

# LAMOILLE HOME HEALTH & HOSPICE

# CareCorner

Happy Holidays

Making Life Easier For Those In Need Winter 2024

• Skilled Nursing • Therapy Services • Long-Term Care  
• Maternal Child Care • Palliative Care • Hospice Care

## Ready. Set. *THRIVE*

Annie Price-Smith can barely contain herself when she talks about the process of childbirth and the miracles that follow. As the Maternal Child Health Nurse for Lamoille Home Health & Hospice, Annie helps women prepare for labor and delivery, as well as for what comes afterward, from breast feeding to early childcare to possible postpartum issues.

“Every expectant mother deserves the deepest level of pre- and post-birthing care possible,” Annie says. “Kids

don’t come with instructions, and so much can ride on the care that a newborn receives in its first few weeks and months. I like to say that the health of our entire community begins at birth.”

A labor and delivery nurse for 15 years, Annie came to LHH&H 13 years ago to take on a more expansive role in the birthing and post-birthing process. “I really wanted to make more of a difference in the lives of these women I was working with,” she said. “Now, in addition to being part of their pre-natal and delivery experience, I can help, when necessary, with IV infusions, breast feeding, drawing blood, and postpartum care. Every woman who gives birth should have the option of receiving this kind of care, and especially those who may be going home to less traditional families.”

A St. Johnsbury native, Annie earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing at UVM.

After stints in Venezuela, Oregon, and North Carolina, she returned to Vermont to practice her speciality. “I love humans,” she said. “Every one of us is different, but we all share similar needs. My greatest joy is helping a mom get her child off to a good start.”

### In this issue

	Page
Letter from the Executive Director	2
Sharing the Gift of Speech Jess McDonald	3
LHH&H Happenings	4 & 5
Please Donate	5
Profile of a Donor: Meet Donnie Blake	6
LHH&H By the Numbers	7
Calendar of Events	7
Helping Yourself - Helping Your Community	Back Page





Lamoille Home Health and Hospice provides caring, expert home health care for you and your loved ones. The homecare team begins with you and is made of many healthcare professionals working together to provide you with the best care. Our staff works closely with you and your physician to develop a home-based plan of care that is considerate of your mental, physical, and emotional health. Our services include:

- Skilled Nursing
- High Technology Nursing
- Rehabilitation Services
- Licensed Nursing Assistants
- Personal Care Attendants
- Homemakers
- Intake Coordination
- Hospital Coordination
- Maternal Child Health nursing services
- Telehealth

Call us:  
802.888.4651  
lhha.org

# To Our Friends and Neighbors...



As the holiday season approaches, I am enormously grateful for the so many of you who support Lamoille Home Health & Hospice year after year. Your generosity and concern for others has empowered us to deliver high quality care throughout the rural communities we serve and to make a meaningful difference in the lives of so many people.

2024 was a busy year, and as I look back, I am filled with both pride and appreciation for the dedication and passion of every caregiver on our staff. Their commitment to excellence ensures that every individual and family who comes to us for care receives the support and resources they need. Whether it's nursing care, therapeutic services, home-maker assistance, or simply keeping someone company, the work our staff does each and every day truly reflects

the spirit of the holiday season — compassion, kindness, and hope.

As I look ahead to the coming year, I am both hopeful and excited about the opportunities we have to provide care to those who depend on us. And while there will always be challenges - many of them budget related - I am confident that we will continue to be here for the individuals and families who need us. Through your partnership with Lamoille Home Health & Hospice, you are playing an active role in keeping families together, in helping individuals grow and thrive and find new beginnings, and in building stronger communities. It is a wonderful partnership and we are deeply honored to have you as part of our team.

From all of us at Lamoille Home Health & Hospice, thank you for your generosity and support over the past year; your belief in our mission; and your commitment to caring for others. We wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season filled with peace, love, and happiness.

Warm regards,  
*Kathy Demars*  
Kathy Demars, RN  
Executive Director

P.S. As we celebrate the season of giving, your year-end contribution can help us start the new year even stronger. To make a year-end donation, visit: <https://www.lhha.org/donate-or-volunteer>

# Sharing the Gift of Speech

Jess McDonald works under a pretty big umbrella. As one of the Speech Language Pathologists on staff at LHH&H, she helps patients navigate the process of growing older and communicating their needs. As a Certified Dementia Trainer, Jess provides training to healthcare professionals on patient-centered care. She also specializes in Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance documentation and educates staff on this process.

“Speech Language Pathology and dementia are really umbrella terms,” she says, “because there are so many components. As people grow older, many develop challenges with swallowing, processing information, retaining memories, and speaking, which can make it difficult to communicate with their loved ones. Much of my work involves helping patients develop strategies –

compensatory, exercise-based, and educational – for communicating with their families and caregivers and swallowing safely and effectively.”

