

Wrap-Around Primary Care

There's a reason Grace Cottage continues to sweep the Readers' Choice Awards in the *Brattleboro Reformer* (see page 8): our patients know they can count on us for "wrap-around care." This means providing comprehensive care that is personal and tailored to meet each individual's needs.

Primary care is like the front porch of healthcare. It's where you come first, where we know your name, listen to your story, and walk beside you through life's ups and downs. Relationships matter in primary care, and preventive care is one of the cornerstones of ensuring you stay healthier over the long run. In Grace Cottage's Family Health clinic, we excel at primary care and are able to conduct many screenings that can prevent or mitigate serious illnesses down the road. Having your blood pressure and cholesterol monitored and being screened for the risk of diabetes can make a big difference in catching problems early and staying well.

We offer specialized care for the whole family, such as pelvic exams and pap smears for women; prostate screenings for men; and bone density tests and heart health checks for both, with the goal of keeping you as well as possible. In addition to preventive screenings, we perform quick and easy vasectomies in our office and offer pregnancy prevention options for women as well.



One of the special joys of primary care is pediatrics. Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Amanda Lindsey has a gift for helping children feel comfortable, whether it's a baby's very first checkup or a teen's sports physical. She is passionate about supporting kids as they grow, from routine vaccinations to the everyday bumps and sniffles of childhood. Amanda also takes the time to reassure parents, answer questions, and closely monitor healthy development. "I love building relationships with families and watching kids grow up healthy and confident," she says. Thanks to our partnership with Reach Out and Read, with added support from the Stratton Foundation, every child from six months through age five goes home with a new book at each wellness visit—encouraging a lifelong love of reading.



We know that good health isn't just about the body but also the mind and spirit. That's why our primary care services include Mental and Behavioral Health. Life brings challenges. If you suffer from anxiety, depression, stress, or something else, our caring professionals are here to listen, guide, and provide support. Having mental healthcare woven into primary care means no one has to face those struggles alone.

And when your care extends beyond the doctor's office, we're also here for that. If you're recovering from an injury, our physical and occupational therapists can help you regain strength and independence. If you've had surgery but aren't quite ready to go home, our swing bed program offers the extra therapy and support you need to recover safely.

At Grace Cottage, our goal is to keep you as healthy as possible. With our on-site laboratory and diagnostic imaging suite, you can get your bloodwork, urinalysis, bone density test, ultrasound, x-ray, and CT scan all in one place, saving you time and travel. Messenger Valley Pharmacy is right across the street, so you can fill your prescription and be on your way. One patient recently shared how much they appreciated the convenience of having everything done right here (see below). Our providers work closely together as a team, coordinating your care with respect, compassion, and a big-picture view of your health.

Our mission is to keep our community healthy and thriving. Whether you need a checkup, a listening ear, or a thoughtful plan for lifelong wellness, you'll find it here—on your community's front porch of health.

A grateful patient writes:

"My experiences at Grace Cottage Family Health have always been good. The most incredible thing is having digital imaging/x-rays on site, as well as a lab for blood work. Everyone is so accommodating, and they make it all so easy."

— Ed Winnicki, Chester, VT

A Word From the CEO



As I reflect on my first year as CEO of Grace Cottage, I'm filled with pride at what we've accomplished.

Like other hospitals in Vermont, Grace Cottage has had to make meaningful changes to ensure that our finances remain stable in an ever-changing landscape. I'm happy to tell you that we've made great strides in efficiency in every department, and I am proud of our staff for the

teamwork required to make these improvements. Throughout these changes, everyone has kept their focus on the most important thing: caring for our patients.

While our budget remains lean, because of our strong performance in fiscal year 2025 to date, we were awarded a budget waiver from

the Green Mountain Care Board. This meant that we did not need to attend a hearing to defend our fiscal year 2026 budget, which was accepted as proposed. While there may still be some broad requirements for all hospitals coming, this is a great outcome for the hard work of every department leader and our stellar finance team.

