Daisy Awards to Bloom at NorthBay

NorthBay Healthcare is planting the seeds to grow a DAISY program to honor our nurses in 2016, according to co-organizers Sandy Piedra, R.N., and Joan Forbush, R.N.

An organizing committee unveiled the plans at NorthBay’s Shared Governance meeting in October and at Management Team at Green Valley Administration Center last week, and will soon start to solicit nominations. See DAISY, Page 11

Join the Parade With One-Star Team

If there seems to be extra pep in the step of the NorthBay Healthcare team marching in today’s Veterans Day Parade in downtown Fairfield, it may be thanks to our new star status.

According to Ed Lowe, executive director of NorthBay’s Health at Home, Hospice & Bereavement, Palliative Care Program See PARADE, Page 16

A LOT of Change

Some Parking Slots Disappear, Some Slots Added at NBMC

As NorthBay Medical Center’s Modernization project kicked into high gear last week, the west side of the hospital was fenced for grading, closing off about 50 parking spaces west of the hospital while at the same time a “back of house” parking lot opened for employees and caregivers, ushering in a whole new approach to parking on campus.

See PARKING, Page 6

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**Lecture Will Address the Hot Topics in Urology**

Interested in the “Hot Topics in Urology?”

Dr. Herkanwal Khaira has the answers on how to manage everything from urinary tract infections (UTIs), and urinary incontinence to an overactive bladder, prostate problems and more.

Check-in and refreshments begin at 5:30, on Thursday, Nov. 12, with the lecture from 6 to 7 p.m. at Green Valley Administration Center.

To register in advance for the event, visit [www.northbay.org/oab+more](http://www.northbay.org/oab+more) or call (707) 646-3280 for more information.
Mary Jameson is the new practice manager for the Center for Primary Care in Vacaville. Mary is a licensed practical nurse with an MBA in Healthcare Administration and 22 years of experience at multiple levels of practice management leadership in the ambulatory care setting.

Mary comes to NorthBay from Dayton, Ohio, where she was the director of Revenue Cycle for the Kettering Healthcare System Physician Network. Additionally, Mary has overseen operations of eight primary and specialty practices, including family practice and specialty women’s services.

“She has excellent knowledge of regulatory processes and billing, and we look forward to how her broad experience will help support our vision for growth and market penetration,” says Stephanie Tarter, assistant vice president, Health and Wellness, NorthBay Healthcare, Ambulatory Division. “Mary has also served as a member of the Quality Advisory Council with success leading change toward an increased focus on our health plan pay for performance initiatives and quality measures.”

Mary began her new job last week.
Adopt a School Signups Set Record

All 62 classrooms have been adopted, setting a record for NorthBay generosity and enthusiasm, says Sylvia Spanos, Adopt a School coordinator.

For those who now have classes, the next step is making contact with the teacher and confirming your party.

Each teacher has filled out a wish list and can share with you further details about what product may be best, or the best place to purchase a certain item.

In past years, items have included school supplies, books, games and small gifts for the students. One year teachers all wanted DVD players, while another year, playground equipment was popular. Many classes want pizza parties and the teacher can share with you which types of food are OK for his/her classroom. For example, one teacher wanted cupcakes while another wanted veggie sticks!

“You can make the experience as simple or as elaborate as you want,” Sylvia adds. “The important thing to do is to have fun and enjoy your experience with the children.”

This year marks the 11th anniversary of NorthBay Healthcare’s Adopt a School Program. The schools were chosen because they have students from families with very low incomes. All of the parties will take place during the week of Dec. 14.

The Talk of the Town

NorthBay Healthcare’s Assistant Vice President of Real Estate and Facilities Development Joelyn Gropp (second from left) won first place in evaluations during a Division D contest in Sacramento Oct. 17. She poses with Christopher Bensch, second-place winner Jimmy Fong and Division D Gov. Donna Lewis. Joelyn went on to place second in the Nov. 7 District 39 Contest in Anderson. Also competing in Sacramento was NorthBay Healthcare’s Director of Respiratory Therapy Niki Peterson, who won first place for Humorous Speech in the Area 41 competition to qualify.

She’s A Good Witch for Halloween

VacaValley Hospital Administrative Coordinator Kirsten Bolen showed her Halloween spirit by walking around the hospital carrying an orange pumpkin bag giving out Halloween candy.