“Dementia care,” she adds, “also includes care for an often-overlooked group of people - the caregivers. As patients with dementia age, their ability to hear, process, and respond to conversation begins to fade, often to the point where they can no longer communicate. This can be very hard on family members and caregivers, so part of what I do involves working with them to develop strategies for not only taking care of themselves, but understanding their loved one’s communication needs, especially when the person with dementia can no longer express their needs.”

How did Jess find her way into this field?

“My mother is a Speech Language Pathologist,” she said, “and I spent summers working as a para-professional shadowing three therapy disciplines - Physical, Occupational, and Speech. My mother always came home from work feeling fulfilled and I guess I was just drawn in that same direction.”

A native of New Jersey, Jess came to UVM in 2014 to earn her Masters in Speech Language Pathology. While there, she met her husband - another New Jerseyan - and the two knew they had found their new home state. “We love it here,” she said, “and I feel very lucky to be doing the work I do here at LHH&H.”



## Therapy Services

Our physical, occupational, speech therapy and Medical Social Worker services allow you to receive comprehensive rehabilitative care in the safety and comfort of your home.

## Physical Therapy (PT)

Physical therapy may be applicable for someone experiencing:

- A loss of balance
- A fall
- Difficulty walking
- Joint pain
- Back pain
- Hip or Knee Replacement Surgery
- A stroke
- Heart Failure
- A heart attack
- Any noticeable decline in function

## Occupational Therapy (OT)

Occupational therapy helps individuals regain day-to-day skills such as dressing and feeding.

## Speech and Language Therapy

Speech and language therapy helps individuals improve breathing, speaking, or swallowing functioning.

## Medical Social Workers

MSW's help patients understand their illness or condition and provide them with information about the resources available to them to cope with the emotional, financial, and social needs that arise with a diagnosis.





# Lamoille Home Health & Hospice Happenings

## Lamoille Home Health & Hospice is giving back this Holiday Season



*Danielle Mears, Human Resources Director, with son Lucian*

At our Agency, we believe in giving back to the community, especially during the holiday season.

This year we are providing support to The Manor and their annual holiday stocking project. We will be purchasing specific items needed for these stockings to be filled.

Also, this year, we have decided to adopt a patient and their family in need, ensuring that they experience the warmth and joy of the holidays. Our team has come together to gather money for purchasing items for this family.

## Aging in place



*Nicole Mitchell, RN*

Lamoille Home Health & Hospice is hosting a “mini-series” on topics of Aging in Place at The Varnum Library in Jeffersonville, VT.

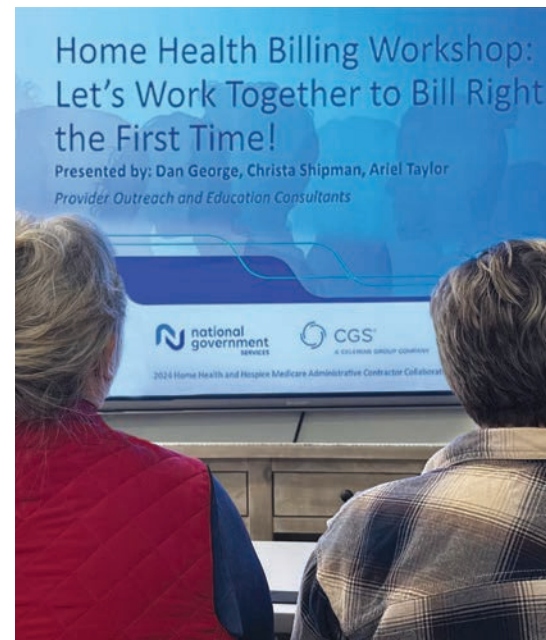
In October, Nicole Mitchell, RN presented on “Introduction to services provided by Lamoille Home Health & Hospice and how the agency serves residents of Lamoille County”.

In November, Nicole returned to the library to present on “Hospice vs Palliative Care, conversations about transitions toward End of Life.”

During the month of December, Margaret Pitkin, PT will be presenting on “Maintaining Mobility and Falls Prevention.” Following this presentation, Jessica McDonald, SLP will present in January of 2025 on the topic of “Memory Impairment and Communication. Promoting effective communication to your loved ones.” (see page 7 for more details)

This “mini-series” is being offered in hopes to expand awareness of LHH&H and the staff that work daily to provide safe, quality care to those in Lamoille County. We thank the Varnum Library for allowing us to use their space to provide education to attendees.

## Making Sense of Medicare



Two members of the Billing Department at Lamoille Home Health and Hospice returned recently from a 4-day conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. The event was sponsored by Medicare Contractors through National Government Services and according to Billing Lead, Carla Alexander, covered a wide range of topics, including the ever changing rules and regulations that specifically impact the billing world.

