As volunteers in a healthcare setting, you are aware this is a constantly changing environment with increasing regulations and demands. In August, The Joint Commission surveyors arrived at Gundersen for a site visit. Surveyors were on-site Aug. 20-23 at the La Crosse and Onalaska campuses, and the review included Behavioral Health and the Hospice program. The Joint Commission exists to continuously improve healthcare for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating healthcare organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The organization accredits and certifies more than 21,000 healthcare facilities and programs in the U.S. An independent, nonprofit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in healthcare.

During the exit session, surveyors shared their appreciation for the genuine and caring interactions provided by employees and volunteers for our patients. One of their comments was "your staff is your greatest asset!" What you do as a volunteer is critical to our quality patient care. Our responsibility in the Volunteer Services department is to provide you with the training and tools you need to continue to do your volunteer work while we meet these requirements. The need for Volunteer Services, especially for our patients and families, will only increase as we look at providing the best healthcare for our communities.

As fall draws near, my hope for all of you is an autumn filled with events involving family and friends – especially as we approach Thanksgiving. This is a perfect time to reflect on the many blessings of our program: your caring involvement and the opportunities to serve.

My thanks,
Lori Van Lin

Volunteer absences
We recognize that as volunteers you may need to be away from volunteering for periods of time – especially as cold weather approaches. Following are guidelines to ensure our volunteer programs run as smoothly as possible during absences.

- Volunteers should communicate all scheduling changes and absences to the Volunteer Services department. Volunteers in the Volunteer Transport Services area should also record this on the calendar in the office.

- Please notify the Volunteer Services department in advance of a long-term absence.
- Upon return, volunteers are not guaranteed their previous volunteer shift will be available. We will do our best to accommodate leaves, but this may not be an option.
- When an unforeseen absence arises, please call Volunteer Services and/or your site placement and leave a voice-mail message if after hours. Please identify your name, assignment, day and shift.
Nathan Burns graduated from Onalaska High School and will be attending UW-Madison. Volunteering definitely helped Nate with his potential career path into the medical field.

Sierra Mack graduated from Onalaska High School and will be attending UW-La Crosse. Sierra always knew she wanted to go into the medical field, and assisting patients through volunteering confirmed her career choice.

Bridget Kusmitch graduated from Aquinas High School and will be attending UW-La Crosse. Volunteers have been a major factor in Bridget choosing a career in occupational therapy.

Lauren Lansling graduated from Central High School and will be attending UW-Madison. Volunteers helped her realize that she wants to be a doctor, as she enjoyed volunteering in the hospital.

Sofie Baggett graduated from La Crosse Logan High School and will be attending Viterbo University. Volunteering helped Sofie realize her goal of a career in healthcare.

Ezechukwu Nduka graduated from Central High School and will be attending Harvard University. Volunteering helped Ezechukwu decide to apply to the Health Science Academy, which helped him decide what he wanted to do in the future.

MyLe Luong graduated from Central High School and will be attending University of Minnesota-Rochester. Volunteering was part of the reason why MyLe wants to pursue a career in helping others.

Sierra Mack graduated from Onalaska High School and will be attending UW-La Crosse. Sierra always knew she wanted to go into the medical field, and assisting patients through volunteering confirmed her career choice.

Pali Mukhtar graduated from Central High School and will be attending University of Pennsylvania-Pittsburgh. Volunteering at the hospital has given Pali stronger motivation to one day make it her workplace.

Cali Oberwieser graduated from Onalaska High School and will be attending Minnesota State University-Mankato. Volunteering helped Cali realize that she wants to go to school for nursing.

RaghuRam Prasad graduated from Onalaska High School and will be attending University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. Volunteering has reaffirmed RaghuRam's decision to pursue a career in medicine.

Tessa Thurin graduated from Central High School and will be attending UW-La Crosse. Volunteering has made Tessa more outgoing and confident individual. She's met so many amazing people through Gundersen.

Regan Wied graduated from Onalaska High School and will be attending Edgewood College. Volunteering helped Regan decide to further her education with a degree in nursing.

