visit [www.valleyhealth.com/auxiliary](http://www.valleyhealth.com/auxiliary)



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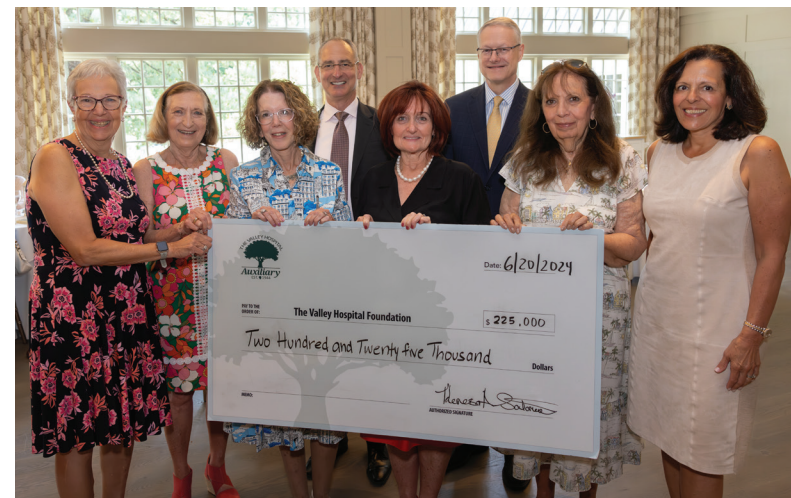
## The VHA Pledge



Since 2019, the VHA has been working towards completing its \$3 million pledge to establish the Pediatric Section of Valley's Emergency Department and \$100,000 pledge to Valley Home Care's *Butterflies*. We are nearly there with just a little over \$500,000 to go.

At the annual luncheon on June 20, VHA donated \$225,000 to The Valley Hospital Foundation in support of our pledge.

*Pictured left to right: Nancy Weiss and Bette Moore, Co-Treasurers, Elaine Heimberger, Co-VP Ways & Means, Dr. Robert Brenner, System President and CEO, Valley Health System, Theresa Salameno, Auxiliary President (2022-2024), David Bohan, VP and Chief Development Officer, The Valley Hospital Foundation, Carol Gillespie, Co-VP Ways & Means, Sandy Carapezza, Executive Director, Development, The Valley Hospital Foundation.*



## Coming Soon



**The 45th Annual Paramus Run**  
Sunday, October 20, 2024

**The 76th Annual Valley Ball**  
Saturday, November 2, 2024

**PARTY ON THE PIER**



**The Tree of Light Illumination Ceremony**  
Sunday, December 8, 2024

**Happy Hour Get-Togethers**



Visit the VHA website for locations and registration: [www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary](http://www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary)

## Introducing a Refreshed VHA Logo...

The “refreshed” Valley Hospital Auxiliary logo was developed to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the Auxiliary. The design maintains the integrity of the logo created in 2016 and the original logo developed in 1964. It gives the Auxiliary a contemporary feel and an impression of a lively and welcoming organization as reflected in the “friendly” uneven line and the “vha” within the tree. A tagline that succinctly defines our mission and incorporates our acorns has been added. The “vha” abbreviation in the tree is also in line with current corporate designs which identify themselves with abbreviations. The image continues to reflect VHA’s heritage as a solid, strong, long-standing organization.



## And a New VHA Program: *Friends of VHA*

Following many discussions at Executive and Central Board meetings, the Executive Board of The Valley Hospital Auxiliary is excited to introduce *Friends of VHA*.

*Friends* represents general membership in the Auxiliary with no particular branch affiliation. It will offer members of the community a way to support and participate in the VHA without belonging to a particular branch. Today, many people are busy with careers and raising families making attending monthly meetings difficult. Joining *Friends* is a way for members to remain informed of the various activities and important works of VHA.

