

James Sullivan  
*Owner*  
John Benedetti  
*Administrator*  
Allison Seavey  
*Admissions/Marketing Director*



**Emerson Village**  
Nursing and Rehabilitation Center



59 Coolidge Hill Road  
Watertown, MA 02472  
(617) 924-5215  
[www.emerson-village.com](http://www.emerson-village.com)

## **Watertown Nursing Director Volunteers in Nigeria**

**Watertown, MA** – Vinieta Lawrence, the Director of Nursing at Emerson Village Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Watertown returned from a 10-day medical missionary trip to Onitsha, Nigeria on August 29.

“I had always wanted to do missionary work but I was waiting for the right time and opportunity to present itself, said Lawrence. “A former nursing colleague introduced me to Onitsha America, Inc. (OAI), an organization that brings medical care and supplies to the people of Onitsha, Nigeria. I jumped at the opportunity to go and be a part of this important project.”

Lawrence, a Milton resident, is the mother of twin 12-year-old girls. “Summertime was the best time for me to go because I didn’t have to worry about my daughters’ school schedules and activities. And, I am fortunate to work for a company that values community outreach and is committed to making a difference. My boss was very supportive of my decision to volunteer with OAI which made my decision to go, easier,” Lawrence added.

Earlier this year, three American physicians purchased a building in Onitsha with plans to convert it into a hospital. “Right now the hospital is essentially a cement block shell with no running water, no electricity, no furnishings. We conducted our daily screening clinics using rented tables, chairs and tents. There were ten of us medical professionals collecting data, identifying and screening patients for hypertension, diabetes, glaucoma, cataracts and diabetic retinopathy.”

Hypertension (high blood pressure) and diabetes are the number two and three killers in Nigeria with HIV disease topping the list as number one.

“It was so gratifying to see how appreciative the patients were of our efforts. Some of the patients blessed me and sang to me to show their gratitude. They even gave me a new name, Ada Di Ora Mma, which means daughter to be appreciated that does good for the community,” added Lawrence.”

When asked about the similarities and differences between elder health care in the U.S. and Nigeria, Lawrence noted, “In the U.S., we have systems in place. In Nigeria, there are no nursing homes or facilities for the elderly. It is the family and extended family that must care for sick and aging relatives. And just like here in this country, it often puts a burden on the caregivers who have to go to work every day.”

“Here at Emerson, we have a dedicated staff of caregivers who are like extended family to our residents. Quite a few of our staff members have been with us for many years.

James Sullivan  
*Owner*

John Benedetti  
*Administrator*

Allison Seavey  
*Admissions/Marketing Director*



# Emerson Village

## Nursing and Rehabilitation Center



*A Village Square Community*

59 Coolidge Hill Road  
Watertown, MA 02472  
(617) 924-5215  
[www.emerson-village.com](http://www.emerson-village.com)

They feel a loyalty to the individuals they care for every day and truly want to make a difference in their lives.”

She continued, “I believe most people who go into the health care profession feel that it’s a calling to help others and strive to make things better. I consider myself very lucky to work with such a dedicated team here at Emerson Village. And, I have a renewed appreciation for the services that are available in this country. I hope to be able to return to Nigeria and continue the work OAI is committed to carrying out. My daughters have already said they’d like to join me on a future trip.”