



2024

Gratitude
Report

VNA & HOSPICE
of the Southwest Region

Serving Bennington, Franklin, & Rutland Counties

Our Mission

To enhance the quality of life of all we serve through comprehensive home and community health services.

Our Vision

To be the best provider of home and community-based healthcare in Vermont.

Thank you to our previous board members!

Bill Bannerman - 22 years
Dr. Brad Berryhill - 9 years
Peter Kinder - 2 years
Ed Ogorzalek - 5 years

Board of Directors

Dan DiBattista - President
Jeff Weld - Vice President
Caitlin Perry - Treasurer
Martha Ide - Secretary
Jessica Boutin*
Margaret Donovan
Pamela Duchene**
Peter Fagan
Judi Fox***
Marsha Hance
Andrea Kaplan
Meg Levene
Dr. Richard Lovett
Frank McDougall
David Sands
Peter Wright

*Permanent Member CEO of VNAHSR

** Permanent Member Representative of SVMC

*** Permanent Member Representative of
Rutland Regional Medical Center

Executive Team

Jessica Boutin
Chief Executive Officer
Nicole Moran
Chief Clinical Operations Officer
Jessica Fredette
Chief Human Resources & Development Officer
Laura Lamarre
Chief Financial Officer
Kieran P. Keefe
Director of Information Technology
Mike Delehanty
Director of Operations, Safety & Security
Mikayla Fisette
Director of Communications
Lyane Adam-Murnaghan
Director of Homecare
Heidi Gillespie
Director of Children & Family Services

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A Note From Our CEO

I am proud to share our 2024 Gratitude Report—an opportunity to reflect on a year of growth, compassion, and unwavering commitment to our mission. This year marked a significant milestone for VNAHSR as we expanded our operations into Franklin County, bringing our home health and hospice services to even more Vermonters. At the same time, we remained deeply rooted in our ongoing work in Rutland and Bennington Counties, where our dedicated team continues to deliver high-quality, compassionate care to every patient and family we serve. We are grateful for the trust our communities place in us and for the generous support that makes our work possible.



Sara King retired from her role as CEO of VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region after more than 23 years of dedicated service. A passionate advocate for high-quality, community-based healthcare, Sara played a pivotal role in expanding access to home health, hospice, and palliative care throughout our region. Her visionary leadership and deep commitment to the people we serve helped shape VNAHSR into the compassionate, mission-driven organization it is today.



At our 2024 VNA Week Celebration, we honored Sara's lasting impact with the newly named Sara King Transformational Leadership Award, which will be given annually to individuals who exemplify her values of compassion, innovation, and service. We are deeply grateful for Sara's many years of leadership and her unwavering dedication to our mission and community.

Because of Your Donations...