Anyone in the community is welcome to join by paying the \$20 annual dues; there are no specific requirements other than to participate, as desired, in Auxiliary-sponsored events, town branch meetings, or volunteering at Valley. Membership can be obtained by completing an on-line or paper form. While not a member of a branch, members of *Friends* are welcome, at any time, to join a branch if they want, or participate in Central Board events.

*Friends of VHA* will be headed by Co-VP’s Membership, Theresa Salameno and Ann Swist. For more information or details, contact Ann at [swistann@yahoo.com](mailto:swistann@yahoo.com) or Theresa at [tsalameno@gmail.com](mailto:tsalameno@gmail.com)

## *The Valley Hospital Auxiliary Pledge*

Proceeds from all Auxiliary events support their current pledge to raise \$3 million to establish the Pediatric Section of the Emergency Department at The Valley Hospital in Paramus, and \$100,000 for Valley Home Care’s endowment for *Butterflies*, a pediatric in-home palliative and hospice care program for seriously ill children. The Auxiliary may provide additional financial support to other Auxiliary and Valley Health System initiatives.





### Third Annual VHA Vegas Night Fundraiser

On May 1, 2024 at Seasons, guests of VHA enjoyed games of chance including Blackjack, Craps, Roulette, Poker, Texas Hold ‘Em, and Money Wheel. Passed hors d’oeuvres, an amazing dinner and dessert buffet, and a 4-hour open bar were highlights of the evening. There were great tricky tray and silent auction prizes that ranged from Lucchese cowboy boots to a diamond necklace and bracelet to a tour of CBS Studios with Chris Wragge. A 50/50 added to the money raised to benefit the VHA’s \$3.1 million pledge. Many thanks to the Vegas Night committee for making the evening a success.



*Seated left to right: Karen Hoy, Co-Chairs Elaine Heimberger and Carol Gillespie, Nancy Weiss, and Bonnie Dalal.*  
*Standing left to right: Lisa Beslity, Margaret Scancarello, Diana Frankel-Hughes, Barbara Mills, Denise Downey, Dana Van Voorhis, Gerry Pehush, Charlotte Byrne, Kathy Ambrose, and Bette Moore.*  
*Missing from photo: Joe Lorino, Theresa Salameno, and Alexis Warmasley.*

**Thank you to our generous sponsors:**  
**Presenting:** FMG  
**Hospitality:** Family of Caring Healthcare System; Heritage WBE, Inc.  
**Lucky Dice:** Allendale Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center, Batska Consulting Group, Sandy & Angelo Carapezza, Oakland Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center, Jeff & Samantha Seidler  
**Bellagio:** Armistead Mechanical, Inc., Concord Healthcare

### The 51st Annual Golf Outing

On June 3, 2024, 145 golfers enjoyed a beautiful day of golf at the Ridgewood Country Club. The day included prizes for a putting contest, closest to the hole at different tees, longest drive at different tees, pink ball and 5th place to 1st place winners. A 50/50, fabulous silent auction prizes and the generosity of all the golfers supported the Auxiliary’s \$3.1 million pledge. Thank you to our sponsors, donors and golfers for their generous support and for making this day a resounding success.



Thank you also to our volunteers: Co-chairs Elaine Heimberger, Margaret Scancarello, and Theresa Salameno, and Kathy Ambrose, Lisa Beslity, Bonnie Dalal, Sandy Carapezza, Diana Frankel-Hughes, Carol Gillespie, Karen Hoy, Joe Lorino—Golf Outing Chair, Bette Moore, Mary Seminara, Ann Swist, and Nancy Weiss.

**Golf Outing Sponsors:**  
**Presenting:** Torcon, Inc.  
**Diamond:** Cushman & Wakefield  
**Platinum:** Armistead Mechanical, Inc., FMG General Contracting Co., Valley Emergency Room Associates  
**Gold:** Batska Consulting Group, Concord Healthcare Group  
**Silver:** Fromkin Brothers, Inc., R4.Architects, LLC  
**Tee Signs:** dancker, F&G Mechanical Corp./Meadowlands Fire Protection, HDR Architects & Engineers, Inserra Supermarkets, Inc., Interstate Drywall Corp., Lapatka Associates, Inc., Mercedes-Benz of Paramus, NJM Insurance Group, RSC Architects, Sal Electric Co., Inc., Denis Salamone, Schneider Electric, Scholes Electric & Communications Corp., Jeff and Samantha Seidler, State Line Construction Co.



