



## December 2014 Issue

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Our latest CSC member: Gladys Santa Ana**
- **President's Choice: VHA OTs at the Community Partners Awards**
- **VHA's Virtual Scrapbook--Check it Out!**
- **VHA's Trees of Life**
- **Meet Laura Borczon, a VHA Parent Relief Volunteer!**
- **Looking for Our Next Great Holiday Photo!**
- **BPSO Champions Workshop**
- **Healthy Steps: Tips for a Delicious and Healthy Holiday**
- **Safe Travels This Winter Season**
- **Seniors In Need connects VHA Clients with Caring Strangers**
- **Taking our Kids to Work**

### IN OTHER NEWS

**Fretting Over Finances**

## Our latest CSC member: Gladys Santa Ana



Gladys Santa Ana recently joined our amazing CSC team. Gladys, who came from Manila, Philippines, initially worked in banking before making the decision to move here to work in health care.

"Moving to Canada was one of the hardest decisions I have faced," she says. "Leaving my family, friends and life back home was something I sacrificed for a better future. Through the

Live-In Caregiver Program, I have made Canada my new home."

After completing the caregiver program, Gladys studied medical office administration, which led her to the CSC. "Customer service gives me the opportunity to meet new people and develop relationships. I get to talk to different kinds of people with different cultural backgrounds, gain friends and create long-lasting memories."

When not working at the CSC, Gladys continues to give back, **volunteering at a hospice.** "Working in health care is close to my heart. It is my passion to help. At the end of the day, I hope I have made a positive impact to their lives by simply listening to them, how their day went, understanding what people are going through and just being there for them."

## President's Choice: VHA OTs at the Community



Staff and service providers gathered for a workshop, led by Debbi Gordon from Family Services Employee Assistance Program (FSEAP), on fretting over finances.

"Instead of worrying, be concerned over your finances," Debbi says. "Worrying gets you stuck on the problem and concern gets you thinking about the solution."

Financial stress comes from all directions and you can help improve your mental and financial health by:

- understanding why you're worrying
- overcoming your habit of worrying and
- taking control of your finances

Take control of your finances with these seven steps:

1. Set a budget.
2. Know your values.
3. Create a plan.
4. Keep track of your expenses.
5. Manage your credit.
6. Check your credit rating.
7. Deal with your credit crisis.

**Happy Holidays!**

## Partners Awards

President's Choice.



We may put our clients front and centre, but that doesn't stop VHAers from making a difference within our communities as well.

Beyond serving their clients, many take the time to mentor up-and-coming service providers. I'm delighted to share that a number of Occupational Therapists (OTs) were among the recipients of the **Community Partners Awards** from the University of Toronto's Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. The awards celebrate outstanding educators who volunteer their time and skills to contribute to educate and inspire student OTs. This year's amazing recipients include **Morgan Gadsby, Gillian Barrie, Betty Yu, Leslie Coulter, Sherri Dakin and Cindy Lee.**

Here's what Student Program Coordinator and one of the recipients, Betty Yu, had to say:

"I love working with the OT students as I have the opportunity to add another layer of richness to their learning. We have had a busy year with the Student Program. Thank you to everyone who expressed an interest in having a student. The Student Program is vibrant and healthy because of commitment, dedication and contributions of the preceptors, who give their time, knowledge and care. I know other preceptors were also recognized with the award for their contributions. I hope that we become their organization/employer of choice when they embark on their careers. Thank you to each of you for your support in my role as Student Program Coordinator. We look forward to an exciting 2015!"

Congratulations to all the recipients for this incredible achievement! And a shout-out to the many VHAers mentoring students who do placements at VHA -- a total of about 95 students in 2014. Not only do we deliver spectacular care to their clients, but they also empower other service providers to do the same.

- Carol Annett  
President and CEO  
VHA Home HealthCare



Thank you for all your hard work over the past year. For those who are working over the holidays, a special thank you!

Wishing you and your families a healthy and happy holiday season and New Year!

