

# The Acorn

Celebrating 50 Years of Publication



Party at the Pier—

## The 76TH Annual Valley Ball

At The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers, a stunning venue on the sparkling Hudson River.



All 260 attendees enjoyed this black-tie event that included a lavish cocktail hour followed by a delicious three-course dinner. The Remember Jones band, nationally known for its over-the-top theatrical events and funk rock/soul showmanship, blew everyone away with their high energy and great sense of fun. It was an unforgettable evening.

Guests were also delighted to honor Audrey Meyers, former Valley Health System President and CEO. Audrey's career at Valley spanned over four decades, with 25 years as President and CEO.

Thank you to our premier sponsors at the Gramercy level: Bergen Anesthesia Group, Mount Sinai, and Valley Emergency Room Associates. To view our other generous sponsors, visit [www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary-events-meetings/valley-ball](http://www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary-events-meetings/valley-ball).

All proceeds from the ball benefited VHA's \$3.1 million pledge.



Save the date  
for this year's  
Valley Ball at Seasons,  
Washington Township:  
November 7, 2025





Donna Mainardi Singer

I hope the holiday season brought you peace, joy, and cherished time with your loved ones. As I reflect on the conclusion of 2024, I am filled with immense gratitude for all the moments of joy and generosity shared within our Auxiliary community. We closed the year with two wonderful and heartwarming events—the Tree of Light ceremony and our annual gift card donations to the Adopt-A-Family program.

The Tree of Light ceremony was a resounding success, with over 70 people attending to celebrate the season of giving. The Ridgewood High School Choir and Orchestra delighted us with their beautiful holiday music. It was a wonderful way to come together and embrace the spirit of the holidays.

Thanks to your generosity, *Butterflies* children and their families received over \$11,000 in gift cards. Your contribution made a meaningful difference in the lives of these families.

I would also like to welcome two new branches to our Auxiliary family: The Wanaque Reserve Branch in Wanaque, NJ and Friends of VHA.

As we settle into 2025, the Auxiliary branches and Central Board have already been busy planning a fantastic year of fundraising events. Please refer to page 9 for more information. In addition to fundraising events, I'd like to highlight some ongoing volunteer opportunities with the Auxiliary. Our **Especially for You Cart** and **No-Sew Sewing Circle** are fantastic ways to support The Valley Hospital and the community. Whether you're an active volunteer or looking for a way to get involved, these programs offer important ways to contribute.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of The Acorn. It has provided our membership with beautiful photos of our great organization and lots of interesting articles about our hospital, our fundraising and community activities, and our dedication to Valley.

Many thanks to all our members who are tirelessly working to create innovative events and initiatives. Your dedication is critical to helping us meet our \$3.1 million pledge.

Looking ahead, I am filled with optimism and excitement for all the ways we will continue to make a positive impact in the lives of others.

## VHA donates to Valley Hospital Foundation



*VHA recently donated \$350,000 to the Valley Hospital Foundation to benefit our \$3.1 million pledge to support the Pediatric Section of The Valley Hospital and Valley Home Care's Butterflies program. Approximately \$187,289.49 remains to be paid. Congratulations everyone!*



## Welcome to Friends of VHA



The first meeting of the Friends of VHA was held on October 4, 2024 at the home of Theresa Salameno, Co-VP Membership. Theresa and Ann Swist, Co-VP Membership welcomed these new members. The *Friends* represent general membership in VHA with no particular branch affiliation. For more information, contact Theresa at [tsalameno@gmail.com](mailto:tsalameno@gmail.com) or Ann at [swistann@yahoo.com](mailto:swistann@yahoo.com).

## Welcome Wanaque Reserve Branch

We have a brand new branch! Formed at the Wanaque Reserve 55+ active community in Wanaque, NJ, the branch is lead by co-chairs Elizabeth Vivenzio and Colette Zonitch. It has grown to 30 members in just three months. Branch officers also include Treasurer, Doris Martinez, Recording Secretary, Barbara Werner and Jackie Patti, Membership.

