



Volunteers in Medicine

# VOICES

SUMMER 2016



## VIM OPEN HOUSE

*Jeff Bliss, Director of Development*

On June 16th Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires held an open house reception for our donors, volunteers, friends, and community members to celebrate the expanded and renovated clinic.

Speakers included Representative William “Smitty” Pignatelli, Great Barrington Town Manager Jennifer Tabakin, and the Chair of our Board of Trustees Art Peisner. More than 100 guests were in attendance throughout the evening and most everyone took a tour of the clinic. So many volunteers and staff turned out to help make the evening a lovely event.

Music was provided by members of The Lucky 5 Band, a tent kept the afternoon sun off of everyone, food was provided by Rita Welch Catering and prosecco was provided by Domaney’s Liquors and Fine Wines. Both of these business donated their services. Please appreciate them.

Special thanks to Bella Flora at Guido’s for their flower arrangements, Janet Elsbach, owner of the Fairgrounds, for providing free parking, and Mark Mills for his photographic prowess.

*Cont’d on page 5*

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## NEWLY EXPANDED SPACE

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*Above: Susan Shoval, a VIM donor, left, along with other donors and volunteers at the open house*

*Below: Ilana Steinhauer, Jennifer Tabakin, Arthur M. Peisner and Smitty Pignatelli*



# Fabulous Chef's Dinner at Wheatleigh!

*Tricia Bevan*

## *Dining in style with a purpose.*

This evening is always a pleasant spring outing, especially when the weather cooperates so that guests may enjoy aperitifs and exquisitely delicious canapés in the beauty of the outdoor setting. This was followed by a sumptuous sampling of Chef Jeffrey Thompson's culinary creations.

Once again, VIM was the beneficiary of a successful evening to start the season, and to provide funds to support this essential organization. It was an evening to meet and greet old friends, to make new acquaintances, and to spread the pride about VIM's accomplishments.

Art Peisner, Board Chair, shared exciting new developments, notably the opening of the expanded VIM facility, and the innovative non-opioid pain treatment program. VIM is leading the way by collaborating with other Berkshire health care providers to offer a range of alternative methodologies to help those in need. What a difference a year makes in this ever growing, always quick to respond organization!



*Join VIM for  
the extraordinary  
annual GALA on August 11.*

*Top to Bottom:  
Nancy Bernstein  
and Elaine Roberts  
Bernie Roberts,  
Vicki Bonnington, Event Chair,  
and David Schecker  
Frani and Al Rothman  
Elise and Michael Richman  
Julia and Douglas Trumbull  
Kris and Larry Hazzard*

# WOW! What A Year It Has Been.

*Arthur Peisner, Chair, Board of Trustees*

Our fundraising got off to an exciting start with a four-year commitment of \$100,000 from **Elaine and Bernie Roberts**. Their generosity inspired other donors to consider the importance of the work we are doing and, in many instances, to expand their level of financial support. This led to record levels of funding for operations from both individuals and organizations.

We were the honored recipient of more than \$75,000 from **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts** annual Community Classic Golf Tournament. The **Bank of America Perpetual Trust** awarded us a two-year grant of \$50,000 and the **Green Foundation** increased its support to \$45,000. **Berkshire Health Systems** has provided more than \$40,000 through the Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund. And we received two \$25,000 grants: one from the **Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Trust** and the second from the **Massachusetts Dental Society Foundation**, as well as several smaller grants from a record number of organizations and businesses. Individual gifts, from our annual appeal, events, coupon book sales, board and patient donations, were also up by a significant margin.

On top of all that, in August we launched our very successful Capital Campaign with a lead gift of \$100,000 from the **Jane and Jack Fitzpatrick Trust**. That gift helped us surpass our goal and raise more than \$300,000 to enable us to significantly expand and completely renovate our clinic. **All in all, we exceeded \$1,000,000 in donations this fiscal year. Incredible!**

But that's just the dollars and cents.

The renovation, almost a year from planning to completion, was recently celebrated at an open house for more than one-hundred people including our State Representative, Smitty Pignatelli, and Great Barrington Town Manager, Jennifer Tabakin. Our expanded space, a more than 60% increase, has already enabled us to take on patient programs we would otherwise not have been able to accommodate.

*Cont'd on page 7*

# CONSIDER A MULTI-YEAR GIFT

*Jeff Bliss, Development Director*

I recently had the opportunity to tour Elaine and Bernie Roberts through the renovated clinic. They were animated as they noticed the expansion and improvements of the clinical offices, the work stations for doctors to complete their notes, the new carpeting, and the light-filled waiting room. We sat down to discuss the benefit of their gift last summer, a four-year commitment totaling \$100,000.