1,446,511

Miles Driven

3,983

Patients Visited

115,938

Homes Visited

30,694

Hospice Days of Care

14,735

Total Care Hours

\$2,064,094

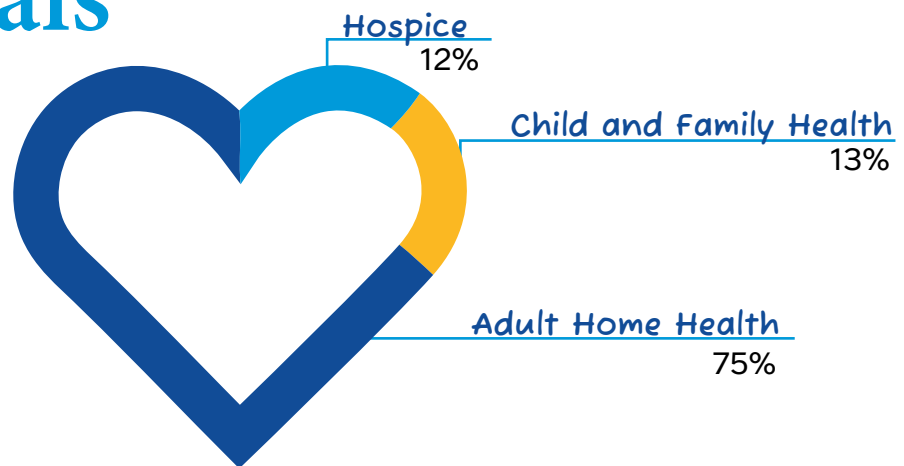
Charitable Care Provided



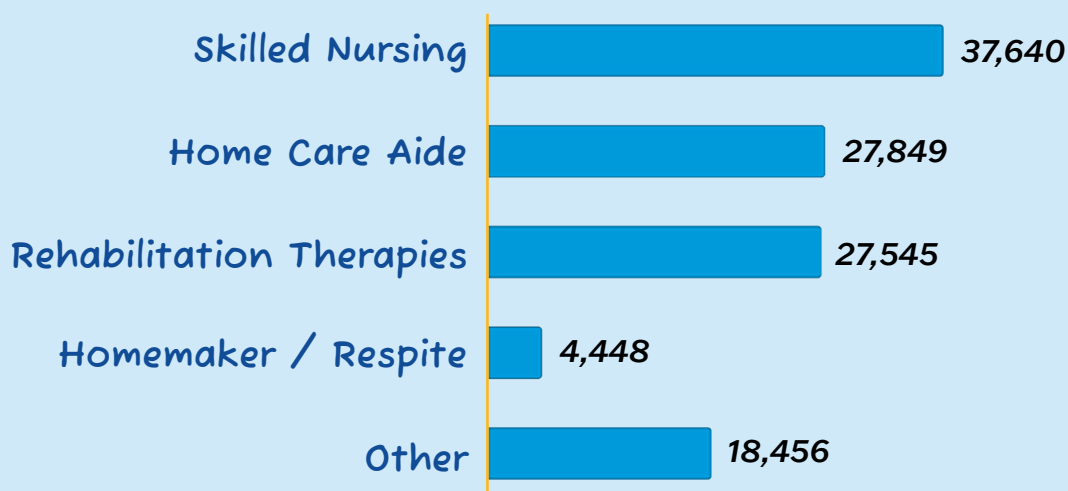
Quality of Care



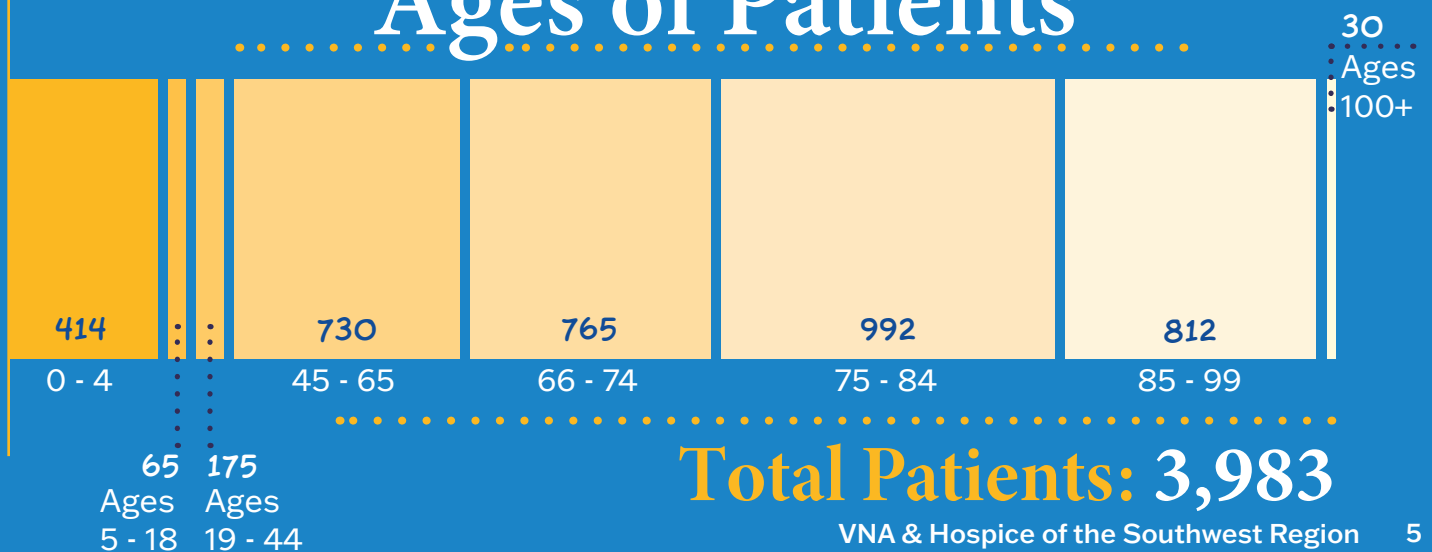
Individuals Served



Homes Visited

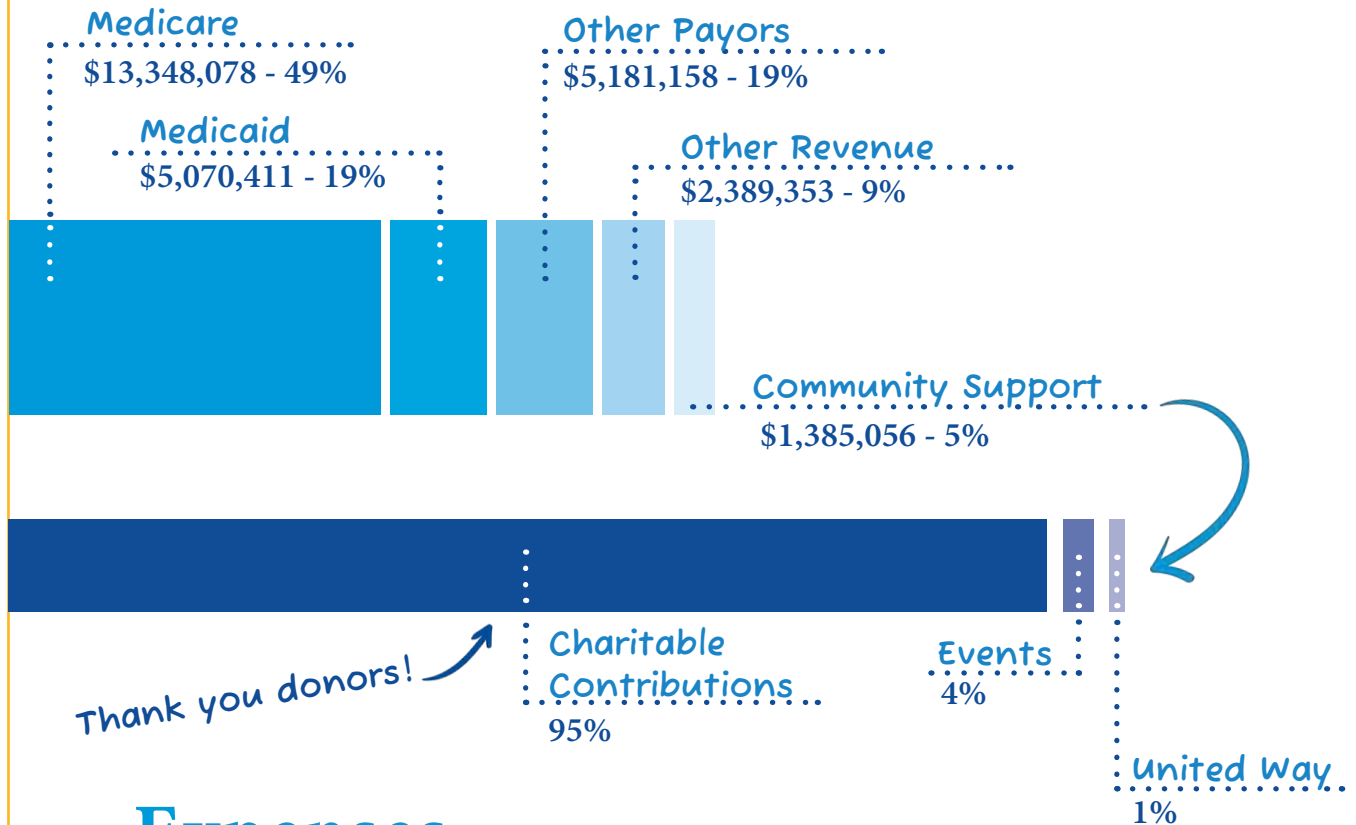


Ages of Patients

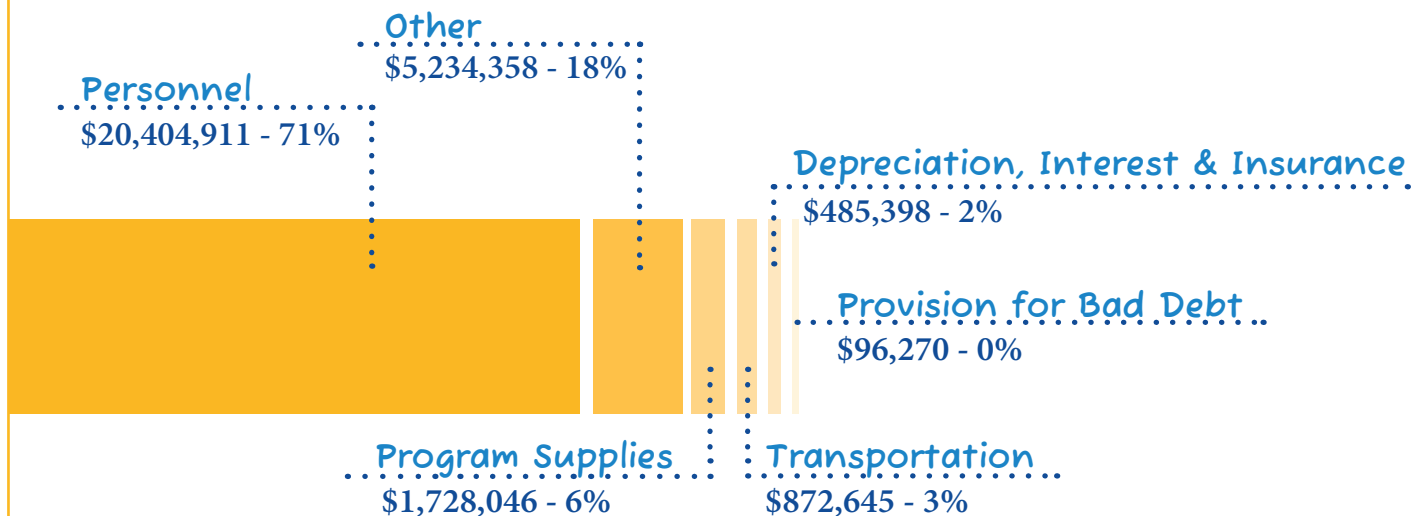


Financials

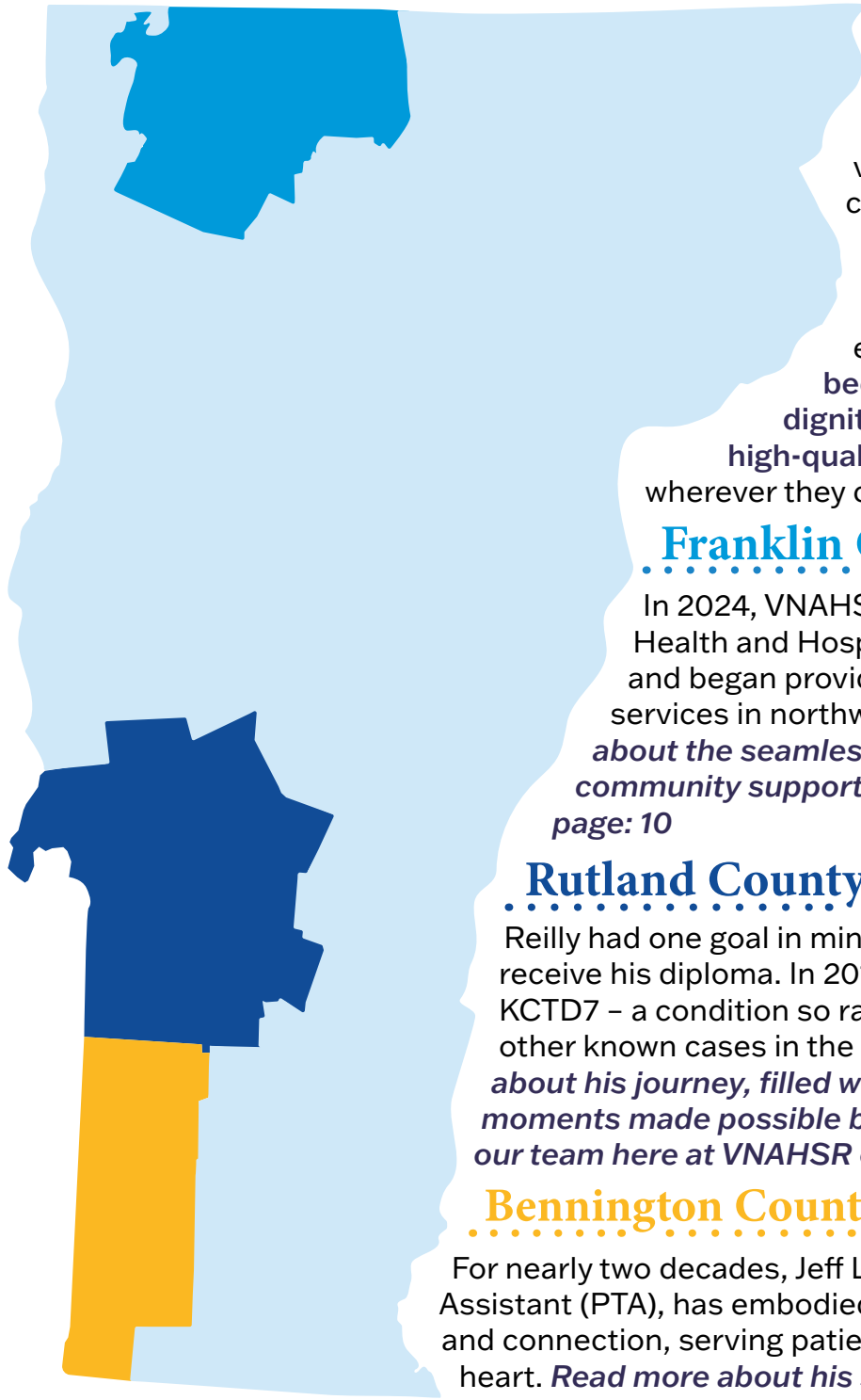
Revenue



Expenses



Three Counties Served



For more than 79 years, VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region (VNAHSR) has been a vital lifeline for the most vulnerable members of our communities— including at-risk children, seniors, individuals living with chronic or disabling conditions and those nearing the end of life. **Our mission has always been grounded in compassion, dignity and a commitment to making high-quality healthcare accessible to all— wherever they call home.**