**BRANCH HAPPENINGS**

**From Foods from Around the World to Pocketbook Bingo—Branches Had a Great Time This Past Year**

From late winter through the spring, branches had a fun season of get-togethers to enjoy friends or raise funds towards VHA's pledge.

**The Allendale Branch** held several happy hours and a Spring Social at Pinstripes in the Garden State Plaza. Guests enjoyed bocce, drinks, lite bites, and desserts.

**The Employee Branch** held their annual Flag Day fundraiser.

**Franklin Lakes Branch** held their third annual pocketbook bingo fundraiser; more than 100 people attended.

**The Midland Park/Wyckoff Branch** decided to go around the world for their annual luncheon. Members prepared food from different countries—Greek salads, Italian pastas, French Coq au Vin, a variety of cheeses, and Shrimp Provençal.

**The Oakland Branch's** annual fundraising event was Queen's Tea at SocieTea in Wayne where lovely teas, sandwiches and sweets were on the menu.

**The Ramsey Branch** held a Saint Patrick's Day Party at Brady's by the Station which always does a great job.

**The Ridgewood Branch** held their end of the year luncheon at the Ho-Ho-Kus Inn.

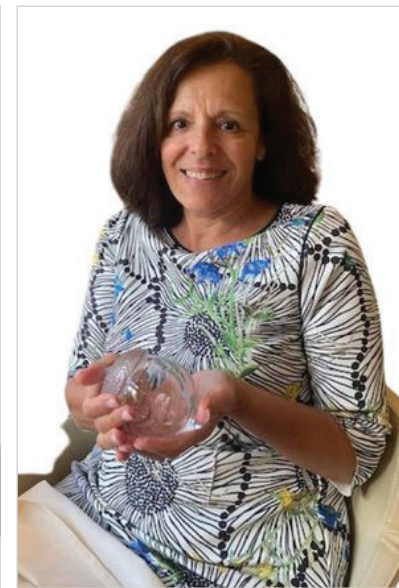
**The Saddle River Branch** held their annual luncheon at the Tuxedo Club with Sarah Wragge of Sarah Wragge Wellness as guest speaker.

**The Waldwick Branch** hosted a painting party for all aspiring artists.



**The Acorn Award**

Introduced in 2020 under the leadership of then Auxiliary President, Denise Downey, the Acorn Award was created to recognize former or current Branch Chair/Co-Chairs for their 7+ years of service. This year, Acorn awards were given to Pam DeFeo and Jeannie Safina, Mahwah Branch Chairs and Cathy Stanczuk, Ramsey Branch Chair. A posthumous award was given to the family of Ruth Barton, Ramsey Branch Co-Chair who passed away earlier this year.



Left to right: Cathy Stanczuk, Pam DeFeo, Jeannie Safina



We sadly acknowledge the passing of these Auxiliary members. We are grateful to have had their friendship and we will remember the service they gave to Valley. Our apologies if we inadvertently omitted someone who passed away recently.

*Ruth Barton  
Ramsey Branch Co-Chair  
Joann Leonard  
Member, Waldwick Branch*

Special Acorn Awards were given to Sandy Carapezza, Executive Director, Development at The Valley Hospital Foundation and Joseph Lorino, Vice President Facilities, Valley Health System. Sandy has been there for the Auxiliary through thick and thin—leading and guiding us with enthusiasm, great ideas, and unwavering support. Joe Lorino has been instrumental in making the Auxiliary's fundraising events so successful by securing sponsors, encouraging attendance, and getting us amazing silent auction items—always with a smile and words of encouragement. Thank you to all the awardees for your generous and loyal service to VHA!

