



# A Healthy Minute

November 2013

## Hospice Marathon



**Meet Hospice Nurse KATHY LEIER**

*"I believe we all need to feel secure."*

### HOLIDAY HOPE Hospice Fundraiser



**Scott's Landscaping**  
at 322 Kent Rd. New Milford

has generously agreed to donate a portion of tree and wreath sales to the New Milford VNA & Hospice.

### The areas we serve...



Our Hospice team took care of a patient who was a marathon runner. Despite her rigorous schedule of chemotherapy and hospital visits, Jodie never let the lung cancer debilitate her to the point that she lost her determination to run a marathon. Her husband, a retired oncologist, was a hard-wired healer who passionately researched every new clinical trial.

They both worked hard at being optimistic, as if their enthusiasm would help produce a miracle. I knew that I, a Hospice nurse, represented a reality that they didn't want to face. Jodie was enrolled in our HOPE program, a comfort-oriented care program for patients with advanced illness who may still be receiving curative treatments. Eventually she started showing signs that the treatments were no longer working. It was time to talk about Hospice.

We met in their living room. I sat directly across from them, which gave me a clear view of the shelves with all of Jodie's marathon medals and trophies. When I broached the subject of Hospice care, the husband reminded me that his wife was never going to give up running marathons. I understood that to mean that somehow we needed to introduce Hospice in runner's terms. So first we talked about the strong sense of community experienced by marathon runners, followed by an introduction of services offered by the Hospice team, which I described as *my community*.

We initiated services to accommodate the needs of both wife and husband -- physical, emotional and spiritual. When we could see that caregiver husband fatigued at the end of the day, we brought in an evening-shift aide to prepare supper and do some light housekeeping. Eventually our medical social worker came to help Jodie put her final plans in place, and our spiritual counselor helped them reach a deeper level of acceptance.

Fast forward to today - when I am in the company of a marathon runner, or when I meet a Hospice patient for the first time, I am reminded that with every marathon comes a new journey.



**New Milford VNA & Hospice Team Members includes:** Amanda Nevin, RN; Andrea Olivera, Social Worker, New Milford Hospital; Andrea Wilson, Executive Director NMVNA & Hospice; Betsy Taylor, Dietician; Catherine Vlasto, Hospice Social Worker; Christine Palmer, RN; Rev. Chris Sakis, Hospice Spiritual Counselor; Eric Polizzotto, Physical Therapist; George Barth, MD/Medical Director; Jill Franco, Massage Therapist; Joanne Tiebout-Douglas, RN; Joseph Bargellini, MD/Radiation Oncologist, New Milford Hospital; Kathy Leier, RN/Hospice Team Leader; Linda McDonold, RN/Supervisor of Clinical Services; Linda Lewis, RN/Hospice Director; Mary Peitler, Volunteer Coordinator; Nancy Morrisroe, RN/Case Management, New Milford Hospital; Peter D'Aprile, Pharmacist, Kent Apothecary; Robert O'Keefe, LCSW/Bereavement Support Group Facilitator; Sherry Corridan, RN; Terry McCarthy, Physical Therapist.