Dr. Mulhern’s Practice Merges with Grace Cottage

Some people compared it to Extreme Home Makeover, Community Wellness Center Edition, others to a good old-fashioned barn raising. It was magical to watch 30 ServCorps volunteers from Hartford, CT, come to Townshend during two weeks in September to build a 1,000 sq. ft. addition and transform the interior of the Heins Building into a Community Wellness Center.

“They started with just a concrete slab on Monday morning,” said Jim Crozier, Facilities Manager at Grace Cottage, “and by Wednesday we had a new structure with four walls and roof trusses. Most of these folks are retired or still working in professional careers in other fields - we had an airline pilot, an oncologist, a symphony orchestra manager, a postmaster. But what really impressed all of us was their energy, their enthusiasm, their construction expertise - they’ve done this many times before.”

“This was probably our favorite project to date and we’ve done a lot of them,” said Rich Grobe of ServCorps. “The community was so appreciative, and the Grace Cottage employees were so helpful, as was the Townshend Congregational Church, where we cooked our dinners.”

The Community Wellness Center would not have been possible if it weren’t for generous donations in the form of a $100,000 grant from the Fanny Holt Ames and Edna Louise Holt Fund, an $80,000 bequest from the estate of June Kipp, donations made in memory of Heidi Shine, and West Townshend architect Vance Hosford’s gift of his architectural design services. A late November ribbon-cutting ceremony is anticipated.

Volunteers Rally to Build New Community Wellness Center

Dr. Alexandra Barstow and Dr. Edward Mulhern

Dr. Edward Mulhern, who has been in private practice family medicine in Townshend since 1987, has announced that he will be merging his practice with Grace Cottage Family Health. Dr. Mulhern will continue to see his patients as before.

With the many changes occurring in the delivery of medical care during recent years (computerization, for example), Dr. Mulhern feels this is a prudent transition to make at this time. When he eventually retires, this new arrangement will benefit his patients.

Beginning this month, Grace Cottage’s Dr. Alexandra Barstow will be seeing her patients at the combined facility, Dr. Mulhern’s office at 152 Grafton Road in Townshend, which will be known as Grace Cottage Family Health East. Appointments with Dr. Barstow will still be made by calling (802) 365-4331 and appointments with Dr. Mulhern can be made by calling (802) 365-4318.
An admirer writes:

“My favorite hospital is the 19-bed Grace Cottage... Thanks to a very generous and supportive community, which includes devoted patients, committed volunteers, an amazingly talented, compassionate and hardworking staff, and wonderful benefactors, Vermont’s smallest hospital [is celebrating] six decades of saving lives, caring for the sick, helping those who are dying, and encouraging those who are well to stay that way. It’s the Vermont way of living, staying well, and dying. America could learn a lot from Vermont.”

Thomas H. Naylor
Charlotte, VT

A Word from the CEO

It is a great privilege for me to serve as CEO of Grace Cottage Hospital. Since assuming the job 18 months ago, I have developed an even deeper appreciation for a place that I already held in high esteem. What I see is a healthcare organization that makes a tremendous difference in peoples’ lives, in our community, and in the quality of life of our patients, our staff, and southeastern Vermont.

Grace Cottage has a new Mission Statement, a new Vision Statement, and a list of five critical issues that have been identified by employees, medical staff, leadership, and the Board:

Mission: “Excellence in healthcare, putting people first.”
Vision: “To be the standard for patient care.”
Five Most Critical Issues:
- Productivity/efficiency
- Facility space/parking
- Communications/computer systems
- Community support/ownership
- Healthcare finances

Task forces have been formed to work on these issues over the next few months; the goal is to make Grace Cottage stronger now and for future generations.

I would like to thank the staff and the community for making Grace Cottage Hospital a shining jewel. Without the support of both staff and community, Grace Cottage would not be able to provide such top-quality care in its personal, hands-on manner. This commitment to “putting people first” makes Grace Cottage a special place to work and to receive care.

Mick Brant

Time for Flu Shots

Don’t forget to get your seasonal flu shot this year. To schedule a flu shot at Grace Cottage Family Health, call (802) 365-4331.

For up-to-the-minute information on the status and spread of the H1N1 flu virus, including what the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is recommending regarding vaccination for this particular strain of flu virus, go to www.flu.gov.

Dr. Backus Cutting Back?

“I will again be trying to reduce my working hours, beginning in January. My office hours in 2010 will be Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. I will continue to see my patients over the age of 60, with the exceptional few younger fry whom I will continue to follow for unique medical reasons.

“For my other patients, I would strongly encourage you to sign up with the newest addition to the Grace Cottage Family Health practice, Dr. Carol Blackwood, our full-time female Family Physician/Geriatrician.

“I continue to feel blessed to be here at Grace Cottage, with this wonderful collection of colleagues, in this exceptional center of healthcare which has kept the patient first.”

Bob Backus, M.D.

