



VHA Voice

ISSUE 6 ■ SPRING ■ 2016

JOIN US!

JUNE 22 7-9PM

Caring for the Caregiver Event

Join us for this very special event designed for caregivers!

- Come out and meet other caregivers over coffee and treats.
- Relax with a quick neck massage from a massage professional.
- Learn strategies from our expert panel to take better care of yourself and avoid caregiver burnout.

Where:

St Johns York Mills Anglican Church

19 Don Ridge Dr. Toronto, ON M2P 1H3

**RSVP to Patricia at:
416-482-4617**

* We're happy to try to help with special considerations or accommodations

Meet VHA's New Client Voice Liaison!

Stacey Ryan recently joined the VHA team as our Client Voice Liaison, but she has been involved with our organization for years. First as a caregiver to her daughter, Sadler, and then as a member of VHA's Client and Carer Advisory Council. We met with her to ask her some questions about her new role.



How did you get involved with VHA?

I was a caregiver for 17 years for my daughter, Sadler. After Sadler was discharged from the hospital, the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) determined the services we were going to receive. That's when we became involved with VHA Home HealthCare. The care was fantastic. Around the same time Sadler passed away, I was asked to join the original Client Voice Steering Committee.

What do you do for VHA now?

I just started as the Client Voice Liaison. I'm all about getting to know team leaders, supervisors and other VHA upper management. I'm here to create supports for robust client voice partnership at VHA. I work to make sure that the client voice is heard. I identify and organize clients for the best projects to get involved with.

How do you think your background can help VHA?

Having been a caregiver for 17 years and receiving services from VHA, I think my unique perspective will help me to closely relate to

clients and their stories and will help me to encourage them to become Client Voice volunteer partners, which will help the entire VHA organization continue to move towards Client and Family Centered Care.

Can you explain the need behind the Client Voice Advisory Council?

The Council introduces voice to our organization. With the help of the Client Voice Advisory Council, departments are able to run stuff by me and those involved to gain a better understanding of how to involve clients in each of their projects. We work to develop what the relationship could look like in terms of client involvement.

What projects are you most excited for? What does the future hold for you at VHA?

I'm excited to build a foundation and future around engaging our clients and matching them with projects. We're talking about doing client engagement open forum nights, where we invite caregivers and clients to come out, touch base with VHA and hear from some of our speakers.

Become a partner! Share your voice!

VHA is always looking to improve. Join the conversation. If you would like to share your voice and become a Client Voice partner at VHA, please contact **Stacey Ryan at 647-460-8595 or sryan@vha.ca** for more information.

VHA Home HealthCare
Creating More Independence



VHA's 2016 Heart of Home Care Award Winners!

VHA honoured three caregivers who won this year's Heart of Home Care Award, held on April 25, 2016, at Telus House. The award recognizes the extraordinary efforts of a friend or family member who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to provide a loved one who is disabled, elderly, or chronically ill with the support needed to live at home with more independence.

Although it was a tough decision, we hope you'll agree that our winners are deserving. Watch the amazing videos of our winners by going to <http://bit.ly/2016HeartVideos>.



Suzanne Retter **Winner of Caregiver to an Adult**

Suzanne is a real estate agent in Oshawa who met Bert through their shared interest in photography. Bert's "magnetic personality" helped them bond instantly.

Suzanne took Bert — originally from Tobago — on several road trips to explore and photograph the vast, beautiful landscapes of Ontario. But sadly, after six years of friendship, Bert was diagnosed with stage four cancer. With limited finances, and no family in Canada, Bert had few options. Suzanne didn't hesitate: she offered Bert a room in her home, put her career on hold and spent several months helping Bert live out his last days as comfortably and happily as possible. Suzanne simply felt "it was the human thing to do," but VHA nurse and nominator Jill Lindo felt differently. "Suzanne is truly an amazing woman," Lindo says.



Fiona Conely **Winner of Caregiver to a Child (Over 18)**

When her son Jason was only four months old, Fiona learned he had cerebral palsy. Then her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and Fiona lost a major support. But despite the odds as a young, single mother with limited education, Fiona has persevered. She returned to school to complete her high school diploma, overcame depression and took training courses that helped her to land a job at a charitable clothing bank. "She is the living embodiment of service to others which I think most of us are missing in our life today," says friend and nominator, Madelynn Cooper.



Memoona (Mona) Ismail **Winner of Caregiver to an Adult**

After learning her father-in-law Moosa — a former soccer player originally from South Africa — had Alzheimer's disease, Mona

put her own catering career on hold to become a full-time caregiver. Despite Moosa's failing faculties, the care Mona provided strengthened their bond. She played music and kept Moosa's brain stimulated with puzzles and crosswords and took on the role of "nurse" at home. At the hospital she was a strong advocate for her father-in-law with medical staff who were sometimes dismissive. Despite the challenges of caregiving, Mona is truly upbeat. "I have a mother-in-law who has now started with early dementia, so that's where I'm going to get all my experience (from Moosa) to pass on to her," says Mona. "She's the best," notes Fatima Ismail, Mona's mother-in-law with a smile.

Thank you to our sponsors Telus, PACE Consulting, Teak Printing Services Ltd., BDO Canada LLP, Manulife and FlashFrame Digital Media for their generous support!

2016 Heart of Home Care Award



Creating More Independence

www.vha.ca

Newsletter available in alternate formats on request.

Loved our newsletter? Thought we missed something? Want to be profiled or contribute?

We're interested in hearing your ideas, stories and suggestions!
Email communications@vha.ca or call 416-489-2500 ext. 4344,
toll free at 1-888-314-6622 ext. 4344

We're All Ears!