**Jeff:** Tell me about how you made the decision to make this generous gift to Volunteers in Medicine?

**Elaine:** We have supported VIM for many years and have watched it become more stable and serve more patients year after year. We wanted to make this gift to help further the good work that we kept learning about.

**Bernie:** I have always thought of VIM as such a hands-on charity where you can really see the good that your gift provides.

**Jeff:** Why make the gift over several years?

**Elaine:** We wanted to let VIM know that we are “invested” in the health of the clinic over the long haul. You all have to raise so much money to keep it going and we wanted to give you some confidence toward the years ahead.

“ I have always thought of VIM as such a hands-on charity where you can really see the good that your gift provides. ”

**Elaine:** I agree. The VIM clinic has a great deal to offer the community and any way that donors can demonstrate their confidence in the clinic over several years will make a real difference. It will, in turn, give the VIM clinic confidence to keep going.

*Please do take a moment and call us to schedule a visit or stop by if you are nearby. We are really enjoying each opportunity to show off the expanded and renovated clinic. If you would like to discuss any donations, including a multi-year gift commitment, call me at VIM at 413-528-4014 or email me at: [jbliss@vimberkshires.org](mailto:jbliss@vimberkshires.org).*



*Elaine and Bernie Roberts with Art Peisner*

Photo: Amy Krzanik, Rural Intelligence  
[www.ruralintelligence.com](http://www.ruralintelligence.com)

# Successful Non-Opioid Pain Management at VIM

Nancy Fernandez Mills

*Berkshire County may be known as a center for the arts and a summer retreat for city dwellers, but it's also one of the worst opioid addiction "hot spots" in New England, according to the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission.*

The current epidemic of heroin addiction, frequent overdoses of prescription painkillers and a doubling of opioid-related hospital visits from 2007 to 2014 are cause for alarm. But Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires has pioneered a successful non-opioid pain management program that is helping to provide a new model for patient care.

“Before I was in the VIM pain management program, I was having trouble walking and by the end of the day, I couldn't work,” said Jennifer, a self-employed worker and caregiver for her elderly mother. “I've been treated with acupuncture regularly, I've been doing the movement therapy classes and talking to the nutrition counselor. I feel much better, I'm able to work more and I'm losing weight. It's a wonderful program.”

Jennifer is one of 16 patients who are participating in VIM Berkshires' non-opioid pain management program for patients of local primary care providers, referred to VIM through a partnership with Berkshire Health Systems. About 115 patients are participating countywide. The program is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

“VIM is currently part of a county-wide effort to formalize and expand a pilot program to a broader cohort of patients and to gather data to verify the program's efficacy,” said VIM Board Chair Arthur Peisner. “This pilot may be duplicated throughout the county and eventually across the state.”



Over the years, VIM's clinicians have rarely prescribed opioids for chronic pain. Instead, patients are routinely treated with acupuncture, massage, mental health counseling, nutrition counseling and mind-body education instead of prescription painkillers.

Retired cardiologist and VIM volunteer physician Jeffrey Blake, MD says VIM's approach has been unique.

“The most common condition I've seen here at the clinic in the past 12 years is low-back pain. Most of our patients do physical labor in construction, landscaping, farming and housekeeping.”

“At VIM, we have alternative approaches that are easy to use and all our services are under one roof,” said Blake. “It allows us to talk to our patients about something other than medication. Access is easy.”

“This pilot is a natural for VIM because we focus on alternative methods of treating these patients that allow us to help prevent the use of opioids and hopefully the human cost of addiction,” says Clinical Care Coordinator Ilana Steinhauer, FNP-BC.

Judy, a patient who has been coping with cancer and serious injuries for years, says the pain management program has taught her to move with more ease and to deal with severe daily stress.

“I have better mobility now and I've learned to breathe and deal with my PTSD.”

Karden Rabin teaches VIM pain patients the “MELT” method of integrative movement therapy (working with props to rehydrate connective tissue, rebalance the nervous system and restore space to compressed joints). He says patients are using the MELT techniques at home, mostly to deal with tendonitis and low back pain.

Carla, a pain management patient, came to VIM suffering frequent hip pain. After several acupuncture treatments and attending movement classes, her pain is almost gone.

“We're all so relaxed when we leave VIM now,” said Carla, “I feel like we need a ride home.”

## Bidding Farewell to Treasured Board Members

With appreciation for their valuable contributions, VIM announces the retirement of two members of the VIM Board.

- **JESSE SCHOONMAKER** has served as a member of the board since 2008, and as Clerk/Secretary from 2009 until she took on the role of Treasurer in 2011. She has also chaired the Strategic Planning Committee for two three-year cycles. Jesse recently retired as Senior Vice President of Retail Banking at Lee Bank, and while she has agreed to remain as a member of our Finance Committee, we will miss her sage advice on the Board.
- **MICHAEL RICHMAN** has served as a member of the VIM Board since 2011 and has been instrumental in the success and growth of the VIM coupon book. His leadership and drive have been critical to expanding the book's distribution and visibility. Michael has felt the need to step away from the board to focus more of his time on business and family obligations, but has agreed to continue his support for the coupon book program.