Cheers for Engineers, Support Staff

Engineers, biotechnicians and facilities support staff came together to celebrate Healthcare Facilities and Engineering Week the last week of October.
NorthBay Runners to Lead in Turkey Trot

Three NorthBay Healthcare employees who run marathons in their spare time are inviting NorthBay employees to join them on Thanksgiving Day in the seventh annual Solano Turkey Trot.

Ed Ballerini, R.N., chief clinical informatics officer/senior director, and Jerry Wilcox, director of Diagnostic Imaging and radiation therapy, ran in the Boston Marathon in 2015 and Systems Engineer Chris Dalton has qualified to run in the 2016 event.

You certainly don’t have to be a marathon runner to sign up for the 10K run or 5K run or walk.

Both races begin at 8 a.m. at Solano Community College, 4000 Suisun Valley Road.

Cost for the 10K is $40 thorough Nov. 22, jumping to $50 for late registration. Children 12 and younger are $15.

Cost for the 5K is $35 through Nov. 22, jumping to $45 for late registration. Again, children 12 and younger are $15. There’s also a free children’s fun run that will begin at 9:30 a.m.

NorthBay Healthcare is a sponsor and will have a booth at the event.

Money raised in the event will benefit Solano Hearts United, Meals on Wheels, Mission Solano and Children’s Nurturing Project.

To sign up, contact Jessica Johnson at JYJohnson@NorthBay.org or call (707) 646-3303 or visit solanoturkeytrot.org.

Vaccination Rate Soars; Few Opt to Wear Masks

A whopping 91 percent of NorthBay Healthcare employees have opted to receive the influenza vaccination, reports Wanda Ellithorpe-Fletcher, clinical manager of Occupational and Employee Health.

That’s up from 66 percent who chose to be vaccinated last flu season.

“There is Senate Bill 1318 requires us to be at 90 percent level or higher, and I’m happy to report we’ve made it,” she says.

The percentage of physicians with privileges here who have received the vaccine was 68 percent last week, but Wanda expects the number to go up as records of their immunizations are received from other clinics.

“The percentage for our physicians in the Ambulatory Division is much higher,” says Wanda. “We are at 93.3 percent overall.

At the Center for Primary Care facilities, the percentage is 99 percent.”

Those who chose not to receive the vaccination must wear a mask when working in patient areas, a new rule mandated by Solano County Public Health Officer Dr. Bela Matyas in a memo issued in October. The mandate states that all health care workers who do not receive the vaccine must wear masks while dealing with patients or working in patient care areas between Nov. 1 and March 31.

“I believe that our results are a reflection on the job that we did educating our staff, providing ease of obtaining the vaccine and the support of every department,” says Wanda. “Every department deserves a standing ovation for the support they provided in helping us obtain these fantastic numbers.”

Issuing stickers for those who have received the vaccines was a bit of a challenge.

“Assuming this mandate will become standard operating procedure next year, we’ll know to give out stickers at the time of vaccinations,” says Mercille Locke, manager of NorthBay’s Infection Prevention Program.
The old Victoria Court area at the back of the hospital adds more than 100 parking slots for employees and caregivers.

“It’s our chance to bring much of the employee parking back onto the campus,” explains Dante Tolbert, assistant vice president of Hospital Operations. “At the same time, it allows us to give our patients and visitors ‘front of house’ parking.”

Parking for employees and caregivers remains available in the mall lot across the street and in the church parking lot on the northeast side of the campus.

Signage went up and reminders were sent out last week asking that employees and caregivers drive into the third parking lot entrance after turning onto B. Gale Wilson Boulevard from Pennsylvania Avenue. It turns into a one-way street that leads drivers to employee- and caregiver-designated “back of house” parking lots.

The committee guiding the parking system transformation is working closely with security to ensure employee safety to and from parking areas.

Escorts are available to help employees to their vehicles, especially after hours. Dial 5050 and Security will make every effort to respond within 10 minutes; note that in some cases, it might take longer.

Lights are being installed to improve after-hour visibility. In addition, a security camera is focused on the lot 24/7.