Franklin County

In 2024, VNAHSR became the designated Home Health and Hospice agency in Franklin County, and began providing quality home healthcare services in northwestern Vermont. ***Read more about the seamless transition backed with community support and expanded resources on page: 10***

Rutland County

Reilly had one goal in mind for graduation day: Walk to receive his diploma. In 2013, Reilly was diagnosed with KCTD7 – a condition so rare that there are only four other known cases in the United States. ***Read more about his journey, filled with love, determination and moments made possible by the care and commitment of our team here at VNAHSR on page: 12***

Bennington County

For nearly two decades, Jeff Leake, a Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA), has embodied understanding, empathy, and connection, serving patients not just with skill but with heart. ***Read more about his story on page: 8***

Honoring Compassionate Care:

Bennington County

The Story of Jeff Leake, Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA)

At VNAHSR, we believe that compassionate care goes beyond just medical treatment. It is about understanding, empathy, and connection. For nearly two decades, Jeff Leake, a PTA, has embodied these values in his work, serving patients not just with skill but with heart.

A Personal Connection to Care

Jeff's journey into home care and hospice work is deeply personal. Growing up in Bennington, Vermont, Leake was raised in a family that understood hard work and dedication. His parents ran a dairy farm in Woodford, and swimming was at the heart of their family life. His father, a national-level swimmer, and his mother, a tireless advocate for youth athletics, shaped Jeff's early life. Yet, his formative years were also marked by profound loss.

When Leake was just 16, his mother was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer, and his father was diagnosed with a brain tumor. "As a kid, you're trying to manage school, sports, and help take care of your parents," Leake recalls. His mother passed away when he was 18, and his father, after battling a neurological disease, died in 2002. **This experience of caring for loved ones deeply impacted Jeff, laying the foundation for his compassionate approach to caregiving.**

Turning Tragedy Into Purpose

After graduating with a degree in Exercise Science, Leake began his career in physical therapy and found his calling in home healthcare. **He saw firsthand the**



Jeff Leake working with a patient.

importance of helping patients regain their strength and independence—especially those who, like his parents, had once needed more than just medical attention. "I've been to homes where people are not only physically struggling, but emotionally isolated as well," Leake shares. "I'm a nurse, a social worker, and a friend. **The care we provide is all-encompassing.**"

Leake recalls one particular instance when a patient's health took an unexpected turn. A man with substance abuse issues had been self-managing his medications for a seizure disorder. Leake noticed the patient was slurring his speech and acting unusually.

"I insisted he go to the hospital, even though he didn't want to," Leake explains. "It turned out he had toxic levels of medication in his system. He later thanked me, and it made me realize how important it is to stay vigilant."

Bridging the Gap Between Healthcare and Home

VNAHSR serves as a bridge between patients' hospital stays and their return to normal life. "We are here to help people re-enter their communities," Leake says. Whether it's guiding someone who's recovering from surgery or stroke through their first steps in weeks, or assisting them with home modifications to ensure safety, Leake's role is integral in improving patients' quality of life.

"There are four worlds in healthcare," says Leake. "The hospital, rehab centers, home health, and outpatient clinics. We are that bridge." It is in their homes that patients often experience their first signs of improvement, as they regain mobility and independence, and begin to reclaim their daily routines.

The Importance of Connection

While physical rehabilitation is an essential part of his work, it's the emotional connection that Leake believes truly makes a difference.

"I walk into people's homes and ask about their families. I know many of them from my childhood. I'm seeing people I knew as kids now struggling to stand up or walk," says Leake.

"Sometimes they request me specifically because they know me. We have a connection, and that means something."

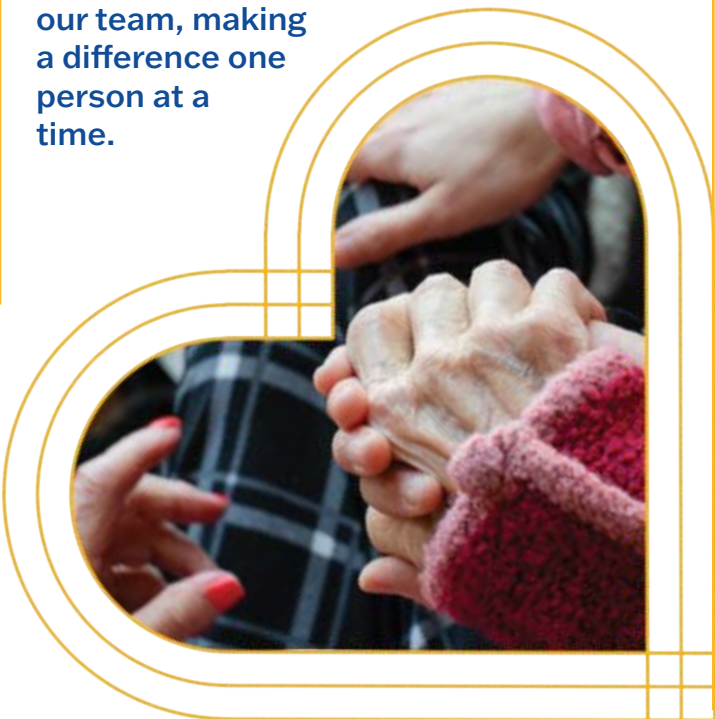
It's these connections—whether between healthcare providers, patients, or the community—that make a lasting impact. "I see former patients at the gas station or in town, and it's great

to see them back in the community, living their lives," says Leake. "One man who was once bedridden with broken legs now rides around on his new motorcycle. Those moments keep me going."

