

# Vitalville Times



All the news that's fit for vital living



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## Happy New Year – VIA News for 2018

by Gabriel Falconer-Stout

[g.stout@vitalityinaction.org](mailto:g.stout@vitalityinaction.org)

**Season's greetings to everyone! Here's what we'll be kicking off this New Year:**

Harvey has been hard at work building our website. We have the ability to host conversations, conduct forums, and provide website support for activity groups.

These changes are the first of regular enhancements. "We welcome everyone to join up, log in, and explore," says Harvey.

***"Please share your thoughts – everyone's input is important."***

Our community is an open conversation and we want the next

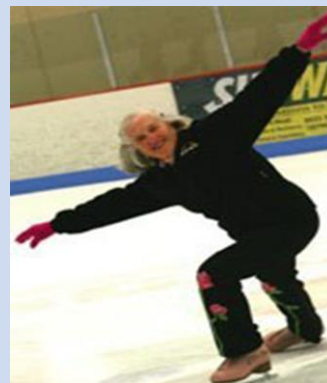
bout of tweaks to reflect members' needs and ideas, and everyone's participation is welcome!

**Oh the people you'll meet,** the places you'll go, and the amazing things you'll do with friends.

In early September, Rusty met Elisa Koshkina, University of Colorado figure skating coach, and Nancy Blackwell-Griender, World Figures Champion and Figures Coach. The three discovered a shared interest in therapeutic skating. Sure enough, three is not only company but the core of a [\[Continued on Happy Page 2\]](#)

## Barrier Buster Yvonne Dowlen

"Well! Hello there!"



Yvonne Dowlen chirped through a broad smile that along with the glint and wrinkles were a picture of happiness, wisdom, and vitality.

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## VIA Family & Friends

by Harvey Siegelman

[hsiegelman@vitalityinaction.org](mailto:hsiegelman@vitalityinaction.org)

June 20, 2016 is a milestone day for me. Retrieving the newspaper set in motion events that changed my life in unimaginable ways. Simply stepping back into the house I fell and broke the strongest bone in the body – my right femur. The hospital's on-call surgeon pieced the

bone together with a titanium rod then sent me on to a care facility for rehabbing.

Thus began an 18 month saga of 7 more surgeries, a life-threatening staph infection, and finally, ***recovery!***

I was a 227 lb., 74 year old sedentary diabetic who lived alone.

Maladies required 17 different medications every day, prescribed by 10 doctors.

I took medications to treat the primary ailments. I took medications to treat the side effects of the primary medications. I took medications that led to new ailments.

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Barrier Busting Project. Nancy immediately connected Rusty with Karen Courtland Kelly, M.A., Olympian, and head of World Figure Sport Society ([www.worldfiguresport.org](http://www.worldfiguresport.org)), an international association that is putting the figure back in figure skating.



Its members are artists who literally draw on ice with boot and blade. These figures require precision, control, and balance to produce the symmetrical etchings. The results are works of individual and collaborative art.

***Those etchings are also a direct indicator of brain function and development.***

They act as a source of biofeedback providing both a method of habilitation and the measurability necessary to conduct the rigorous research required to develop effective therapies.

Karen invited Rusty to join their Inclusive Skaters Workshop at the World Figure & Fancy Skating Championships in Vail, Colorado at the end of September.

Rusty, Harvey, and Al (Vitality's Founding Friends) took the trip to make new friends at the Dobson Ice Arena. After all, 1976 Olympic Gold Medalist Dorothy Hamill would be there. "Meeting people always entails some risk-taking," says Rusty, "especially Olympians. The prospect is rather intimidating. But once we introduced ourselves, we knew we were among good friends.

The warmth of Karen and Dorothy melted my icy foot immediately. And when Dorothy invited me to skate a lap... well... dreams do come true," Rusty mused. On the drive home, The Founding Friends agreed to launch a Barrier Busting Project to develop Therapeutic Skating.



Dorothy Hamill, 1976 Olympic Gold Medalist

***Safety is the primary barrier to overcome.***



Therapeutic Skating demands a "Best Practices" approach and the adaptive equipment necessary to support a wide range of handicaps.

[Horizon Prosthetics, LLC](http://HorizonProsthetics.com) jumped on board the project shortly after the trip to Vail. Pawel Brzozka, Certified Prosthetist and engineer is beginning the design process for a harness structure that allows for safe, natural, and independent movement. John Nitta, Vice President of Business Development, is already busy promoting the project.

After 10 years of developmental research we are now gathering a community that can unfold the incredible possibilities of therapeutic skating.