The three entrances into NorthBay Medical Center’s lot from B. Gale Wilson Boulevard will be clearly marked in the near future, says Dante. Coming from Pennsylvania Avenue onto B. Gale Wilson Boulevard:

- The first entrance is for patients and visitors only;
- The second entrance is for emergencies and emergency vehicles; and
- The third entrance is for employees.

Physician parking spaces are being moved from an area south of the Gateway Medical Plaza to an area just north of the Gateway building in the southwest corner of the Penn Tab lot (where a badge access controlled gate will allow convenient “back of house” access). Doctor-designated parking slots scattered around

See PARKING, Page 7
Partnering with Police for Safety

NorthBay Healthcare leaders, the Fairfield Police Department Crime Prevention Unit and the city’s Quality of Life Task Force met with property owners and property management companies in late October to explore ways to tackle safety issues in the neighborhood next to NorthBay Medical Center.

Just a few years ago, Dana Drive apartment complexes were plagued by crime, disorder and nuisances that affect quality of life — not only for the residents, but also for the patients and staff at NorthBay Medical Center, located across B. Gale Wilson Boulevard.

Efforts to curb problems got rolling two years ago when the city used grant funding to install closed-circuit cameras and im-
prove lighting along Dana Drive. Other improvements included trimming overgrown trees that hindered view of key areas, code enforcement of building hazards, more police patrols and stepped-up crime suppression operations.

Much progress has been made since then, and police calls-for-service have diminished to a fraction of prior levels. More work remains to be done.

The latest goal is to mobilize apartment owners and managers to participate in the Police Department’s Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

The proven program trains managers and owners on a variety of issues including fair housing laws and appropriate background checks of prospective tenants to screen those with histories of poor tenancy.

Officers running the program will provide timely reporting to managers of calls for service to their properties.

The program uses a three-phase process to certify each apartment community as a Crime Free Certified Property.

NorthBay Healthcare will participate in a neighborhood block party of sorts on Wednesday, Nov. 18, to explain to residents how the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program works.

Residents will also learn how they, too, can continue doing their part to fight crime.

Parking ...
(From Page 6)

campus will remain.

Soon all parking around the Gateway Medical Plaza will be marked and reserved for patients and visitors.

Also soon, a walking path will be painted in green from the Gateway building to the front of the hospital. Walking guides for employees can be found on the employee portal and walking guides for patients and visitors soon will be posted on NorthBay.org.

Employees coming from Penn Tab and the Annex will have a couple of routes to gain access to the hospital, as noted on the map (at right). Traffic coming from the parking area or Gateway into the hospital lobby is encouraged around the front of the hospital, into the southern entrance.

Two more small parking lots on the south end of the hospital will be opened in December.

Questions or concerns? Email Dante at DTolbert@NorthBay.org.

Walking Routes for Employees, Caregivers
Dedicated Care of NICU Team Helped Our Baby Come Home

To NorthBay Foundation Board:

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who works in Labor/Delivery, Mother/Baby and the NICU. From the doctors to the nurses to occupational and respiratory therapists, lactation consultants and clerical staff for the absolutely wonderful, professional care our entire family received. As a former R.N., I recognized the effort everyone put forward to make sure our baby and mother received the best care day in and day out. There are not enough words to thank you all for everything!

My granddaughter was born on June 4, about 10 weeks early. I am happy to report that our 3 lb. 3 oz. preemie now weighs almost 10 pounds. My daughter spent a week on the labor and delivery ward after her water broke and another five days on the mother/baby ward after her emergency C-section. Our baby stayed in the NICU until July 3.

I believe our baby thrived in the NICU and came home after only one month due to the wonderful care she received constantly and consistently. I have never seen more dedicated, caring angels. The NICU staff went above and beyond to make sure all the babies were tended to spiritually as well as medically.

I have a donation that I want to go specifically to the Maternity/Labor and Delivery/NICU ward. I am sure there is something the nurses have been asking for. I hope this helps in some way.

— Mother and Grandmother of a patient

Why Hasn’t Max Benefit Increased?

Dear Direct Line:

I have a question regarding dental insurance. I have had Dental Plus for more than 20 years. The price has gone up a little, but the maximum benefit has remained at $2,000, which doesn’t buy much from the dentist in 2015!

Like all health care, dental prices have gone way up in 20 years, but this benefit has not kept up. I would be happy to pay more for a larger benefit. Why hasn’t the limit changed in all these years?