Our work in efficiency has resulted in openings for new patients in primary care, pediatrics, and behavioral health, including counseling and medication management. We are very excited to offer improved access to appointments! Please call 802-365-4331 if you are looking for a new provider - we would love to have you. And as a reminder, we have a full-service 24/7 emergency room with top-notch staff who are there whenever you need us.

- Olivia Sweetnam, CEO

New Providers Join Grace Cottage



We are pleased to welcome two wonderful providers to Grace Cottage. Speech-language pathologist Lesley Clogston started with us in July. Clogston earned her Master's degree in Communication Disorders and Sciences at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and has been an ASHA-certified Speech-Language Pathologist since 2009. She has worked

in a range of settings, including acute care hospitals, subacute rehabilitation, outpatient rehabilitation, assisted living facilities, and skilled nursing facilities.

A native and resident of Deerfield, MA, Clogston enjoys spending quality time with her two children and finds joy in watching them navigate life by inspiring and guiding others. She is motivated by personal growth and expansion and has an eclectic variety of interests, including the outdoors, wildlife, the arts, astrology, and music.



Our most recent addition is Susan Kinnersley, MSW, LICSW, who started counseling patients at Grace Cottage in August.

Kinnersley received her BA in Psychology from the University of Delaware, and her Master of Social Work from Rutgers University. Kinnersley offers both traditional psychotherapy and EMDR to patients age 14

and up. "We all know life can be challenging. Depression, anxiety, chronic pain and negative past experiences can all get in the way of being the person you want to be and having the relationships you want and deserve. For over 20 years, I have enjoyed helping people attain their goals in therapy and enjoy more satisfying lives." Kinnersley also provides therapy to address the issues of ADD, depression, anxiety, trauma, family and relationship problems, grief and loss, life transitions, personal growth, and chronic pain.

Primary Care Clinic Progress



Thanks to 250 early supporters, we've raised over \$14 million in pledges and gifts for the primary care clinic project! Our Act 250 permit application is pending, and we have submitted the answers to questions that came up during the public comment period. We hope to have our permit in hand soon!

To learn more about this important transformational project, visit our website at gracecottage.org/future.

A grateful patient writes:

"Recently, my five-year-old needed to have blood drawn, and I have to tell you that Tanya in the lab did an amazing job. She really went above and beyond with kindness and patience. She explained to her everything that she was doing, and gave her juice, crackers, and stickers to share with her siblings that were watching. She made the experience the absolute best it could be, and I am so grateful!"

- Jessica Vinton, Vernon, VT



Grace Cottage Pediatric Tips in the News

To help parents and children with the back-to-school transition, Grace Cottage Pediatric Provider, Amanda Lindsey recently wrote an article published in the Brattleboro Reformer we'd like to share with you:



Get Ready for School – 5 Tips

By Amanda Lindsey, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Grace Cottage Family Health

It seems like summer has just begun, and already we are seeing ads for back-to-school supplies!

It's also a good time for parents to get their kids ready for school health-wise.

Here are some tips to help families prepare for the upcoming school year:

1. Has your child had a physical examination within the past year? Check to be sure. For Grace Cottage patients up to age 12, parents can set up a portal to see their child's records; for older children, check with the provider directly.

If parents have any concerns about their child's health or behavior in the past year, an annual exam before the start of school is an excellent opportunity to bring this up with your healthcare provider. It also allows the provider to sign any updated paperwork for the school, including medication forms and an asthma action plan if needed, to be filed with the school nurse. Make sure to include any mental health concerns or recent traumas (death, divorce, etc.) with your child's back-to-school paperwork.

2. Make sure your child's immunizations are up-to-date. A list of "Recommended Vaccines by Age" is available on the Vermont Department of Health website and can also be requested from your provider.

Besides being required for public schools in Vermont, immunizations are also safe and effective tools to prevent any serious illness, injury, or death from vaccine preventable diseases. Vaccines protect not ONLY your own child and family, but the rest of the community as well. For example, whooping cough (pertussis) is especially dangerous for elderly adults, and a beloved grandparent could become seriously ill with this disease through contact with an unvaccinated child. Measles, in particular, is highly contagious, and about 30% of all measles cases will result in complications.

