

Generations

The **News** Source for the Aging Community

Mid January 2009 - Mid February 2009

Volume 2 Issue 5

www.Generations-News.com

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VNA Nurse visiting a patient in 2009

Georgia Bates in 1946 caring for the sick in their home.



Volunteer Nurse Marie Goss with patient 1946



Celebrating 75 Years with the "Roots of Life" Diamond Jubilee

The Visiting Nurse Association Celebrates 75 Years Of Care

The year 2009 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Visiting Nurse Association in Dallas. A small group of volunteer nurses from the Dallas County Public Health Nurses Association, led by Lillian Beckett, a Dallas public school nurse, went into the community to provide desperately needed nursing care for the poor sick, disabled, and dying during the Great Depression.

Realizing that the critical need for this care was greater than what these few volunteer nurses could provide, 12 prominent Dallas club women and 13 public health nurses met on April 6, 1934 to organize the Dallas

see 75 Years on page 18

BBB Sends Businesses Back to School With New Letter-Grade Ratings System

Find out which companies earn an A+ and which get a failing grade from your BBB

In order to help consumers make better-informed decisions on where to spend their hard-earned dollars, the Better Business Bureau serving Dallas and Northeast Texas today announced it will now assign letter grades to local businesses ranging from A+ to F. The letter grade system—which replaces a less-detailed scale of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory"—represents BBB's degree of confidence that the business is operating in a trustworthy manner and will make a good faith effort to resolve customer concerns.

Consumers can research the grades of more than 43,000 local businesses by reviewing BBB Reliability Reports™, which are available online and free of charge at www.dallas.bbb.org. In addition to

see BBB on page 8

Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo Saddles Up For 2009 Run

By Weldon Clark

Once again, after 113 years of operation, the legendary Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo, honored by the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce with its "Spirit of Enterprise Award" for "helping to build a modern fort Worth, boosting agribusiness education with grants and scholarships, and demonstrating a strong spirit of enterprise," prepares for its Friday, January 16th through February 8th opening that promises to generate an economic impact in excess of \$100 million for the Fort worth area.

Known throughout the world as the event that began from a one-day affair with a few head of cattle tethered under ice-laden shade trees over 113-years-ago, the Southwester Exposition and Livestock Show has grown into a three-week extravaganza with international appeal for exhibitors and visitors alike.

Over the years, the steady growth of the Show

see Stock Show on page 10

In This Issue:

Economic Woes Help Shape AARP's 2009 Legislative Agenda

Bob Jackson,
State Director, AARP Texas

As the economic recession deepens and job stability deteriorates, fears grow that more Texas



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Alzheimer's Disease and African-Americans: A Call to Action

Felicia Fields, Multicultural Outreach Coordinator, Alzheimer's Association - North Central Texas Chapter

One of the great things about the month of February is that Black History Month is celebrated. This month marks



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What's on your list of resolutions? Let's have some fun in 2009!

Mirchelle Louis, LMSW
Program Director
Gilda's Club North Texas

Well, it's that time of year again! New Year, resolution time, and all the musts and shoulds are lining up for



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Ask a HOME CARE PROFESSIONAL

Gail Meyer, LCSW
Social Worker
Visiting Nurse Association

Needing Help With The Rising Cost Of Health Care Q - I constantly worry about not having enough money each month to pay our bills.



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75 Years *continued from page 1*

Visiting Nurse Association. An official announcement was made on May 12, the birth date of Florence Nightingale, of the creation of the nonprofit home care organization. Its purpose was to "give service in the home to invalids, mothers and babies, post operative cases and to patients in need of periodic treatments."

The first office of the Visiting Nurse Association was in a building basement on 1901 N. Harwood Street, where the Dallas Museum of Art is now located.

A volunteer secretary sat on a wooden box used as a chair. The typewriter was borrowed and had to be returned to its owner periodically. The first month's rent of \$10 was paid by an employee at St. Paul Hospital. Subsequent rent was donated by the National Council of Jewish Women: Greater Dallas Section and the Junior League of Dallas.