*Correction to 2023-2024 annual report:  
VHA thanks the Saddle River Branch for their generous donation of \$27,000.*





Reverend Mason Jenkins

## The Editors recently spoke with Reverend Mason Jenkins, BCC-Supervisor of Spiritual Care at The Valley Hospital.

*We thank him for his time and insights into this important service.*

### How many people are in your department and what are their functions?

The Spiritual Care Department has two Board Certified Interfaith Chaplains to address the needs of all patients, families, and staff, regardless of their background or religious identity. We have two Roman Catholic Priest Chaplains and a Rabbi. For other specific religious or cultural needs, we have numerous contacts in the community. Lastly, as we are a 24/7 operation, we have nine per diem chaplains to cover our on-call duties overnight and on the weekends.

### Before we discuss the various services your department provides, how have resources dedicated to this area developed over the past few decades within The Valley Hospital?

In the 14 years that I have been at Valley we have benefited greatly from the support of the Marron family. We use those funds to help support the work of our department, specifically around ongoing education for our team and for education and support to the staff. We also receive steady though modest support from local religious communities as well as individual donors. One of the very best things about working at Valley is the small family-like community. We are connected to leaders at all levels of the organization and through these relationships have system-wide impact on the culture, mission, and values of our institution.

### How do patients and families avail themselves of your services?

Patients and families may connect with us by making a verbal request to a member of their care team, by calling our office and requesting a visit, or through the regular rounding of chaplains to critical areas and patients on the Palliative Care service. We have staff in the hospital 7 days a week and chaplains and priests are on call overnight for urgent needs.

### Would you discuss non-religious as well as religious-based services provided by your team?

We begin with the premise that all humans have an innate spiritual capacity. This manifests itself in our need to make sense and draw meaning from our experiences; we tell stories. Also, we need to be in relationship with other people, with a sense of community, or with the transcendent. Lastly, we all seek joy and relief from suffering. Spiritual Care interventions aim to address these key areas: meaning, making connection, and relieving suffering. For most people, having a visit with a calm, kind, receptive person is automatically therapeutic in that it helps them to feel seen, heard, and valued. Through reflective listening we help people to identify key areas of strength and connection as well as salient themes and guideposts in their personal narrative. We provide communion, anointing, and other sacraments to our Catholic population as well as daily Mass. For our observant Jewish population, we provide kosher food selections and two bikur cholim rooms for prayer, literature, and kosher foods. We work closely with these folks to provide accommodation for Sabbath and holidays. Our Muslim population is growing and we have recently begun to offer a Friday Jum'ah prayer service for our numerous Muslim staff to pray together.

### In addition to the valuable support you provide to patients and their families, do you also provide services to employees of Valley who are on the front lines of treating members of our community?

We take the well-being of our Valley family very seriously. This came to the fore during the pandemic when the emotional strain on healthcare workers was undeniable. We are widely recognized as the organizational leaders in resilience building and well-being support. We do this informally by checking in with staff and offering our listening presence to them. We also engage more formally in education and support.

We developed and teach resilience curriculum to all new hospital employees through the SERVE & CARE class, to Nurse Residents through regular group debriefing and didactics, and now to the Graduate Medical Education Residents through regular resilience building sessions.

### How did experiences during Covid-19 impact or change the type of services you and your team provide? What new insights might you have learned from this difficult period?

We really need each other! No person, regardless of how capable, hardworking, or intelligent can be successful without the support of a loving community. We cannot grit our teeth and muscle through hard times. We must acknowledge our limitations, be open about our vulnerabilities, and seek help and support. This looks different for each individual, but Spiritual Care is uniquely positioned within Valley to be a source of caring support, and a consistent manifestation of Valley's love and concern. When I show someone that they are loved and worthy of love I do so not just as an individual, but on behalf of the larger Valley community. The line that we draw between the sick and the healthy, the care-giver and the patient is an illusion. We are all in need of healing and all capable of bestowing healing upon others. This was never clearer than during the pandemic.