We are also happy to announce that our newest Board member, **DAN BURKE**, CPA, has agreed to become our new Treasurer. With his extensive experience as Vice President for Finance and Controller at Iredale Mineral Cosmetics Ltd., Dan will bring new insights and vision to the role. We also congratulate Dan and his wife Abigail on the birth of their twins, Charlie and Marcus, joining son Matt and daughter Anabelle, increasing the family to six! Welcome!

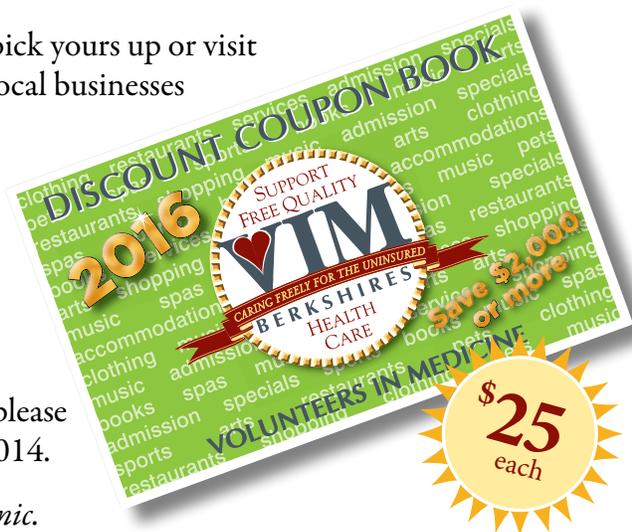
## The Volunteers In Medicine Coupon Book 2016

Come by the clinic to pick yours up or visit one of our supportive local businesses that sell the book.

You can find the list of vendors on our website, or order the book there —  
[vimberkshires.org](http://vimberkshires.org)

For more information, please call VIM at 413-528-4014.

*All proceeds fund the clinic.*



## Open House *Cont'd from page 1*



*Top to Bottom:*  
Nancy Kalodner,  
Marion Simon, Jennifer Tabakin  
Matt and Catherine Mandel  
Jennifer Tabakin and  
Nancy Fernandez Mills

Photos Pages 1 & 5: Mark Mills

## VIM BERKSHIRES

website: [vimberkshires.org](http://vimberkshires.org)  
has news about our activities,  
pictures, profiles of our patients  
and volunteers and other exciting  
information about healthcare.  
Check it often!

# VOLUNTEER CORNER

*Susan Minnich, Volunteer Coordinator*

Surely everyone reading this column has heard about the extraordinary growth that VIM has seen during the recent past. We have expanded the physical plant, created innovate new programs, and implemented a new medical records system. There are articles elsewhere in this issue about those achievements.

Given the growth, it seems to me an appropriate time to note the dedication, commitment and responsible energies of volunteers who have together created these changes.

Many are relatively new to VIM, have joined in the past year or two, and are doing amazing work that is helping to grow and formalize clinic programs and policies. I have mentioned them recently in this column.

But just now I want to highlight volunteers whose steady patient work, longstanding commitment, and donation of service hours well beyond the norm has created the base on which this amazing growth could occur.

Some have been here for more than eight of our twelve years. Some have served approximately a thousand hours of volunteer time. Those are remarkable figures and everyone involved should be proud. They include individuals across our services, both clinical and administrative, and many of them have volunteered in multiple roles. Their work at VIM has been consistent, dedicated and professional.

Now the disclaimer. Of course this would not have been possible without our Board of Directors, made up of volunteers who work tirelessly for the mission of the clinic. In this article though you will only see the names of board members involved in roles outside of their board governance work. Secondly, these are all current clinic volunteers; if I was to include volunteers who are not involved just now it would be considerably longer.

There are enough people involved that I will not tell you everything they have done by individual, that would be impossible in this space. Here then is a list of extraordinary individuals.

Many thanks and huge congratulations to each of them.

Tricia Bevan	William Hayhurst	Marilyn Rossier
Hildi Black	Becky Jemlich	Ellen Rowntree
Jeff Blake	Amy Jenter	Thomas Sakshaug
Shayna Bronstein	Vicki Kay	Judith Schnurr
Priscilla Cote	Clara Londoner	Frank Sessa
Trina Cysz	Catherine Mandel	Molly Sheriff
Tom Drury	Michelle Manto	Marguerite Sherman
Robert Edwards	Kenneth Mayer	Joanne Simpson
Claire Eurich	Nelda McGraw	Turbi Smilow
Melvyn Feldman	Nancy Mills	Judith Waldman
Roz Forman	Linda Olson	Ruth Weinstein
John Galt	Eddie O'Toole	Maureen Wellspeak
Gerry Goldberg	Jeani Parsons	James Whitman

## Tributes

VIM is pleased to accept contributions recognizing honors, special occasions and memorials.