### The VHA Spark! Challenge Winner is....



...the **VHA crew in London!** The team managed to increase its Spark! use by 32.2 per cent. Way to go, guys!

A shout-out to our second place team — **child and family nursing in the GTA** at an impressive 20.8 per cent increase and the **Champlain crew** with a respectable 14.3 per cent increase. If your team didn't place, don't worry — there's always room for improvement! We'll be sending out another challenge shortly.

In the meantime, **get yourself over to VHA Spark!** to share your

## VHA's Virtual Scrapbook--Check it Out!



The feedback on the video scrapbook has been amazing **so grab a tissue and check it out now!!!** It's just three minutes long but it packs a meaningful message:

"Just want to say "thank you." It helps when one has a loss to know that others are aware and one is not totally alone. What you have done must leave a impact on those who still feel their losses."

--VHA Physiotherapist

"Wow! This is awesome!!! Love it!"

--VHA PSW

Thanks to all those VHA staff and service providers who shared their memories of special clients, staff and loved ones who have passed away. If you haven't had a chance, please visit your local office to post a leaf in memory of your clients and loved ones.

## VHA's Trees of Life

excellent ideas.

Currently, we're at...

- **649 users**
- **154 ideas**
- **253 comments**
- **2,741 votes**

Many thanks for sharing your great ideas, voting and commenting. Let's keep the ideas flowing!

**Holiday Cards are now available!**



We now have holiday cards for you to distribute to your clients. They are available to pick up at our offices or you can request to have them mailed to you.

Please contact Kelsey Muir, Communications Coordinator, at [kmuir2@vha.ca](mailto:kmuir2@vha.ca) or ext. 1129 if you would like some cards mailed to you.

**We Want Your Stories!**



## Meet Laura Borczon, a VHA Parent Relief Volunteer!

In honour of **International Volunteer Day** on December 5, we thought we'd take the time to highlight one of our many incredible volunteers: **Laura Borczon**, a VHA Parent Relief Volunteer.

Laura, an aspiring midwife, has been with the Parent Relief Volunteer Program since May, for which she supports overburdened parents and gives them a break with the demands of parenting.



"As a parent relief volunteer, I've helped moms get out of their homes, by guiding them and giving them confidence to use the TTC with a stroller or by introducing them to parenting centres," she says.

"Recently, I've come to realize that my client just needs time to heal, so I take her child out for a walk and to the food bank for her. I've noticed a tremendous difference in my client's general disposition after receiving this help."

In terms of what motivated her to get involved, Laura wants to help postpartum mothers and learn more about family dynamics. "I've



Just got your pilot's license?  
Won an award for your latest painting?

We want to hear from you and are happy to share your amazing events in an upcoming Future Focus!

Please submit any stories to Sam Dunsiger, Communications Specialist, at [sdunsiger@vha.ca](mailto:sdunsiger@vha.ca).

learnt that giving a little helps a lot!"

And the payoff of volunteering has been rewarding. "I enjoy seeing my clients smile with ease, when previously a smile was difficult. I enjoy seeing the baby's smile when I play with them. Pure joy...I love that."

**Many thanks to all our amazing volunteers for all the awesome work you do for our clients and in our communities!**

## Looking for Our Next Great Holiday Photo!

Our annual holiday contest is back and we're looking for the next great holiday photo. Spend this holiday season with your camera out, and get some shots of your family and friends.

Remember: the top prize wins a \$150 dollar gift card. Please send your digital photos to Sam Dunsiger, Interim Communications Specialist, at: [sdunsiger@vha.ca](mailto:sdunsiger@vha.ca) by **Friday December 19th** or contact him at ext. 4336 if you need to mail it in/drop off a hard copy. **Please submit only one photo per staff or service provider.**

**Here are the top three amazing photos from last year. Can you top them??? Then send your pictures in!!**



## BPSO Champions Workshop



Thanks to Janeth Valenciano, Janet Chippin, Oliva Maborang and Pam Stuckless (pictured left to right above) for attending the Level 2 Champion's workshop hosted by St. Elizabeth Healthcare.