A Future of Compassionate Care

Jeff Leake's dedication to his patients and their families is a testament to the mission of VNAHSR: to provide compassionate, high-quality care at every stage of life. Whether it's physical rehabilitation, end-of-life care, or simply offering someone a listening ear, our team is here to support the community through every challenge.

In 2024 and beyond, we remain committed to delivering exceptional care that addresses not only the physical but also the emotional, social, and psychological needs of our patients. Jeff Leake's story is just one example of the impact we make in the lives of the people we serve. **We are grateful to have caregivers like him as part of our team, making a difference one person at a time.**



VNAHSR Began Providing Care in Franklin County

Franklin County



In 2024, VNAHSR became the designated Home Health and Hospice agency in Franklin County, and began providing quality home healthcare services in northwestern Vermont.

Like many home health agencies across the country, Franklin County Home Health (FCHHA) had been affected by numerous challenges, including the low reimbursement rates of Medicaid and Medicare programs and ongoing funding cuts. Enduring such margin pressures was compounded by the challenges of providing home health services in a state as rural as Vermont.

FCHHA and its Board of Directors recognized the need to consolidate operations and concluded that transferring operations to another visiting nurse association, such as VNAHSR, would allow for the continuation of quality home healthcare services for the residents of Franklin County.

“Part of our mission is to continue our founders’ vision for home healthcare in Franklin County by making sure our staff is prepared to meet changing healthcare needs,” said Corey Parent, FCHHA Board President. “VNAHSR, with its strong

operational track record, high patient satisfaction and quality outcome scores, and commitment to utilizing local staff, is uniquely positioned to help Franklin County meet those needs.”

The two agencies had been collaborating on a solution for Franklin County for the better part of 2023; it was a strong partnership from the start.

Both FCHHA and VNAHSR considered themselves sister agencies; both missions closely aligned having the



Reva Stollings, Marissa Hurley, Traci Osterhoudt.

Thank you!

Jason Dessureault
Director of Strategy and Planning

goal to support a healthier Vermont, build stronger families and transform our communities.

Reva said “The best part about the transition is the patients got to keep their same nurses. So the name on the folder changed, the name on their documentation changed, but that face that shows up at their house once a week or two times a week is the same face. That was a really big deal for all of them.”

The transition from FCHHA to VNAHSR has been seamless, ensuring that patients and families in Franklin County continue to

receive the high-quality, compassionate care they’ve come to trust. With many of the same dedicated staff members, enhanced resources and the support of an experienced and mission-driven organization, we are well-positioned to meet the evolving healthcare needs of our community.

We are proud to carry forward the legacy of home healthcare in Franklin County and look forward to continuing to provide comprehensive, person-centered services that promote health and well-being for all.

An interview with Clinical Managers, Marissa Hurley and Traci Osterhoudt

What part of the job is most important to you?

Marissa: Being in this type of healthcare setting, we’re seeing people on their level, in their homes, finding ways to improve their quality of life and to keep them safe in their own homes.

Describe the transition of care from FCHHA to VNAHSR.

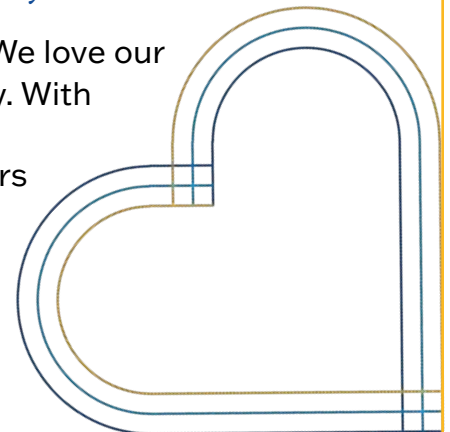
Traci: It was a seamless transition. It is the same people taking care of the patient, the same services, but with more support from VNAHSR.

How did you experience the transition from FCHHA to VNAHSR?

Marissa: I was part of the core group from FCHHA that came over with the transition. It’s always been a community feel. Now that we’ve made the switch over to VNAHSR, we have expanded resources. **It’s their same friends and neighbors, but better technology, better support, providing even better care than where we started from.**

What is your favorite part of the job?

Traci: We love our community. With VNAHSR, it truly is neighbors taking care of neighbors.



A Family's Journey:

Rutland County

Support, Strength and Hope with Help from VNAHSR

When Reilly Jakubiak was around 18 months old, his parents, Irene and Chris, began to sense something wasn't quite right. His hands trembled, but at the time, they thought it was simply excitement. At his two-year well-child visit, his pediatrician noticed he still wasn't speaking and referred him to the Kids on the Move (KOTM) program for speech therapy.

Soon after, Reilly's condition began to change rapidly. He experienced his first seizure at just over two years old. By age four, he struggled to walk and had difficulty swallowing liquids. "We saw a sharp decline around Christmas of 2010," Irene recalled. That's when VNAHSR began to support the family in their home.

Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, VNAHSR provided Reilly with essential in-home therapies—speech, occupational, and physical—that helped him retain function and communicate. In 2013, Maternal-Child Health nurses began visiting regularly to administer medications and monitor his condition. As his medical needs grew, pediatric high-tech nurses joined the team, helping the Jakubiaks manage the increasing number of machines and equipment needed for Reilly's care. He was also the first child in Rutland County to receive pediatric palliative care services from VNAHSR.

Despite the challenges, Reilly found joy in his care team. "He saw his therapists and nurses as friends—people who came to play with him," Irene shared. "He was fully engaged during their visits, and they gave him their full attention." **For Irene, this support extended well beyond her son's medical needs.** With VNAHSR's help, she was able to care for her aging grandmother and still be present for Reilly.

Chris, a full-time hydro-operator at Green Mountain Power, also worked as a volunteer firefighter and EMT. With such a full plate, the couple valued every bit of support. "We even managed an occasional date night," Chris said. "That time together really helped us stay connected."

For years, the Jakubiaks searched tirelessly for a diagnosis. In 2012, they pursued genome mapping—a long and uncertain process.



**The Jakubiak Family:
Chris, Reilly, and Irene.**



**Reilly and Jamie
Rosploch at his
Graduation.**

Fifteen months later, in July 2013, they finally received answers: Reilly had a rare genetic disorder called KCTD7. Only four other known cases existed in the U.S. Both Chris and Irene unknowingly carried the gene. “It felt like winning the wrong kind of lottery,” Irene said. “But finally knowing gave us the peace to move forward.”