“They kept us pretty busy,” Carla said, “with presentations on Medicare fraud, audits, appeals, learning how Medicare secondary payers work, and just understanding Medicare health benefits in general. They also offered workshops on billing, documentation, and other Medicare guidelines. All in all, we covered a lot of ground over those few days and for Alberta (Colby) and me, it was fun getting to meet other people in our particular area of expertise. It was also helpful to learn about ways we can better serve our Medicare patients.”

As for Las Vegas? “Let’s just say it was pretty much the opposite of Vermont,” Carla laughed. “It was exciting to visit a city I’ve never been to before, but it’s always great to get back home.”

## Lamoille County Depends on Us - and We Depend on You



Lamoille Home Health & Hospice serves over 400 families in our nearby communities - people who depend on us for pregnancy care, recovery from surgery, assistance with daily living, and peaceful end of life care - regardless of their ability to pay.

As a nonprofit 501c3 organization, we depend on gifts and donations to fund our programs and to sustain the important services we provide. Our partnerships with area civic and service organizations, foundations, and businesses go a long way towards helping us in this regard. But as federal funding begins to dry up, we rely more and more on contributions and support from the communities we serve.

There are many ways to donate - money, services, securities, life insurance - the list of possibilities is long, and we’ll share more about this in future newsletters. For now, anyone wishing to make a donation of any size can do so by:

### • Check

Make payable to:  
**Lamoille Home Health & Hospice**  
mail to:  
**54 Farr Ave, Morristown VT 05661**

• **Credit Card** Please call LHH&H:  
**802-888-4651**

### • PayPal

Visit: [lhha.org/donate-or-volunteer](https://lhma.org/donate-or-volunteer)

Lamoille County depends on LHH&H - and we depend on Lamoille County!



Lamoille Home Health & Hospice provides caring, expert home health care for you and your newborn. Through home visits, we can answer questions, provide childbirth education and help you prepare for childbirth. After your baby is born, we help you settle into parenthood.

Services include:

- Prenatal home care visits
- Postpartum care
- Assessment of both the mother and the baby
- Breastfeeding support
- Family adjustment support
- Skilled nursing care if needed, such as IV therapy, blood pressure monitoring and nutritional information.
- Family support services for families struggling with multiple stressors that can temporarily hinder their capacity to nurture their children.





Palliative care treats people suffering from serious and chronic illnesses such as cancer, cardiac disease, congestive heart failure (CHF), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), kidney failure, Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and more.

Palliative care is a team approach created to meet the individual needs of the client... The core team includes the client, the client's doctor, nursing care, and a medical social worker who specializes in palliative care. Massage therapists, pharmacists, nutritionists, chaplains and others may also be part of the team.

The team spends as much time as necessary with you and your family. They become a partner with you, your family and your doctors. They support you and your family, not only by controlling your symptoms, but also by helping you to understand your treatment options and goals.

Call us:  
802.888.4651  
lhha.org

# Profile of a Donor: Meet Donnie Blake

Donnie Blake is your classic Vermonter, honest, straightforward, hard working, and independent. And if you knew his mother, Noel, who passed away in September, none of that comes as a surprise.

A lifetime resident of Lamoille County, Donnie learned the construction trade working with area builders before starting his own company in 1985. Growing up in a working-class community, he knew the value of a handshake and the importance of supporting organizations that make the community stronger - among them Lamoille Home Health & Hospice.

"My wife Julie and I have always believed in supporting community," he said, "and three things initially drove our donating to LHH&H: Kathy Demars, who serves on the board, Erica Scott, who's been our go-to person, and Senator Rich Westman, who one day told me he 'wasn't sure what he would have done without them' when it came to caring for his father."

But the Blakes recently found another reason to make a significant donation, and that's the care that LHH&H provided to Donnie's mother toward the end of her life.

"My mom was fiercely independent," Donnie said, "and as she grew older and battled the infirmities that affect older people, including cancer, I just didn't have the ability to give her the level of care she needed. When LHH&H stepped in to help, it was a huge burden off my shoulders. They did anything and everything that was needed to keep mom comfortable, independent, and in her own home. One call and there they were. Whether it was advocating for mom at the hospital or arranging for specialty care, it was comforting to know mom had someone in her corner."

Like any true Vermonter, at first, Noel resisted getting outside help. But she eventually came around. "The staff at LHH&H was so patient, so gentle, and so understanding that they just won mom over," Donnie said. "She could be tough to deal with at times, but they somehow brought out her sweet side. On every level, they were just a blessing to have around."

Donnie and Julie Blake are committed to supporting their community, and LHH&H is both proud and grateful to call them partners.



