

## St. Albans, VT – Fourwinds

### That's a Wrap! – Managing Lymphedema with the support of SASH



Lymphedema can often be a debilitating condition and can leave those affected home bound unable to enjoy activities outside of the house. No one knows this better than a SASH participant with lymphedema who enjoys volunteering with his wife at a nearby elementary school. The current participant also suffers from obesity and is reliant on oxygen for breathing. Before enrolling in SASH the participant's wife was left with the daily responsibility of wrapping her husband's legs. These required daily wrappings take time and dedicated care to manage the lymphedema. Eventually, the wife could no longer continue this duty as she suffered from her own health issues. This is when the SASH Fourwinds panel intervened after being contacted by a social worker at NOTCH (Northern Tiers Center for Health) in St. Albans.

The SASH coordinator visited the current participant's home and signed both husband and wife up as SASH participants. After this initial step, the SASH coordinator spoke with them to determine which services the husband could receive to help manage his lymphedema. A number of options were discussed with them and the SASH collaborative team. Team members include representatives from CVAA, Franklin County Home Health and Northwestern Counseling and Support Services. Among the options considered was Choices for Care (for which the husband did not qualify) and home health services for which he also did not qualify as he was not homebound. The third choice discussed included privately paying a qualified professional to perform daily home visits which were estimated at \$600 per month. Unfortunately, this amount exceeded what the couple could realistically pay.

Finally, it was suggested by the SASH Wellness RN that the husband could register as an outpatient, after obtaining a referral from his doctor, to receive physical therapy (PT) services. In PT, he learned to wrap his legs (which is not an easy task to do!). At first, the participant was discouraged and believed he could not learn this difficult task. But after encouragement from those in PT he was able to master it and today continues this important work of managing his condition. As his wife also receives SASH services she is being supported to manage her medical conditions and no longer has to worry about having to wrap her husband's legs. The couple credits SASH with helping them live a healthier life and being able to continue volunteering at the local elementary school!



**"SASH is a gateway to a world of resources for people."**

-Pam Brainard, SASH Wellness Nurse, Orleans/Essex Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice, Inc.

## Newport, VT

### 87 year old man– Governor's Mansion SASH



Julie, SASH Coordinator, works with a wonderful gentleman who is wheelchair bound and recently lost his ability to drive. This gentleman is a well liked member of the Newport community and used to own his own restaurant there. He had become isolated since his wife passed away and his health declined. When SASH began seeing him he had reported that he missed his car (his doctor had taken away his license) and his health and wellness goal was to get out of the apartment on

his own and get back to doing things for himself. He made a doctor's appointment and called Rural Community Transportation (RCT) to pick him up on the bus. He was very nervous about this and thought about cancelling his appointment. Julie volunteered to ride on the RCT bus with him, which he gladly accepted. The bus driver was very nice and talked him through the process of loading and unloading him on the wheelchair

lift. Julie was able to help him communicate with the bus driver (he is hard of hearing), and made him feel safe in case anything went wrong. This was an extremely successful trip!

Julie Chase, Newport SASH Coordinator, and SASH Participant

## Williston, VT

72 year old man – Whitney Hill Homestead, SASH Team



This is a surprising story of a social couple living at Whitney Hill Homestead who enjoyed doing things with other couples and seemed to be quite happy. While conducting the SASH assessment in a couple's home, the SASH Coordinator, Ellen, noticed that the wife needed support to take action regarding her husband's alcohol issue. While Ellen was conducting the PHQ-9 (depression screen) with the wife, her affect became saddened and she had difficulty responding to the questions. When asked if she wanted to complete this screen at another time, she responded no. She then sternly said that her husband (him present) had

alcoholism and that he had recently began drinking again. Her voice clearly told Ellen (and the husband) that this was the last straw (after living with it for over 40 years) and that if he did not get help, she could no longer live with it. Ellen could sense the urgency in her statement. Upon questioning them both about previous treatments, they were able to report that he had been at Brattleboro Retreat twice previously. Ellen asked if he would be willing to make a phone call right then to the Brattleboro Retreat to see if they had bed availability, and they did in 2 weeks. The gentleman registered himself to participate in what would be a month program. Ellen

observed that his wife needed a break and he needed treatment, she helped facilitate, with their consent, that he attend AA as much as he could in those next 2 weeks prior to treatment. At the end of the meeting that day they both thanked Ellen. The wife said she just needed someone else there to let him know she was no longer going to tolerate his behavior. Her husband successfully completed the treatment and is going to DAY 1 for after care. The SASH team even assisted in identifying places for her to live if in fact this treatment did not work. He has been sober for approximately 3 months.

## Williston, VT

61 year old woman – Williston Woods, SASH Team



Williston Woods SASH Participant (center) with Rene Kaczka-Valiere from the Agency on Aging (left) and Cathie Andreyko, SASH Coordinator (right).

Since the SASH Program started in April the SASH Team has been giving a sixty-one year old Williston Woods Resident who has MS a great deal of support. Before SASH began, this resident didn't have any support or services at all. The SASH Wellness Nurse (Lena) and SASH Coordinator, Cathie, connected with CVAA & VNA with the participant's consent in order to secure more services. The SASH

Team is in the process of securing funding for a ramp for her home, and got her a practically brand new wheel chair so she could get around easier, as well as got volunteers to help her with shopping and minor household duties. Also, just recently,

Cathie arranged to have a volunteer student with similar interests in Chinese language and culture spend time visiting with her on a weekly basis.