If you have questions or concerns about vaccines, your provider

is a great resource. Discuss your concerns with them. The American Academy of Pediatrics also has some wonderful information for families that you could use to prepare for your appointment.

3. It's also important to consider your child's sleep schedule. Do you need to make some adjustments so that your child can be on time for school? Sleep is essential for both cognitive and physical development. Ensuring your child has enough sleep will set them up for success in the school setting.

Having a calming and consistent bedtime routine can be helpful. It doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes a shower or bath, reading a book together, and tucking in is all it takes. Ideally, you will implement this 10-14 days before the start of the school year so it's a habit by the time school starts.

4. Attend any back-to-school events or orientations. Have your child practice finding their classroom, take them for playtime on the new playground, and make sure that children who may walk to school or the bus stop know the route.

5. And please talk to your child about bullying. Bullying is never acceptable, and students should always feel comfortable speaking up to a parent or teacher if they witness or fall victim to bullying. Stopbullying.gov has some great resources on how to talk to your students about this important issue.

This back-to-school health checklist can set your child up to have a good and successful year!

Amanda Lindsey, CPNP joined Grace Cottage in the fall of 2024. A nursing graduate of the University of Michigan, she received her Master of Science as a Pediatric Acute Care Nurse Practitioner from Wayne State University, and her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from the University of Michigan. She is a Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner who worked for nine years in Utah on the Heart Failure/Transplant Team and on the Cardiothoracic Surgery team at Primary Children's Hospital.

Amanda and other practitioners at Grace Cottage are currently accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, please call (802) 365-4331.

Grace Cottage Wins Worksite Wellness Award



For the fourth year in a row, Grace Cottage has received the Governor's Excellence in Worksite Wellness Award – Gold Level. The Vermont Department of Health and the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports has given this award in recognition of Grace Cottage's efforts to enhance productivity, bolster a healthy environment, and improve employee wellbeing. The

award will be presented in Killington, VT on October 31 at the Vermont Safety and Health Council's Annual Expo.

Grace Cottage Remains on the Honor Roll



Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital has maintained its 4-star rating by the National Rural Rating System (NRRS), a program through the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) that

recognizes excellence in rural healthcare. Grace Cottage remains on the 2025 National Rural Honor Roll for the 2nd Quarter in a row. Sixteen hospitals in the United States were awarded a 4-star rating; Grace Cottage was the only hospital in the Northeast to receive this 4-star distinction.

The National Rural Honor Roll was created to honor rural hospitals and clinics that consistently deliver exceptional patient-centered care. Rural hospitals on the National Rural Honor Roll have met the highest standards for patient experience, based on cumulative ratings in patient surveys. This recognition highlights Grace Cottage's continued commitment to providing outstanding medical service.

16th Annual Spring Into Health 5K



Despite the weather, our 16th Annual *Spring Into Health* 5K, our annual walk/run, was a lot of fun!

Of the 93 registrants for the event, 15 were children under 18 years of age, and of those kids, two won the awards for the fastest male and female: Max Albin (20:30) and Kalia Webb (22:24). Christine Tattersall won the prize for the most experienced runner. Congratulations to them, and to all who participated! View full results and our photo album on our Facebook page.

The 16th Annual *Spring Into Health* 5K was sponsored by M&T Bank,



Linda Bastian, Big Picture Farm, Burrows Sports, Cota & Cota Oil, River Bend Farm Market, Smith Family Maple, and WEEI Sports Radio 93.5 FM.

Special thanks to our sponsors, volunteers, and participants! Mark your calendar for next year's event on Saturday, May 9, 2026.

