



Creating More Independence



Music to our ears...



2013 Annual Report



"Music is the literature of the heart; it commences where speech ends." — Alphonse de Lamartine

Music to our ears

Message from the President and Board Chair



Carol Annett
President and CEO
VHA Home HealthCare

Music is everywhere—it wafts through our houses of worship, blares through teenagers’ ipods and soothes us on a long drive to nowhere in gridlock. Sometimes it moves us to tears, while in other moments, it inspires us to move past our limits—real or imagined—and just go for it!

As 2013’s viral videos from the **Music and Memory Clinic** showed the world, music—even amongst those in the final stages of Alzheimer’s disease—can evoke powerful emotions and expressions of pure joy.

And that’s exactly what VHA’s Client and Family Voice initiative did for our organization in 2013. An initiative where we don’t just listen and respond to concerns, but instead invite clients and family members to join the ensemble and be part of the creative process to continually improve home and community care. Though we were really still “rehearsing” the process of involving clients and family in 2013, discovering their top 12 priorities was definitely a highlight and will undoubtedly take centre stage in 2014 as we together orchestrate new paths to realize our mission of **creating possibilities for more independence**.



John Macfarlane
Board Chair
VHA Home HealthCare

The year was also marked by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s quick-tempo changes to physiotherapy services province-wide, testing our responsiveness. Though timelines were tight and approaches by each Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) unique, VHA’s flexible, creative reply to these changes meant we became quickly attuned to each region’s needs and handled the challenges presented with gusto.



The high-speed pace continued as we implemented **inspired and creative** measures to improve the ebb and flow of client communication and support our staff in new and meaningful ways. Certainly the roll out of Mobility Plus—mobile devices for our personal support workers—improved communication around scheduling of clients, and more importantly, allowed PSWs to transfer vital information about client preferences to the entire VHA care team. From a cup of warm milk before bedtime, to having the shades drawn, to a short walk around the building after a meal, these simple notes culminated into a strong and vibrant chorus of client choice.

The revamping of our personal support model to include PSW coaches was another seemingly small but mighty move that helps our workers connect with experienced peers to uncover solutions to on-the-job challenges. Initial surveying reveals that the coaches enjoy fostering the skills of peers, problem-solving and being an integral player in the improvement of client and family centred care. It's a win-win-win for all involved and a model we look forward to fine-tuning in 2014.

This was also a year we continued our tangible and measureable pursuit of **More Outstanding Care**. In VHA's sophomore year of our Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO®) journey we moved from preparing the pieces of our Best Practice Guidelines (BPGs), to implementation in home and community care.

Though BPSO® is a Registered Nurses Association of Ontario-led initiative, it is rooted in interprofessional practice and aligns with our commitment to care that is **integrated and collaborative to unearth innovative answers to complex challenges**. It also means, BPGs will be adapted to apply to all disciplines—from personal support workers, to rehabilitation professionals, to nurses. In 2013 **Client Centred Care** was rolled out to PSWs and dovetailed with previous work on the CCACs' *Changing the Conversation*. **Falls Prevention in Older Adults** focused on rehab providers while nursing teams concentrated on **Assessment and Management of Stage I to IV Pressure Ulcers**. Early results show significant improvement in the measurement process and client outcomes.



Left to right: Carol Annett, Christopher Gray and Judy Breckles cut ribbon at Fairview Clinic opening.

BPSO® allows us to listen to the experiences of organizations that have been through the process and learn from their successes and challenges— it is also instrumental to VHA's growth and development on our journey to care that is **spectacular and continuously focused on quality improvement and safety**.

As our community support funding continues to grow, through the continued support of the United Way Toronto and an additional boost from the London Community Fund's Community Vitality Grant, so too does our reach to serving the most vulnerable. The funding will support expansion of the Extreme Cleaning program in the London area and help those at risk of eviction because of the unsanitary condition of their home, reclaim their space and lives.

This venture, along with many of our other projects and services, would be impossible without the collaborative spirit of our partners, funders, donors and referral sources who harmoniously work alongside us. For their efforts, we at VHA are eternally grateful. We'd also like to thank our talented staff, service providers and volunteers—including our Board—for their passion, professionalism and heart that truly deliver on our mission of **creating possibilities for more independence**.

