



# VISITING NURSE SERVICE OF ITHACA AND TOMPKINS COUNTY

*The Heart and Hands of Home Care*

Volume 3

Issue 1

Visiting Nurse Service of Ithaca and Tompkins County  
Quarterly Newsletter  
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Ahh...fall...falling leaves, apples, pumpkins, the last of summer fading away; here in upstate New York, we know what a beautiful journey it can be from summer to autumn.



*Welcome Fall!*  
**Falls Prevention™**  
**STEP UP TO STOP FALLS**

Along with fall, we all know colder weather is coming. During those months when the weather is cold and blustery, it's especially important to be aware of your footing to be able to prevent falls before they happen. The following excerpt is taken from the article [Falls Prevention Initiative in Tompkins County Produces Good Results](#), which was published on the Tompkins County website October 9, 2015.

“Tompkins County, in a collaborative effort of the Health Planning Council, Office for the Aging, the Department of Emergency Response, Finger Lakes Independence Center, **Visiting Nurse Service**, Lifelong, the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute, and the Department of Occupational Therapy participated in the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York's Step Up to Falls initiative. Tompkins County has seen a decrease in hospitalization due to falls from 221 to 208 per 1000 persons between 2008 and 2013.”

VNS works hard every day to keep this positive trend going, as we work together with our patients and families to continue to decrease the number of falls and injuries from falls. Please visit our Falls Prevention page at

<http://www.vnsithaca.org/initiatives/fallsprevention.html>

to learn more about how VNS is partnering with other local community organizations to help spread the word about falls prevention.

## Home Health Aide Skills Training

The Health Foundation of Western and Central NY Cohort 4 Fellows (HFWCNYC) group, which includes Visiting Nurse Service , has applied for a grant from HFWCNTC to provide life skill trainings for home health care agencies to increase the life skills of home health care aides. The training will take place over the next 2-3 years with two trainings in Western NY and two to take place in Central NY.

The training will present participants with a toolkit of 3 life skills training programs including the Botvin Life Skills program, the Care Well program and the "Life Skills Program" developed by the Finger Lakes/Monroe County VNS including time management, money management and cultural competency. Local examples of the Botvin and VNS Life Skills programs will be presented and video of training components will be taped to develop a webinar to provide sustainability and continuation of the training post-grant period. Included in the life skills training, participants will receive an additional toolkit on how to host home health aide "employee recognition" events to assist in staff retention and recruitment. Training will also include an agreement of the trained agencies to participate in employee recruitment/retention data collection and a follow-up meeting (either on-site or as a group) post training to assess inclusion of the material into organizational practices. This data will also assist in efforts to sustain this training model.

The Gerontology Institute at Ithaca College will provide marketing materials for the training and will market to home health care agency providers in our region. Marketing will be targeted to include Human Resources staff and staff who could implement the training in their agencies. Tompkins County Office for Aging Director, also a HFWCNY Fellow, will pilot the HHA recognition event in Tompkins County, in partnership with the Long Term Health Committee in Tompkins County. The event will be held in the Spring of 2016 to gather data to present at the trainings to develop the "recognition event toolkit" for agencies and communities. Visiting Nurse Service of Ithaca and Tompkins County will serve as the fiscal agency for the program.

VNS is currently using the BOTVIN Life Skills Program to train its Home Health Aides.

**VNS employees taking a break to smile for the camera during a Home Health Aide meeting.**





## Eden At Home (The Eden Alternative)

VNS employees are attending Eden at Home workshops.

The Eden Alternative was cofounded by Dr. Bill Thomas and his wife Judith Meyers-Thomas. Together their vision has been building a Human Habitat that is changing the lives of Elders and their care partners. It advocates a shift from institutional models of care to person-directed values and practices that put the person first. The ten principles of the Eden Alternative have been applied to improving quality of life for the Elders living at home, Eden at Home. This emphasizes building collaborative care partner teams empowered by concepts central to person directed care. It promotes a culture of meaningful care in our communities that does not see the needs of caregivers as separate from the needs of care receivers, but rather advocates for the well-being of the whole care partnership. Working together, empowered care partner teams help to ensure the independence, dignity and continued growth and development of all involved by eliminating loneliness, helplessness and boredom for all care partners on the team.

### The Ten Principles of The Eden Alternative® are:

1. The three plagues of loneliness, helplessness, and boredom account for the bulk of suffering among our Elders.
2. An Elder-centered community commits to creating a human habitat where life revolves around close and continuing contact with plants, animals, and children. It is these relationships that provide the young and old alike with a pathway to a life worth living.
3. Loving companionship is the antidote to loneliness. Elders deserve easy access to human and animal companionship.
4. An Elder-centered community creates opportunity to give as well as receive care. This is the antidote to helplessness.
5. An Elder-centered community imbues daily life with variety and spontaneity by creating an environment in which unexpected and unpredictable interactions and happenings can take place. This is the antidote to boredom.
6. Meaningless activity corrodes the human spirit. The opportunity to do things that we find meaningful is essential to human health.
7. Medical treatment should be the servant of genuine human caring, never its master.
8. An Elder-centered community honors its Elders by de-emphasizing top-down bureaucratic authority, seeking instead to place the maximum possible decision-making authority into the hands of the Elders or into the hands of those closest to them.
9. Creating an Elder-centered community is a never-ending process. Human growth must never be separated from human life.
10. Wise leadership is the lifeblood of any struggle against the three plagues. For it, there can be no substitute.

We are most fortunate to have the Thomas family members (Bill, Jude and Haleigh) as well as Laura Beck, Eden Trainer, as the facilitators in our employees' Eden at Home workshops. Our employees are anxious to use the new learning in the interactions with VNS clients and their families. For more information about The Eden Alternative, Eden at Home and their work across the USA and abroad, please visit their worksite: [www.edenalt.org](http://www.edenalt.org).



VNS is proud to welcome more additions to our team:

~Patrick Anguish, Physical Therapist~  
~Carol Blank, Nursing Case Manager~  
~Sarah Gilbert, Nursing Case Manager~  
~Lloyd Graves, Physical Therapist~  
~Rachel Mix, Home Health Aide~  
~Carolynn Weeks, Nursing Case Manager~

We are very fortunate to welcome all of our new employees!



We are expanding and looking for even more nursing case managers! If you are an RN looking for an exciting, fun place to work, please look on our webpage, [www.vnsithaca.org](http://www.vnsithaca.org) and visit the [Employment](#) section, then call our office at 607-273-0466 and ask to speak with Judy Eckard, our Human Resources Manager.



Look for our next quarterly newsletter, where we will feature National Home Care Month in November!

In the meantime, click here to sign up for our mailing list:

<http://www.vnsithaca.org/contact.html>

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