



NEWS

Greetings!

“Babies die all the time.” Her statement sent chills of sadness through me. I was sitting with a group of people who coordinate programs teaching English to speakers of other languages in faith communities. I had encouraged them to include health care access and health information in their classes. “Yes, we really need to do this,” echoed one of the coordinators who is also a pediatric nurse practitioner. “And we also need to bring hope along with information.” Then she told the story of her home visit. The baby had a high fever, but the young immigrant mother was afraid to take him for evaluation and care. “But he could die from this high fever,” the nurse warned. The mother’s resigned reply came: “Babies die all the time. There is nothing we can do about it.”

In a discussion with another group of health ministers this story was put in context for me. “There is often a fatalistic attitude among our people. They don’t have any hope that things could be different.”

Hope is central to wellness, to the desire for full life. It envisions possibility and is propelled by persistence. Lived hope is active – picturing and then putting into behavior what it takes to be healthy and whole. “Hope is the ability to picture ourselves coming out the other side of whatever chasm of pain, disease or tragedy in which we might find ourselves.” (Hiles, Marv and Nancy, *All the Days of My Life*, Healdsburg, CA, Iona Center, 2005.)

Gary Gunderson calls it “informed hope.” “Wishful thinking will not suffice. Optimism devoid of reality can bring us both to denial and despair. But informed hope is grounded in life itself. It has a way of saying, ‘Yes, untoward events have happened, but you still have a life to live. Live it!’” (With Larry Pray, *Leading Causes of Life*, Memphis, TN, The Center of Excellence in Faith and Health, 2006, p. 133.)

Congregational Health Partnership (CHP) continues to encourage you in the faith community to explore the underlying root causes of death and disease framed positively as the root impetus for life. Past issues of this newsletter have reflected upon information/education, a meaningful existence, and economic resource skills to build the foundations of health. This issue completes the bottom section of the Community Health Needs Map (see page 2) with a consideration of hope. A diverse sampling of individuals share their stories of hope. May these stories encourage other people, families and communities to build hope. May they help you strengthen community connections...make fresh starts...give birth to life.

The Rev. Sandi John, MDiv, MS, APRN, BC
Senior Manager, Congregational Health Partnership

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- Life with Cancer® Stories of Hope
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Thoughts on Hope in Human Community

A saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) that has always touched me:

“The Prophet said, ‘A faithful believer to a faithful believer is like the bricks of a wall, enforcing each other.’ While (saying that) the Prophet clasped his hands, by interlacing his fingers.”

Being part of a community is a vitally important thing. In this world where we are often very busy with many things, we can easily get isolated, and in our isolation, things become more overwhelming than if we are able to share them with others, and receive support and advice.

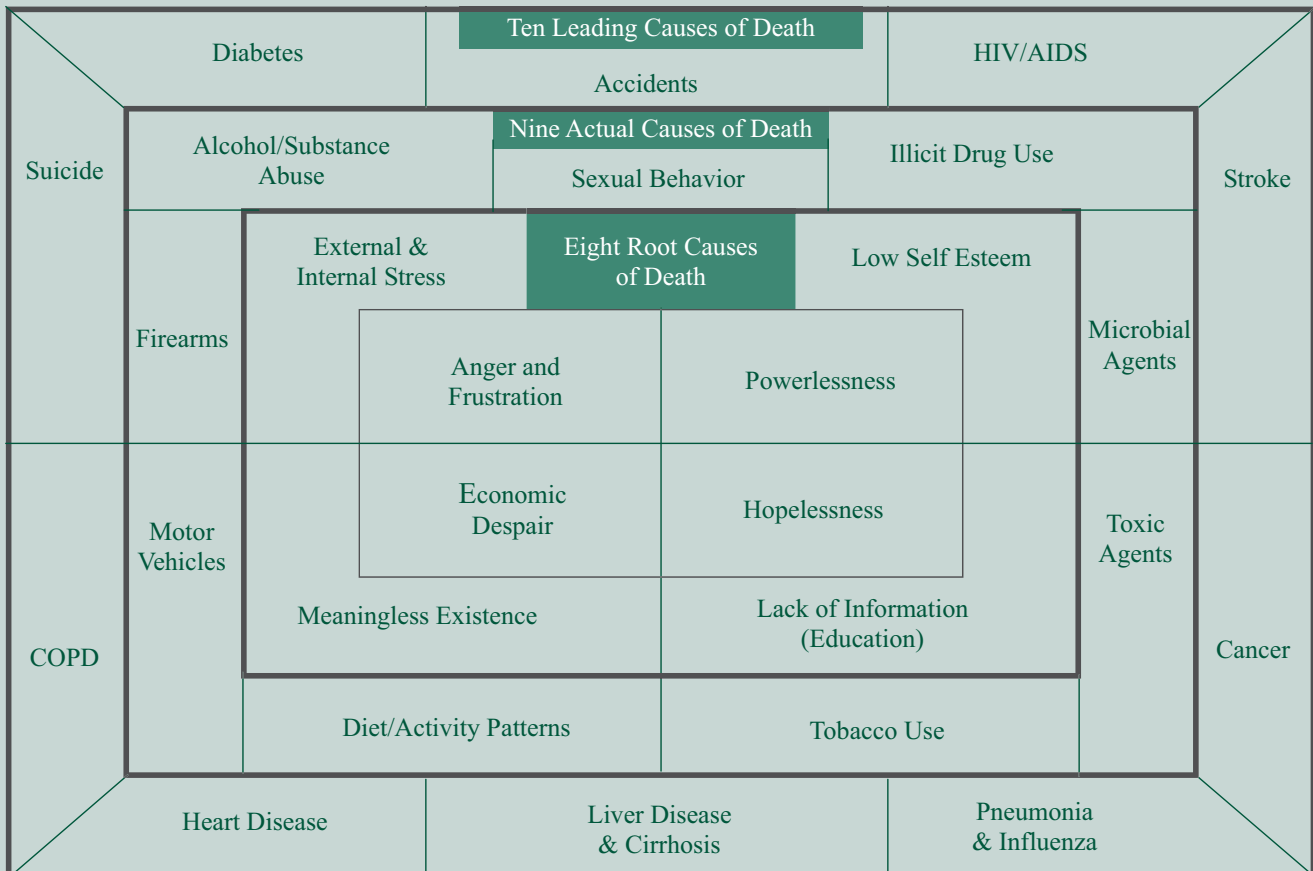
The companions of the Prophet used to ask each other, “How is your