Volunteer News

Teen Corner
By Karol Fox, program coordinator

This edition of our newsletter contains the Teen/High School Volunteer Merit Award recipients and an article by RaghuRam Prasad on his volunteer experience and what he has gained personally by volunteering. As our graduates head off to their chosen colleges, we wish them the best and maybe someday will see them in our hallways as employees!

Teen/High School Volunteer Merit Award recipients

Each year in February, Volunteer Services and Gundersen Partners host their annual Valentine’s Day Carnation Sale. The proceeds from the fundraiser are designated to the Teen/High School Volunteer Merit Award program. The Partners Board recognized and valued the impact of the teen volunteers and donated additional funds for the Merit Award program this year. We would not be able to honor this many of our volunteers without their generosity. The Merit Awards are only given to high school seniors who have graduated. The following students are the recipients.
Comfort Cloths
By Carly Anderson, RN, clinical manager, Inpatient Behavioral Health

Inpatient Behavioral Health is grateful for our wonderful volunteers for their sewing talents in creating our comfort cloths. We use the comfort clothes in a variety of ways for our patients to help them when they are struggling with their anxiety symptoms and helping them soothe their sensory needs. We often put essential oils on the comfort cloths, and many patients take these cloths home with them and continue to use them once discharged. These wonderful volunteers have sewn 1,072 comfort cloths for our unit in the past year. Thank you, ladies, for your hard work in providing comfort cloths to our patients.

Volunteer Lessons
By RaghuRam Prasad, teen/high school volunteer

I remember my first time volunteering at Gundersen: I was nervous, worried and scared that I would horrendously screw up. I had never volunteered with people who were of a different age group than me, and I was most certainly unprepared for the socializing that would occur. When I began training in Volunteer Transport that day, I was a little overwhelmed with the various floors of all the buildings and the scope to which VTS operates. Despite all that, I kept coming back to volunteer. Why? Because seeing the joy in patients’ faces makes it all worth it. To me, volunteering has been more than just accumulating NHS hours. Volunteering, in its essence, is to willingly devote time to help others. That help can be anything from helping someone up the stairs to a simple smile. The beauty of volunteering is that no matter what the task is, there is always an opportunity to go above and beyond to make a person’s day better; this is true especially in a hospital.

Volunteering here at Gundersen has also taught me more than a thing or two. For starters, it has taught me that being the closed clamshell in the room won’t get me far. Sitting back and observing conversations can only help until it’s time to get involved. I have found that after volunteering, I am more comfortable at starting and maintaining conversations with others, which is helpful in making a patient more relaxed throughout the discharge process. In addition, volunteering here has given me valuable experience in different types of situations. After dealing with these situations and with many types of people, there is a certain type of empathy towards people in different circumstances that is developed. That empathy plays a vital role in interacting with others, be it in a professional setting or sitting around the campfire.

While these things are very important lessons, the most important thing that volunteering taught me is that I can help others best in a medical setting through direct patient interaction. From a very young age, my end goal has always been set at becoming a physician working to help others. Volunteering at Gundersen has reaffirmed that goal for me and, over the course of nearly three years, has provided me with a view into the inner workings of a hospital and the opportunity to truly have an impact by caring for others, which I am grateful for.

To conclude, I would like to send a special thanks to the Friday VTS crew for taking me under their wing and helping me grow out of my shell into who I am now. Their constant positivity and camaraderie were things I always looked forward to seeing every time I volunteered, and I sincerely hope that anyone who volunteers will be lucky enough to work with people like them.
Volunteer News

Volunteer Transport Services Friday morning crew

Pictured, from left, are Jim Schiefelbein, Bob Thompson, Larry Stryker, Joyce Potter, RaghuRam Prasad, Ken Isler and Linda Stark.

Volunteer Transport Services Friday afternoon crew

Pictured, from left, are Jim Schiefelbein, Bob Thompson, Mary Csiacsek, Ed Biddick, RaghuRam Prasad, Warren Bartsch, Rosie Ledden, Dennis Wolf and Kathy Trussoni.