As any good conductor will tell you, great musicians are highly attuned to the other voices or instruments around them, responding to meet the energy of the room. Our active involvement at many collaborative tables focused on improving the quality and value of home care in our province is testament to this.

Our staff and service providers are also highly engaged in sharing their research findings, knowledge and experience with the sector through the numerous talks, posters and research papers presented at key industry events throughout the year.

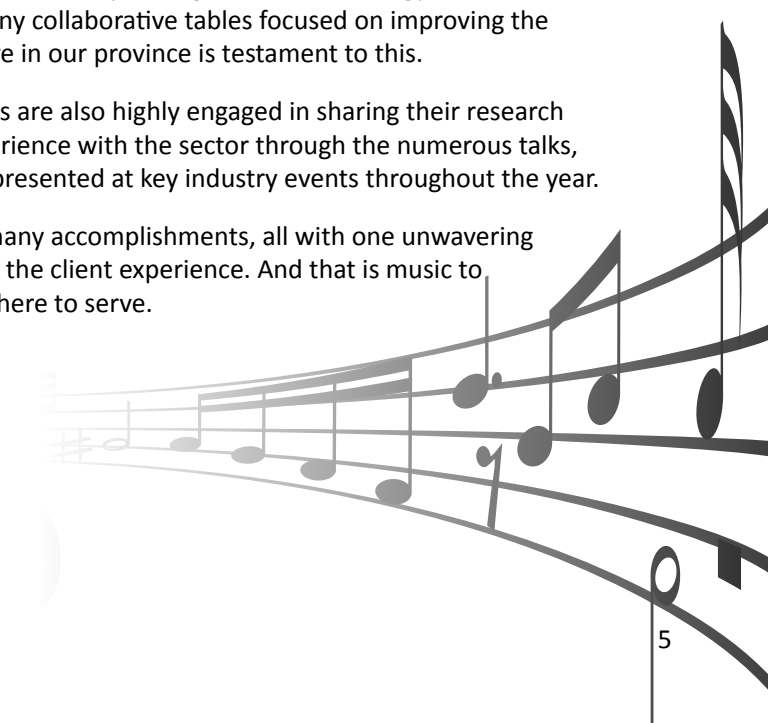
2013 was indeed filled with many accomplishments, all with one unwavering objective in mind—improving the client experience. And that is music to our ears and to those we are here to serve.

