

The Acorn Digest

A Publication of The Valley Hospital Auxiliary

September 2026



Meet Kathy Ambrose, New VHA President



Kathy has been a VHA member for several years, contributing to our organization in a variety of capacities. Here's her backstory:

Kathy was raised in Haworth, NJ, and received the spirit of volunteering from her parents. Her own volunteering began as a high school student when she joined service clubs assisting others in the community.

Many years after high school, she married her high school sweetheart, Charlie, and they raised their family of three daughters in Township of Washington. Kathy became a Girl Scout Troop leader while pregnant with her first-born child. She continued in scouting over the years that her three daughters were involved, rising to the ranks of Service Unit Chairman for the town.

While her daughters were enrolled in grammar school, Kathy participated in the Home School Organization, where after many years she became president of the group.

As the girls got older, Kathy was asked to join the editorial department of an area newspaper as a reporter and feature writer. Several years later, the opportunity arose to work for Tomorrows Children's Fund, a non-profit organization that provides assistance to young children fighting cancer or a serious blood disorder. During this time, her husband faced a life-threatening diagnosis and subsequently passed away. "While this was the most devastating time for me and my daughters," Kathy said, "my work provided me with the strength to keep going on - one day at a time." She continued her work at Tomorrows Children for over 23 years, retiring in 2013 as one of its directors.

Retirement provided a change in lifestyle and a move to Ramsey with time to relax. While attending a picnic in Ramsey, she was asked to join VHA, and became an active member of the Ramsey Branch and was invited to attend a leadership seminar which led to her involvement in the Executive Board. Kathy has served on the Executive Board in various positions for many years.

"The Valley Hospital Auxiliary has provided me with a much-needed way to share my time and talents, introduced me to many new friends and has allowed me to serve my community. I am grateful for all my time spent at Valley." Kathy continues to serve as an active volunteer in Valley Health System and is a member of VHS's Patient Family Advisory Council (PFAC).

While Kathy remains active in hospital and community programs, her main focus is spending time with her 10 grandchildren who reside in the tri-state area.

VHA Wrapped Up the Year with Fun and Exciting Events!



Members of VHA in front of the Integrative Healing Boutique, one of the recipients of our current pledge. The Valley Hospital Auxiliary's current pledge supports four Valley Health System programs:

- Cool Cap Therapy for cancer patients
- Integrative Healing Boutique
- Pregnancy-Induced Hypertension Program
- Valley Home Care's Butterflies

Each of these programs helps individuals and families facing difficult healthcare situations.



April 8, 2026 - **Midland Park Regional “Mid-Morning Mix and Mingle”**— In addition to a sumptuous brunch, Donna Singer, VHA President (2024-2026) and Sandy Carapezza, Executive Director, Development at The Valley Hospital Foundation, spoke about VHA’s current pledge. During the brunch, Alida Kleinsmann, Grace VanDerStad, and Meme Terpstra were recognized as Midland Park Regional’s three most senior members, totaling almost 100 years in VHA. The branch’s leadership includes Lorraine DeLuca and Gilda Gilmartin, Co-Chairs, Robin Burgess, event chair, and Alice Perkus, branch secretary.



No-Sew Sewing Project Expands—Ninth grade boys from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Ridgewood, NJ, made 20 no-sew blankets for their Confirmation Service Project. With a little instruction from VHA, led by Barbara Mills, the boys ran with the project and delivered the blankets to the Volunteer Office for use in the Emergency Department, the Pediatrics Department and throughout the hospital.



April 9, 2026 — **Ramsey Branch Chocolate Outing.** Members of the Ramsey Branch enjoyed an afternoon of delicious fun at Chocolate Etc. in Wyckoff. Guests from the Mahwah Branch also joined in creating individual chocolates, lollipops and rice krispie chocolate. Bette Moore (left), Mahwah Branch member and VHA Co-Treasurer and Anne O’Loughlin love their special lollipops!



April 30, 2026 — **Franklin Lakes Branch 4th Annual Pocketbook Bingo.** The Franklin Lakes Branch's 4th annual Pocketbook Bingo event, held at St Leon's Church in Fair Lawn, exceeded all expectations. They had a record crowd of 160 people. Pictured left to right is the Pocketbook Bingo Committee, Bonnie Dalal, Kay Mills, Lynn Bigica, Liz Mastrangelo, Barbara Mills, Branch Co-Chair, Jean Riva, Susan Mediterraneo, Nancy Weiss, Elaine Heimberger, Branch Co-Chair, Joyce Srednicki. Save the date for our 5th Annual Pocketbook Bingo event on April 29, 2027.



May 2026—**Valley Homecare's Butterfly Release.** Gilda Gilmartin and Lorraine DeLuca from the Midland Park Regional Branch, and Charlotte Byrne, Vice President, Volunteer Services, were delighted to check families in for VHC's annual Butterfly Release.



May 5, 2026--**Ridgewood Branch Mother's Day Spring Tea & Shopping Boutique**--During an absolutely perfect spring weather day, members of the Ridgewood Branch hosted a delightful and delicious tea party at the Ridgewood Country Club. Besides Afternoon Tea, the branch offered a 50/50 raffle, tricky tray, silent auction, and a fabulous shopping boutique. Standing left to right is the Ridgewood Tea committee: Peggy Becher, Ridgewood Branch Co-Chair, Charlotte Byrne, Karen Hoy, Ridgewood Branch Co-Chair, Gabrielle Winnert, Gerry Pehush, and Bette Moore.