Answer by Diane Urbano:

“Thank you for your Direct Line question. We continually look to offer the very best health offerings we can for our employees. While you are absolutely correct that dental expenses have risen over time, the plan design has remained constant. We participate in benefit surveys regularly to ensure that our plans are providing the best coverage we can provide at the best rate. What we are finding is that our dental plus plan is in line or in many instances providing higher coverage than other plans being offered. I appreciate your feedback and will continue to review our dental offerings to ensure that we are able to provide the highest plan offerings available.”

Ask Direct Line for Answers

Do you have a question or concern about an issue at NorthBay Healthcare? Direct Line was established many years ago to give you a forum to ask questions and to receive timely answers in FYI.

Employees can submit questions to Lorie Jarvis in Human Resources. Lorie will forward the question to the appropriate manager for an answer, and the reply will be published in FYI. Questions can be submitted signed or anonymously. If signed, the writer’s name will be removed from the question before it is submitted for an answer and it will be published anonymously as well.
During the Quality Division’s recent road show, held over four days in October, a large number of employees spent a few minutes visiting with representatives of the division’s various departments. At the Patient Experience and “Creating Connections” exhibit, several employees reflected on memorable patients and a few shared their connections. If you have a story you would like to share, post it on the ShareSpace site under “Patient Experience/Connection Stories,” call Jennifer Shoemaker at ext. 5757, or email to connections@NorthBay.org. It may appear in a future edition of FYI – Editor.

Looking Out for a Lost Patient is Right Thing to Do

I noticed an older man walking around our building. He was wearing a walking cast, walking slowly, carrying X-rays and looking lost.

After his second pass around the building, I went out and asked him if he needed help, and he told me he was there for an appointment with Dr. Burton. But Dr. Burton had moved his offices, so I offered to drive him there, since it was just across the street.

I also told him to contact his driver to let him know where to pick him up. You do what you can for people; I’d want someone to do that for someone I know or care about.

— Jeanette Demma
Transcriptionist/orders management
NorthBay Health at Home, Hospice & Bereavement

Working Through the System to Get a Second Opinion

I get calls from people who are frustrated or angry all the time. But this one mother was really anxious and just wanted to have a second opinion for her child.

I helped her work through the system and after we were successful, she was so relieved. We are advocates for our patients, and most times we work in the background and people never know we are doing these things for them.

It is often very difficult to work within our contractual agreements and also keep the patients pleased. But this one case stood out for me.

— Nancee Thompson,
Lead case manager
Outpatient Case Management

Taking the Extra Time With A Patient Can Really Pay Off

I take calls all day from patients; sometimes they’re not sure of the process, or they are frustrated, don’t understand or don’t think things are happening fast enough.

I recently took a call from a gentleman who was new to the area, new to the plan, and he just had a lot of questions. He was getting pretty frustrated and anxious.

I try to reassure all my callers, and walk them through the process. But this patient, he called me back to thank me after everything was taken care of.

— Angel Crisosto,
Resource specialist
Outpatient Case Management

Employees took time during Quality Week to pose for photos with signs that read, “I am the patient experience.” The gallery, created by Jennifer Shoemaker, can be found on the Patient Experience page on ShareSpace.
Tickled PINK by Support

It was a great night for pink T-shirts, pizza, hugs and fund raising at Pietro’s No. 1 in downtown Vacaville Oct. 27. It’s the fifth year Vacaville firefighters have served meals to raise money and awareness for the NorthBay Center for Women’s Health.

Joe Murdaca and family, owners of Pietro’s No. 1, donated 50 percent of every pizza purchased that night, which added up to nearly $4,000. A young firefighter in the making, Cody Bassey of Vacaville, passed his tiny boot around and collected another $1,200. Then NorthBay Healthcare Foundation Board Member Stanley Davis offered to match the funds, which pushed the total to $10,000.

One of NorthBay’s nurses got a surprise that evening, too. Vacaville firefighters chipped in to buy dinner, flowers and champagne for Erica Taylor, a breast cancer survivor, who works in the VacaValley Hospital Emergency Department.
DAISY Awards to Bloom ... (From Page 1)

for outstanding nurses from colleagues and the public alike.

