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Mackenzie Shanahan is a pleasant woman, upbeat and enthusiastic about her work, although she deals with death every day. As the Director of All Care Hospice, which serves Lynn and its surrounding communities, Shanahan is determined to make life easier for patients nearing the end of their lives and their loved ones. **"No one has a crystal ball," she says, "We remain involved until the end of life, no matter where that occurs."**

What Is Hospice?

Hospice is a network of professionals and volunteers that helps families when a loved one is expected to live fewer than six months longer. When the illness is deemed terminal, efforts to cure the patient stop and providing comfort takes the forefront. "We do what we can in order to allow the person the quality of life and



All Care VNA and Hospice Medical Director Dr. Lewis Hays and clinical assistant Lynda Dep

support necessary to get through that time," Shanahan says. This includes not only patients with a cancer diagnosis but with a host of other medical issues such as heart and lung disease, Parkinson's disease, and dementia like Alzheimer's disease.

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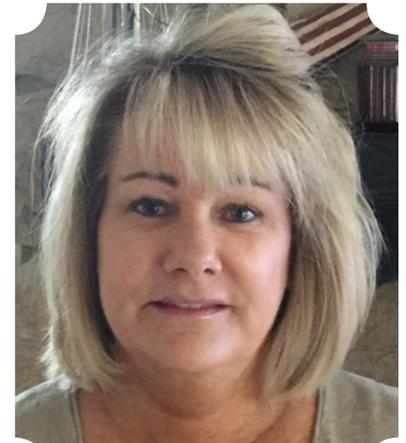
MEET LISA JEPSON, ALL CARE HOSPICE VOLUNTEER

Losing her father not too long ago gave Lisa Jepson a way to honor his memory. "He had retired and lived in Georgia," Jepson says, "and when he got lung cancer, he was unable to care for himself." Taking a leave from her administrative work in outpatient mental health, Jepson took care of him. Luckily she was not alone. Hospice stepped up too. "Hospice was so good to him. It was so important in the last few months of his life."

"Unfortunately he went quickly. I wanted to give back the way others had helped him," she continues. Now, a few times a week, Jepson spends time with folks who are themselves hospice patients, approaching the end of their lives. **"Mostly I am a friend to them. Some don't have family or anyone in the immediate area, so I am a companion."**

She also spends time with patients to give their caretakers a respite for a couple of hours so they can get groceries or get their hair or nails done. It's the little things that we don't think about until we don't have free time to do them, and caregivers are grateful for Jepson's help.

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Lisa Jepson

ALL CARE VNA & HOSPICE: HERE FOR YOU WHEN YOU NEED THEM

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All Care Hospice is careful to maintain manageable caseloads for their staff so the teams can respond appropriately to crises or emergencies, whether medical or social. All Care Hospice handles the paperwork and other details, allowing extra time for families to sit together, to concentrate on the patient's needs. While you sit with Mom, the hospice folks get the medications and equipment you need to make her comfortable.

How is All Care Hospice Different?

"The first thing that comes to mind is size," says Shanahan. "Many hospices are much larger, some are smaller. What I like about ours is our community homegrown feel. All Care Hospice has been here for about 13 years but the umbrella VNA organization has been serving the community for over a hundred years. VNA is well known in the Lynn area and the hospice grew the same way. It feels like home, whether I am in the community or in the office."

She points out their Bridge program, which loops patients from day care to palliative care to hospice, all within the same organization.

How Do They Help?

"Hospice can be a very difficult time. You are faced with a physician telling you that you or a loved one has a terminal illness. It's tough stuff," Shanahan says. "Hospice develops trust and rapport with the family, the caregivers, and the patient. We understand the disease process and get to know the patient personally so we are better able to provide the best care."

One key is in accepting hospice services earlier rather than later. If you only have two or three weeks of help, you may be in crisis management mode. There isn't enough time today in most physician office visits to talk about long-term care. Palliative care (alleviating symptoms and pain without seeking to cure the underlying cause) is beneficial to patients and family as well, so nobody is forced to make snap decisions without timely explanations of options. You can't get the full benefit of services in just the final week or two.