### Some of Smiling Faces of the New VHA Wanaque Branch



*VHA Branch Co-Chairs are in the process of creating a photo directory for the branch. The project is half done, and it will eventually include all 30 members and a short biography of each to help all get to know one another better.*

## Welcome Pooja Kumar, New Saddle River Valley Branch Chair

A Saddle River resident, Pooja was recently appointed as Chair of the Saddle River Branch. She is involved in several non-profits where she helps strategize community outreach initiatives, donation drives and fundraising efforts. Pooja is a Senior Director with CareTen, a home care company providing care to the elderly with compassion and empathy. Her passion and commitment has led CareTen to win numerous awards.



## Keep up with the VHA on Social Media

The VHA is on Facebook, Instagram, and X. 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](mailto: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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### Sporting Clays Classics

On August 26, 2024, the 4th Annual Sporting Clays Classic at Hudson Farm Club was hosted by the Employee Branch of VHA. Kicking off with breakfast, 94 attendees engaged in morning activities, followed by a delicious lunch, and an exciting afternoon of clay shooting. As the day unfolded, attendees enjoyed cocktails followed by a traditional pig roast.

We extend our gratitude to our Premier Sponsor, H.M. Hughes, and all our sponsors, whose generous support played a pivotal role in the success of this event. The event raised \$100,000 towards the VHA \$3.1 million pledge.

To view all the sponsors of this annual event, please visit [www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary/auxiliary-events-meetings/sporting-clays-classic](http://www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary/auxiliary-events-meetings/sporting-clays-classic).

Left to right:  
Joseph Lorino, Vice President Facilities, Valley Health System and Dr. Robert Brenner, President and CEO, Valley Health System.



Left to right: Sporting Clays committee: Sandy Carapezza, Executive Director, Development, The Valley Hospital Foundation, Peggy Becher, Patient Ambassador and Chair, Employee Branch, David J. Bohan, VP & Chief Philanthropy Officer, and Bonnie Dalal, Auxiliary Coordinator, The Valley Hospital Foundation. Missing from photo, Margaret Scancarello, VHA member.

### GALS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN AGAIN

Back by popular demand, the Midland Park/Wyckoff Branch held their much in-demand "Gals Just Wanna Have Fun Again" fundraiser on November 16, 2024 at the Midland Park Fire House. It was a fabulous evening of good food and square dancing and line dancing taught to the "Gals" by a professional line dance caller.

Just some of the gals who had fun: left to right: Charlotte Byrne, Elaine Heimberger, Bette Moore, Kathy Acocella, Kathy Ambrose, Lisa Beslity, Gerry Pehush



### Branch Holiday Celebrations

#### Allendale at Fino's



#### Mahwah at Savini



#### Franklin Lakes at Indian Trail Club



#### Ridgewood at Cafe Panache



#### Waldwick at Fiona's





### Brunch at the Lake—September 5, 2024



VHA hosted Brunch at the Lake at the Indian Trail Club, Franklin Lakes. Branch chairs along with the newly-formed Friends of the VHA presented information about their upcoming meetings and activities. Over 100 members and guests attended with 14 members joining VHA on that day.



### VHA Donates \$11,285 to Butterflies Families for Holidays

Kathy Acocella, VP, Volunteer Services, sits beside the many gift cards donated by VHA members to Valley Home Care's Adopt a Family program for *Butterflies* families.



Allendale Branch members show off their adorable blankets with Barbara Mills' (front/center) help.

### No-Sew Sewing Circle Going Strong

VHA members continue to come together to make the no-sew, warm, cuddly fleece blankets for patients at The Valley Hospital. This project, initiated by Barbara Mills Co-Chair, Franklin Lakes Branch, provides patients at the hospital with a loving, hand-made gift from VHA members. To date, 200 blankets have been made.

For more information, visit [www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary-events-meetings](http://www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary-events-meetings).