June 1, 2026 - **The 58th Annual VHA Golf Outing.** A beautiful day at Ridgewood Country Club brought in more than 200 golfers, all of whom helped to raise \$263,095 to benefit VHA's \$1.6 million pledge. Twelve VHA members volunteered to work on this event. Some sold 50/50's, pink balls, and mulligans while others checked-in golfers, distributed golfer gloves and gifts or oversaw the putting contest and silent auction. Left to right: Volunteers Nancy Weiss, Kathy Ambrose, Jeannie Safina, Linda Leeder, and Karen Hoy. The other volunteers were Lisa Beslity, Diana Frankel Hughes, Carol Gillespie, Elaine Heimberger, Claudia Sanchez, Margaret Scancarello, Mary Seminara, and Donna Singer. Standing in the center of the committee is Joe Lorino, Vice President, Facilities Management and Golf Outing Chair.



The Ridgewood Branch's bridge group has been supporting VHA for many years and happily continues to do so. This group meets for lunch and bridge at Ridgewood Country Club from September through May. Pictured left to right are Joyce Taylor, Bridge Group Co Chair, Louise Boswell presenting thank you bouquets to the co-chairs, and Betsy Hershberger Bridge Group Co-Chair.



June 3, 2026— **Student Scholarship Awards.** The VHA Scholarship Committee awarded \$29,000 in scholarships to 21 students at a special ceremony. Each recipient was chosen for their academic excellence, dedication, and a strong commitment to making a meaningful impact in healthcare. These talented students represent the next generation of medical professionals who will help shape the future of patient care. Congratulations to all our 2026 scholarship recipients! Many thanks to the Scholarship Committee for their hard work: Carol Gillespie and Gabrielle Winnert, Co-Chairs, Kathy Ambrose, Lisa Beslity, l'India Davenport, and Susan Mediterraneo.



June 12, 2026 – **Friends of VHA Charcuterie & Wine Tasting.** The tasting was held at the lovely home of Theresa Salameno and included a demonstration led by Graze Craze, Wyckoff, on how to make a charcuterie platter.



June 18, 2026—**The Annual VHA Luncheon.** Held at the beautiful Indian Trail Club, the annual VHA luncheon was a wonderful get-together. Lesley Dinallo, VHA Nominating Chair, installed our new officers for 2026-2028. As we thanked our outgoing president, Donna Singer, we also welcomed our new president, Kathy Ambrose. Our guest speaker was celebrity stylist, Cenia Paredes, Designer/Founder, Cenia® New York, whose store is located in Ridgewood, NJ. Standing next to Cenia Paredes are Carol Gillespie and Donna Singer. Thanks to the efforts of VHA members, we donated \$400,000 at the luncheon to The Valley Hospital Foundation to benefit our pledge.

Newly elected officers for 2026-2028: Left to right: Charlotte Byrne, Member-at-Large, Geisa Flynn, Member-at-Large, Jeannie Safina, Corresponding Secretary/Scheduler, Theresa Salameno, VP, Membership, Ann Swist, VP, Membership, Nancy Weiss, Co-Treasurer, Susan Mediterraneo, Co-Recording Secretary, Carol Gillespie, VP, Ways & Means, Elaine Heimberger, VP, Ways & Means, Donna Singer, VP, Volunteer Services, Lisa Beslity, Administrative VP, Kathy Ambrose, President (one year), and Lesley Dinallo, Nominating Chair. Newly elected officers for 2026-2028 are left to right: Charlotte Byrne, Member at Large, Geisa Flynn, Member at Large, Jeannie Safina, Corresponding Secretary/Scheduler, Theresa Salameno, Co-VP Membership, Ann Swist, Co-VP Membership, Nancy Weiss, Co-Treasurer, Susan Mediterraneo, Recording Secretary, Carol Gillespie, Co-VP Ways & Means, Elaine Heimberger Co-VP Ways & Means, Donna Singer, VP, Volunteer Services, Lisa Beslity, Administrative VP, Kathy Ambrose, VHA President, Lesley Dinallo, Nominating Chair.

Save These Dates

Central Board Fundraising Events

The Terri Roemer Paramus Run
Sunday, October 18, 2026, 9 am
Fairfield Inn & Suites, Paramus Park, Paramus, NJ

The 78th Annual Valley Ball
Friday, November 13, 2026, 7 pm - 11 pm
Pleasantdale Chateau, West Orange, NJ

Tree of Light Illumination Ceremony
Sunday, December 6, 2026, 4:30 pm
1st Floor Lobby, The Valley Hospital, Paramus, NJ

Branch Fundraising Events

Mahwah Branch
An Evening With Drew Cali, Renowned Psychic Medium
Thursday, September 17, 2026, 7 - 8:30 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.)
Franklin Lakes Ambulance Corps, Franklin Lakes, NJ

Mahwah Branch
Mahwah Neighborhood Card Night
Thursday, October 15, 2026, 6:30 pm
Apple Ridge Clubhouse, Mahwah, NJ

Midland Park Regional Branch
Gals & Guys Just Wanna Have Fun
Friday, November 6, 2026, 6 - 10 pm,
Social Hall at the Midland Park Firehouse, Midland Park, NJ

To register for these events, click [here](#) or call Bonnie Dalal at 201-447-8136.