LOOKING FORWARD TO... the hot, hazy days of summer and resuming a busy schedule of picnics and outdoor activities! Mark your calendars for upcoming excursions to the Dollar Store, Sack Lunch Picnics at Marysville & Fort Gratiot Parks, and our annual Summer Family & Friends Potluck in July. Please don't forget to bring your favorite dish to pass! (The ADP will provide the basics: meat, side dishes & beverages). We'll honor our dedicated Aide staff on Nursing Assistants Day, enjoy our time with Mindy and Pastor Joe, and resume volunteering at the Blue Water Riverwalk. Fuzz therapy, birthday celebrations, bowling, and an assortment of wacky days will round out a busy month!

SHOP TO SUPPORT OUR AGENCY! VNA-BWH has partnered with Main Street's “A Little Something” for an in-store agency fundraiser on Thursday, June 30th from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM. “A Little Something” is a nonprofit gift shop operated by Touchstone Services, an agency that trains people with barriers as they develop job skills to help them find paid employment. VNABWH will receive 20% of all sales made during the day on June 30th. If you have a moment, stop by the store at 205 Huron Avenue to see their great selection of cute and unique items. You can also find them on Facebook!

BLUE WATER TRANSPORTATION...
Please remember that if you utilize Blue Water Transportation, it’s your responsibility to schedule changes or deviations from the normal route. You may reach BWT at (810) 987-7373, Ext.2.
3 Kinds of Grief Nobody Talks About

The author of *Grief Is a Journey* explains how some of our most cutting losses can go unrecognized by friends and family—and even ourselves. By Kenneth J. Doka, PhD

1) **The Loss of a Person We Once Knew**

Sometimes the people you love change in significant ways. They are still in your life—but not in the way you remember or once knew them. Illness often changes people, especially mental illness or dementia. In dementia, a person still is with us, but is not like the person we previously knew. The ties that bind us to one another, the shared memories and even the personality are no longer accessible. Sometimes the changes can be startling. The mother of one of my clients grew up in the segregated South. Yet her daughter was proud that her mom had been active in the civil rights movement, even though her mom lost friends and alienated family. Her mother would proudly tell the story of how, as an adolescent girl, she shamed her all-white church into integrating services. Yet, as her mom lapsed into dementia, she began using racial epithets. Her mother’s language not only shocked her daughter but also called into question her mom's true beliefs. Was her mother really the progressive person she believed her to be?

Other illnesses can create a similar sense of loss. A traumatic brain injury generally affects all levels of mental function. We may grieve people as they sink into mental illness, alcoholism or drug use. Positive changes can also engender grief, when a person becomes different from the individual we knew and loved. For Tristan, it was the religious conversion of his brother. He was initially delighted that his brother found some faith, even if it was more intense than his own beliefs. But Tristan soon found it difficult to relate to his born-again brother who no longer wanted to share a beer and was always witnessing to Tristan and his family.

Similarly, Abigail was proud that her husband joined Alcoholics Anonymous after a long struggle with addiction that nearly ruined their marriage. Yet she misses the “people, places and things”—especially the pub-based dart club that was a shared activity—that her husband now avoids in order to remain sober. They celebrate New Year’s Eve at an alcohol-free party sponsored by his local AA chapter in a church basement. Abby is proud of her husband and supportive of his efforts at sobriety, even as she grieves aspects of her former life.

2) **The Loss of a Person We Haven’t Yet Lost**

*Anticipatory grief* is a term that refers to the grief felt about someone with a life-limiting illness; friends, family and caregivers often experience it in anticipation of an eventual death. These losses are significant. The loss of health—even the prediction of loss—contained in a diagnosis can be a source of grief not just for the person diagnosed, but also for his or her loved ones. We lose our assumptive world. All our plans, thoughts, our sense of the future—even our sense of safety and security—are now challenged. The future we know is not the one we once imagined. For Craig, his wife’s diagnosis of pancreatic cancer dashed their retirement dreams of travel and possibly relocating to Tuscany. As any illness progresses, we continue to experience additional losses and grieve each one.