### The 45th Annual Paramus Run—October 20, 2024

It was a pleasure for the VHA to co-host this amazing event for the third consecutive year! The sun was shining and the Borough of Paramus opened its roads to 1,100+ participants of all ages. The Paramus Run funds



Barbara Mills (left) and Kathy Ambrose at the finish line.

scholarships to Paramus High School seniors pursuing further education and supports VHA's \$3.1 million pledge. This year we raised \$25,000. Each year, we gain new participants and sponsors, enabling us to increase our support to these local programs. Our sincere gratitude and thanks go out to our Presenting Sponsor, La Bella Roma Pizzeria & Ristorante. Thanks also to this year's committee: Kathy Ambrose, Linda Leeder, Barbara Mills, Chair, and Gabrielle Winnert. We hope you'll join us next year on Sunday, October 19, 2025. To see our other generous sponsors, visit [www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary-events-meetings/paramus-run](http://www.valleyhealth.com/services/auxiliary-events-meetings/paramus-run).

### Another Fun-Filled Teddy Bear Party

Each year the Valley Home Care *Butterflies* Program sponsors a wonderful Teddy Bear Party for loved ones of children receiving palliative and hospice care through *Butterflies* services. VHA volunteer helped out with games, food, face painting and clowns. Upon leaving, each child received a cute Teddy Bear donated for the event. Lots of happy smiling faces and a great time was had by all! Thank you to Rose Ranuro and her staff for providing a terrific and heartwarming get-together.



Standing, left to right: Rosemarie Ranuro, Kathy Acocella, Jean Sollitto, and Lorraine De Luca. Seated left to right: Bette Moore, Anthony Sollitto and Charlotte Byrne



**VHA 2024 Tree of Light Ceremony—December 8, 2024**

The Tree of Light ceremony marked our first in-person illumination at the new Valley Hospital. VHA extends heartfelt thanks to our speakers, Charles Vannoy, Vice President, Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer, The Valley Hospital; Donna Mainardi Singer, President, VHA, and David Bohan, VP and Chief Philanthropy Officer, The Valley Hospital Foundation, whose inspiring words uplifted all attendees. We were also delighted by the Ridgewood High School Choir and Orchestra, who filled the air with beautiful holiday music.



*Ridgewood High School Choir and Orchestra*

The collective effort of everyone who purchased stars or lights in honor or memory of a loved one has made a significant impact. Your contributions support the Auxiliary’s \$3.1 million pledge. Thanks to your generosity, we raised over \$20,000.



**Save These Dates**

**Sat., May 3:**  
**Mahwah**  
**Spring Into Fitness**  
 Valley Lifestyles,  
 Mahwah

**Wed., May 7:**  
**Ridgewood**  
**Spring Tea & Boutique**  
 Ridgewood Country Club,  
 Paramus

**Thurs., May 8:**  
**Franklin Lakes**  
**Designer Pocketbook Bingo**  
 Trinity Episcopal Church,  
 Allendale

**Wed., June 4:**  
**Saddle River**  
**Annual Spring Luncheon**  
 Tuxedo Club,  
 Tuxedo, NY

**Mon., June 2:**  
**VHA Annual Golf Outing**  
 Ridgewood Country Club,  
 Paramus

**Thurs., June 19:**  
**Annual Auxiliary Luncheon**  
 Indian Trail Club,  
 Franklin Lakes

For more information about these events, visit [www.valleyhealth.com/services](http://www.valleyhealth.com/services)



*Tree of Light 2024 Committee left to right: Judy Smith, Nora McAvey, Katherine Grasso, Mary Seminara, Chair, Patricia Judge, Claire McLellan, Carol Gillespie, and Elaine Arezzo. Missing from photo: Bonnie Dalal and Elaine Heimberger.*

A special round of applause goes to Tree of Light chair, Mary Seminara and her dedicated committee for their hard work. Thank you also to Bonnie Dalal, Auxiliary Coordinator, for creating the Tribute Book of donors and people they honored or memorialized. Finally, thank you to VHA members, Valley volunteers, and various Valley departments for their generous donations of goodies and services, which further enriched the ceremony. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of children and families in our community.

*The Valley Hospital Auxiliary Pledge*

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

## Valley Home Care is one of New Jersey's largest home care agencies, serving more than 12,000 people in Bergen and Passaic Counties each year.