Carol Annett

Carol Annett
President and CEO

John Macfarlane

John Macfarlane
Board Chair



Facts and figures 2013

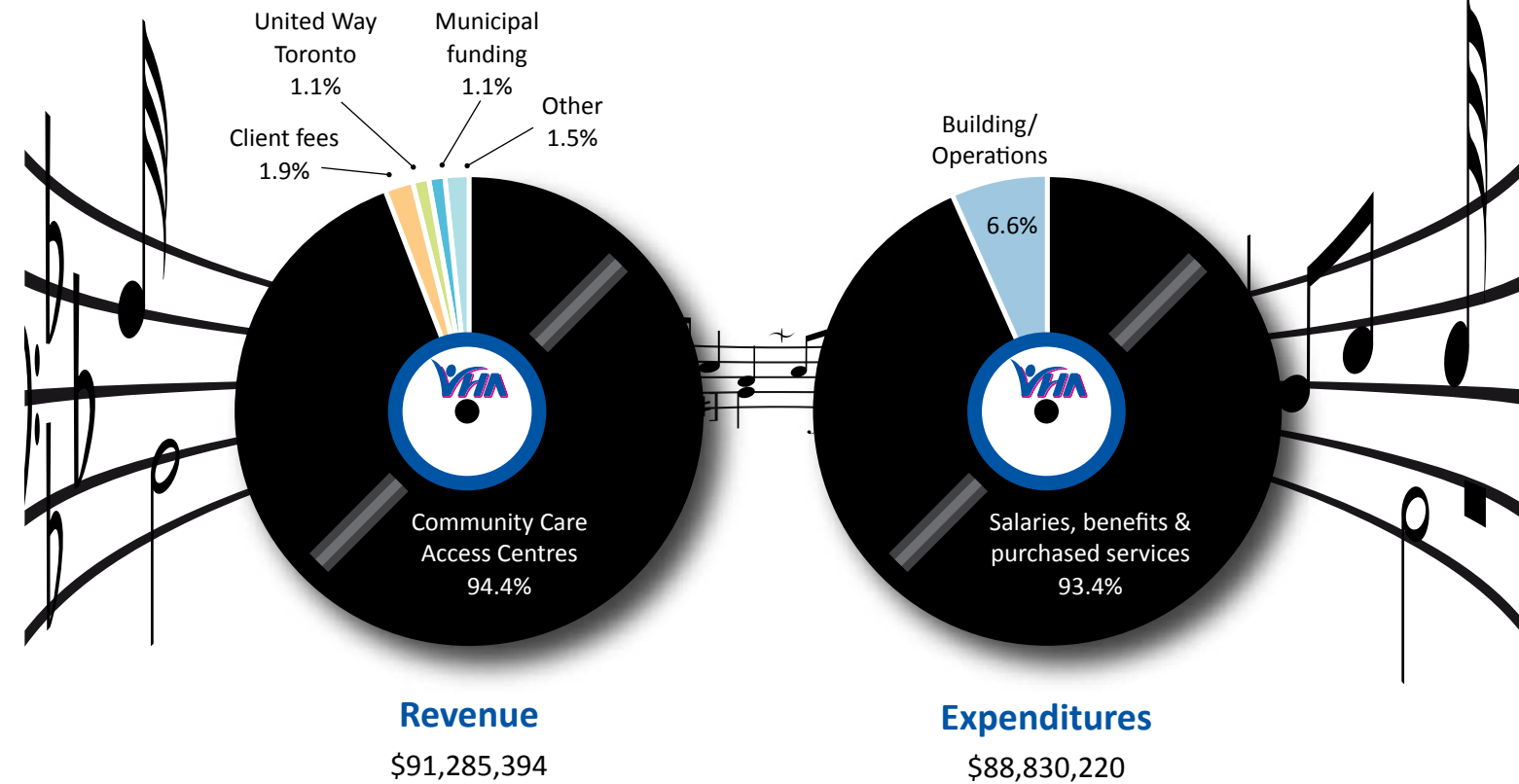
In 2013, VHA Home HealthCare's **1,904** staff and service providers delivered **2,238,850** units of service to **77,319** clients where and when they needed it.

We provided **7,080** hours of parent relief and **75,073** hours of charitable community support services to clients in need. Our service volunteers gave of their talents and enthusiasm to the tune of **5,934** hours of volunteer service.

258 Extreme Cleaning clients were able to stay safe in their homes – and **33** tenants with severe mental illness received shelter and support at Adams House, transitional housing for people at risk of homelessness.

VHA staff and service providers had access to **\$200,000** from our Simple Comforts fund and Ideas to Action/Innovation Fund to provide clients with extra items they needed and to kickstart new projects to support more efficient and spectacular care.

VHA also delivered **16,478** hours of staff training this year.