iman (faith) today?” which shows us that they weren't just concerned with “Hello, how are you?” in a superficial sense. They were truly interested in each other and inquired about the core of each other's beings. This should underscore for us the responsibility we have to be concerned about those who pray next to us, or work next to us, and that we need to ask about each other. We need to be aware of how others are doing, and to provide whatever support we are able to. If we don't pay attention to this responsibility, the bricks in our wall will not hold together well, and the wall will become weak – so weak, in fact, that the slightest gust of wind can topple it.

Humans are social creatures, which is why it doesn't surprise me that religions usually emphasize the community of believers and the social obligations that one has to improve the world together. If we were to truly think about the impact of many, in the form of a wall, rather than the impact of individual bricks scattered about, then we would have a lot more hope, not only for the well-being of each individual, but for the community as a whole.

**Fatima Y. Mirza, MSW
PhD Student, Social Work
Remarks at Dar Al-Hijrah
Islamic Center, 12/8/2007
Life Management Forum,
“Take Control of Your Life”**

Community Health Needs Map



Reprinted with permission, Dr. Randy Johnson, M.D., Marquette County Public Health Department

We asked! You answered! We listened!

A huge thanks to each of the 109 of you who responded to our newsletter satisfaction survey last fall! Responses to your comments included:

- The font is black and larger as requested.
- If you were one who prefers an electronic format, send me your e-mail address, and I'll switch you from paper to electronic.
- If you were one who asked for multiple copies mailed via USPS, please e-mail that request to me.

- If you have a specific request, such as how to get a hospital visitor badge, please contact me.
- For those who requested information on free health clinics, health care for the uninsured and for seniors, please visit our Web site, www.inova.org/chp, click on "Community Resources" and you will find these lists.
- You asked for and we will continue to provide: wellness topics, community resources, articles by guest authors, and spiritual resources woven throughout.

- You asked for and we will strengthen or add: more story sharing and connecting among congregations.
- You suggested quite an impressive list of content you would like explored, and we will address these suggestions in upcoming issues.

You asked! Now we are asking you in return!

In the fall survey there were a number of suggestions for more opportunities for faith communities to network, learn from, connect with, and mentor one another via this newsletter. To meet this need, will you please send me the kinds of items you would like to share with or learn from other faith communities:

- Volunteer opportunities
- Stories of successful faith and health promotions
- Questions or concerns others have successfully handled

Again, thank you for your part in strengthening this medium for faith community health promotion. (Sandi John)

Email to sandi.john@inova.org or call 703-321-2602.