### Within the recently opened Valley Hospital in Paramus, there is a dedicated Marron Spiritual Care Center on the first floor. How important is it to have such a space within the Hospital?

We are so grateful for our beautiful and serene Spiritual Care Center. Families sometimes need to make difficult decisions about their loved ones, so for them to be able to seek solace and ask for guidance in a sacred space is absolutely essential. In the presence of human suffering, faced with the most difficult moments, there is oftentimes no action, no fix, no medical intervention that will bring healing. The Spiritual Care Center stands as a physical reminder that sometimes stillness, quiet, no action is the appropriate course.

### How do you and your team interact and how important are shared experiences (while maintaining confidentiality) with each other in assisting those in need of spiritual support and guidance?

Any time I teach resilience to employees I accentuate that fun social connection is not frivolous, but is essential to our ability to provide excellent care. We make a point of laughing together, eating lunch together, and checking in about our lives. When I am in a patient room and a provider or nurse or dining ambassador enters the room and I can address that person by name, the patient subtly receives the information that we are a team working together on your behalf.

### What is your role on Valley's Patient/Family Advisory Council (PFAC)?

I am in charge of the Patient and Family Advisory Council. I work with our volunteer advisors to ensure that we are considering the voice of the patient and family in everything that we do as an institution. We look over pamphlets and flag any medical jargon. We test out furniture to see what would be most comfortable. We offer feedback regarding wayfinding, which is especially important in a new building. Patient and Family Centered Care is the gold standard for high quality healthcare, and we aim through this work to put the experience and the voice of the patient front and center in our culture.

### Is there any additional information you would like to share with our readers?

Our world is so complex and each of us can sometimes feel so small. Healthcare is the same. There are so many competing factors; insurance, technology, government regulation, market forces. The voice of the patient or the needs of the bedside nurse could easily be forgotten amidst these enormous pressures. Our aim in Spiritual Care is to lift up the immeasurable value in each human experience. Even in the midst of your suffering, when you feel powerless or adrift, you are special, you have agency, and you are loved.





## Volunteering at Valley



Karen Hoy (left) and Charlotte Byrne volunteering on Transition Day

For several months prior to the opening of The Valley Hospital on April 14, volunteers led hour-long tours of the new facility. Still under active construction, the Hard Hat Tours, as they were known, gave over 3,000 Valley Health System employees the opportunity to have an initial orientation of the new hospital. Tour guides led employees through the front and back stage areas of the hospital, providing them with an early glimpse into their future working spaces. For months, tours were scheduled many times each day to enable as many employees to witness this incredible facility. Additional hour-long tours were later provided for staff to orient themselves to the features of each nursing unit and patient rooms.

*“When we began giving tours the area was a true construction site - walls, floors, ceilings were non-existent. Each week, work advanced and rooms and departments took shape. The Hard Hat Tours allowed employees not only to see their future work environment but to celebrate this amazing achievement.”*

—Kathy Ambrose, Tour Guide

*“I felt so connected to our mission as we led employees, physicians, and Auxiliary members through our amazing new hospital. As tour guides, we became part of the build as well as the transition.”*

—Barbara Mills, Tour Guide

*“I was so honored to be able to help serve as a tour guide for the medical staff, employees and Auxiliary members for our truly beautiful and amazing, new state of the art hospital. Tours were either 1 hour for non-medical staff and 1 1/2 hours for medical staff. Everyone left impressed with the new hospital.”*

—Pam DeFeo, Tour Guide



Barbara Mills, Pam DeFeo, Kathy Ambrose, Tour Guides



**There are many opportunities for you to join the over 900 people who serve as Valley Volunteers. Your assistance is needed in The Valley Hospital, Valley Home Care offices, the Ridgewood campus and various outpatient locations. Whatever your skills, interests or availability, Volunteer Resources will find the assignment that’s right for you. Visit [www.valleyhealth.com/volunteering](http://www.valleyhealth.com/volunteering)**

Kathy Ambrose and Nancy Weiss with the Especially For You Cart