The All Care VNA Hospice services provide a wide range of assistance, including:

- Regular nursing and home health care
- Palliative care
- Durable medical equipment such as loaned hospital beds
- Licensed social workers for support and counseling
- Grief services after the loved one has passed
- Companionship
- Spiritual care
- Medications for pain and symptom management
- Acupuncture



Maureen Burge, Makenzie Shanahan, RN, Erika Donofrio and RN Arthur DiGiacomo are some of the faces of All Care VNA and Hospice.

Who Does All This?

Shanahan is supported by a varied staff ranging from nurses and aides to chaplains and dementia care specialists. Dr. Lewis Hays is the Medical Director who oversees patient services; he is available anytime families have questions, and he even makes house calls as needed. All Care VNA Hospice has what Shanahan calls a "robust group of volunteers" who provide companionship to patients at home, sit with clients to give respite to caregivers, or work in the office. Maureen Burge, Coordinator of Volunteers, says "there are now about 35 volunteers, all of whom receive structured training when they begin."

Where Does This All Happen?

All Care VNA Hospice doesn't have a "brick and mortar" inpatient facility. "We do what we can in order to support the patient, to keep up the quality of life, to help the patient pass away where they would like to be. Most often that is at home." If home care is no longer possible, All Care VNA has contacts with skilled nursing facilities and hospitals in the area, where they continue hospice services.

"There is a myth that patients can't die at home. That is not true," Shanahan says. "Hospice was designed to help you live, but when death is imminent, we plan for patients to die at home: comfortably, peacefully, in their own home. No matter where that home might be."

All Care VNA Hospice & Home Care can be reached at 800-287-2454, or by emailing info@allcare.org. Their website is www.allcare.org.

Meet the Solimine Staff: Joel Solimine

“Some people think it’s weird to be in the funeral business, but it’s really all I have known,” says Joel Solimine. He notes that he is only the latest in his family to be in the business, certainly not the first.

Joel is a third generation funeral director in the family, so he has been learning the business almost since birth. His grandfather Dave Solimine Sr. started in 1965 and over the years consolidated with other family-owned funeral homes. Today Joel is the owner and general manager of Solimine Funeral Homes, where he is focused on customer service. He understands that dealing with a death in any family is difficult whatever the circumstances. “We make sure we do our best to make families as comfortable as they can be during the most difficult times of their lives.”

He is just the type of guy you would want by your side when you are making tough choices and grieving a loved one: compassionate, caring, and with a good sense of humor. Joel is the same age that Dave Sr. was when he started in the funeral business: 30. “When I was younger, my family called me “Grampy Jr.” because I always wanted to say ‘hi’ to people everywhere we went. I have been told that I have the right personality for a funeral director.”

“I was always around the funeral home when I was younger, hanging out with my dad or my grandfather. During summers in high school, I started working part-time and when I was in college I came home most weekends to work. I worked wakes, funerals, transportation, cleaning... anything that needed to be done.” The Solimine family has an unusual expectation: “No matter what you are wearing or what you are doing, if something needs to get done, you get it done. Even if it ruins a suit.”

After graduating from St. John’s Prep in Danvers, he attended Bentley University where he received a degree in Business Management. Joel also earned an associate degree with honors in Funeral Service from Mount Ida College in Newton. He played baseball, basketball, and soccer as a kid but he is now an avid golfer and skier. Besides overseeing the daily operations of the funeral home, Joel joins other family members to support many community programs and charities, from church-related fundraising to assistance for veterans and special-needs youngsters.

Joel balances his work and community service with active recreation and travel. Whether he is wakeboarding in Maine or on the golf links in the summer, or flying out west to ski or heading down south for a beach in the winter, the pretty woman at his side is Deena (Cole), whom he married in 2016.

With a strong history of service in the Lynn community, the Solimine family is dedicated to easing the confusion and grief that inevitably comes with the death of a loved one. Joel is ready to continue that tradition for the Lynn community.



Joel Solimine

What Else Does All Care VNA & Hospice Do?

With offices in Lynn, North Andover and North Chelmsford, All Care VNA and Hospice provides a much wider range of services than caring for very sick patients. Such as:

Skilled Nursing Care

Registered and Licensed Practical Nurses provide professional care to patients in their homes under the direction of physicians

Rehabilitation Therapy

Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists help patients in their homes, often after a hospital stay.

Help with Stressful Situations

Medical Social Workers help patients and their family members cope with the stresses of illness and infirmity.

Certified Home Health Aides

Trained aides go to the patient’s home to help with bathing, grooming, and dressing.