Sympathy to:
Bev Bodine on the death of her husband.
Sharon Clark on the death of her sister and brother.
Sandy Drexler on the death of her uncle.
Denise Shedivy on the death of her father.
Happy autumn,

July and August were months that allowed Partners to get a much-needed break after all of the successful events in the first half of the year. In September, Partners sponsored a team – “Partners in Pink” – for Steppin’ out in Pink who donated and walked to support this amazing event. The Partners board has continued to plan for our future with a strategic planning and bylaws review meeting in September. We continue to strive to meet our mission statement, and an effective and evolving strategic plan helps us to do just that.

Finally, the WHA Fall District Meeting was held Sept. 26 in Black River Falls, hosted by the Partners of Black River Memorial Hospital. WHA district meetings continue to give us important insights into what is going on in the District and other partners groups in the Western District. Oct. 1-3 is the State Convention for the WHA at the Red Lion Paper Valley Convention Center in Appleton, Wis. Several members of the board will attend the convention for training and information sharing with its theme of “Volunteers: Our Precious Gems.” In November and December, we will hold several fundraisers including a Simply Sweet Candy Sale Oct. 15-16 in the Legacy Lower Level Lobby and on Oct. 17 in Onalaska; a PRN Footwear Sale Oct. 29 in the Legacy Lower Level Lobby; and a $6 Sale Nov. 11-13 in the Legacy Lower Level Lobby and on Nov. 14 in Onalaska.

Finally, we will be hosting a new sale Nov. 21 and 22, provided by Discovery Toys. This is an exciting new event for us. Watch for more information to come. Dec. 9 will be the Annual Membership Meeting in the Rasmus Center at 12:30 p.m., followed by the Love Lights Celebration in the Main Clinic Lobby at 2 p.m. We hope that many of our members can join us to celebrate Gundersen Partners and all those that we honor with Love Lights. You will be seeing much more information soon on these events. The support of the volunteers who staff the Gundersen Gift Shop and customer patronage have made it possible for Gundersen Partners to donate to the following events, organizations and programs in the first three quarters of 2019:

- Carnations were donated to Behavioral Health and Unity House as part of the annual Carnation Sale
- Paula’s Purse
- NICU/PICU sibling activity kits
- CCU pilot activity kits
- Drive for Hope
- Coulee Regional RSVP – “Who Will Be Smarter Than a 5th Grader?”
- Boys and Girl Club Family Night
- Freedom Honor Flight
- Gundersen iGive campaign
- Abilities in Harmony
- French Island Lions Club
- La Crosse Police Department K9 Unit
- Pawsitively for Patients
- Gundersen Teen Merit Awards
- Steppin’ Out in Pink
- Gundersen Employees Children’s Scholarships
- Endowed scholarships at UW-La Crosse, Viterbo and Western Technical College

Through the thoughtful assistance of our Donation Allocation Committee, Gundersen Partners identifies donations that support our mission statement. In the next newsletter we will highlight the additional donations for the balance of 2019. When you purchase a gift at the Gundersen Gift Shop, it is a gift that gives twice.
2019 Gundersen Employees Children’s Scholarship recipients

Once again, Gundersen Partners has awarded scholarships totaling $12,000 to children of Gundersen Health System employees studying medicine or pursuing careers in healthcare-related fields. Recipients were recognized for academic, character and community excellence. The scholarships are awarded annually prior to the fall semester.

The 2019 scholarship recipients are:

• Lauryn Behrend, daughter of Cindy Behrend, RN. Lauryn will attend the University of Dubuque in the fall, majoring in human health science with plans to attend dental school.
• Jaden Coles, son of Nichole Coles, Accounts Receivable rep. Jaden will study chemistry, physics and pre-med at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
• Allison Ecklund, daughter of Leah Dietrich, MD and Daniel Ecklund, MD. Allison is enrolled at the University of Minnesota, College of Biological Sciences, majoring in biology.
• Allanda Kriener, daughter of Rene Kriener, RN. Allanda will attend Georgia Institute of Technology to pursue a major in biomedical engineering and a minor in psychology.
• Lauren Lansing, daughter of Kimberly Lansing, MD. Lauren will attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the fall to study genetics and genomics.
• Courtney Oesterle, daughter of Nikki Oesterle, financial counselor. Courtney will study neurobiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
• Raghu Ram Prasad, son of Kumari Usha, MD. Raghu Ram will attend the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, majoring in biophysics and biochemistry.
• Christian Riemer, son of Shelley Riemer, RN. Christian will attend University of Wisconsin-Madison in the fall to study biochemistry.
• Mikaela Schlesinger, daughter of Janice Schlesinger, RN. Mikaela attends Gonzaga University, majoring in biology (research concentration) and minoring in psychology and chemistry.
• Forrest Stehula, son of Brian Stehula, clinical informaticist-pharmacy. Forrest is a second-year medical student at the Medical College of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Where are they now?
By Marilyn McElligott, Partners historian