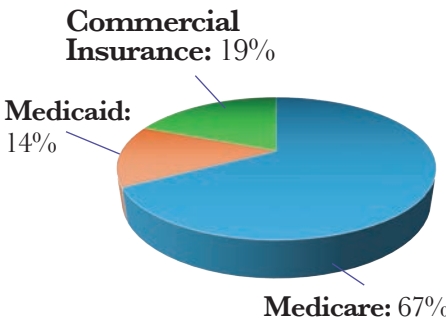
# Lamoille Home Health & Hospice by the numbers

## Fundraising

1/1/2015- 11/25/24  
Total donations: 5993  
Total Donors: 1395  
Out of state: 312  
Vermont: 1054  
Unknown (online Donors): 28  
Average donation size: \$174.72

## Payor Mix

Fiscal Year 7/1/23 - 6/30/24



## Visits (All Programs)

Fiscal Year 7/1/23 - 6/30/24  
Skilled Nursing: 15,458  
Physical Therapy: 7,468  
Occupational Therapy: 2,237  
Speech Therapy: 1,701  
MSW: 1,496  
LNA: 4,914  
PCA: 4,323  
Total All Visits: 37,597  
Miles Driven: 320,371

## Hospice

Fiscal Year 7/1/23 - 6/30/24  
Census: 96  
ALOS (ave length of stay): 85.02  
Ave Daily Census: 18

**Total Unduplicated  
Patient Count: 1,062**

## Aging in Place Mini Series

at the Varnum Memorial Library  
194 S Vermont 108, Jeffersonville, VT 05464

January 8th 12:00-1:00pm

**"Memory Impairment and Communication.  
Promoting effective communication to your  
loved ones."**

Presented by Jessica McDonald, SLP

This "mini-series" is being offered in hopes to expand awareness of LHH&H and the staff that work daily to provide safe, quality care to those in Lamoille County. We thank the Varnum Library for allowing us to use their space to provide education to attendees.

## LHH&H support groups

**Grief Support**, first and third Tuesday of each month 5:30-6:30pm, for more information, contact Oona Lehouillier at 802-888-4651 or [olehouillier@lhha.org](mailto:olehouillier@lhha.org)

**Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group**, Meets virtually the third Wednesday of every month 6pm-7pm, for more information, and access to the Teams meeting link, contact Jane Paine at 802-888-4651 or [jpaine@lhha.org](mailto:jpaine@lhha.org).



Hospice caregivers are dedicated to enhancing your quality of remaining life by keeping you as alert and comfortable as possible in a familiar environment with the support of family and friends. Hospice programs offer services in your own home or in a hospice center, like a respite house, long term care facility, or hospital.

What services are provided?

- Basic medical care with a focus on pain and symptom control with access to your team 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Medical supplies and equipment as needed.
- Counseling and social support to help with psychological, emotional and spiritual needs.
- Guidance with the difficult, but normal, issues of life completion and closure.
- A break (respite care) for caregivers, family, and others who regularly care for you.
- Personal Care Attendants who can help with personal care such as bathing and toileting.
- Volunteer support, such as preparing meals.
- Counseling and support for your loved ones.
- Hospice Chaplain- Provides spiritual healing through a variety of ways, including music and prayer as well as provide grief support to loved ones. Support is provided based on an individual's personal beliefs.





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VT 05661

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# CareCorner

Making Life Easier For Those In Need

Winter 2024

## Our Feedback

*"We appreciate your service to our local communities and thank you for the work that you do."*

*Fraternal Order of Eagles*

*"Thank you for the wonderful care for Henry. I know Donna was very appreciative of the card she received as well. Your work with end-of-life patients is so caring & comforting."*

*Kenneth & Cathy*

*"Thank you for the care & kindness you give to loved ones and their families."*

*Leslie & Claire*

## Helping Yourself - Helping Your Community

Looking for a way to lower your taxable income and make a gift to charity before the end of the year? Consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). A QCD lets IRA owners 70½ or older transfer up to \$105,000 for 2024 - (adjusted annually) to charity tax-free each year. What's more, IRA owners age 73 or older can apply their QCD toward their "required minimum distribution (RMD)" for the year.

An RMD is the minimum amount of money a person age 73 or older must withdraw from their IRA each year. The amount is calculated each year based on the balance in their accounts and their life expectancy as defined by the IRS.



But what if someone doesn't need their RMD? Do they still have to withdraw it and pay income taxes on it?

The answer is both yes and no. Yes, they have to withdraw it by the end of the calendar year, but no, they can avoid paying income taxes on it if they have it transferred directly to a qualified charitable organization via a QCD. In this way, they can support a charitable organization that is important to them while avoiding income taxes on money they don't need.

Want to learn more? Ask your broker or tax professional if transferring your RMD to Lamoille Home Health & Hospice through a QCD is right for you. You'll be helping yourself avoid taxes and your community receive the competent, compassionate healthcare it needs.

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