



# VHA Voice

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## The Pan Am Games are Coming to the GTA!

The greater Toronto area (GTA) is hosting the Pan Am Games from July 10 through July 26 while the Para Pan Am Games are scheduled from August 7 to 15 at various locations throughout the region. Top performance athletes from North and South America will be in attendance and daily events/competitions will be held during these dates.

And while these are exciting events, they are also sure to cause increased traffic, road closures and delays in certain pockets of the GTA including areas of Durham and Mississauga. Know that **client safety is our priority** and that VHA is working hard to ensure your services and care are not affected.

We will be operating “business as usual” throughout event dates, but there may be delays. We are working with staff and service providers to keep you informed of any issues as they arise and appreciate your patience and understanding.

Go Canada go!



## Eight Spectacular Workers Win 2015 Client Choice Award!

VHA is committed to bringing the voices, feedback and ideas of clients and their families into all that we do. So what could be better than asking YOU our clients and families for your input about who should win VHA’s Barbara Blackstock-Cody Client Choice Awards?

We received nearly 400 nominations! Stories of committed, compassionate and spectacular care spoke volumes about extraordinary VHA staff and service providers. We want to thank you for taking the time to nominate and for sending us your heartfelt letters, emails and phone calls. It was a tough decision but we hope you’ll agree, our winners are nothing short of deserving. In fact, you can view videos of these touching stories by going online to [bit.ly/clientchoicewinners](http://bit.ly/clientchoicewinners).

Congratulations to all our winners and to you—our clients and families—for making the Client Choice Awards such a stunning success. Below are some highlights of each winner.



**Veronica Foisy, Personal Support Worker** nominated by **Ruth Adams**

“For nearly 20 years she’s always come through the door with a smile on her face,” says Ruth. “She is really upbeat and positive...It’s really a pleasure having her in the home. She really takes care of my mom the way she would take care of my mom if mom was *her* mother.”

“My mom was almost ready to die and then they sent Susan and she has just been amazing with my mom. I’ve noticed my mom change for the better.”



**Roselyn Subba, Personal Support Worker** nominated by **Anne Thomson**

“On the day my husband unexpectedly died, Mrs. Subba visited us to pay her respects and to help me bathe and change his clothes.

She was a wonderful emotional and spiritual support in my time of need,” says Anne.



**Susan Diocares, Personal Support Worker** nominated by **Dina Coronios**

“She is always so cheerful and she has truly made a difference in my mom’s life,” says Dina.

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](mailto:communications@vha.ca) or call

416-489-2500 ext. 4344 toll free: 1-888-314-6622 ext. 4344.

We’re All Ears!!



[www.vha.ca](http://www.vha.ca)

# Keep Your Cool This Summer!

## Here are some hot tips on staying cool:

- Drink lots of water
- Use a fan to circulate cooler air
- Turn off lights, computer and other electronics when possible
- Wear light and loose clothing
- Cool down by taking a bath or shower



**Rose Sullivan, Personal Support Worker nominated by Carolyn Strangrat & Diogo C. Lobo**

“Rose seems to go above and beyond her job. She does many things for my father and the one thing she does is always try to engage him in conversation and she makes him laugh and sings to him,” says Carolyn. Diogo notes; “She has attention to detail and does the job completely not halfway and puts you at ease...that’s what I like about her.”

**Hermyn Pearce, Personal Support Worker nominated by Jean and Kathleen Smith**

“Over the years we’ve noticed Hermyn does a lot more than just her work and especially in this last year. My father was a difficult person and didn’t want any help at all but in the end he realized he needed help and I know he would ask Hermyn to do those extra things,” says Kathleen.



**Amanda Tope, Nurse nominated by Catherine Seaton**

“My 90 year-old father was nearing the end of his life...so when it came time to talk about palliative care I knew I needed to assemble a whole new team around my father. So the

people in the residence called the palliative care consultation team and into our lives came Amanda. What she gave me—her biggest gift—was to take the complexity out of managing this diverse inter-professional team so that I could be the daughter I needed to be,” says Catherine.

**Elizabeth Dent, Social Worker nominated by Khatereh Ebrut & Siroos Soleimani**

“She was dedicated and she was serious and that’s why we nominated her. And if it wasn’t for her help we wouldn’t be able to find this place (a facility where their daughters receive 24-7 care while still living independently) for our daughters,” says Siroos. Adds his wife Khatereh; “Everything turned out very good miraculously and I am happy for Elizabeth, our daughters and for ourselves.”



**Roxanne Lewis, Office Staff nominated by Manzel Linton**

“She is an excellent team player when she walks into a room she lights it up,” says Roxanne. “She can help you get through those challenging things. She’s got this way of calming down the person and helping the person to understand they are being heard and she will take care of the situation—whatever it is.”

## VHA Honours Caregivers with Heart of Home Care Award

Now in its 10th year, the Heart of Home Care Award recognizes the unwavering dedication, love and perseverance of family caregivers throughout Ontario. This year, thanks to our generous sponsors—Teak Printing, Telus, PACE Consulting and Standard Life—nominees and winners were also invited to a "Take a Break Caregiving Lunch." Lunch was followed by a fascinating talk on **Caregiving in the 21st Century** and our Heart of Home Care Award presentations.

This year we honoured three inspirational family caregivers:

- Single mom **Joanne Barker** who is the primary caregiver to her son Christopher, 14 who has a rare form of dystonic cerebral palsy. Joanne’s determination and heart have helped Christopher defy the odds of his diagnosis every step of the way.
- **Dora O’Brien**, who for 52 years has cared for her son Kevin who lives with myositis ossifican, a rare and debilitating disease. Despite the condition’s grip, Dora and Kevin’s “glass half full” approach to life is truly inspiring.
- For 64 years farmer **Fred Heeny** has been married to Elizabeth, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. Fred’s unwavering love for his wife is a real-life version of the popular movie, “The Notebook.”



**Left to right:** Winner Joanne Barker enjoys lunch with her son Christopher, winner Dora O’Brien speaking to City TV, winner Fred Heeny enjoys caregiver presentation.

To watch the videos of these amazing stories online go to [bit.ly/Heart2015](http://bit.ly/Heart2015)

**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](http://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.

Available in alternate formats on request.