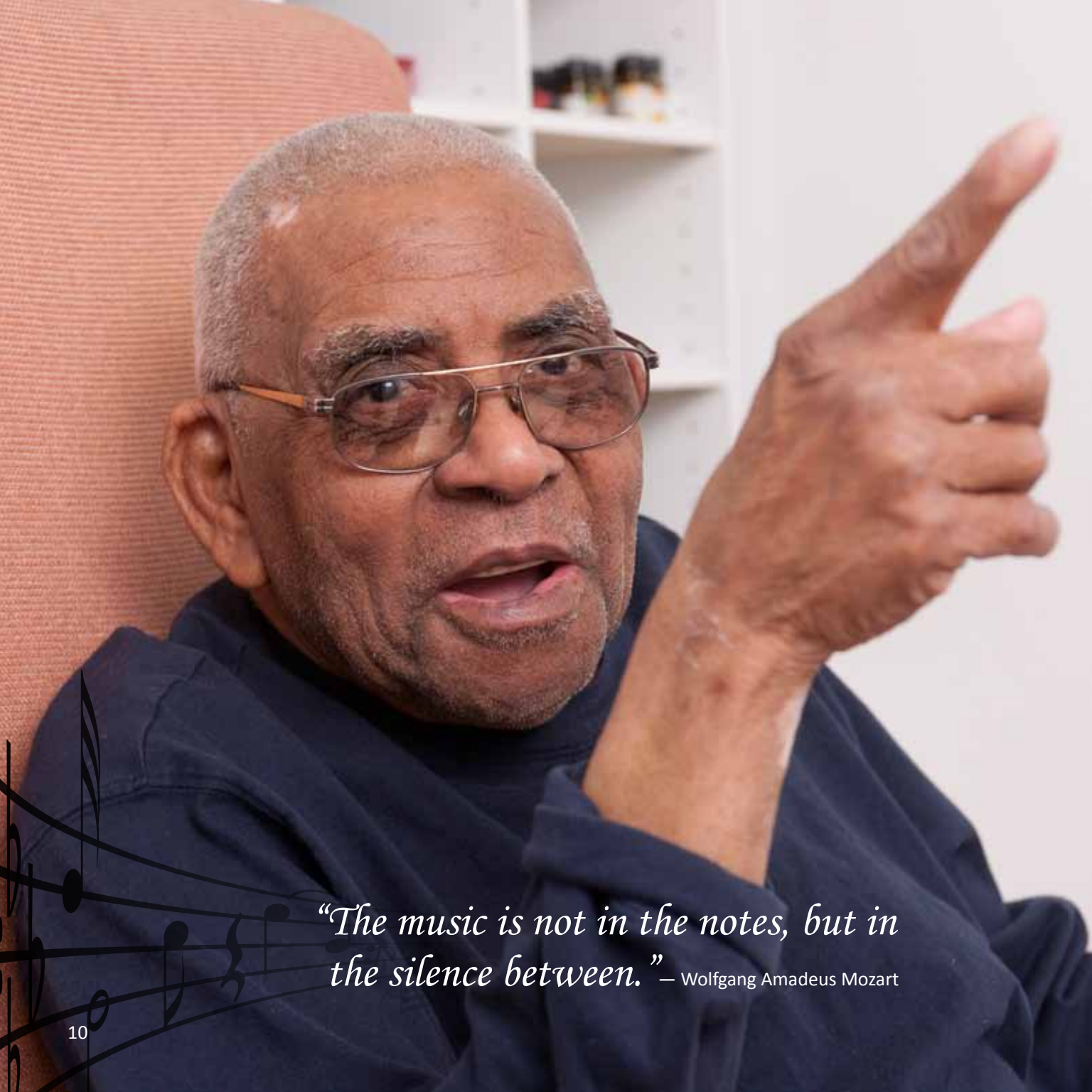




“One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain.” — Bob Marley

Highlights

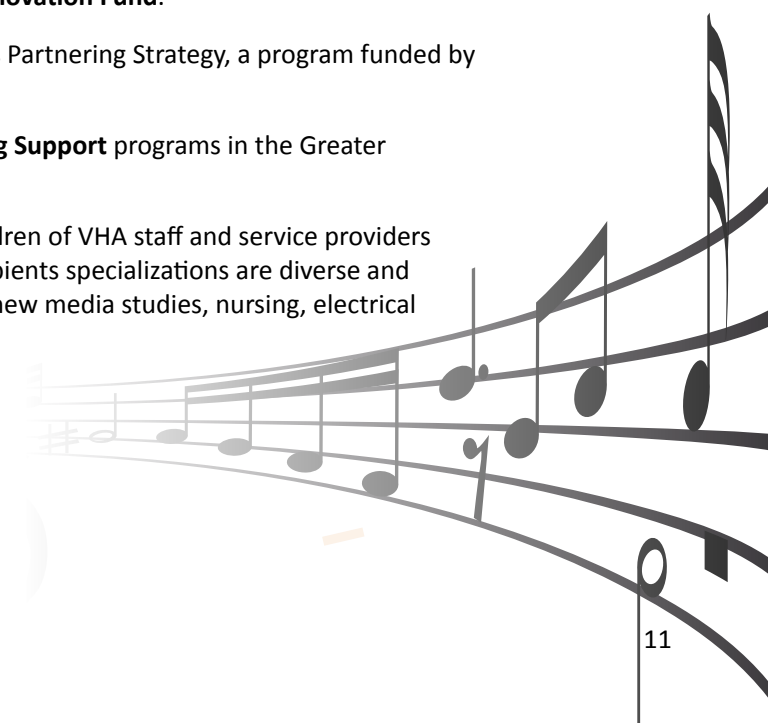
- Launched the **Client and Family Voice Steering Committee** to gain feedback, insights and ideas from clients and families about readying VHA for engagement with clients and families in quality improvement projects. Identified 12 improvement opportunities for VHA to focus on.
- Honoured the challenging and inspiring journeys of our **Heart of Home Care Award** winners: **Kelly Beatty, Jose Lino, Jenni Ward and Leomina Valderrama** for their unwavering commitment to caring for an ill loved one. The event also hosted a compelling presentation from renowned neuroscientist Dr. Tiffany Chow, on the impact of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.
- Received a **Community Vitality Grant** from the London Community Foundation (LCF), to expand VHA’s **Extreme Cleaning** program to Middlesex.
- In partnership with Central CCAC, helped launch the **Fairview Clinic**—offering clients post-surgical care, injections, IV therapy and wound care in one central location. The clinic is fully staffed by VHA nurses.
- Received a grant from the Government of Canada’s **New Horizons Seniors Program** for our Volunteer Hoarding Support program in London.
- Launched a new www.vha.ca website with a fresh look, feel and functionality that complies with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- Applauded four spectacular VHA nurses nominated for the **Toronto Star’s 2013 Nightingale Nurse of the Year Award**.
- Celebrated the dedicated and spectacular care of our long service award recipients: 137 with five years of service, 43 with 10 years, 23 with 20 years, two with 25 and one worker with an amazing 35 years of outstanding service.
- Actively involved in the transformation of Ontario’s home care system through Quality and Value in Home Care (QVHC)—an initiative of the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres (OACCAC). As members of the QVHC Steering Committee and various work groups, we’re helping to: redefine how we measure performance, work out new pricing and payment models, as well as design new care pathways and new business processes. The collaboration with CCACs and other service provider organizations aims to ensure quality, value and accountability in home health care.