After the diagnosis, their focus shifted from seeking answers to creating joyful moments. Though Reilly eventually lost the ability to walk, eat, or stand on his own, he continued to find happiness in the things he loved: Disney cartoons, water play, and family trips. The Jakubiaks made multiple visits to Disney World, where accessibility allowed Reilly to enjoy the rides and magic of the parks. “He lit up every time,”

To our donors: Thank you. Your generosity brought vital care and peace of mind to the Jakubiaks and so many other families in our region. You helped make this journey possible.

Irene recalled. “I loved planning every detail, and I could do that because I had help.”

“VNAHSR really understood our lives,” Chris said. “They supported not just Reilly, but all of us. They gave us room to breathe, and to be a family.”

In spring of 2024, Reilly graduated from high school—a milestone once filled with uncertainty. His journey has been anything but typical, but it has been filled with love, determination, and moments made possible by the care and commitment of VNAHSR.



Reilly and his parents walking at his graduation.

Memorable achievements with Jamie Rosploch, Home Care Clinical Manager.

1. How do you know Reilly?

I have worked with Reilly since he was seven years old. Throughout this time, his abilities have fluctuated, from engaging in functional tasks, to passive involvement, the ability to walk and then to only weight bear. I see Reilly for both medical and school OT services. Reilly had been able to pivot, bear weight and sometimes walk with two people assisting him for short distances for the past few years.

3. Then the real work must have begun, what did that look like?

Myself and the school PT, Sally, jumped at the chance to set a goal and help him achieve it. We spent every visit from that point on both in-school services and medical care with home PT Janet Hodge.

2. When did the goal of walking at graduation come about?

About 1 year ago, we were in a school IEP meeting discussing the excitement of planning graduation attendance within the next year. Reilly was previously told he was not expected to live past 10-years-old. This was a dream his parents never thought would come true. During his meeting, Dad jokingly said, “What if he could walk to get his diploma?!”

4. Reilly walked on graduation day to receive his diploma.

We were all so excited that we were able to be a part of such a huge achievement and memorable moment for this child and his family.

Spiritual Care Bereavement



Karyn Brower - Social Worker, Jesse Bradley - Hospice Chaplain/Spiritual Care Coordinator, Jess Greco - Social Worker.

Grief Groups

What inspired you to revamp the grief groups?

We recognized that grief is not a one-size-fits-all experience, and we wanted to offer more flexibility and ongoing support for people at different points in their journey.

How are the new grief groups going so far?

The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants are engaging deeply in the sessions, and many have expressed gratitude for the safe space and meaningful connections they've found.

What changes did you make to the grief groups, and why?

We introduced a six-week, curriculum-driven group for those who want structured support, and a monthly drop-in group for long-term connection and continued healing. These changes give participants both guidance and community, depending on what they need most.



Ed Keating

An interview with Ed Keating:

I lead Death, Dying & Danishes in Bennington, a community discussion series based on the Death Cafe model. These monthly gatherings create a welcoming and safe space where people from all walks of life can openly explore death, grief, and caregiving without judgment. **The feedback we receive is inspiring**—participants say these conversations are thought-provoking, comforting, and empowering, helping them become more informed and open to discussing mortality with their loved ones.

For anyone considering hospice volunteering, I would say: It is a gift to give and to receive. You don't need to have all the answers—just compassion, presence, and a willingness to walk beside someone on their unique journey. **This work enriches your own life in ways you never expect.**

Check out our website to see future events.



Hospice Volunteering

Did You Know?



Offerings of Hospice volunteer trainings in our coverage area occurred at least once every two months.



In 2024, our dedicated hospice volunteers contributed a total of 1,274.93 hours of meaningful support to patients.



Over 150 volunteers enrich the efforts of the VNAHSR to help best serve our patients and families. Thank you!



Our volunteers provided 3642.03 volunteer hours, a cost savings value of \$74,333.79 for our agency!



Interested in volunteering?

Please call or email Mary Pleasant.
802.442.0540 | Mary.Pleasant@vnahsr.org

Hospice Training Feedback:

“ I am grateful for all the resources and knowledge. I appreciate the blunt way of do's-and-don'ts as a volunteer. I am excited to develop my professional skills. This way of looking at death is a sigh of relief. Thank you. ”

“ Thorough presentation. Beneficial, interactive exercises. I feel as though I will be well supported in my role as a volunteer. It seems like the staff is a good team and they get along well. I'm excited to join the team! ”

Impact Story Highlights:

Dinners With Love: Serving Love & Comfort

Southside Steakhouse is a known staple in Rutland. What you may not know is they have participated in the VNAHSR's Dinners with Love program for a number of years.

"To the Owners & Chefs at Southside Steakhouse,

I am so very appreciative for the meals of love sent to me through the Dinners with Love Hospice Program. We were nourished by an amazing meal and love all around. The meals of love program is an invaluable gift... one of the many things that makes Rutland such an amazing community."

Did you know??

2,830 

Dinners With Love
Meals were Delivered



DINNERS
— WITH —
LOVE

Hospice Volunteers: Thank you!

Lauryn Axelrod

Mary Barron

Bob Bessette

Kathy Bessette

Dick Bower

Nancy Bower

Karen Braeutigam

Debbie Burdick

Patti Buscemi

Angel Butcher

Marianne Campbell

MaryAnn Carlson

Amy Carman

David Castonguay

Lois Costonguay

Phillip Ciulla

Donna Ciulla

Kathleen Clark

Patti Cody

Margaret Comar

Beth Contreras

Stephen Cookingham

Carrie Croft

Holly Cronin

Liza Dee

Nicole Denoyers

Alison Dezotelle

Paula DiCrosta

Robert DiCrosta

Nicole Dodge

Nancy Donavan

Louse Duda

Roberta Dunphy

Sandy Eddy

Nancy Eddy

Priscilla Eriksen

Nancy Fitzgerald

Brian Fleming

Kevin Fleming

Catherine Fullenwider

Joan Gamble

Heidi Gillespie

Carrie Girton

Irene Godfrey

Katie Gomez

Elizabeth Hardesty

Noreen Haynes

Michelle Heleba

Mike Hodulik

John "Jack" Hoffman

Ellen Hogan

Glenn Horgan

Greg Jacobs

George Jacoby

Jessica Jones

Donna Jones

Jim Kahle

Kathy Katz

Edward Keating

Louise Kenney

Nicole Kimbrough

Brendan Lalor

Nan Lance

Jamie Losikoff-Kent

Christopher Luke

Nancy Luke

Margaret Mailhot

Cheryl Mance

Dave Mance



• To read the
• full stories,
• check out the
• Impact Story
• Library.