Our mid-year BPSO report was submitted to the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) and received positive feedback on our work to date. The RNAO is very optimistic that VHA will receive its "designation status" in March of 2015 (a cautious yipee!).

Education for Falls Prevention and Client Centred Care continues marching on so please keep an eye out for invites in your email box.

## Healthy Steps: Tips for a Delicious and Healthy Holiday



**VHA Healthy Steps**

*Moving Towards Better Health*

Once again, the holidays are upon us (happy holidays, everyone). That means it's time for festivities and feasting.

Here are some tips for a delicious and healthy holiday season:

- **Don't wait for January 1 to start your New Year's resolution.** Try making a holiday season resolution. Some ideas to try: go for a walk after dinner; have a healthy breakfast each morning or decompress with a good night's sleep.
- **Enjoy your "must have" treats.** It's easy to indulge in all of your favourite holiday treats...and that's okay. Limit yourself to a few of your favourites and aim to make healthy choices the rest of the time.

- **Don't use the cold as an excuse to not go outside.** Get outside and explore the snow, whether it's skating, skiing, tobogganing or just walking. You'll be having so much fun you won't even notice the weather!
- **Stay food safe.** The best way to know if your food is safe and ready is by using a thermometer.
- **Watch your portions.** Be mindful of portion sizes and try using a smaller plate.
- **Enjoy this time of year.** You may be busy entertaining guests or shopping for presents but remember to take time to relax. Enjoy good food and quality time with family and friends.

Visit **Eat Right Ontario's** website for more tips, and delicious and healthy recipes.

## Safe Travels This Winter Season



As we get into whiter times and icy conditions, please remember to be vigilant when travelling.

Here are some tips for safe winter travelling:

- Dress warmly and stay dry.
- Avoid walking on ice or getting wet.
- Be cautious about travel, and try to avoid travelling on ice-covered roads, overpasses, and bridges if you can.
- Wear a bright colour--a scarf, bag or hat--to improve your visibility to others when it gets dark.
- Always check the weather before stepping outside and dress accordingly.
- Field staff: remember to have shoe grips with you, and wear them when it's icy. **You can pick up shoe grips from our various offices.**

### Tips for riding transit in the winter:

- Service will be delayed when it snows or is unusually cold. To ensure your comfort while you wait, be sure to dress warmly.
- Snowstorms creating poor road conditions and increased ridership can cause service slowdowns throughout the entire transit system. If you allow more time, your trip will be more relaxed.
- If you don't have a seat, make sure you hang onto a handrail to remain sturdy during quick unexpected stops.
- Enter and exit buses/streetcars with caution to avoid slipping on ice and stepping in slush.

- Keep your hands free while on transit for quick reactions. Don't hold your phone in your hand; use a backpack to always have hands and arms free.
- Never run for a bus, streetcar or train as you may slip and fall. Instead, please wait for the next one.

If you have any questions, please contact Renée Achong, Healthy Workplace Coordinator, at ext. 1137 or [rachong@vha.ca](mailto:rachong@vha.ca)

## Seniors In Need connects VHA Clients with Caring Strangers

Do you have an elderly client with a need for a particular item? The **Seniors In Need** program connects clients with a specific need with people who are able to donate funds to pay for the item or provide the item itself.

Here's how it works: we post a brief synopsis of the client's situation, where they live and the nature of his or her need on the Seniors In Need website (anonymously). If a donor comes forward, we connect them with the client's service provider to coordinate.



Previous requests have included hospital beds, eye glasses and walkers.

If you have a request for an item or any questions about the program, please contact Emma Gallagher, Intake Social Worker at ext. 4349 or [egallagher@vha.ca](mailto:egallagher@vha.ca).

## Taking our Kids to Work



Last month, we had some special visitors at 30 Soudan. Eight grade nine students spent a day at our office as part of **Take Our Kids To Work Day**.

They explored a variety of areas at VHA that were of interest to them, including IT, operations and nursing.

Many thanks to all at our Soudan office for making our visitors feel welcome!

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