Adult Day Health Center

This All Care VNA program provide a safe place for frail, infirm, or otherwise disabled adults who live in a home setting but need supervision or help during the day. The center provides social activities, exercise, mental and social stimulation, meals, and monitors health conditions.

Bridge to Hospice/Palliative Care

Palliative care provides a continuation of care between the treatments to cure an illness and a terminal diagnosis. With this service, All Care VNA supports the patient and the family from diagnosis through the course of the disease.

Bereavement Services

Grief is different for everyone, but All Care provides services to help families after the death of a loved one. Support groups and remembrance services are free and open to all members of the community. One Example is HeART Space, a monthly workshop celebrating the power of the creative process.

Upcoming HeART sessions will be held from 1 to 3 pm on Fridays May 18, June 15, July 20 and August 17, 2018. Groups are led by a registered art therapist; you don’t have to have art skills or experience, but you do have to RSVP (781-244-1198).

FAQ: “What Should I Look for When Choosing a Cremation Provider?”

All funeral homes provide cremation services. The important thing, when choosing any personal service, is to be confident that the provider you choose has your best interests at heart, is willing to answer your questions and educate you about your options, and will help you to make the decisions that are in accord with your values and budget. Investigating options and funeral service providers in advance is the best way to ensure that you have the time to make the choice that is most comfortable for you.

Remember that cremation is only a method of disposition. You may choose to have as many service options as make sense for you and your family. Some families choose small, private services while others choose to have an open-casket viewing and visitation prior to cremation, followed by a service and burial of the cremains. Other families may choose to have their loved ones cremated and hold a memorial afterward. There are a full range of options available and cremation can provide flexibility in terms of timing as well as other traditions. Your funeral professional will help you make these choices based on your needs.



All states have different laws and regulations governing cremation services that must be upheld by the funeral home. In Massachusetts, funeral homes are not allowed to own or operate crematories, so it is important to understand how that funeral home works with the crematory. Solimine Funeral Homes offer a multi-step Cremation Process that ensures your loved one is treated with respect and care, that the correct cremated remains are returned to you, and that a strict code of ethics is in place to uphold their standards. “We offer an exclusive Cremation with Confidence Guarantee that backs up our promise to safeguard your loved one’s remains until they are returned to you,” says Joel Solimine, owner and general manager. “We are also members of trade organizations such as the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association.”

Steps the Solimine Funeral Home professionals take in preparing your loved one after death include:

- Using a preferred crematory that upholds a strict code of ethics
- Placing an identification band on your loved one as soon as the body is transferred into their care
- Keeping your loved one in a controlled environment for the two-day waiting period required by Massachusetts law
- Holding personal effects in a secure area for the family
- Dressing and bathing your loved one in clothes of your choosing
- Having each step documented three times: once by the funeral home and twice at the crematory
- Returning the cremated remains to the family in an urn of their choice or another container
- Assisting the family in planning a funeral or memorial service at the chosen time

One of the best things you can do for your loved ones is to plan ahead so there won’t be a crushing number of choices to make in the hours and days after a death occurs. Making decisions in the painful time right after a loved one dies adds a burden the family can avoid with preplanning, a thoughtful process that does not require a financial commitment.

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MEET LISA JEPSON, ALL CARE HOSPICE VOLUNTEER

“We might do a puzzle, or I do their nails, or sing,” she says. Most of her patients are women and some have Alzheimer’s disease. It is unusual, but one of her patients improved enough that she didn’t need hospice services. Jepson still eats with her once a week. “I couldn’t imagine not seeing her,” she says.

Originally from California, Jepson came east and buckled down to finish her undergraduate degree at Merrimack College. She is married to a police officer. Her 22-year-old son is in the Marines, stationed currently in Hawaii. Traveling home is too expensive so she doesn’t see him often, but she is looking forward to his return home in August at the end of his enlistment.

When she is not working or visiting hospice patients, Jepson is still a busy woman. She is self-described as “artsy-craftsy”. She sews, makes jewelry, and walks her two dogs. “It depends on the time of year and the weather outside.”

Jepson says it’s hard to explain what she gets out of it. **“I really feel a sense of warmth. I get a loving feeling especially around the holidays, no matter what their religion might be. I get more out of it than they do.”**



FUNERAL, MEMORIAL & CREMATION SERVICES
FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED
Caring for Our Community in Countless Ways