An interview with Rosemarie Ranuro, RN, MSN, CPNP, Director of Clinical Services, Valley Home Care



Rosemarie Ranuro

### What is the breadth of services you offer and how many professionals are on your team?

We offer services that enhance life from the beginning to the end, from newborns to individuals who reach 100+ years of age. Our Valley Home Care teams are comprised of nurses, including specialized nurses such as wound care specialists, diabetes specialists, and IV clinicians, dietitians, social workers, chaplains, home health aides, speech therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, escorts/security, behind the scenes staff, including schedulers, coordinators, billing personnel, intake liaisons, and many more. We provide services to all ages from newborns for well-baby checks and those with elevated bilirubin to patients who are recovering from surgery or some acute change in their health, to patients as they take their last breaths. We have approximately 419 staff members.

### How do patients or caregivers access Valley Home Care services?

It's easy to access care through Valley Home Care or Valley Hospice. All you have to do is have your physician send a referral to our Admission Services Department via the fax # 201-291-6257.

### If a patient or caregiver doesn't seek out these services, but Valley personnel (doctors, nurses, social workers, etc.) feel a patient or caregiver needs them, how do VHC services get implemented?

Their physician can send a referral to our Admission Services Dept. and our team will reach out to the patient to let them know their Dr. feels that we could help them improve the quality of their life. Also, anyone can call the Admission Services Department and they will be instructed on how to have their physician (or their loved one's physician) submit a referral on their behalf. The number to call is 201-291-6000.

### We see some individuals opting to remain comfortably at home in their later years rather than moving to senior living communities. Has this been your observation and how does this dynamic intersect with the services you and your team provide?

That absolutely is something we see very often. That's why we're here to offer the best home care around! We have specialists who can do in home evaluations to ensure the patient is in the safest environment possible. If it becomes clear that there is no cure for the patient's current condition, we can provide palliative care and/or Hospice to keep them as comfortable as possible and provide a better quality of life by managing their end-of-life symptoms in the comfort of their home right up until the end. Many of our patients and their loved ones opt for in home hospice care because that is where they want to spend the remainder of their time, and we help make that possible!

### When you and your team are called in to assist a person at home, when and how do doctors participate in the overall care plan?

Our clinicians work very closely with the patient's physician to ensure that the patient's needs are met in an efficient and effective manner. They work together to create a plan of care that all our caregivers then follow. The care team communicates with the physician for any updates and changes in patient status and they decide together when it's safe to discharge the patient from our services.



For many years, VHA have supported the incredible *Butterflies* program.

### Would you discuss how this critical service has grown and possibly changed over more recent years?

We have hosted our second Annual *Butterflies* Release where families who suffered a loss of their child gather to engage with other parents, grandparents' siblings to release a Butterfly, work on an art project and listen to the words of our chaplain. We offer art therapy to our families along with music therapy.

### What are some of the biggest challenges you and your team face currently?

The challenges include staffing of our field clinicians. Working in a home care setting, traveling throughout both counties 24 hours a day, enduring all types of weather is becoming harder to recruit good staff.

### Please include a list of volunteer opportunities within Valley Home Care.

Our Volunteer Coordinator can find a role for anyone who wants to volunteer at Valley Home Care or Valley Hospice. We even have specialized End of Life DOULA volunteers who work together as a team to ensure that a patient who is nearing the end never has to be alone. We have volunteers who work with our pediatric population as well. We have clerical tasks, patient phone calls and collaborate with our VIBE committee to assist with engaging all staff.

### What else would you like our readers to know about Valley Home Care?

At Valley Home Care, our number one priority is to provide Zero Harm, 100% Reliability, and Safety Above All as we perform the care needed by our patients!

## Become a Valley Volunteer!

There are many opportunities for YOU to serve as a Valley Volunteer. Your assistance is needed in The Valley Hospital, Valley Medical Group, Valley Home Care offices, The Ridgewood Campus and various outpatient locations. You can volunteer once a month, once a week or more. Once your records are accepted, you can discuss volunteer roles with the Volunteer Resources Department. Whatever your skills, interests or availability, Volunteer Resources will find the assignment that's right fit for you!

