

# Why Your Donation Matters

## Elmer's Story

*At 6'8" tall, Elmer Vaillancourt is a "gentle giant." A favorite of his home care team and of the Adult Day Program staff, Elmer returns the compliments for their work. "These people bend over backwards for me. All hours of the day and night, somebody is there to help. I don't know what I would do without my nurse, Tracy. She helps me sort and manage my medications – and there are a lot of them," admits Elmer. "And Miranda (one of his private duty PCAs) cooks for me. When I hear her coming through the door, I get hungry," he jokes.*

*Elmer first experienced the care that the VNA offers when his wife, Clara, was diagnosed with cancer in 2005. This past June, Clara's care needs became greater than she and Elmer could manage at home. With encouragement from her VNA hospice team, the couple decided Clara would benefit from the care at Vermont Respite House. Clara felt at home the minute she entered the House. "She told me 'I should have come here months ago'," remembers Elmer. "She loved watching the birds visit the feeders – she called it her little airport. I took 100 pounds of birdseed out to Respite House after she died."*

*Alone since Clara's death, Elmer now relies on multiple VNA services to remain in his Burlington home. Elmer requires oxygen for emphysema and struggles with complications from diabetes and heart disease. Neighbors check in frequently, but it's his small army of VNA caregivers including nurses, LNAs, and care attendants who provide needed care and support. "My viewpoint is that if it wasn't for the VNA, I wouldn't be alive today," says Elmer.*

The VNA is Elmer's lifeline to independence. At the VNA, you are our lifeline to help Elmer and so many others. Your support helps the VNA serve everyone – from infants to elders – in our community. This is why your donation matters.

If you'd like more information about the charitable care mission of your VNA, please contact Ann Irwin, Director of Development and Community Relations at (802) 860-4437 or [Irwin@vnacares.org](mailto:Irwin@vnacares.org).