3) **The Loss of the Person We Used to Be**

Waiting for the school bus with my grandchildren recently, on the second day of school, I heard a young neighbor complain to his mother that he went to kindergarten yesterday! His mom patiently explained that he would now go five days a week to kindergarten—instead of his two-day-a-week preschool. The boy looked at her with disappointment, tears in his eyes. *This changes everything!* he complained.

It does. Everything changes as you age. Some changes you take in stride, but others affect you deeply. Consider the birth of a child. You may have anticipated this event for years and be overjoyed. But you also know life will be different now; over the next couple of decades, your own freedom will be limited—and for a shorter period, so will your sleep.

Each transition in our lives—no matter how positive—has an undercurrent. The thrill of passing your driving test and earning your license held so much meaning, a mark both of accomplishment and maturity that promised new freedom and adventure. Now, imagine the pain and grief when, through age or disability, you are forced to surrender that license and all it has meant.

Remember: Grief is not always about death, but it is always about attachment and separation. Often, people endure pervasive and intense distress without having faced the death of a loved one at all. Further, in these cases of unrecognized losses, our grief is often not recognized by others, either. But you can grieve the loss of anything, anywhere or anyone to whom you had become attached—no list could name all the possibilities. To deal with the sorrow, you may need to find confidants, counselors and support groups that can assist you. Above all, you need to have your grief acknowledged. Allowing yourself to understand the validity of your emotions is the only way to begin feeling better. You are not the only one to have mourned in these situations—and you are not alone.
MAY OUTINGS AND EVENTS

Our trip to Stahl’s Auto Museum in Chesterfield was simply fantastic, and their wonderful staff treated us to a personal tour of the beautiful facility. We saw many amazing displays, including a gallery of music machines from vintage Wurlitzers and calliopes to modern juke boxes. The auto showroom houses over 80 vehicles dating from the 1800’s to cars featured in recent Hollywood movies. Some of our favorites included a Stutz Bearcat with a rumble seat, an Aquatic vehicle, a 1947 Packard, and a pine green Tucker Sedan with three headlights! Stopping at Golden Hawk Golf Course for a burger, coke and fries was the perfect way to end the day. Many volunteers and clients said this was the best trip ever, and we can’t wait to go back!
MAY REFLECTIONS

It’s been a busy and productive month in the Day Program! Our cedar planters are now stocked with zinnias, green peppers, and several varieties of tomatoes. Pet therapy and Photo Booth Fun are sure-fire fun activities that guarantee a smile. Be sure to check the June calendar for more fun events like Banana Split Day, building bird feeders for arts & crafts, and lunch at the beach in Fort Gratiot. Join the fun from the sidelines as we cheer on participants at the River Run on June 4th!

FUZZ THERAPY FRIENDS

PHOTO BOOTH FUN

2016 RIVER RUN

Join us for our 31st Annual River Run Saturday, June 4, 2016 at Marysville City Park. This 5K-10K Run, 3-mile walk and 1 mile Fun Run helps raise funds to benefit charity care for deserving members of our community. You may call the Visiting Nurse Association at (810) 984-4131 or visit vnabwh.com for registration information and details.

HONOR OUR NURSING ASSISTANTS!

Nursing Assistant’s Day is celebrated each June 12th to honor those who have dedicated their lives to the well-being of others. Nursing Assistants are very special individuals who fulfill a complex role in the lives of their patients. They are caregivers who provide compassion, emotional support, physical mobility and day-to-day dignity in addition to basic medical needs. The Adult Day Program staff receives continuous specialized instruction in order to provide the highest standard of care for our clients, and each Aide brings unique abilities that enrich our Program. Thank you Chris, Cindy, Cricket, Mary and Maxine for all that you do!