

# Annual Report

## 2008



Complex care, Simple comforts



“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep  
your balance you must keep moving.”  
– Albert Einstein

# balancing care

## PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE

Finding a healthy balance is what all of us struggle to achieve in life and what VHA strives to accomplish in its work. Though delivering the finest in *complex care* to our clients is one of our goals, without the depth of compassion, concern and *simple comforts* our employees deliver, our services wouldn't be as appreciated as they are; 96 per cent of 800 clients polled in 2008 said they'd recommend VHA's services to others.

And while we're proud of this achievement, the missing four per cent carry significant weight in our quest to do better, aim higher and provide more responsive care. It is, after all our clients and their families who, when faced with a physical or mental health challenge, look to us to help restore balance in their lives. From providing relief to an exhausted caregiver through our respite services, to assisting a client in the management of a chronic disease, we bring stability and support to lives made turbulent by illness or an acute condition.



In the tumultuous environment which dominated 2008 (and continues to do so), finding equilibrium is more relevant than ever. During difficult economic periods, fear can take the place of optimism and innovation is often squeezed out by practicality. These are undoubtedly challenging times that require us all to stay positive and work creatively with our partners to ensure our clients get the support and care they need.

Despite the turmoil, VHA has stayed the course to achieving its strategic objectives of:

- Ensuring organization sustainability, growth and development
- Collaborating to respond to community needs
- Strengthening organizational capacity
- Fostering innovation and excellence

In fact, never has the need for home care been more apparent. It is, after all that soft place to land during difficult times. Home is more than a roof over our head, or a place to sleep: it is the spirit of life, of hope and of comfort. Home soothes, it calms and, some would say, even heals. Home also has a practical side: it's an efficient

and cost-effective way to deliver many health services. This is the underpinning of Dr. Paul Williams' exciting research on "Balance of Care." Preliminary studies reveal between 30 and 50 per cent of seniors now waiting to enter a long-term care facility could actually remain in their own home if services such as meal preparation, housekeeping, medication management and transportation were provided.

Fortunately, *The Aging at Home Strategy*, a four-year initiative launched in 2008 by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care delivers – giving home care the prominence it needs and helping us launch new programs in the community. Ultimately it helps Ontarians, many of whom are our clients, live with the respect, dignity and independence they want, need and deserve. We can only hope the financial and social value of initiatives like these win out over the climate of fiscal restraint.

Two thousand and eight kicked off VHA's fourth journey on the road to accreditation (with our on-site survey set for 2009). Accreditation Canada's newly-minted program, Qmentum, includes extensive self-assessment components that allow us to see how we're doing internally in a number

of areas including a Worklife Pulse — a nod to the fact that a well-balanced, healthy and positive workforce is more inclined to deliver quality care.

The moratorium on CCAC contracts continued throughout 2008 — a break from the competitive process that allowed VHA more time to take stock of accomplishments and challenges and use these as a springboard for the planning of future endeavors. While the time away was productive, we anxiously await the resumption of the bidding process scheduled to begin again towards the latter part of 2009.

We're again indebted to our wonderful staff and volunteers who continue to provide their support, passion and compassion to the VHA team and to the clients they serve. We'd also like to offer our thanks to our devoted service partners, funders, donors and referral sources: your commitment is the lifeblood of our organization, and makes all the good we do possible.

It's with great optimism and excitement that we look to 2009: especially with the upcoming integration of COTA Health's Rehabilitation Services into the new division of

*VHA Rehab Solutions*. The inclusion of these services — and the over 400 professionals who'll join the VHA team — will allow us to provide a more complete basket of services to our clients and seamless, collaborative care.

Einstein once said, "Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving." With all VHA achieved in 2008 and all there is to look forward to in the coming years, we're clearly on the path and travelling full speed ahead.