### **In Honor of Arthur Peisner's Birthday**

*Michael & Irene Nachwalter  
Susan Caine & Harry Griffin  
Claire & Edward Stiepleman  
Patricia & David Hubbard  
Michael & Elise Richman*

### **In Honor of Hevreh**

*Rabbis Liz & Neil Hirsch*

### **In Honor of Ruth Goldstein's Birthday**

*Frani & Al Rothman  
Mark & Barbara Cohen*

### **In Honor of the CS Craig Family Foundation**

*Simon & Nancy Kirkby*

### **In Honor of the Engagement of Saadia Khan & Casey Fitzpatrick**

*Nancy Fitzpatrick & Lincoln Russell*

### **In Honor of the Wedding of Vincent P. Marinaro & Sheila A. Pia**

*Marguerite Sherman*

### **In Honor of the Birth of Twins to Dan Burke**

*Denyse & Harold Adler*

### **In Memory of Len Simon**

*Jeffrey Charles Larkins*

### **In Memory of Captain Herbert Irving Mandel, US Navy (Retired)**

*Denyse & Harold Adler*

### **In Memory of Dr. Ira Wasserberg**

*Ruth & Martin Weinstein*

*If you would like to honor someone  
by making a gift to VIM Berkshires,  
please call the clinic at 413-528-4014.*

Contributions through June 2016



## What A Year *Cont'd from page 3*

Our robust new and/or expanded programs are growing:

- Our Shared Medical Appointments program, is now completing its second year.
- We have launched a Substance Use Disorder and Chronic Pain management program in conjunction with Berkshire Health Systems. This program combines acupuncture, yoga and other movement therapies, with mind-body training and nutrition counseling to reduce, eliminate or avoid altogether the use of addictive opioid pain medications.
- This is an outgrowth of our own Non-opioid Pain Management program, begun almost two years ago, which was the subject of a county-wide conference on the subject that we convened at Fairview Hospital in February.

While all this was going on, we researched, planned and implemented a completely new electronic medical record system, which links directly with Berkshire Health Systems and we are in the process of implementing a new electronic dental record as well.

All this while logging record numbers of patients and visits in several of our service areas.

Finally, **Dr. Jeffrey Blake**, a founding member of our board, a volunteer clinician for 12 years and our co-medical director for 6 years, was selected by the Massachusetts Medical Society

as the recipient of its 2016 Senior Volunteer Physician of the Year Award. We all take great pride in this recognition of Jeff's extraordinary contributions, and in the fact that he is the second VIM Berkshires volunteer physician to be so honored within the past five years. Congratulations!

An extraordinary year. And now we get to do it all over again! Can we still count on you?

### Massachusetts Medical Society Award

Long-time volunteer physician and member of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Jeffrey W. Blake was awarded the prestigious Massachusetts Medical Society Senior Volunteer Physician of the Year at a ceremony on June 29. Members of the VIM Board were present and joined the Society in paying tribute to Dr. Blake's significant and impressive contributions.

*Board Members  
Denyse Adler,  
Dr. Ellen  
Rowntree, and  
Art Peisner,  
flanking  
award winner  
Dr. Jeffrey Blake  
and wife, Julie.*



### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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**VOICES Editor: Denyse Adler**

**Photographer: Tricia Bevan**

*We welcome your suggestions about what you would like to see in VOICES in the future; what you like and what you do not. Please contact Denyse at adlergrp@yahoo.com. All comments are welcome!*

*Please visit our website  
vimperkshires.org!*

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# VOICES

SUMMER 2016

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The Volunteers In Medicine Berkshires free clinic provides access to quality health care for income qualified, uninsured residents of the Berkshire region in a respectful and caring manner.

777 South Main Street, Suite 4, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Tel.: 413-528-4014 Fax: 413-528-3996

[vimberkshires.org](http://vimberkshires.org)

# “VIM”

**You're invited to a  
“Roaring Speakeasy”**

— — — — —  
**August 11, 2016  
6:30 p.m.**

Ski Butternut  
Great Barrington, MA

Cocktails, “*Put up or Shut up*” Auction  
Followed by Dinner and  
Entertainment: The Wanda Houston Band

Dress: Flappers & Dappers

For reservations and information, please call VIM at 413-528-4014.

KNOCK  
THREE  
TIMES,  
&  
WHISPER....



**2016  
Cala**