

Serving the community

While many of you know what the Rutland Area Visiting Nurses Association and Hospice is, you might not know about some of the special services it provides. For example, the annual Dancing with the Rutland Stars event benefits one such program — a pediatric rehabilitation program, Kids on the Move.

Having a child who is developmentally delayed or who has a genetic disorder can be a heart-breaking experience for parents and families. It can seem like you're alone in your struggle. But RAVNAH wants to make sure parents have the support they need to help their child reach his or her full potential.

Kids on the Move isn't just about the children — it's about the family, schools and community that the child interacts with. They believe kids are happiest and healthiest when living with their families, and Kids on the Move provides services that focus on keeping kids at home.

Some of these services are individualized therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy. Emphasis is given to helping the child communicate — whether verbally, through sign language or other non-verbal means.

Kids on the Move is the only program of its kind in the Rutland area, and its clients represent a diverse array of demographics from all walks of life. Along with town ballot initiatives, RAVNAH is funded by donations, support from the United Way and by events such as Dancing with the Rutland Stars.

RAVNAH serves all of Rutland County and Dorset.

Their other major offering is hospice end-of-life service. In addition to being staffed with professional nurses, social workers and bereavement counselors, the hospice program benefits from a large number of volunteers. Having this volunteer base makes possible unique services not found elsewhere.

For example, a group of hospice volunteers formed an a cappella group, Trillium, in 2007. This group of thoughtful, caring individuals sings beautiful harmonies to local residents with life-limiting illnesses. Isn't that the most amazing thing? I



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**Rutland
upRising**



ELSIE GILMORE PHOTO

One of the little participants in RAVNAH's Kids on the Move pediatric rehabilitation program.

can only imagine how soothing that must be.

RAVNAH's aim with end-of-life services is to provide for patients' physical, emotional and spiritual needs, whether they are at home or in a nursing home, assisted-living facility or hospital. The focus for these community members is managing symptoms and controlling pain to enhance their quality of life.

Hospice volunteers are a special breed of human being — so compassionate and caring. If you wish to embark on this rewarding opportunity, which begins with an eight-week

training session, you can call RAVNAH at 770-1683. Your volunteer experience might involve:

■ **Patient Care.** Volunteers offer companionship and respite to terminally ill patients and their caregivers. Also, volunteers also assist with meal preparation, light housekeeping, transportation and errands.

■ **Specialty Services.** Volunteers provide patient and family support through diverse skills such as music, art, massage therapy, scrapbooking, journaling, haircutting and bookkeeping.

■ **Bereavement.** Volunteers offer

continued support to Hospice families after a patient's death through telephone calls and/or visits, and may assist with bereavement support groups and memorial services.

■ **Office.** Volunteers provide filing, computer data entry, typing, telephone and group mailing support. Also, volunteers assist with special events, bulk mailings and marketing projects.

■ **Speaker's Bureau.** Volunteers educate the community about the Hospice program at RAVNAH and provided services.

Other volunteer opportunities include planning and managing fundraising events and assisting nurses and staff members at health fairs and clinics by distributing materials, registering clients and providing on-site information at Flu Clinics.

Along with raising money through the Dancing with the Rutland Stars event, which will be held Oct. 11 this year, RAVNAH also raises money through its annual Bella Notte event. A foodie's delight, this event is held at Three Tomatoes — this year on Sept. 14. It includes a delicious Italian dinner and live auction. Consider supporting these two valuable events.

Elsie Gilmore is the founder of Urban Mayhem Project, the catalyst for the Rutland Uprising campaign (www.urbanmayhemproject.com).