



VHA Voice

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Making the Most of Your Summer Months

The long, hot, carefree days of summer make you want to kick back, relax and soak it all in. But, if you're caring for an ill or aging loved one, it can feel like summer has slipped away before either of you has had a chance to enjoy it. Staying active and engaged will allow you to reap health benefits, spend more time together and make the most of the season. Here are some summer fun ideas to get you started:

Be a tourist: While a getaway may not be possible, try seeing where you live with fresh eyes. Take a bus tour, visit a museum, enjoy summer festivals, outdoor concerts, movies in the park or sporting events. Many of the offerings are free, so check out your city's calendar to see what's planned for the summer.

Set a goal: Find something you and your loved one can work towards together. Try painting summer scenery, learning a new language, taking up pickle ball, or experimenting with photography. Many community centres and colleges offer summer classes that can help you reach your goals.

Picnic outside: Invite friends or family and find a spot to eat outside together—even if it's just the backyard. Pack classic summer food like berries, watermelon and corn on the cob or make it a potluck. A picnic can also include horseshoes, bocce ball or other outdoor games. Just remember to bring comfortable seating and shade for safety.

See more fun summer ideas for you and your loved one at www.familycaregiving.ca



Meet One of VHA's Newest Client Partners: David Shaul

At age 94, Dr. David Shaul is full of life, laughter and new responsibilities as a VHA Client and Carer Advisory Council member. A retired Obstetrician and Gynecologist who graduated from medical school 71 years ago. David was also the director of the Human Sexuality course at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine. Recently, he began receiving home care from VHA at the insistence of his children. He now has five workers visit him throughout the week to provide support and is excited to use his lived experiences to inform his contributions and insights to VHA's Client and Carer Advisory Council.



If David looks familiar, you may know him from his TV and radio shows about health. "Listeners would call into the radio station and ask me medical questions," explains David. He was asked to do panel discussions, teaching the audience techniques on how to communicate. "My solution was always communication. I never gave them answers, I simply taught them how to find the answers and how to talk to each other," he says.

One of the techniques he would give his audience was called "Red Lights and Green Lights." The couple had to spend two weeks apart writing about what made them feel good about each other, themselves and their life (green lights), and what they didn't like about themselves, their partner and their life (red lights). At the end of the two weeks they had to meet at a public place to discuss their findings. They had to do it in public—for example, at a restaurant where the tables were set up closely—so that they couldn't yell at each other or easily get up and leave. After sharing the green lights, and seeing that they agreed on lots of things, they would take on the red lights, bringing to the surface all the problems they'd been struggling with. "After this exercise they'd come to me and say, 'We don't need you anymore, we've figured out what we need to do,'" he says with humour.

David hopes to bring his expertise to the Client and Carer Advisory Council. "The reason this council is so important is because we're communicating," he says. "Communication is key. I'm learning a lot more about what VHA is trying to do for me and other clients, and they're learning a lot more about what we, the clients, would like to receive in care."

To date, David and his daughter, who also sits on the council, have attended three meetings. He has been listening attentively and soaking in the VHA culture. "I'm impressed with all the people who are part of the council," says David.

When asked what advice he would give to anyone who would like to join the council, David responds, "Don't be afraid to come to the council, because you will be heard, you will be listened to and respected, and you'll make an impact. So join the council!"



David (third from the right) poses as part of a group photo of VHA's Client Advisory Council in July 2018.

VHA Home HealthCare
Creating More Independence

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!



The Superstars of VHA Staff: Our 2018 Client Choice Award Winners



The Client Choice Awards celebrate VHA staff and service providers who our clients and their families think are outstanding. So when we asked you for help finding our 2018 Client Choice Award winners, we weren’t surprised to have hundreds of nominations coming in! To those who nominated, thank you for your effort. It was a tough decision because all of the nominees are deserving. Below are VHA’s 2018 Client Choice Award winners!