Tee It Up for Health, Saturday, June 7, 2025



Although we never made it onto the course, our 16th annual golf tournament, *Tee It Up for Health*, was a great success. The event raised \$44,749.20 after expenses, to be put towards the new primary care clinic project. The rain fell all day, but our dedicated golfers came anyway and showed their support by participating in indoor games, raffles, and the silent auction. Haystack Golf Pro Johnny Cleanthes made the day complete by providing a delicious lunch and welcoming atmosphere. A good time was had by all despite the dreary weather.

Thank you to all our golfers, sponsors, and volunteers. This important event would not have been a success without you. Save the date for next year's tournament: **Saturday, June 6, 2026 at Haystack!**

Thank You

To our 2025 'Tee It Up for Health' Tournament Sponsors
on behalf of the Patients at Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital

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Pizza Fundraiser on September 30th



American Flatbread in West Dover is hosting a "Benefit Bake" fundraiser for Grace Cottage on Tuesday, September 30. The restaurant will donate a percentage of their proceeds on all pizzas sold that night to the hospital. Last year's Benefit Bake was attended by over 70 members of the community who joined us for a fun and delicious evening and raised over \$1,000 in support of Grace Cottage. Hope to see you there!

Hospital Fair Day – Saturday, August 2, 2025



Grace Cottage's 75th Annual Hospital Fair Day on August 2nd was blessed with a perfect Vermont summer day – mild temperatures, blue skies, and the kind of weather we could only hope for. It is such a wonder to see the Townshend Common transform into a bustling fairground. Volunteers –

both seasoned veterans and new— worked tirelessly to bring each booth to life.

On Friday, volunteers began setting up the booths they had been preparing for months, while the dedicated crew that sets up the fairground and disassembles it on Sunday once again proved themselves to be the definition of “unsung heroes.” Watching everyone seamlessly come together is like seeing a well-oiled machine in motion, and we cannot fully express our gratitude for their hard work and teamwork.

On Saturday, we enjoyed working at our White Elephant booth, lending a hand to others, and seeing the community gather. The music, parade, pony rides, games, and specialty booths created a wonderful atmosphere, but what stood out most was the spirit of togetherness. People from all walks of life came to enjoy all of the day's events while supporting,



protecting, and sustaining our rural hospital and health care center for the future.

As we complete our second year as Fair Day Co-Chairs, we are reminded what an honor it is to serve in this role. We continue to learn from those who have guided this event for so many years, and we are grateful for the camaraderie of fellow Booth Chairs, volunteers, and the Grace Cottage Foundation staff. This shared mission for Grace Cottage Hospital unites us, and it gives us hope for the future.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to every volunteer, supporter, and neighbor who made Fair Day possible. Your time, energy, and generosity are what keep this tradition alive, and we are deeply grateful to be part of such a caring community.

This year, on the 75th anniversary of Hospital Fair Day, we are proud to share that the event raised more than \$52,000 before expenses. We are already looking forward to doing it all again next year – and we hope to see you on **Saturday, August 1, 2026!**

– *Connie Holt & Helen Holt*
Hospital Fair Day Co-Chairs



Our Annual Make Tracks For Health at Stratton



Despite the forecast, we had magnificent weather for our 2nd annual *Make Tracks for Health* XC ski/snowshoe event at the Nordic Center at Stratton this year.

We raised over \$4,000 for the construction of the primary care clinic, thanks to more than 25 participants and our generous sponsors: Harmonyville Store, M&T Bank,



Rawsonville Market, Solstice at Stratton, Stratton Resort, Wadsworth Design/Build & Vermont Barns, and James A. Young, Counselor at Law.

Save the date for this family-friendly day of fun: **February 28, 2026.**



COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR

Saturday
October 4, 2025
11:00 am – 3:00 pm

BRATTLEBORO UNION HIGH SCHOOL
131 Fairground Rd, Brattleboro, VT 05301

FREE ENTRY

FUN FOR ALL AGES!

- activities
- demonstrations
- information on local services
- local food trucks
- AND MUCH MORE!