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The mission of Grace Cottage Hospital is to provide excellence in healthcare, putting people first. The vision for the future is to be the standard for patient care.
NEW EMPLOYEES

Dr. Carol Blackwood MD
Cassandra Blodgett Lab Tech
Florence Burt Occupational Therapist
Meghan Curtin Radiologic Technologist
Christina Doucette Radiologic Technologist
Robin Ekstrom RN
Rebecca Gantt Pharmacy Tech
Mary Jane Miles RN
Warren Montgomery Physician Assistant
Catherine Nemchek Telephone Receptionist
Eva Pare Housekeeper
Marie Plumley Dietary Aide
Marina Potter Housekeeper
Walter Rae RN
Jeanette Reynolds Pharmacy Tech
William Roohan Physical Therapist
Molly Teich RN
Christine Whipple Pharmacy Tech

WISHES FULFILLED . . .

♥ Grace Cottage’s hanging flower baskets were spectacular this summer, thanks to gifts from Jim Crozier, Ken & Maria Denzel, Mary Gyori, Joan McConnel, Elizabeth Walker, and “Anonymous.”

♥ The Irwin and Dorothy Nessel Foundation donated very generously for patient care, and the Panwy Foundation gave a very generous gift for Endowment.

♥ The Deerfield Valley Rotary gave a gift to purchase a wheelchair for the Rehabilitation Department.

♥ Ken & Ellie Lemire, Jean Coburn, Jean Jordan donated the funds to purchase walker arm attachments, and Duane Murphy gave a donation for a heavy-duty walker.

♥ Betty Saunders donated the funds to purchase an over-the-bed table for a hospital bed.

♥ The funds to purchase new privacy window blinds for patient rooms were donated by Paula Filipowich, Bill & Leona Tabell, and Bill & Pat Lincoln.

♥ Thanks to Gifford Hospital in Randolph, VT, which donated a blood culture analyzer to Grace Cottage.

♥ Sarah Messenger and Paul Weber and Bill & Leona Tabell donated the funds to purchase temporal scanning thermometers.

WISHES MADE . . .

♥ An additional continuous passive motion machine is needed for hospital patients who are rehabilitating from knee replacements; the cost is $2,000.

♥ An additional wheelchair is needed for the Rehabilitation department - the cost is $500.

♥ A heavy-duty wheelchair wedge cushion is needed for patients using wheelchairs; the cost is $295. Three basic cushions for patient using wheelchairs are also needed, $50 each.

♥ The funds to purchase a sofa and two comfy chairs for the Community Wellness Center support-group lounge are needed. The cost is $500 for the sofa and $250 for each chair.

♥ Funds are needed to purchase a colposcope. The main goal of colposcopy is to prevent cervical cancer by detecting precancerous lesions early and treating them. The cost is $16,000; any amount will help.

♥ A medical-grade refrigerator to hold vaccines is needed in Grace Cottage Family Health; the cost is $500.

♥ Nine additional over-the-bed tables are needed for patient rooms. A vanity mirror and a compartment for personal items, plus a pull-out table for extra space are great features for patient comfort. $500 each.

A sincere thank you:

“Where else in the world does one feel that hospital staff are old friends who care about you? They do at Grace Cottage! … Thank you all for being the caring group that you are.”

Janet Severance
Wilmington, VT

Do We Have Talent?

Grace Cottage’s Got Talent will be held on Friday, November 6th at 7 p.m. at the Townshend Town Hall. Dr. Bob Backus will be the Master of Ceremonies, and there will be a variety of five-minute skits by the talented staff of Grace Cottage. Admission is by free-will donation. Come join the fun!
A grateful patient writes:
Many, many thanks for the excellent care given to our mother during her last days at Grace Cottage. She didn’t want to be anywhere else, and we all knew why. It was like being at home. Everyone was caring, thoughtful, and treated her with the utmost respect.

Pat Noble
Chester, VT
CEO Mick Brant, Gov. Jim and Dorothy Douglas, Effie Chamberlin, and Dr. Otis’s daughters, Carleen Pelsue and Marion Lewis, cut Grace Cottage’s 60th birthday cake.

Grace Cottage beach balls + kids + fountain = HUGE HIT!

Dr. Shafer AND the Stork (?!)

Spellbound!

The Townshend Common is filled on Fair Day.

Magic wand for a magical day!

Grace Cottage beach balls + kids + fountain = HUGE HIT!
**Auxiliary News - Best Fair Day Ever!**

“It’s the best Fair Day ever,” was the refrain heard around the Common. Perhaps fairgoers were referring to the beautiful weather, the visit by Governor Jim Douglas to cut the birthday cake, the New England Performing Arts circus troupe hanging from a trapeze by the gazebo, the crowd, the children cavorting in the fountain with Grace Cottage beach balls...whatever it was, it was magical. See you on August 7, 2010, for the 60th Annual Hospital Fair Day!

