



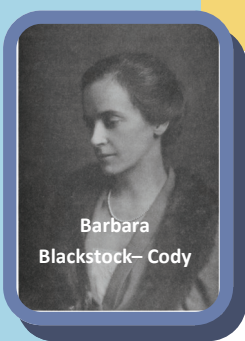
VHA Voice

ISSUE 2 ■ Winter ■ 2015

Who is Barbara Blackstock-Cody?

VHA's founder Barbara Blackstock-Cody was a trailblazer and continues to inspire and motivate VHA's vision. She became a nurse during WWI and was part of the first graduating class of the University of Toronto's Public Health Nursing in 1921. **In 1925 she founded Toronto's Visiting Homemakers Association.**

Barbara connected to people in a meaningful way, using her influence and intelligence to better her community. VHA's Barbara Blackstock-Cody Client Choice Award winners embody our founder's compassionate spirit and propel our legacy as a visionary of home and community health care forward.



Nominate a VHA Worker for a Client Choice Award!

VHA is celebrating its 90th anniversary! What started as a little charity of 14 homemakers has blossomed into a diverse organization of over 2,000 caring health care professionals.

And while we hope that every worker provides spectacular client care, we know there are "standouts." People who go above and beyond to support you or your loved one. They're kind, dedicated and passionate, putting the needs of their clients and families first.



This year, we're asking clients and family members to share your stories of spectacular VHA care by **nominating your nurse, personal support worker (PSW), rehab service provider or client service co-ordinator for VHA's Barbara Blackstock-Cody Client Choice Award.**

How can I nominate my VHA worker?

Tell us about how your VHA worker who has truly made a difference in your life. Submit your nomination **by March 16th 2015:**

- Online at www.vha.ca/clientchoice
- By calling 416-489-2500 extension 7007 or toll free at: 1-888-314-6622 ext. 7007
- By writing us a letter and addressing it to:
VHA Home HealthCare, Client Choice Award
30 Soudan Ave. Suite 600, Toronto, ON M4S 1V6

Remember to give us the name of the VHA worker you are nominating, tell us why they should receive the award and give examples of why you feel the worker is so spectacular! We look forward to hearing from you!

We're All Ears!!

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: 1-888-314-6622 ext. 4344.



VHA Client Profile

At 19, Michelle Amerie was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). But instead of slowing her down, it's taken her to new and exciting heights!

What's your philosophy on living with MS?

“I have two ways of looking at life: my glass is either half empty, or half full. I choose the latter. When or if things change, I have to figure out how to reinvent my life so that my glass always remains full. I don't have to allow the progression of the disease to take away my identity, my character, my ability to do certain things. *Do I stop being me?* No! I take back control. VHA plays a big part in making this happen everyday.”

What have you done in spite of your MS?



Michelle
Amerie

“Take skydiving. I originally bought a backpack and was going to walk across Europe. Well, it became very difficult for me to walk with the backpack empty let alone with it full. I had to do something just as exciting, just as fulfilling as what I had initiated. I didn't need my legs to skydive. I just needed that courage!”

What advice would you give someone with a progressive disease like MS?

“Say it. Do it. Live it. I have a saying, ‘a bad day today means a stronger day tomorrow.’ Keep going when you have those bad days because there are lots of good days, you just have to find them. Don't give up on yourself!”

Why do you enjoy being on VHA's Client and Family Advisory?

“There has been so much that has been given to me by having that relationship that I feel it's the least that I can do to give back.”

Playing with Purpose: Caregiver Tips

By Cody Georgeneau, VHA Registered Nurse, Child and Family Program

Often as parents and caregivers of children with a serious health condition, we are so focused on care that we overlook the importance of helping kids cope with a diagnosis they don't understand.

Don't let your child's health condition limit their imagination and creativity! **Purposeful play** can help critically ill children develop, grow and learn about the world around them and express themselves. Play can not only reduce anxiety, but also boosts self-confidence, develops trust in others, enhances creativity and builds healthy relationships. Help children cope better with stressful procedures, unfamiliar environments and isolation by:



- Letting them **play with and hold medical equipment** to ease fears about unknown procedures like taking vital signs.
- **Blowing bubbles**—it's a good breathing technique to help kids relieve anger or anxiety.
- **Playing with puppets** to help children act out their own emotions.
- **Playing with blocks** to develop hand-eye coordination, motor and spatial skills.
- **Using nursery rhymes** to explore sounds and develop language skills.
- **Playing follow the leader** to encourage large muscle development.
- **Developing bedtime rituals**, whether they're reading books, a bath or songs, to create a sense of safety and stability when your child is dealing with ongoing procedures, separation anxiety, etc.
- Using a **picture chart** to help kids identify, express and communicate their emotions.
- **Playing board games** to teach kids the art of patience as they need to take turns, sit still and cope with the ups and downs of the game.
- **Using books, puzzles and movies** to help distract your child from any pain they may have.

Share your voice! VHA is always looking to improve. Join the conversation as a Client and Family Partner and **share your ideas to make our services spectacular!**

Visit www.vha.ca or call Roseanna Wirt at 416-489-2500 ext. 4327, toll free at 1-888-314-6622 ext. 4327 for more information.