***In memory of our friend and mentor, we are launching The Yvonne Dowlen Adaptive and Therapeutic Skating Project.***

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## *The fall was a wakeup call that I had to become a better manager of my health.*

Rather than rehabilitate to my previous normal, I had to *habilitate* to a new normal.

### *Harvey before*



Rusty Stout, Al Schauf, and I had brainstormed Vitality in Action Foundation to assist and support *friends helping friends*. Everyone faces physical, social, and intellectual challenges in a lifetime. And, each of us desires maximum vitality over a long life.

*In essence, habilitation is the discipline of mastering one's vitality. Our friends are the key to that discipline.*

Rusty came to help once I was released from the acute care facility to home.

We devised a habilitation process based on [W. Edwards Deming's business management theories](#) called [Total Quality Management](#) (TQM). It is a strategy that focuses on constant improvement – habilitating to a new normal.

TQM is a sensible approach to managing quality of life. The *key is managing lifestyle*.

By the simple process of doing less of those things that are unhealthy and doing more of those things that improve vitality, we create a *vital lifestyle*. For me, this process began with a brutal assessment of where I stood at the moment – on one leg, diabetic, obese – at high risk of death.

Fresh whole foods became a staple of my diet. I found a host of wonderful flavors I had been missing and I didn't miss the habitual heaping bowl of ice cream before bedtime.

I consulted each of my specialists and eliminated 12 of the daily medications. After ten years of opioid addiction, I dropped them cold turkey.

I was shocked to find I had no withdrawal symptoms with *no* increase in perceived pain.

## *I have become the manager of my health risks.*

After two failed surgeries to repair my femur in 2016. I found success in Dr. Jason Stoneback and his team of miracle-workers at the University of Colorado Hospital.

Along the way, I encountered a life-threatening staph infection and four clean-out operations.

But, today I am learning to walk again. Over the course of the past 18 months I lost 56 lbs. and no longer fear stairs.

Vitality in Action and the fellowship of family and friends – new and old - sustained me each step of the way.

### *Harvey After!*



[Barriers - Continued from Page 1]

by Rusty Stout  
([j.stout@vitalityinaction.org](mailto:j.stout@vitalityinaction.org))

Bob Jones, Apex Ice Arena Manager, informed me the 84 year old skating legend had coached another amputee who achieved a full loop jump, so I was both anxious and enthusiastic to meet her.

The moment we made eye contact my anxiety melted away like ice on pavement in July, and a lifetime friendship took root.

Yvonne was an inspiration to those who have the blessing of knowing her. She gave us bright hopes for



the future and supported our dreams. Ice is, by nature, cold and unfriendly.

Skating culture often reflects that nature. Yvonne's presence during the public skate time created a warm, welcoming, and safe space.

*When a crowd gathered in one spot on the ice, Yvonne was at the*

*center.* Her mentorship was available to anyone who wanted to, as she would say, ***"Put on skates and wander around the ice for a while."***

We wandered around the ice for many 'whiles,' talking and skating, lap after lap, lost in a Zen garden of human possibility that rinks provide.

Skating is especially beneficial for those growing up, growing older, and those with handicaps. In our wanderings, we found a common purpose in exploring the use of ice skating as physical, social, and intellectual therapy.

Then, Yvonne had a stroke shortly after she turned 88. Doctors told her she would never skate again. She'd heard that before – it didn't take.

After all, whose army was going to be the barrier? Winter would be setting in soon and, "there's always a frozen pond somewhere up in the hills."

With her daughter Sherry's close supervision, Yvonne returned to the

ice – much too soon according to the experts. Within days, she was the Yvonne we all knew, the vital woman I met four years earlier.

Her skating was a bit less powerful and the stroke had shaken her confidence as any serious injury or illness does. But six weeks later she was working on her loop jump again.

***She skated until the moment she passed, vital and happy.***



Yvonne is the picture of Vitality In Action Foundation. She volunteered her time, her wisdom, and her spirit to building a community of friends who work together to overcome barriers.

Yvonne inspired us to organize an effort to conduct research on the concept of therapeutic skating and to push forward with further development of adaptive

skating. Yvonne, you are with us. Vitality In Action Foundation dedicates:

**THE YVONNE DOWLEN  
ADAPTIVE AND  
THERAPEUTIC SKATING  
PROJECT**

Vitality in Action Foundation  
[www.vitalact123.org](http://www.vitalact123.org)  
6500 DeFrame Ct. Arvada, CO  
80004 – (303) 674 - 1852