---

Jeff Litwin  
*Board Chair*



---

Carol Annett  
*President & CEO*

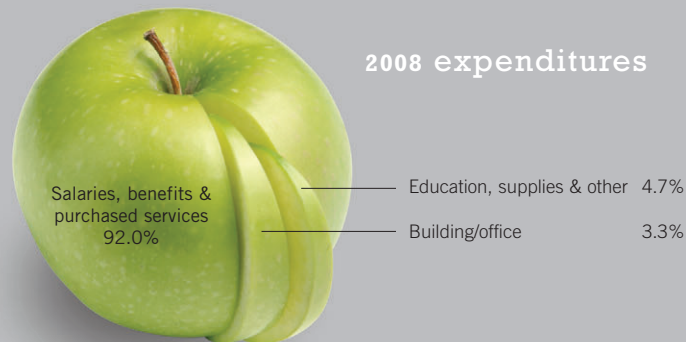
# facts and figures 2008

- **1,286** staff delivered more than **1.38** million units of nursing, personal support and homemaking services to **16,809** individuals with acute or chronic illness/disability.
- **102** evictions were prevented because of extreme cleaning services and follow-up support.
- **4,820** hours of parent relief services were provided — as well as **1,369** hours of volunteer support — to **169** at-risk families with children birth to six years of age.
- **30** tenants with severe mental illness were lodged at Adams House — a transitional housing initiative for those at risk of homelessness.
- **36,754** hours of charitable community support services were extended to people and families in crisis who: did not have the financial means to pay for help, were ineligible for government funded services and/or were in need of extra support to remain at home.

## 2008 revenue



## 2008 expenditures





# projects

- Helped Toronto Central CCAC deliver *Waiting at Home* (also supported by the Toronto Central LHIN). The program is part of a strategy to reduce wait times and eliminate unnecessary hospital admissions, by offering enhanced services, such as personal support and nursing, to patients awaiting long-term care placement.
- Joined forces with OCSA, VON, and St. Elizabeth Healthcare for *Actively Leading in Virtual Environments* (ALIVE). The project supports nurse managers and leaders in the home health care sector through leadership development orientation. It also helps participants — who often work in isolation — share experiences and ideas to enhance client-centered care.
- Began providing nursing services in four supportive housing sites at the request of several community support service providers, as part of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Aging at Home Strategy.
- Provided on-site staffing to Toronto East General Hospital, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph's Health Centre and Toronto Western Hospital for Toronto Central CCAC's Hospital to Home (H2H) initiative. The pilot project provided transportation and a PSW escort service to recently discharged patients to reduce hospital and emergency room over-crowding.
- Completed a diabetes project with VON and Southlake Hospital to provide clients with training and support of their diabetes through home monitoring equipment and/or home visits.
- Working with our community support agency partners, served 182 elderly clients through the collaborative *Home At Last* program in Scarborough, helping them transition from hospital to home.
- Became the "Preferred Home Care Provider" for University Health Network's employees and families.



“Truly successful decision making relies on a **balance** between  
**deliberate** and **instinctive thinking**.”

– Malcolm Gladwell



# reaching out, looking in

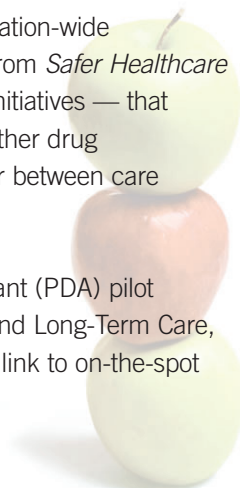
- Surveyed over 800 clients. 96 per cent would recommend VHA to a friend or family member.
- Created new job site and video that expands reach of recruitment and actively demonstrates VHA's status as an employer of choice.
- After much work and review, released a new and improved emergency and pandemic plan to ensure the highest level of client and staff safety.
- Created more user-friendly communications materials including an updated look for VHA's website.
- Implemented automated time reporting for personal support field staff, eliminating manual time sheets and improving service by providing more accurate visit information.
- Implemented *Issues Tracking* — an internal standardized electronic system designed to improve productivity and workflow by tracking employee work needs, challenges and their resolution.
- Improved incident reporting by standardizing documentation processes, promoting a patient safety culture and actively encouraging reporting of incidents.
- Enhanced clinical education for personal support workers through a more robust curriculum covering topics such as infection control, emergency planning, patient safety, medication administration and chronic disease management, increasing knowledge of best practices and ensuring consistency of care.
- Completed a structural review of VHA and created an organizational 'blueprint' for the future, focused on strengthening VHA as we grow.