Plans call for the award to be presented every other month — six times a year — starting in January 2016, says Sandy.

Award-winning nurses must establish a special professional connection with patients and families through trust and emotional support, demonstrate professionalism, exemplify NorthBay’s mission and values, and collaborate with the health care team to meet the patient’s needs and goals. Other criteria include use of critical thinking skills, excellent interpersonal skills, the ability to educate patients and their families while modeling empathy and a caring attitude.

Nomination forms can be found at the front desk of our hospitals and medical office buildings, as well as online at northbay.org/DAISY.

The DAISY (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) Award was created in memory of J. Patrick Barnes to express his family’s gratitude for the skillful and amazingly compassionate care he received from his nurses when he was hospitalized with the auto-immune disease Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP) in 1999. He died eight weeks later at age 33.

The award honors the work nurses do every day in thousands of healthcare facilities throughout the United States and in 14 other countries.

Bonnie Barnes, co-founder and president of The DAISY Foundation and Patrick’s stepmother explained, “We learned from personal experience during Patrick’s illness just how remarkable nurses’ clinical skill is. What really touched our hearts during his eight-week illness is the level of compassion and kindness nurses also bring to their patients and families.”

So the family created DAISY to celebrate the super-human work nurses do every day.

“It’s work they take for granted but that makes a profound difference in their patients’ lives,” says Bonnie. “We hope that with NorthBay Healthcare’s support, we will bring our message of gratitude to many more deserving nurses who provide profound comfort and care to patients and their families. These extraordinary nurses’ stories need to be celebrated.”

The foundation is based in Glen Ellen, and Bonnie and Mark Barnes have been invited to attend NorthBay’s first DAISY presentation Jan. 27.

Honorees are chosen by a committee of their peers based on blinded nominations that tell the stories of the extraordinary impact nurses have in their everyday practice.

NorthBay intends to start a tradition by sending a congratulatory banner to the winning nurse to display in his or her unit until the next winner is named. In addition, there’s a sweet treat for all the nurses in the unit.

One day during Pat’s hospitalization he asked his family to bring him a cinnamon roll, plus enough for all the nurses in the unit.

With the help of Cinnabon’s parent company, FOCUS Brands, The DAISY Foundation carries on this tradition by serving Cinnabons to the nurses in the Award recipient’s unit in thanks for everything they do for their patients and families.
Volunteer’s Breakthrough Helps

Erika’s Dream Come True

There’s a whole lot of love packed into the Wheatley House on this bright summer day. More than 20 relatives of Alzheimer’s patient Erika Duarte have gathered at the Country Cottages assisted-living facility in Vacaville to pay tribute to her.

The guest of honor — nattily attired in her favorite color of a brown silk skirt and blouse that matches her flowing auburn hair — is hunkered in her wheelchair, silently whirling around the hardwood floors.

“She really loves to move,” says Carmen Duarte as she watches her 88-year-old mother being pushed by family members lap after lap around the small room.

Propped nearby on an easel is a board studded with photos of a vibrant, vivacious Erika in her younger years — a mother of six who loved to read, tend to her garden and take long road trips. There are images of her celebrating Christmas with her family. And swimming. And dancing. Enjoying all that life has to offer.

“She was quite a beauty,” remarks Linda Pribble, gazing at the photos. Linda, the volunteer coordinator for NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement, has organized this gathering, paid for by NorthBay’s Dream of a Lifetime program. “It’s all about making connections and memories,” she says.

When Erika finally gives her wheels a rest, Elise Wigton, a hospice volunteer, crouches down and comes face-to-face with her. Speaking German, Elise tells Erika that she looks beautiful and that her family has come to celebrate with her.

Erika leans closer and gently taps her head against her friend’s.

“That,” explains Elise, “is her way of saying, ‘I understand.’”

That Erika could understand — and connect with — Elise on a certain level was a major breakthrough.
Before her first meeting with Erika weeks earlier, Elise was told that the patient was uncommunicative and didn’t like to be touched. Moreover, she occasionally threw objects playfully or in anger, as her way of connecting. The prospects of a productive encounter seemed dismal.

But Elise, who had been trained in how to interact with Alzheimer’s patients by Sandy Perez, manager of the NorthBay Adult Day Center, figured that she might have an “in” with Erika that others didn’t: Both women spent their childhoods in Germany.