Watch the amazing videos of our workers and their clients online at: bit.ly/2018ClientChoiceWinners



Carmencita Cruz
Personal Support Worker
Nominated by Teresa Verity

For more than six years, Carmencita has been a PSW for Teresa’s mom, who has Alzheimer’s. The relationship between the two is amazing. Carmencita has learned all of her mom’s favourite hymns, rhymes, and poems. She cares for her client as if she was part of her own family. “There are things that Carmencita has picked up on that I haven’t—and I’m pretty intuitive when it comes to my mom,” explains Teresa about the relationship between Carmencita and her mother. “It’s amazing to care that much...”



Christine Froude
Personal Support Worker
Nominated by Debbie Bishop, Jean and Sonita Jagan, and Leslie Moore

“Going to the hospital on her own time and going out of her way... you wouldn’t see a lot of other PSWs do something like that,” says Debbie, remembering the times Christine had supported her mom Marie during her illness. While in the hospital, Christine would take the time to sing, read, and just be there for Marie when she needed it. “I’m really, really glad that she won this,” says Debbie.



Debby Zinger
Personal Support Worker
Nominated by Tom Hurst

Debby often goes the extra mile to build a relationship of support, trust, and laughter with her clients. “If you just show somebody a little bit of care and that you’re there for them, anything can happen,” explains Debby in between cracking jokes with one of her clients, Marlene. “I love my job. This is number one. I wouldn’t trade it for the world.”



Janeth Valenciano
Registered Nurse
Nominated by Denise McLaughlin

Janeth is a favourite among the students and staff in the school where she works with children with complex medical needs. “Regardless of the classroom that she’s in, she’s always smiling, she’s always positive, she’s always offering to help... and this is on top of her role as a nurse,” says Denise. “I think we are lost when Janeth is not here and that’s how we know how valuable and important she is to us.”



Marife Felibello
Personal Support Coordinator
Nominated by Emmanuella Kaputo

“She is an uplifting presence, not just to me, but to everyone around her,” says Emmanuella when describing how compassionate and caring Marife is when dealing with sensitive client situations as part of the coordination team at VHA. The coordination team wouldn’t be the same without Marife’s optimism, support and dedication.



Medhanit Negusse
Personal Support Worker
Nominated by Sarojimi and Sanmugam Balasingam, and Sandy Carruthers

“She is so patient and nice and she knows what he needs,” says Sarojimi, explaining how Medhanit makes the couple’s lives a little easier every day. “To an outstanding lady, the PSW by the name of Medhanit, who is looking after me for the last three years—thank you,” says Sanmugam.



Nancy Becker
Personal Support Worker
Nominated by Vinny Vaithalingam, Dolores Smith, Sakko Anakaropar, Martha Grzincic, Paul Nout, and Davinder Varlier

“Sometimes my mom doesn’t get along well with everyone. But Nancy... she loves her!” exclaims nominator Vinny. “If a new person comes, I’ve got to be sitting by the side of the phone, but with Nancy I don’t need to... she will get along well.”



Trudi Stewart
Registered Practical Nurse
Nominated by Andrea Lomelin

Raising a child with a rare genetic syndrome can be challenging, but finding a worker that connects with your child makes it easier. “I can tell she loves him and he loves her too. They are always playing, and she knows him very well...” says mom and nominator Andrea, adding that she hears Trudi and her son Iker laughing from the other room. “Thank you for loving Iker the way you do. You are great!”



Yeshi Namdhak
Personal Support Worker
Nominated by Maggie Hopcraft

“He’s dedicated, very loyal, and ... you can tell he loves what he does,” says Maggie while sitting beside her husband and VHA client, George. According to Maggie, Yeshi and George have a solid relationship where the two just understand each other. “We are blessed to have been sent this gem.”



Yolanda Lacap
Personal Support Worker
Nominated by Amr Elimam, Mary Kaia, Mary Cottle, and Joyce Stewart

“To be honest with you, it’s an overdue nomination. There were many occasions over the past few years that Yolanda was amazing,” explains Amr while sharing stories about how Yolanda has gone above and beyond to support his sister, Dina. Yolanda is like a family member and really makes a difference in their lives. “There were times of crisis that without her, I wouldn’t know what I would’ve done.” She was there for us. She’s an angel.”

Become a partner! Share your voice!

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