“The music is not in the notes, but in the silence between.” — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Sharing and caring

- Expanded VHA's **Extreme Cleaning** program to Region of Durham in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association.
- **Ring and Reach**, a national phone and online seminar support program for caregivers, delivered information and support to Ontarians on topics such as: caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease, advance care planning, hoarding and self-care for caregivers.
- Launched **Memory Mentors**, a program focused on educating isolated seniors about brain health. Funding for the program came from VHA's **Ideas to Action/Innovation Fund**. Along with **Seniors on the Move**, these regional mobile health programs in and around Chatham and Sarnia had significant participation from seniors living in isolated, rural environments during the more than 35 sessions held.
- **Rebound and Reconnect** program launched in August 2013 to reduce caregiver burden, enhance and improve their physical and mental wellness, and improve caregiver quality of life.
- Piloted a **Baby and Toddler Rehab Therapy Group** in Toronto for children with low muscle tone and their parents through VHA's **Ideas to Action/Innovation Fund**.
- Received additional funding from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, a program funded by the City of Toronto, for **Extreme Cleaning**.
- Began new **Caregiver Relief** and **Volunteer Hoarding Support** programs in the Greater Toronto Area.
- Awarded 20 \$1,500 **Head Start Scholarships** to children of VHA staff and service providers towards their post-secondary education. Grant recipients specializations are diverse and include programs such as: social work, psychology, new media studies, nursing, electrical engineering, fashion and public health.



"Music is the great uniter. An incredible force. Something that people who differ on everything and anything else can have in common." — Sarah Dessen, Just Listen