“What I dream of is an art of balance...”  
— Henri Matisse

# sharing

- Initiated the *Support for Personal Support Workers Community of Practice* (CoP), funded by the Seniors Health Research Transfer Network. The CoP now has over 200 members and provides personal and virtual learning exchange opportunities for PSWs across Ontario.
- Increased our participation in presentations by 60 per cent including:
  - Client-centered care initiative and *House Calls* project at the Ministry of Health's Innovation Expo
  - VHA's Ethics Program and collaborative initiatives — *ALIVE Nursing Leadership* and *House Calls* — at the Canadian Home Care Conference
  - Falls Prevention and *Extreme Cleaning* at the LHIN's Aging at Home Innovation Fair
  - Panel presentation on *Ethics in Community Care* at the Canadian Bioethics Society Conference
  - Panel presentation on *PSW Community of Practice* at the Ontario Community Support Association annual conference
  - Client Services Redesign and *Recruiting the Best* at PS Network of Ontario Supervisor's Conference
- Participated in TEAMWORKS — a project involving Toronto Rehab, Bridgepoint Health, COTA Health and University of Toronto — to improve client outcomes in the home by working and learning collaboratively. Funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the project highlights the importance of open communication between home health professionals.
- Played an active role in MedRec — a nation-wide collaborative program which emerged from *Safer Healthcare Now!* and *Quality Healthcare Network* initiatives — that helps avoid medication duplication or other drug discrepancies during a patient's transfer between care providers.
- Participated in a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) pilot project through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, providing nurses in the field with a vital link to on-the-spot information for improved client care.







“... keep a balance in your life, acknowledge the **great powers** around us and in us. If you can do that, and live that way, you are really a **wise** man.”  
– Euripides

## board of directors

### OFFICERS

Jeff Litwin, Chair  
Vikas Sharma, *Past Chair*  
John Macfarlane,  
*First Vice Chair*  
Catherine Seguin,  
*Treasurer-Secretary*

### DIRECTORS

Don Bell\*  
Adowa K. Buahene  
Alan Ely  
Stephen Handler  
Susan Houston\*  
Cynthia Majewski  
Jeanette Munshaw  
Dr. John Nkansah  
Diane Savage  
Donna-Dale Smith\*  
Colleen Mulholland  
James Robertson  
Tomi Nieminen

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Fred Rodenhausen  
Jennifer Arnold

\*term ended June 2008

## people

- o Fortified our senior management team with the hiring of Jennifer Blum as CFO, VP Operations Support, and the promotion of Cheryl Perara, Director, New Ventures & Community Programs and Joy Klopp to Director, Contracts, Quality and Performance Management.
- o Honoured another incredible Hero in the Home, Albert Martens, for the compassionate and inspirational care he provided to his ailing wife, Helen.
- o Welcomed VHA staff from Chatham-Kent-Sarnia-Lambton to VHA Staff Appreciation celebration as one of their own, Sue Watson, nursing supervisor, was named Employee of the Year.
- o Celebrated the dedication and commitment of all our employees and honoured service award recipients: 53 staff with five years; 18 with 10 years; 20 with 15 years; two with 20 years and one with 30 years of excellent and dedicated service.
- o Invested in VHA staff, providing 6090 hours of training to strengthen and further develop our skilled workforce.
- o Realigned our supervisory resources to provide more direct support to our Personal Support Workers in the communities they work.
- o Participated in the New Grad Initiative through *Health Force Ontario* and provided mentoring and training opportunities to graduating nurses.



# vision, mission and values

## VISION

To be recognized as the best provider of home health care and community support services in the province.

## MISSION

To make a positive impact on every life we touch by providing complex care and simple comforts.

## VALUES

**Client Focused** - providing service that is responsive to individual and family needs and preferences, respectful of diversity and delivered with competence and compassion.

**Healthy Workplace** - creating a culture that values the contributions of its diverse workforce, fosters innovation and learning, supports employee wellness and expects everyone to work together in striving for excellence.

**Continuous Quality Improvement** - sharing the responsibility to provide the best possible care and service, monitor performance, evaluate service quality and address opportunities for improvement.

**Cooperation and Collaboration** - working with our community partners and other stakeholders.

**Advocacy** - effecting positive health care system change in support of client service needs.

As a charitable not-for-profit organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors, we all share a commitment to manage our resources with fiscal responsibility, to adhere to ethical practices in all our operations and to ensure, as we are able, that the most vulnerable in our community have access to our services.



thank you...

to all of our community partners, funders,  
donors and volunteers for their ongoing  
support: **without you our work could not continue.**

www.vha.ca



#### HEAD OFFICE

477 Mt. Pleasant Road, Suite 500,  
Toronto, Ontario M4S 2L9  
Tel: 416.489.2500  
Toll Free: 1.888.314.6622  
Fax: 416.489.7533

#### BRANCH OFFICE

111 Heritage Road, Suite 103  
Chatham, Ontario N7M 5W7  
Tel. 519.351.4414  
Toll-free: 1.866.309.1115  
Fax 519.351.5091



creative : the walsh group

Registered Charitable Number: 10818 5141 RR0002