Hope Reaches for and Thru You

*Hugged by hardened earth and
frozen lakes
in financial times from which my
foundation shakes
the bough for my swing in the hard
wind breaks
from the parting of a dear friend
my heart and soul aches*

*Painting me blue
a bucket full of sky
rain fills my eyes
may the Weathermaker show why
such questions propel me
deeper than a sigh*

*Clouds appear and dissipate
the sun comes around
if I could only wait*

*But as soon as I am near lost
inside an ocean of thought
God's light reaches from a horizon
that is already bought
in the form of a friend
who rows inward with a smile
now I can wait past a moment
and run for a mile*

*Sharing brings back the peace
that allows hope to grow
please pass it around
so others may know*

*January 2, 2008, Tom Doremus,
Roman Catholic*

"We have a long way to go. So let us hasten along the road, the road of human tenderness and generosity. Groping, we may find one another's hands in the dark."

Emily Greene Balch

A Story of Hope

I was a naïve 19-year-old college junior. I had become very active on campus, helping start two new student organizations focusing on international affairs, and was elected first president of one of them. I learned for the first time while president of the student organization why my high school vice principle asked me to run for student body president. To my bewilderment, he had told me that my classmates had singled me out as a leader. In college I learned I had skills and talents far beyond my understanding. I was excited about the present, what I was doing and learning, about life and myself. I was also excited, optimistic and confident for the future, already looking at graduate programs in international affairs, my dream since high school.

My parents had separated when I was 17 and divorced before I was 19. The divorce was dramatic – emotionally violent between my parents and destructive for our family. My twin brother became estranged and remains so to this day. At 19, I began to have difficulty sitting still to read and completing homework assignments on time. I began to experience anxiety being around people and became less energetic and more saddened. I began to isolate myself.

When I was summoned to court on a traffic citation, I appeared 12 days late, having walked over three miles because I had no money for gas. I was sent to county jail, where I was incarcerated in the same large cell as people accused of crimes ranging from DUI and petty theft to murder.

This began a five-year nightmare, which included more than 20 stays in hospital psychiatric wards. I was soon to go from acute depression to major depression, and finally to a diagnosis of manic depression. I left college, could not work and stopped visiting friends altogether. I left my family and told no one where I was.

Eventually, so much time had passed with my situation unchanged, I thought my life was forever lost. Then one day an unforeseen miracle happened: I nearly died. I was in the hospital yet again to increase the dosage on a medicine. Once the dosage change began, my body rejected the medicine and I went into a comatose state. I was unconscious for five days. The hospital staff said later they thought they had lost me.

After regaining consciousness and learning what had happened, I knew I had to take stock of my life, and I realized I was alive because God intended it to be so. And God wanted me to be alive with everything that I have and am. At that moment, I never needed to ask the question “Why?” again, and everything changed.

Within a year I was back at work, within four years back at college, and within seven years I had finished my undergraduate degree that I had started 15 years earlier.

Commencement for me was the most gracious day of my life to date. I have never felt so much joy and relief in one day. I experienced this as the grace of God and have tried to thank Him every day since, in

words, in living my life to help others and in pursuing the dreams He has created in me.

After a very successful three years of professional life with a Fortune 500 firm, I applied to graduate school for my dream international relations degree. My application was rejected. So many years of undergraduate difficulty in sitting still to read and complete assignments had destroyed my grades. However, I had met an alumna of the program and learned an appeal was possible. For me the appeal involved retaking courses and the GRE with specific scores, and relocating away from my job for a prep program. Near the end of this process, having exceeded the scores requested, the Academic Dean pulled me from class. She congratulated me and told me I was accepted to the program.

Today, having graduated with the highest grades I'd ever earned and moving to Washington, DC to begin a new career in international relations, I lead a non-profit organization related to foreign policy. None of this would be possible without the grace of God our Father. There have been thousands of times I thought I would never see another day. So I have learned to never give up, to keep walking even when I can't see the hope that is always there. My prayer is that my story will be an encouragement to others who are experiencing difficult challenges and who may have lost hope.

- submitted anonymously from one of the Catholic faith community partners

Betsy and Marge (stories on facing page) are participants in Life with Cancer's Spirituality Quest Group, which meets the second Tuesday of each month, facilitated by Marsha Komandt, RN, a Life with Cancer staff person who also is a faith community nurse and part of the Northern Virginia Faith Community Nurse Network. The group is for those exploring the meaning of spirituality in their lives as they experience a cancer diagnosis and how they can find peace in the midst of potential chaos. For more information on this class or other Life with Cancer services, call 703-776-2841 or visit www.lifewithcancer.org.