Learning and innovating

- Piloted and then began implementation of Mobility Plus to Personal Support Workers (PSWs). The mobile device and customized application allows workers to securely check client visit information, emails and schedules on the go. Initial evaluations show that the device improves communication between PSWs, office staff and, in so doing, with clients.
- As part of the Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) initiative, VHA completed its Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) pilots for **Prevention of Falls, and Assessment and Management of Stage I – IV Pressure Ulcers**. Early results show significant improvement in all BPGs, especially Assessment and Management of Pressure Ulcers where assessments increased by 30% and clients with pressure ulcers that healed during care improved by 80%. The RNAO also singled out VHA for its recognition and inclusion of PSWs in the integration of the BPGs.
- Chatham nurses participated in a pilot with Pixalere's electronic tool that uses a tablet or laptop to chart wounds online at the point of care.
- Launched **Juiced: Beyond Engagement** – a strategy to increase job satisfaction. Using a simple **energy check tool**, leaders and staff are supported to have focused conversations connected to six driving needs: *I Fit, I'm Supported, I'm Inspired, I'm Clear, I'm Valued and I'm Energized*.
- Provided staff with 16,478 hours of education and training including a new client and family centred care course focused on practices that are teachable, observable and measurable. Staff also acquired new knowledge through Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) e-learning modules, preceptor training and Mobility Plus amongst others.
- Participated in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Late Career Nursing Initiative (LCNI) for a second time. Nurses participated in two projects: **Documentations Standards for Professional Practice and Leadership Development at the Point of Care**.
- Partnered with George Brown College to identify and evaluate learning requirements and knowledge gaps for personal support workers (PSWs) new to the home care sector.
- Piloted a Personal Support Coaching model which provides PSWs with greater peer support and offers veteran workers an opportunity to mentor their colleagues.
- As part of its commitment to evidence-based best practice and quality care, VHA's nursing teams participated in an Annual Advanced Competencies/Best Practice Review at George Brown College. Using the school's simulation labs with specialized equipment and lifelike models, nurses demonstrated their competence in varying practice requirements.
- Shortlisted as one of **Canada's Top 100 Employers** and as one of Canada's **Passion Capitalists**.



Reaching out

- Participated in 39 external presentations and speaking engagements including:
 - Accreditation Canada, Quality Conference, *Innovation: From the strategic plan to the point of care*
 - Ontario Home Care Association Symposium, *How Can We Help: A community based OT clinic to promote independence and community integration* as well as, *Changes in the Community Health Sector: An early adopters' perspective of outcome based pathways and reimbursement*
 - Canadian Home Care Association Conference, *Including the Client Voice: Creating sustainable and meaningful relationships with our clients and families* and *Interprofessional Care Model: Approaching wound management through collaboration*
 - University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT), *Health Program Planning: Prevention of falls and falls injuries in older adults*
 - OSOT (Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists), *Being Strategic: Increased emphasis on wound healing and the role OT's play within the care team*
 - Community Health Nurses Canada Conference, *Exemplary Model of Inter-professional Education and Collaboration for Optimal Wound Management*
- Grew the Parent Relief Volunteer Program (PRVP) significantly with a 30 per cent increase in volunteers in 2013.
- Received media attention from several outlets: **CBC Radio** (on support services to new mothers), **Hospital News** (article about the PRVP), **London Community News** (article about the LCF grant) and a quote on hoarding in the **Toronto Star**.
- Journal articles by VHA authors published: Home Healthcare Nurse on *Hoarding Strategies for the HomeCare Provider*, Home HealthCare Services Quarterly on *Engaging Home HealthCare Providers in a Fall Prevention Best Practice Initiative*, and Physiotherapy Canada on *Self Management Goal Setting: Identifying the practice patterns of community-based physical therapists*.
- 445 VHA staff and service providers participated in our 2013 United Way campaign, raising more than \$22,000 for the year.
- In partnership with Sunnybrook Health Science Centre and The Scarborough Hospital, co-hosted a third Hoarding Conference aimed at helping those who work in the community to better understand the condition, best practices and potential avenues of response and support.
- Partnered with Community and Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS) to launch hoarding and Extreme Cleaning programs in the York Region.

2013 Heart of Home Care Award Winners



Recognized for the incredible love, dedication and positivity they bring to their caregiving role, 2013's Heart of Home Care winners left their audience inspired by their tenacity, in awe of their strength and moved by their ability to stay positive in the face of adversity.



(right to left): 2013 winners Jose Lino, Carol Annett (VHA's CEO) Kelly Beatty, Jenni Ward and Leomina Valderrama.

Kelly Beatty

For 21 years, Kelly helped care for her husband who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. Despite losing their son to a car accident and battling breast cancer herself, Kelly stayed positive despite the difficult turns her life took. Looking back on the experience (sadly David succumbed to MS in March, 2013) she wouldn't have done anything differently. "He (David) was just the best person to look after and anybody would tell you that," says Kelly. "He was a top dollar patient! I just loved caring for him."

Jose Lino

Since his wife's passing more than six years ago, Jose Lino has cared for his daughter Marta—who was diagnosed with Downs Syndrome and Autism—with passion and an unwavering commitment to her wellbeing. Though loving family members are around to lend a hand, Jose insists on taking on most of Marta's care needs including bathing, feeding, dressing, toileting, meal preparation, laundry and so much more.