Trillium Singers: Songs of Love & Peace

Through spirituals, hymns, folk songs, and old standards, these volunteer vocalists bring comfort and connection to patients and families.

"To every member of the Trillium Chorus, to our supporters, and to the families who welcome our singers into their most intimate moments—thank you. Your belief in the healing power of music ensures that voices of compassion and care will continue to be heard across our community. In harmony, in hope, in gratitude—thank you."

Diane Mayo
Kelly McDermott-Burns
Alice McGarey-Martin
Barb McGuire
Sheila McIntyer
Jim McManigle
Karen Mee
Elise Melesky
Phyllis Michaelson
Marc Miele
Donna Miller
Margaret Nadeau
Carol Newell
Lauren Norford
Andrew Ohotnick
Lauren Olewnik
Laura Olsen
Bonnie Olson
Suzanne Ordway
Mary Papeika
Ruth Pelletier
Linell Pike

Jackie Proulx
Phyllis Quarles
Tom Ragland
Cathy Ranney
Charlene Rapinz
Ellen Reiling
Christopher Robbins
Judie Robbins
Elaine Ryan
Priscilla Sachs
Stephanie Savage
Sara Schmollinger
Carol Schoenwetter
Wendy Scott
Kathleen Sherwin
Margaret Soule
Carol Steinmetz
Connie Stewart
Robin Stomgren
Tara Talley
Alida Tarbell
Emily Tarrant
Amanda Thurber

Lynn Trefrey
Brian Vogel
Kim Vogel
Kestrel Voulgarakis
Marilyn Warner
Rosey Warner
Karen Waterworth
Sarah West
Bruce Wheat
Eileen Wheeler
Jay White
Gary Whiting
Tami Whitmore
Leah Widmer
Ellen Wilcox
Paula Willoquet
Dave Wolk
Wendy Wood
Alicia Wuesthoff
Jo Yoder
Louise "Terry" Zimmer

Philanthropy

With Deep Gratitude to Our Supporters

Thank you to everyone who championed our mission and supported VNAHSR's work throughout 2024. Your generosity and partnership allowed us to continue delivering compassionate, high-quality care to our neighbors—when and where they needed it most.

This year, thanks to the extraordinary support of individuals, local businesses, charitable organizations, volunteers and municipal partners across Bennington, Rutland and now Franklin Counties, we were able to provide more than **\$2 million**



Gina Grove

**Annual Fund &
Development Manager**

**Gina.Grove@vnahsr.org
802.770.1543**

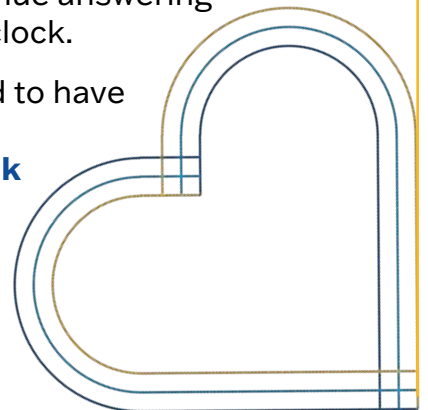
in unreimbursed charitable care. That means more patients received essential home health, hospice, and palliative care services regardless of what their insurance allowed to pay.

We were especially excited to expand our services into Franklin County in 2024, and are deeply grateful for the warm and enthusiastic welcome we received from the community. From the start, Franklin County residents and local leaders have embraced our mission and joined us in ensuring that heartfelt, expert care is available to all who need it. We are proud to now call Franklin County part of the VNAHSR family.

Every home visit, every moment of comfort provided, every hand held in a time of need was made possible in part because of you. From remote rural communities, to town centers across our designated service area, your support ensured Vermonters had access to expert care and unwavering compassion—hallmarks of our work for just shy of 80 years.

Whether you gave your time, your resources or your voice—**you made a difference.** You helped someone stay safely at home after surgery, offered a grieving family the support they needed, and ensured our nurses, therapists and aides could continue answering calls around the clock.

We are honored to have you as part of our community. **Thank you for standing with us and believing in the power of care delivered at home.**



A Golf Day Fore VNA

Nothing can stop the fun, or success, when great people come together! A Golf Day FORE VNA, presented by OneDigital, raised over \$47,000 thanks to fantastic businesses, community supporters and volunteers.

Critical revenue raised supports our patients and families, especially the +\$2 million in unreimbursed charitable care provided in 2024.



Thank you to our planning committee who devoted dozen of hours to ensure the success of the annual fundraiser: Melissa Brown, Jessica Fredette, Gina Grove, Maru Leon, Katha Pehm, Susan Plaisance and Christine Thompson.

Special thanks to our tournament volunteers and Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Pleasant: Patti Cody, Nancy Donovan, Roberta Dunphy and Stacie Eaton.

The Thrift Shop

The VNA Thrift Shop, located at 5468 Main St, Manchester, VT, is a hidden gem for high quality, women's, men's and children's clothing, shoes, house wares and more.

Our shoppers helped us have a record breaking year - in 2024 they raised over \$200,000 in revenue!

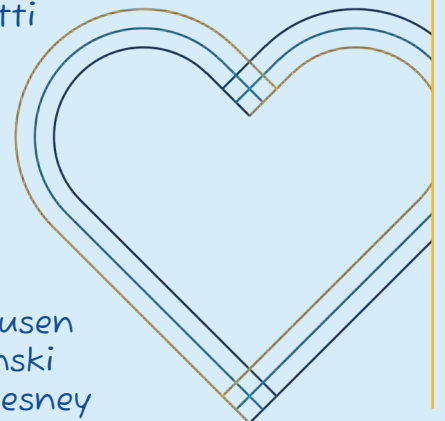
The Thrift Shop also successfully trialed opening the shop one Saturday a month and have since maintained that schedule thanks to the positive response from the community.