Life with Cancer® Stories of Hope

For me, HOPE is a very positive word. It sounds bubbly and full of energy and holds sweet promise for good. Its optimistic unspoken message shouts “never give up!” I believe that HOPE nourishes our dreams and soul. I can’t imagine living without HOPE. In my struggle with breast cancer, I always felt that I’d survive and die much later of something else. It wasn’t false hope; it was knowing that most of the time, many of us are offered another chance. HOPE keeps that light shining even though, at times, it’s reduced to a glimmer. HOPE quietly sends a strong message to “hold on.” I believe that HOPE is God’s still voice gently and continually whispering to us what he expects from faithful children.

Sturdy Sunflowers

*As the sun goes down
My sunflowers bend low;
But they’re safe
Knowing that the sun
Will come out again soon
And they’ll thrive once again.*

*With time, their stems weaken
Just as my legs
Aren’t so strong anymore.
But with water and food*
There’ll be strength for another day.*

*Another day of beauty
And messages and memories;
And lessons
And amazement
But mostly – of hope!*

**flower food*

-story and poem submitted by Marge Killmon, breast cancer survivor

My mother-in-law, Ginny, who is 87 years young, is an inspiration of hope for what can happen if one has a positive outlook. A little over 20 years ago, she had a serious fall in which she had to be airlifted from her home in northern California to a hospital in San Francisco. She was in the hospital for about three months. It was touch and go for awhile. Her right side being

partially paralyzed, she required many months of physical therapy. But her spirit has always continued to remain positive. Recently, she decided that it was time to move from her home of 37 years to an apartment for older people. She has many friends, and is such fun to be around. She talks on the phone encouraging people when they have a challenging day. She plays

bridge, is taking art classes, and participates in chair-based exercise, as well as memory enhancement classes. Mom has an electric wheelchair that allows her to be more independent. With her sense of humor, she's like a breath of sunshine. Although she has had challenges that might make others want to give up, she keeps going, like the Energizer bunny.

-submitted by Betsy Baker



How to Contact Us

CHP looks forward to serving you again from:

8003 Forbes Place, Suite 102

Springfield, VA 22151

Phone: 703-321-2602, Fax: 703-321-1978

If you would like more information about Inova Congregational Health Partnership, or to volunteer, update your contact information, or be removed from our mailing list, please contact CHP at our new address, listed above.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services including emergency and urgent care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health and blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova’s mission is to improve the health of the diverse community it serves through excellence in patient care, education and research. Inova provides a healthy environment for its patients, families, visitors, staff and physicians by prohibiting tobacco use on its campuses.

www.inova.org

Your contribution to the Congregational Health Partnership program will help ensure that other congregations receive similar health related benefits. To make a donation, please contact the Inova Health System Foundation at 703-289-2072.

Inova Health System respects the unique nature of a congregation’s health ministry, its forms of spiritual expression, and the objectives that emerge from a congregational needs assessment.

What's Happening in the Faith Communities?

Bridging the Gap: Fourth Annual Conference on Youth Suicide Prevention and Mental Wellness

The Many Faces of Depression

When: Tuesday, May 13, 2008, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Where: Fairfax Community Church, 11451 Braddock Rd., Fairfax, VA 22030

Sponsored by: Fairfax Partnership for Youth, Youth Suicide and Depression Task Force (YSAD)

Watch for registration to be posted on the Fairfax Partnership for Youth Web site: www.fairfaxyouth.org.

For more information, call Susan Lydick at 703-324-5292.

Partners Together

Fourth Annual Faith Community HIV Awareness and Education Conference

When: Friday, June 13, 2008, 8 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Where: First Baptist Church of Alexandria, 2932 King St., Alexandria, VA 22302

Sponsored by: Inova Juniper Program and community partners

Registration information: 703-321-2600

Where to Start: Closing Gaps in Serving Older Adults

INTERFAITH SUMMIT 2008

Wednesday, June 11, 2008

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

George Mason University

Student Union II

4400 University Drive, Fairfax VA, 22030

The summit will provide tools for faith-based communities to act as “first responders” to seniors’ needs and increase their opportunities for:

- Sharing resources at the community level
- Building programs for older adults

To register:

1. By e-mail: info@carefaxltc.org. Provide first name, last name, your faith community, mailing address and contact phone number.
2. By phone: call 571-321-2018.

Hope is the habit in which I see myself becoming healthy again. I picture how I will be when I come out the other side of this present trial. Hope is the mother of who I will become. Hope leans ahead into the reality of what we envision. We may make ourselves vulnerable to disease when in an odd moment our hearts begin to tremble, our forward motion falters, and we unknowingly turn back. Hope, the healer, looks ahead.