Community Health & Wellness Fair in Brattleboro on October 4

Please join Grace Cottage and many other local providers at the Community Health & Wellness Fair on Saturday, October 4, 2025, from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at Brattleboro Union High School. This free event will showcase local resources and provide a day filled with fun, learning, and connection. Visitors can enjoy interactive activities, live demonstrations, and educational displays focused on health and wellness. Local organizations will be on hand to share information about services and programs that support healthy living in the Brattleboro area.

In addition to health and wellness opportunities, attendees can explore various family-friendly activities and hands-on experiences. Local food trucks will sell delicious meals and treats, making it easy for visitors to spend the afternoon enjoying everything the fair offers.

“This is a great chance for our community to come together and learn about local health and wellness resources,” said Chris Boucher, Chief Operating Officer at Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital and member of the planning team that includes representatives from Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Senior Solutions, Brattleboro Youth Council, The Vermont Department of Health, The Brattleboro Retreat, and the Town of Brattleboro. “We are proud to join our colleagues in presenting health information at this event.”

The Community Health & Wellness Fair is free and open to the public. Parking will be available on-site. Hope to see you there!

A grateful patient writes:

“Thank you for lifting us up with your support, your wisdom, your kindness. With the deepest gratitude and love.”

– *Laury Greening & Donna Macomber, Brattleboro, VT*

Grace Cottage Joins the DAISY Award Program

We are proud to announce that we have joined the DAISY Award program, an international recognition initiative that honors extraordinary nurses. The DAISY Award celebrates the skillful and compassionate care nurses provide every day. Patients, families, and colleagues are invited to nominate a Grace Cottage nurse who has made a meaningful difference through kindness, expertise, and dedication.

Nomination forms are available throughout the hospital and online at gracecottage.org. Each DAISY Award Honoree will be celebrated with a presentation attended by colleagues, patients,



and visitors, and will receive a certificate, a DAISY Award pin, and a hand-carved stone *Healer's Touch* sculpture.

We are thrilled to participate in this program, which honors the healing heart of nursing at Grace Cottage and gives our community a chance to say thank you to our extraordinary nurses!

A grateful patient writes:

“Last year, I injured myself when I stepped off Amtrak’s Vermonter, badly lacerating my shin. I came directly to Grace Cottage and without delay, Dr. Jennifer Zweig, assisted by nurse Lisa, attended to the wound immediately; it required eighteen stitches to close! Thanks to Dr. Zweig’s skills, my laceration healed quickly and completely. Now, a year later, my leg is fine. Many, many thanks, Grace Cottage and your Emergency Room staff!”

– *Muriel Hard, Garden City, NY*

A grateful patient writes:

"I absolutely love Grace Cottage. Dr. Morrison and his staff are the best. Both my son and I have been patients of Dr. Morrison for a few years. Great team. The hospital itself is wonderful, and the staff are always so helpful and kind. There is plenty of parking the back and on the side. Handicap parking at entrances, as well as bathrooms, are all available at GC. The few times whether my son or I need an ER visit, we go to GC and we're well taken care of in a very timely manner. Definitely recommend GC."

– *Debbie Gaillardetz*, Online Review



Wishes Granted...

- The Inpatient Rehabilitation Department received funds to purchase four walkers from a grateful patient.
- Pediatric therapy equipment, including a platform swing, floor exercise mats, a sensory fish bubble light, and an inflatable pea pod chair, were funded by Mark & Liz Richards in memory of their daughter, Anne Richards.



Wishes Made...

- The Hospital inpatient unit is updating its bedside tables and needs four more, \$630 each, total \$2,520.
- The Dietary Department needs a new manual food slicer, \$1,424.
- The Laboratory needs to replace its microbiology incubator, \$2,400.
- The Family Health Clinic needs funds for cholesterol testing equipment, \$2,100.
- The Outpatient Rehab Department requests funds for an oversize ping pong set for physical therapy (\$80) and infrared video goggles for patient vision assessments by allowing therapists to see and record eye movement, \$2,600.

Grace Cottage's Wish List is updated monthly on our website, at gracecottage.org, or call (802) 365-9109 for more information.