"I've worked for VHA for 12 years and I have never seen anything like this," notes nominator Maureen Gludd. "He takes such good care of his daughter."

Leomina Valderrama

"Looking after a child like Brendall is a special gift," notes Heart of Home Care winner Leomina Valderrama. "He is a beautiful child and I try my best every day to give him the quality of life he deserves." Born premature and later diagnosed with cerebral palsy, her son Brendall requires constant care. And then life threw her another curve-ball: breast cancer.

Fortunately, Leomina's incredible spirit could not be broken—she maintained a positive outlook, and managed the trek back and forth between her treatments at Sunnybrook Hospital and Brendall's at Sick Kids Hospital without ever losing her optimism. "It's all about hope. Although there are many challenges and it isn't always easy, you will find the joy in caring for your loved one," says Leomina. "There is always a light at the end of the tunnel and the sun will always shine!"

Jenni Ward

The nine years Jenni Ward has cared for her son Blake have been challenging, to say the least. Prenatally, Blake was diagnosed with hypoplastic left heart syndrome (HLHS) meaning the left side of his heart is underdeveloped. Later it was also discovered that Blake was living with severe to profound hearing loss. Jenni has taken on Blake's constant care—which includes administering 36 medications, g-tube feedings, and recently (as his condition worsens), oxygen—with incredible courage and grace.

"I always try to stay positive and keep a smile on my face," says Jenni. "People tell me I have a 'heart of a lion'." As she watches Blake's health decline, Jenni is heartbroken but adds, "these have been the best nine years of my life."

Sponsored by:



Standard Life





Simply essential

As a not-for-profit, charitable organization, an important part of VHA's mandate is to ensure our care is inclusive and committed to serving the most vulnerable in our communities all while supporting our mission of **creating possibilities for more independence**. VHA's Simple Comforts Fund is one instrument in our quest to realize these ambitions. Staff and service providers are able to access funds to

ensure vulnerable clients in the community get what they urgently need when no other program or support is available. Whether it's a slip mat for a bathtub, or respite personal support services in a crisis situation, VHA's **Simple Comforts Fund** is there to help clients in need, and gives our team the power to do it.

This customized knife—that was too costly for this client to pay for out of pocket—was ordered by his occupational therapist and paid for by VHA's Simple Comforts Fund.



Igniting innovation

Great ideas should be rewarded. That's the thinking behind **VHA's Ideas to Action/Innovation Fund**. Established by VHA's Board in 2009, the fund provides a one-time financing opportunity to staff and service providers with innovative ideas to create or improve processes or services. The fund has provided a launching pad for several key projects including VHA's **Baby and Toddler Rehab Therapy Group**—a cost-effective way for families with children diagnosed with low muscle tone to improve their child's condition through group occupational therapy activities and connect with other families facing the same challenges. The project launched at VHA's 700 Lawrence West office in Toronto and has since expanded to the Dorset Park Hub in Scarborough as well.

"This program wouldn't have gotten off the ground without the Ideas to Action/Innovation Fund," notes one of the co-creators of the program, Occupational Therapist, Leila Amin. "Instead of the obstacles that might have confronted us at another institution, we've had support, flexibility and mentorship. It's allowed us to jump start."

Vision:

Everyone receives community support and home health care when, where and how they want it

Mission:

Creating possibilities for more independence

Core Beliefs:

Our care must be:

Spectacular and continuously focused on quality improvement and safety

Client-driven, because what matters most to clients is what counts

Integrated and collaborative to unearth innovative answers to complex challenges

Inclusive and committed to serving the most vulnerable in our communities

Inspired and creative, delivered by a skilled team that has tremendous heart

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As a charitable not-for-profit organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors, VHA is committed to:

- Fiscal responsibility
- Ethical practices in all our operations
- Driving positive change in community support and home health care

Thank you... to all our community partners, funders, volunteers and donors. With your support, we're creating possibilities for more independence every day.



Creating More Independence

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United Way
Member Agency



VHA Home HealthCare has no corporate or other affiliation with VHA Health & Home Support, also known as VHA Ottawa. VHA Health & Home Support can be reached through their website at www.vhaottawa.ca.

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