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**Soggy But Spirited Tour de Grace**

Saturday, September 12, dawned dark and stormy, but that didn't dampen the spirits of 30 stalwart riders, ranging in age from 5 to 70 years old, and 35 volunteers who cheered, fed, and entertained the riders along the 19-mile mostly-downhill route from Stratton Mountain to Grace Cottage. Thanks to sponsors BB's Landscaping, D&K's Jamaica Grocery, Equipe Sport, Howard Printing, Solstice at Stratton, Stratton Resort, and Three Mountain Inn, and pledges raised and registrations paid by those who did and didn't ride, almost $4,000 was raised, after ride expenses, for patient care at Grace Cottage. Next year, the ride will be on September 11th, with a rain date of September 12th!

Ruth O'Hearn and her grandson Jake were among those who enjoyed this year's Tour de Grace.

**A personal thank you:**

“While on vacation in Vermont in late August, I quite unexpectedly had occasion to avail myself of your emergency room ... I would like to extend a personal thank you to the highly competent emergency staff, as they brought expertise, control and kindness to a rather frightening situation ... Without exception, everyone involved managed the situation with the highest level of professionalism. I’d also like to thank those behind the scenes who support the hospital operationally and administratively, thereby allowing the doctors to do what they do best.”

**Stan Holt, Auxiliary President**

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**Medication Collection Day**

On Saturday, November 7, from 9 - 11 a.m., Grace Cottage Hospital (with the help of Windham Solid Waste Management) will be accepting expired or unused medications for appropriate disposal. With recent press about the damage being done to the environment by medication that has been flushed down the toilet or tossed in the garbage, this free service is very timely. Call 365-3624 for more information.

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Auctioneer Kit Martin kids around with Governor Jim Douglas before taking bids on lunch with Vermont’s chief executive.
Gifts were recently received in honor of:

- Dr. Robert Backus
- Effie Chamberlin
- Emergency Room Staff
- Grace Cottage Nurses
- Grace Cottage Staff
- Dr. Walter Griffiths
- The Linder Family - Moss, Elizabeth, Elkanah, Cara & Maris
- Dr. Edward Mulhern
- Dr. Timothy Shafer

“...I never fail to hear people saying what a great hospital Grace Cottage is. I have never heard anything but praise, which is saying so much. Keep up the great work!”

Kathryn Nowell
Brattleboro, VT

The Gift of Giving

Marie J. Goodrich wanted to celebrate Grace Cottage’s 60th Anniversary by donating $60, but she couldn’t give that amount all at once. So, each month since July, Marie has sent a check for $20.

Marie’s devotion sums up what makes Grace Cottage special; last year, donations such as Marie’s totaled almost $600,000 given in appreciation or support of patient care at Grace Cottage.

Currently a resident of Saxtons River, VT, Marie and her husband, Harvey (who died in 1989), were neighbors to many - at one time or another, they lived in Townshend, Wardsboro, Jamaica, and Athens Grafton, as they raised their five children.

“Grace Cottage Hospital has been there for my family since 1965,” said Marie. “Two of my children were born there, and I’ve been in rehabilitation twice at Grace Cottage in the past four years. I was treated very well by everyone.

“In fact, if you can say that you enjoyed yourself at a hospital, I did!” she said, adding that, “Grace Cottage still offers personal patient care, second to none.”

Grace Cottage Hospital & Grace Cottage Foundation are 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.

The mission of Grace Cottage Foundation is to raise funds on behalf of Grace Cottage Hospital. Donations to Grace Cottage Foundation are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Grace Cottage Foundation’s Federal Tax ID # is: 03-0343282

Donations may be made by cash, credit card, check, stocks, bonds, or other tangible assets.

An audit of Grace Cottage Hospital, which includes Grace Cottage Foundation, is available upon request.

Call (802) 365-9109.
An unexpected emergency room delivery at Grace Cottage Hospital marked the first time in seven years that Vermont’s smallest hospital welcomed a newborn into the world. Wardsboro resident Shari Zavattero, 24, gave birth Sunday [September 6] at 11:51 p.m. to Jasper Wyhatt Zavattero in the emergency room of the Townshend hospital, just minutes after arriving. Jasper weighed 2 pounds, 11 ounces and measured about 15 inches long. According to Shari’s mother, Brenda Zavattero, her daughter’s first child was not due until November 28, but she felt something was wrong at home last weekend. She went into the bathroom and realized the baby was coming much sooner than scheduled, said her mother. Keith Burke, a family friend, rushed her to the nearest emergency room... “Within minutes of getting to the hospital, the baby was crowning,” said Zavattero.... Since Grace Cottage no longer includes a birthing center, staff members attended to the newborn and his family in the ER, bringing in blankets and other supplies necessary for Jasper. Medics with the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center neonatal team arrived shortly after the birth to pick up Jasper, who was 12 weeks premature, and bring him to the Lebanon, N.H., hospital. Shari Zavatterro took a separate ambulance to Lebanon to stay with her son. Jasper remains at DHMC in stable condition, but the family is uncertain when he will return home.

... Brenda Zavatterro said her family wishes to extend its deepest gratitude to the staff at Grace Cottage for all their assistance. “We would like to thank the doctor, nurses and staff at Grace Cottage for a fantastic job they did with the delivery of Jasper and the care they gave him and my daughter,” she said.