Our deepest gratitude to our staff and volunteers who sort through countless bags of donations to offer the very best inventory on the shop floor, and to our donors and shoppers who make so much possible for our patients and families through this unique avenue of philanthropy.



Thrift Shop Volunteers in 2024:

Cheryl Gasperetti
Paula Teeling
Sharron Kropa
Linda Slade
Rosemary Free
Tim Weyant
Gert D'Eredita
Rose Ramos
Joanne VanDeusen
MaryEllen Bielinski
Margaret McChesney



A Room to Heal: Marsha J. Hance's Gift of Comfort and Care



Marsha J. Hance made a gift that quietly transformed the way VNAHSR supports those walking through grief. Her donation to the Life's Journey Capital Campaign in 2018 created the *Marsha J. Hance Comfort and Care Center, in loving memory of Ron Hance*—a serene, purposefully designed space dedicated to bereavement support. It stands not only as a tribute to her late husband, Ron Hance, but also as a heartfelt offering to the community they both came to love.

Marsha, a board member of VNAHSR since 2017, sat with Gina Grove, Annual Fund and Development Manager, in the space she envisioned after her own experience with loss ten years ago. As she moved through the room, she pointed out the deeply personal details—a pair of wooden ducks resting on a mantle that once belonged to Ron, abstract artwork that welcomes all interpretations, seating oriented toward views of nature, no clocks to hold grief to a time limit, a felt cardinal, gifted by Ron's

very first friend, perched in a decorative birch tree gently aglow with twinkle lights.

When Marsha herself needed grief counseling after Ron's passing, this room did not exist – yet. "Counseling happened wherever there was space—offices, conference rooms, even outside," she recalled. "The first year of loss you focus on getting through all of the firsts. Looking back, it was important that I designed this room after that first year, because it was then that I knew what was needed."

She designed the Marsha J. Hance Comfort and Care Center as a "soft landing"—a place to exhale, reflect and begin to heal in the memory of their loved one. "I hope people feel a little better when they leave than when they walked in." A living tribute to a man who loved Rutland with his heart and soul.

Ron Hance spent a majority of his career at Heritage Family Credit Union and served as a board member of the World Council of Credit Unions. His travels spanned the globe, but when it came to where he might retire, Ron knew there was nowhere he'd rather be than Rutland. **"Ron loved to help people," Marsha said. "People helping people—that's what he lived by. His eyes would well with happy tears knowing this room was available to the community."**

Now, thanks to Marsha's generosity, families and loved ones of patients served through VNAHSR's Hospice program have access to the Marsha J. Hance Comfort and Care Center. Through the Medicare hospice benefit, bereavement services are offered up to 13

months after a patient’s death—a vital and often overlooked part of the care journey.

In a world where caregivers often feel forgotten in the shadows of loss, Marsha wanted to make sure no one had to grieve alone. “They need help when the hearse leaves, when the chaos settles.” She likened grief counseling to the thread that helps us stitch our hearts back together—stronger and softer all at once.

For Marsha, this gift was also about giving back to the place that had embraced her. Though she didn’t grow up, work or live most of her life in Rutland, she was welcomed here through Ron. “For years, I was known as ‘Ron’s wife’—and I adored that,” she said with a smile. “This gift, and this room, allowed me to put a stamp on a community that didn’t really know me.”

Marsha hopes her story encourages others to consider how their generosity can shape the places they live in—or come to call home. “You don’t have to be from here to care about the people here. You just have to see the need and make that impact.”

The Marsha J. Hance Comfort and Care Center, she says, is like planting a tree in Rutland—rooted in personal meaning, but for the community to benefit from for years to come.

Giving is more than a financial transaction. It’s an act of hope. It’s a way of honoring the past, nurturing the present, and investing in the future. It’s how we plant roots—not just for ourselves, but for others we may never meet. **“I’ll never know all the people my contributions have helped,” Marsha said. “But I believe in this work. I believe in this agency. And I’m going to keep spreading the message about this wonderful organization that helped us both.”**

Her voice carries warmth and quiet strength, but the message is clear: the health of a community depends on the people willing to give back to it. **When we support one another—through loss, through love, through life—we create a legacy that lasts far beyond us.**



Gina Grove

“ Gifts like Marsha’s don’t just make a difference—they build what didn’t exist before. Legacy giving empowers you to create something permanent, meaningful and deeply personal.

Let’s talk about how your generosity can leave a legacy that changes lives. Contact me to explore the meaningful ways you can create your own legacy of care.

Gina.Grove@vnahsr.org
802.770.1543

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Within the next few pages we've chosen to recognize donors who made a gift in 2024 by the number of years they've been giving to highlight the **enduring impact of sustained support**—whether someone made their first gift or their 30th in 2024, generosity is part of the foundation that makes our work possible. **Every gift matters**, and long-time giving shows the strength of a shared commitment that grows over time. This listing is a tribute to both new connections and lasting partnerships. **Thank you to every single donor!**

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To All the Hospice Caregivers: On behalf of the patient, her daughter, myself and husband, I wish to thank all of the nurses, LNA's, housekeepers, social workers, spiritual therapists and all other support staff that helped make it possible to keep her in my home. It meant a great deal to her daughter that she was with us. We could not have done it without you. You are all very special people to do what you do. May God bless.

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“ I have just had knee surgery and have never had VNA & Hospice before. I had Janet Hodge, PT come take care of me. She is very good at what she does and I want to thank her and VNA & Hospice for all their help to take care of me. Thank you all so much. ”

“ I cannot tell you how WONDERFUL the VNA team has been for my husband. Every single person that has come out to see him has the most genuine caring nature about them! You all go above and beyond to help us not only as a patient, but the whole family. Keeping us informed as to how to help him the best way we can. Including helping us get him transitioned from Home Care to Hospice. You all are just unbelievable! Thank you very much from the bottom of my heart! ”

Thank you for your generosity!
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Lynne G. Munaghan

Thank you for your
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Laura Lamane

Your contribution is
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Thank you for
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- Mikayla
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