This Giving Tuesday, Help Keep Grace Cottage Safe

Giving Tuesday falls on December 2 this year, and we're asking for your help to make Grace Cottage's Emergency Room safer for everyone—our patients, visitors, and the nurses and providers ready to care for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We are proud of our reputation at Grace Cottage for compassionate, personal care. That includes caring for people in crisis and keeping them, as well as Grace Cottage staff, safe.

We need your help to make a series of necessary security upgrades, including:

- Additional security cameras in key areas
- Shatterproof, impact-resistant glass and doors
- Stronger lockdown mechanisms for rapid response

These improvements will not change the warm and welcoming atmosphere you expect at Grace Cottage—but they will ensure greater protection for those who depend on us in their most vulnerable moments, and for the staff who dedicate their lives to helping our community. Our Giving Tuesday campaign goal is \$35,000 and all gifts, no matter the size, will go directly toward these vital security upgrades. Together, we can create an ER that is both caring and secure. Thank you for your support!



After Black Friday and Cyber Monday comes Giving Tuesday, a worldwide day of philanthropy during the season of gratitude.

Donations Were Recently Received In Honor Of:

Charma Bonanno ♦ Grace Cottage Emergency Department ♦ Grace Cottage Volunteers ♦ Connie Holt ♦ Helen Holt
Marion Lewis ♦ Carleen Pelsue ♦ Josh Rosenblum ♦ Phil Schafer ♦ Andrea Seaton ♦ Rachel Spengler

Memorial Gifts

Donations have been received between May 1st and September 5th in memory of the following individuals:

Patricia Austin ♦ Cathy Barker ♦ Angelo F. Bonanno ♦ Roy & Margaret Brooks ♦ Gladys Brown ♦ David Brownell ♦ Chris Coleman
♦ Phil Coleman ♦ Neva Corse ♦ Ruth Daigneault ♦ Raymond Davis, Jr. ♦ Phil Dibble ♦ Sylvia Elliott ♦ Lodovico & Bianca Ferrarin
♦ John Kenneth & Catherine Atwater Galbraith ♦ Patrick Gregory ♦ Stan Holt ♦ Hope Johnson ♦ Joel Johnson ♦ Joyce Jones
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♦ Porter & Lillian Thayer ♦ Betsy Waldo ♦ Merton & Hazel Wilson ♦ Robert Works

We extend our sympathy to the families and friends of these loved ones, and our appreciation to those who have given in their memories. When memorial gifts are received by Grace Cottage, the donor is thanked, and the next of kin is notified of the gift. (The amount given is never divulged.)



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Grace Cottage wins Best of Brattleboro Again!

Grace Cottage was a big winner in this year's *Brattleboro Reformer* Readers' Choice Awards poll. The *Brattleboro Reformer* announced the winners on Saturday, Aug. 2.

Brattleboro Reformer readers have consistently honored Grace Cottage in this contest over the years. This is the ninth year in a row that Grace Cottage has won Best Place to Work and Best Physical Therapy, and the seventh year in a row for Best Hospital, Best Emergency Care, Best Doctor, and Best Pharmacy.

Dr. Moss Linder was recognized as this year's Best Doctor, with Dr. Tim Shafer coming in as a close second place. Dr. Elizabeth Linder was named Best Pediatrician, although she no longer has a pediatric practice. (Pediatric patients at Grace Cottage are now being seen by Amanda Lindsey, CPNP—see page 3.)

Grace Cottage's primary care clinic is currently accepting new patients of all ages, including those seeking a mental health provider. To learn more, call 802-365-4331. Grace Cottage's Career Opportunities can be found at gracecottage.org/careers.



- ❖ Best Place to Work
- ❖ Best Hospital
- ❖ Best Emergency Care
- ❖ Best Physical Therapy
- ❖ Best Doctor: Dr. Moss Linder (Dr. Tim Shafer in a close second!)
- ❖ Best Pediatrician: Dr. Elizabeth Linder
- ❖ Best Pharmacy: Messenger Valley Pharmacy



Our Emergency Department has an average wait time of 20 minutes and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!