### Consider helping with roles such as

- **Especially For You Cart**—Serve refreshments to family members in waiting areas
  - **Reception Services**—Greeting visitors and wayfinding
- **Best Medicine Cart**—Visiting in-patients and offering complimentary comfort items
  - **Transporting Patients**
- **Valley Home Care & Hospice**—Assist with phone calls in the office to families, take part in special community projects, bereavement support, helping with *Butterflies* programs and events.
  - **VIBE**—Visiting departments in many Valley Health buildings with the VIBE Cart, providing treats of appreciation to staff

### For members who have volunteered in the past

and would like to renew their status, contact the Volunteer Resources Department at 201-447-8135 to ensure your records are up to date.

### For members who would like to become a volunteer,

complete the adult electronic application at [www.valleyhealth.com/volunteering](http://www.valleyhealth.com/volunteering). Then contact the Volunteer Office to expedite your onboarding.



## Chef's Corner

John Graziano, CDM, CFPP, Executive Chef, The Valley Hospital

*Chef Graziano won a contest with his Cuban Spring Rolls. According to the Chef, "it's a fun recipe that is quite simple to make. It's also very healthy and has lots of vibrant flavors throughout." Bon appetit!*

### Cuban Spring Rolls - 6 servings

#### Cuban chicken

- 12 oz chicken breast, skinned and boned
- 12 oz chicken thigh, skinned and boned
- 2 oz coriander cress micro green
- 2 tbsp granulated garlic
- 2 tbsp granulated onion
- 1 tsp Kosher salt
- 1 tbsp ground toasted cumin
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 oz white rum
- 2 oz olive oil
- Juice of one orange
- Juice of one lime
- Juice of one lemon

#### Method

- Julienne chicken
- Add dry spices together and mix
- Add spices to chicken with coriander cress and mix
- Let sit for five minutes
- Heat large sauté pan
- Add olive oil
- Add chicken and sauté
- Add orange, lime, and lemon juice to the sauté pan
- Deglaze pan with rum, cook chicken to 165 degrees
- Cool chicken down, reserve

#### Spring roll

- 12 oz Cuban chicken breast cooked/ julienne
- 12 oz Cuban chicken thigh cooked/ julienne
- 8 oz radish daikon cress micro green
- 12 oz cooked vermicelli noodles
- 1 oz coriander cress micro green
- Juice of one lime
- 1 cucumber, seeded/peeled and julienne into 2-inch strips
- 6 oz shredded carrots
- 6 rice paper rounds

#### Method

- Soak rice paper individually in warm water for 30 seconds
- Remove from water, place on a towel, and pat dry
- Toss cooked vermicelli with lime juice and coriander cress
- Lay flat on a table
- Place rice noodles in the center of the rice paper followed by chicken, cucumber, carrot, and daikon cress
- Fold sides of rice paper over filling
- Roll tightly
- Slice each roll in half with a sharp knife

#### Jicama Slaw

- 3 oz coriander micro green
- 3 oz chive garlic micro green
- 12 oz jicama
- 6 oz yellow bell pepper
- 6 oz red bell pepper
- 1 lime
- 1/2 orange
- 1 oz extra virgin olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste

#### Method

- Cut jicama, yellow, and green pepper into matchstick-size pieces
- Prepare micro greens by snipping roots and washing
- Toss all ingredients together and squeeze the juice of lime and orange into the salad
- Finish with olive oil & salt and pepper

#### Tropical Mojito Dipping Sauce

- 8 oz diced pineapple
- 8 oz diced mango
- 2 oz white rum
- 3 tbsp white sugar
- 1 habanero pepper
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 bunch of mint

#### Method

- Heat up rum with sugar and flambé
- Allow rum to cool
- Seed & finely dice one habanero pepper
- Add pineapple, mango, salt & rum in a bowl
- With a blender puree until smooth
- Add fresh mint while reserving a few leaves to decorate the glass with and puree
- Pour into a dipping glass and garnish with mint leaves and diced habanero