Marv and Nancy Hiles

A letter of gratitude and hope from the fall class of Personal Care Attendants, Grace Ministries, United Methodist Church

We are writing this letter today with the purpose of thanking you and the Grace Ministries for the opportunity to help us become Personal Care Attendants. This training gave us the tools to earn a living, and at the same time helped us open our eyes and become more compassionate, caring and respectful individuals. It also gave us lessons and tools that we will carry all of our lives.

This training has been very impactful to us and has changed our lives. The fact that Grace Ministries has sponsored individuals like ourselves with income challenges but with the desire and willingness to be better citizens and contribute to the community, gives us the hope and push to build a better future for our families.

Presented to Sarah Newman of Floris United Methodist Church, Herndon, VA November 17, 2007

Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up.

Anne Lamott

What's Happening at Inova?

Effective Nursing Strategies to Decrease Health Care Disparities

When: Saturday, April 5, 2008, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Where: Inova Fairfax Hospital Physicians Conference Center

Sponsored by: National Black Nurses Association and Inova Fairfax Hospital Nursing Leadership

For more information contact Sandi John: sandi.john@inova.org

PREPARANDOSE PARA SU BÉBE

Inova HealthSource presents a one-session, four-hour class in Spanish that prepares families for labor and childbirth. It includes medications during labor, relaxation techniques, role of the support person, newborn care and infant feeding. Meets monthly on a Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cost: \$75.

PREPARANDOSE PARA SU BEBE:

Inova HealthSource presenta una sesion de 4 horas en Espanol para preparar familias durante el trabajo de parto y nacimiento del bebe. Incluye medicamentos usados durante el trabajo de parto, tecnicas de relajacion, papel de la persona que da apoyo a la madre, cuidados y alimentacion del recién nacido. La reunion es cada mes en Sabados de 10 a.m. a 2 p.m. Costo: \$75. Call **703-204-3366** for more information or to register.

Inova HealthSource Nutrition Classes

Stress and Your Waistline

See how stress affects your eating pattern and choices.

90 minutes, \$35

Inova Mount Vernon Hospital
Monday, March 10, 7 p.m.

Taming Toddler Food Fights

Review mealtime strategies and feeding basics.

90 minutes, \$35

Inova Alexandria Hospital
Tuesday, March 11, 7 p.m.

Foods for Fertility

Learn what foods boost fertility and help baby grow during pregnancy.

90 minutes, \$35

Inova Fair Oaks Hospital
Thursday, March 13, 7 p.m.

Registration required for classes. Call **703-204-3366** or visit www.inova.org.

The Northern Virginia Faith Community Nurse Networks

The following Faith Community Nurse Networks are currently meeting in the Northern Virginia Area.

All Faith Community Nurses and Health Ministers are welcome!!

Fairfax Group:

Second Thursday of each month, noon to 1:30 p.m.

St. Anthony's of Padua Catholic Church

3305 Glen Carlyn, Falls Church, VA, 22041

For more information please contact Betty Yurkewitch at

betty.yurkewitch@verizon.net or Marsha Komandt at mngkomandt@verizon.net.

Loudoun/Western Fairfax Group:

Fourth Tuesday of each month excluding December, 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Shenandoah University Northern Virginia Campus

908 Trailview Blvd., Leesburg, VA, 20175

For information, please contact Levenia Kibler at Levenia@verizon.net.

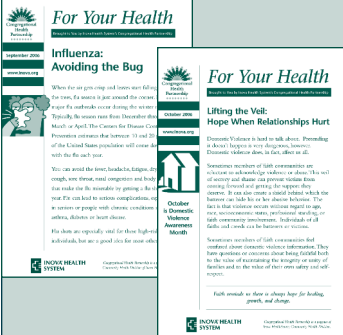


These networks are the faith community nursing and health ministry connection with CHP and provide opportunities for collaboration, mentoring, sharing of ideas/experiences, and education on the integration of faith and health.

May the God of hope be with you, blowing away the despair, making a new pathway when all roads seem blocked, confirming choice when no options are apparent, gently whispering the reminder that possibility is always present.

May the blessing of hope be with you. (Sandi John)

e-BULLETIN CORNER



The CHP e-bulletin is a monthly health information pamphlet on various health topics. It is sent electronically for you to print, copy and distribute in your congregation. If you would like to receive the monthly e-bulletin, e-mail sandi.john@inova.org.

**Future Topics: Nutrition
Cancer Prevention**

CHECK OUT OUR WEB SITE!!

www.inova.org/chp

- Download past issues of e-bulletins or this newsletter.
- View detailed documents on hosting a health fair or starting or sustaining a health ministry.
- Find the community resource you've been seeking.
- Let us know what impact your ministry had had so we can celebrate with you and have data to advocate for ministry expansion.



NEWS

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