**Rutland, VT – 50 year old male - Parker House SASH Team**

Robin, SASH Coordinator, reports that, “at one of my senior housing sites, a non-SASH participant had told the HASS Resident Service Coordinator and me that her friend was very, very depressed and was saying things about wanting to harm himself.” Robin went to meet with him with the Resident Service Coordinator he knew to discuss SASH and find out more about him as a person. When meeting with him, it became clear that there had been several losses in his life. Some of his neighbors had passed, his doctor told him he shouldn’t

be driving due to possible seizures, he was on a strict diet (he made it stricter than it had to be), and he just didn’t feel like he was useful to anyone. It was clear to Robin that he could benefit greatly from SASH. He chose to participate and they started working together. With SASH assistance, they were able to coordinate an appointment with a psychiatrist (which he self-initiated), daily check ins, information on crisis and diet, and getting him connected to a local nursing home where he now volunteers in the maintenance

department. When Robin first visited him, his curtains were closed and the apartment dark. The apartment is now bright with the curtains open, and he is out and about more in the community room visiting with the other men when he returns home from "work". He has told Robin that his spirits have lifted and she reports that, “it’s nice to see him smiling and laughing, and hearing his stories about his job!”



Parker House—Affordable Housing—Rutland Housing Authority offers SASH at six affordable housing sites and to the surrounding community.



Patti Kent, SASH Wellness Nurse, taking a blood pressure.

**Northeast Kingdom, VT**

**52 year old male, St. Johnsbury /Lyndonville SASH Team**

John was referred to the SASH program through Community Connections who had worked with John for many years and had identified his needs and had encouraged him to make healthy choices.

For the past nine years John had lived in a remote area of the Northeast Kingdom in a cabin. He had lived without running water, electricity or sanitation. He has significant health issues and was in need of a healthier living environment. His home had become unsafe to live in over the last few years. Last year, during a cold spell John and his dog were forced to sleep in his truck for warmth and they nearly died of carbon monoxide poisoning. John spent some time in the hospital and decided

that he would like to sell his home and move into a Gilman managed apartment. He realized that due to his medical needs he would no longer be able to remain in his home and could no longer drive the 25 miles plus to grocery shop or cut and split firewood.

During the time he was on the waiting list for affordable housing with Gilman Housing Trust, John joined the SASH program and continued to work with Community Connections, Faith In Action, The community meal sites and he received health screenings from the SASH nurse. With the Help of Shauna Barret of Community Connections, he has decided to move into a farm type boarding house where he will receive healthy meals, rides to doctor’s ap-

pointments and rides to community activities. His pet will receive veterinary screenings and John will have the opportunity to work with farm animals and socialize with other residents.

The SASH team is in the process of assisting John in making this big move. John, while nervous about these changes is looking forward to having a comfortable place to live while he waits for an apartment to become available. The team will continue to support him as he makes these changes.



Rotting wood beams in John’s home that let heat escape and cold in.



John’s future home with Gilman Housing Trust.

## Newport, VT - SASH Team



*“SASH takes the fear out of aging.”*

*-SASH Participant*

At our mobile home park the residents have not come together in their community room (a separate building) for almost 3 years. About the same time that SASH started, a few individuals became interested in forming a park association. SASH activities have brought people together once again and they gathering at the community room for workshops, pot-luck dinners, music and exercise. We have held

numerous educational workshops, a Matter of Balance class, 2 evenings of music from local bands (25 attended the first one and 35 the second) and a pot-luck dinner. The park association is also working with other associations for guidance and our mobile home park is now becoming a vibrant and active place.

## South Burlington, VT - 83 year old woman Grand Way Commons Independent Living SASH Team



Susan Schmidt, SASH  
Wellness Nurse, South  
Burlington VT

A long time resident of Grand Way Commons, Mary, who always preferred to be alone in her apartment enjoying the company of her cat and watching educational TV started coming to blood pressure clinics with Susan, the Wellness Nurse, once she joined SASH in order to challenge herself to “get out” more. Susan found that Mary’s blood pressure was elevated and started to monitor it closely per the primary care providers instructions. Both Susan and Mary felt hesitant that something more was amiss, but they continued to monitor. Normally a SASH Nurse would be doing in-home visits but Mary was proud of her efforts to leave

the apartment and overcome her isolation to visit Susan in her office, which is how Susan initially could not double check all medications, the same as a provider could not. One day, Mary invited Susan to visit with her in her home, Susan realized after looking at her medications that one of her BP meds was missing. The participant was on automatic delivery from a local pharmacy. Susan called the PCP to verify she was still supposed to be on that particular medicine and they confirmed this, she then called the pharmacy to see if Mary had an active Rx -which she did and they got the medication ordered and sent over. Susan then talked to Mary about bubble

packs (which she had never heard of). The SASH team got Mary started on bubble packs in order to keep her on consistent medication management with little effort... and her BP has dropped to a normal level.

**Having Susan in Mary’s home with her and her close communication with the primary provider made the difference in getting her blood pressure to a safe level.**