“I decided that I was just going to speak in German,” recalls Elise, who brought along a small teddy bear to that first meeting.

Elise introduced herself and, stunningly, Erika repeated her name back to her. Elise then presented the bear to Erika, thinking that the patient might throw it back at her. Instead, Erika placed the bear on her bed railing and gently stroked it.

“I thought: ‘Wow, this is really cool,’” says Elise, who referred to it as a “God-wink moment.”

It got even better. Elise told Erika that she was from Stuttgart and asked Erika where she was from.

Without hesitation, Erika, who was only 14 when World War II broke out, replied, “Berlin.”

The two women talked some more in German and moments later, Erika placed her hand on Elise’s cheek. Then she tenderly took Elise’s hand and placed it on her cheek.

Another God-wink moment.

For her second visit, the NorthBay volunteer brought along a book of German children’s songs. When Elise began softly singing, the “uncommunicative” patient happily joined in while holding Elise’s hand the entire time. Later, Elise, an avid knitter, presented her new friend with what she calls a “twiddle” blanket.

“She touched and played with it the whole time I was there,” Elise says. “That was awesome.”

Sandy beams with pride as Elisa tells her success story.

“Elise did everything she’s supposed to do,” she says. “She made a safe environment. She reached (Erika) where she’s living. That’s exactly what we want to do.”

As for the foreign language interplay, Sandy explains that most Alzheimer’s patients live in their “mind’s eye,” and not necessarily in the environment around them.

“I’ve learned over the years that, as people progress with the disease, they actually go backward in time,” she says. “... In many cases, they start living as younger.” Hence, Erika has reverted to her childhood language.

“We need to appreciate Alzheimer patients where they’re living and treat them in that time frame. It works out a lot better,” says Sandy, who points out that Erika’s penchant for tossing objects most likely was borne of frustrations over her inability to communicate with those speaking English.

Sandy has witnessed a great deal of frustration during her 35 years in the field. Alzheimer’s patients are frustrated, and fright-
Erika ...
(From Page 13)

ened, she says, because they are losing their memory — a huge part of who they are. Family members are frustrated because their loved one has ceased being the person they’ve known their whole life.

“I always tell them, ‘You have to be the one to change, because they can’t,’” Sandy says. “This disease is taking over and there’s nothing they can do about it. ... And no (patient) is the same. Our memories, our journey in life, everything we store in our brain, is unique to us. And the disease is unique in that we don’t really know what memories are going to be lost. So we have to treat them as an individual — a human being — with respect and dignity.”

According to Linda, hospice-care workers have seen a substantial increase of dementia-Alzheimer’s patients in recent years. This dismaying trend prompted her to enlist Sandy to help instruct NorthBay hospice volunteers such as Elise in how to more effectively connect with these patients.

“It just helps us do such a better job,” says Linda, who points out that the bond formed between Elise and Erika is “a wonderful story” that demonstrates how connecting across disciplines at NorthBay ultimately comes down to “providing beautiful care for our patients and our community.”

“This makes me very happy, and very touched,” Linda says, “because I think this is what hospice volunteering is all about.”

At the Wheatley house party, a marzipan cake is being divided among family members. Carmen tenderly spoons some of it into her mother’s mouth. Moments later, Erika surprises everyone by grabbing the bowl and spoon and helping herself. Later, everyone gathers behind and alongside Erika to pose for a great big group picture. There are smiles all around.

Says Linda, “As Erika’s memory gets more tired, we will create new memories through photos and video as a gift for her family to treasure.”

Carmen admits that it’s extremely difficult to see her mother, who was once so active and energetic, unable to take care of herself. And she bemoans the fact that, on many days, Erika is largely unresponsive. But, for a few hours at least, there are encouraging signs.

“Today,” she says, “is a good day for her.”

One week after her party, Erika suffered a stroke, and passed away two weeks later, on Sept. 9.

Her family has expressed gratitude that Dream of a Lifetime created an opportunity for the family to celebrate her life before she passed away.

NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement’s Dream of a Lifetime program is one of the few in the nation that make dreams come true for adult patients in hospice. Donations can be made to NorthBay Healthcare Foundation, in care of Dream of a Lifetime, program for Solano County residents served by NorthBay Hospice. For information, visit www.northbay.org/Dreamofalifetime.
The holiday season is especially difficult for those who are suffering the loss of a loved one, and NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement has planned grief workshops and a memorial to help during this particularly challenging time.

Drop-in Holiday Grief Support Groups are on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 7:30 p.m., Nov. 17 through Dec. 15. The support group meetings are free and will be held at NorthBay Hospice & Bereavement, Suite 110, 4520 Business Center Drive in Fairfield.

NorthBay Hospice also holds an annual Tree of Memories event to provide people with an opportunity to remember their friends and loved ones during a thoughtfully designed ceremony.

The NorthBay Hospice Tree of Memories observation takes place at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5, at the Green Valley Administration Center, 4500 Business Center Drive.

The two-hour ceremony includes music, an invocation and reading of names, followed by light refreshments.

Guests will also be invited to decorate a tree with free handmade butterfly-themed ornaments to honor their loved ones.

Special keepsake ornaments can also be ordered in advance by contacting Tim Johnson in the NorthBay Healthcare Foundation, at ext. 3132, or at txjohnson@NorthBay.org. A $20 suggested donation per keepsake ornament is requested, and orders should be placed by Nov. 24.

For more information about Tree of Memories or the support groups, contact Hospice at ext. 3517.

Every 12.8 minutes, someone commits suicide somewhere within the United States, making suicide the 10th leading cause of death, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).

For loved ones left behind, there is help available, as they cope with guilt and an overwhelming sense of loss.

Survivor’s day conferences are held around the world on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, according to Gordon Doughty of the AFSP. Solano County’s only conference, hosted by NorthBay Healthcare, runs from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Nov. 21, at the Green Valley Administration Center. This is the second year that NorthBay has worked with the county to coordinate this event.

During the conference, attendees will watch a 30-minute documentary, “The Journey,” which was filmed in the Bay Area. Gordon and his wife will speak, and then attendees participate in small group discussions.

“Survivors can feel shame and try to keep it under wraps,” added Linda Pribble, NorthBay Bereavement coordinator. “People need to know that it is OK to speak up, so that healing can take place.”

To register for Solano County’s International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day event, go to www.survivorday.org, select California, and then Fairfield.
and the Alzhiemer’s Adult Day Center, NorthBay has earned its first star in our journey toward four-star distinction in the We Honor Veterans Program.

In fact, our team walking in today’s parade, which begins on Texas Street at 12:30 p.m., will carry the ”We Honor Veterans” banner with pride. Participants in the NorthBay entry include employees, physicians, volunteers and veterans.

“Some of our employees are veterans, a number of our physicians are veterans, and a number of our volunteers are also veterans,” says Linda Pribble, volunteer and bereavement coordinator and parade organizer. “They can’t all join us today, but we’ll walk in their honor. In this community, our veterans are plentiful and deserve to be honored.”

That’s why the decision to become affiliated with the national We Honor Veterans Program made complete sense, says Ed.

The program is a collaborative partnership between the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and the Department of Veteran Affairs, which joined ranks to empower hospice and non-hospice community partners across America to meet the unique needs of seriously ill veterans and their families at end of life.

There are four levels of distinction to be achieved by the hospice team, explains Linda, and each level includes educational components for hospice administration, clinical staff and volunteers, to become more veteran-focused.

NorthBay’s bereavement center recently started a support group for veteran widowers who have lost their spouses.

“Many have done multiple tours of duty, seen a lot, but as they say...’losing your life partner, is really rough, a daily battle,’” says Linda.

In addition, there are 10 hospice volunteers who are veterans or wives of veterans who will help in our outreach.

“Today’s parade gives us a chance to celebrate, to honor our veterans and reach out in support,” says Linda.

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**Be Main Street Merry**

Kick off your holiday with NorthBay Healthcare at Vacaville’s Merriment on Main celebration, starting at 4 p.m. on Dec. 1.

Employees, friends and family members are encouraged to visit SecondHand Rose, 322B Parker St. for some food and drink, says Jane Hilliard, director of Volunteer Services.

Jane has ordered a limited supply of blue Santa hats, embroidered with the NorthBay logo, and they will be available for $12.50, at either of the hospital gift shops or at Secondhand Rose.