Sadie Lefkowitz was elected first president of the board of directors of the Visiting Nurse Association in 1934. Her leadership was vital to the success of the fledgling organization, which had a bank balance of \$4.61 in December of that year. The organization had so little money that alumnae nurses of Parkland hospital made donations to pay the transportation costs for the volunteer visiting nurses.

Mrs. Lefkowitz acquired needed equipment and supplies from the many women's organizations she was associated with in Dallas. Donations from Dallas community leaders and service organizations kept the Visiting Nurse Association afloat through 1935, when it became funded as an affiliate of the Community Chest (later renamed the United Way). The application had stated "The purpose of the Dallas Visiting Nurse Association is to give skilled nursing care in the home to those who cannot afford to pay for such service and would otherwise go uncared for."

In January 1935, the Visiting Nurse Association was able to hire its first part-time paid nurse. An anonymous gift also made it possible to hire the first executive director and nurse supervisor.

During its first full year of operation, the Visiting Nurse Association made 6,500 home care visits to 739 patients. Mothers and their infants received 2,500 nurse visits; 4,000 visits were to 414 acutely ill patients. The Visiting Nurse Association reported in 1935 that no calls for service in the city had been refused and patients were cared for irrespective of race, color, sex, or creed. Nurses went into the segregated sections of Dallas,

the tent cities, cardboard houses, tourist camps, and trailers to provide life-giving care.

By 1936, seven nurses were employed part time by the Visiting Nurse Association, making 18 to 20 home visits a day. The organization hired its first African-American nurse that same year. In 1939, Georgia Bates became the first full-time nurse. Her salary was paid by the Highland Park Methodist Church to provide nursing services in West Dallas.

Under Mrs. Lefkowitz's leadership, an association with Parkland and Baylor Hospitals was developed to care for mothers and their infants at home. One third of all babies born in Dallas in 1938 were under the care of the Visiting Nurse Association. The demand for VNA nurses grew so large that services were expanded to include patients who could afford to pay for care.

Requests for the nurses to travel to areas outside Dallas County became so frequent that branch offices were eventually set up to reduce their travel time. A Kaufman office opened in 1974, one in McKinney in 1979, and an office in Fort Worth in 1981. The Visiting Nurse Association added an office in Denton when it merged with Ann's Haven Hospice in 1995. The Visiting Nurse Association's Dallas headquarters has been at 1440 W. Mockingbird Lane since 1992 and houses the largest single Meals on Wheels kitchen in the United States.

The Visiting Nurse Association today is giving needed care to frail, sick, and disabled individuals in thousands of homes in Dallas and the

surrounding area. Its programs have expanded to include hospice, rehabilitative therapies, long-term care, and other services that allow patients to be cared for in their homes.

As the Visiting Nurse Association celebrates 75 years of service, it gratefully acknowledges the continued leadership and support in the communities of Northeast Texas that have made this possible. VNA's Jubilee celebration honors those nurses, who in 1934 cared for the sick, infirm, and disabled during a time of great economic hardship. The anniversary also recognizes the individuals and organizations in Dallas who supported those efforts and gave life to an organization that 75 years later continues to provide needed care in our

community.

The Visiting Nurse Association's 75th anniversary celebration in 2009 is co-chaired by Peggy and daughter Catherine Carr, with Lyda Hill serving as honorary chair. The theme of the

Visiting Nurse Association's diamond jubilee year is "Roots of Life." The jubilee gala will be held on May 2, 2009 at the Trinity River Audubon Center in Dallas and will benefit the Visiting Nurse Association's home care, hospice, and

Meals on Wheels programs. Linda Slaughter is chairing the gala and Bank of America is the presenting sponsor. Sponsorship and ticket information can be obtained by calling (214) 689-2211 or online at www.vnatexas.org.



Home care for child 1935



Nurses Sally Peel, Maryalyce Haughton 1941

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Speaks to the heart of the organization

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