Gundersen Partners has been awarding scholarships to children of employees for 15 years. This is one of the many scholarship programs which Partners has offered for over 60 years. Recipients will be highlighted to keep the membership and others aware of the important support of healthcare education.

Andrea Guggenbuehl
Degree: Doctorate in physical therapy (DPT)
Attended: University of St. Thomas and St. Catherine’s in St. Paul
Occupation: Regional director of Outpatient Therapy for Aegis Health
Location: Greater Twin Cities region
Comments: Andrea is very thankful for the scholarship she received during her educational years. It allowed her to focus more on her learning than on her financial challenges at the time. Thank you!

Gundersen Partners will celebrate their 70th anniversary in 2020. Co-chairs of the event are Maria Runde and Marilyn McElligott. If you would like to be part of the planning committee, please give your name, email or phone number to Sheila Erickson at sgericks@gunderenhealth.org.
Liz Rogers was appointed as Gundersen Partners Public Policy Educator in June. Liz keeps the Partners board and our members updated on legislation affecting healthcare and Gundersen Health System. Liz graduated from UW-La Crosse, majoring in communications with an emphasis in advocacy. Liz interned at Gundersen in External Affairs during college and has been an employee in External Affairs for over two years. Liz greatly enjoys healthcare policy and collaborating with various departments at Gundersen. She looks forward to contributing her knowledge and expertise in health policy to Gundersen Partners. She also represents Gundersen through participation in community and healthcare-focused organizations. Liz was recently recognized for five years of service as a crisis line advocate. She enjoys reading, traveling and meeting new people. During the past year, Liz has visited Graffiti Alley in Toronto and surfed off the coast of Florida.

Please join us in welcoming Liz to the Gundersen Partners board of directors!

Thank you, Brian Vamstad

Brian Vamstad, PhD, recently stepped down as the Public Policy Educator for Gundersen Partners. Brian and his family have relocated to the Twin Cities area, and he has taken a position as the manager of Regulatory Affairs and Payment Policy for Allina Health. Partners thanks Brian for his many years of service to Gundersen Partners.

Discovery Toys coming to Gundersen in November

Gundersen Partners will sponsor a Discovery Toys sale Nov. 21 and 22 at Gundersen’s La Crosse Campus. Throughout its 40-year history, Discovery Toys has focused on kinesthetic, multi-sensory, child-directed toys and games, which are more important than ever is today’s world. Their fun developmental products, disguised as toys, offer a valuable alternative to electronic media for building young minds. You won’t want to miss this sale!

Volunteer Services Mission Statement

Volunteer Services provides meaningful experiences for our volunteers, elevating services and programs for our patients and families and the community we serve.
# Calendar of Events

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<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
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<tr>
<td>1-3 Partners of WHA Annual Convention, Appleton, Wis.</td>
<td>03 Daylight saving time ends</td>
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<td>15-16 Partners Simply Sweet Candy Sale, La Crosse Campus</td>
<td>11-13 $6 Merchandise Sale, La Crosse Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Partners Simply Sweet Candy Sale, Onalaska Campus</td>
<td>14 $6 Merchandise Sale, Onalaska Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 PRN Footwear Sale, La Crosse Campus</td>
<td>28 Happy Thanksgiving, Volunteer Services closed</td>
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<tr>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
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<tr>
<td>09 Annual Partners Membership Meeting, La Crosse Campus, Rasmus Center</td>
<td>01 Happy New Year, Volunteer Services Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>09 Love Lights Celebration, La Crosse Main Clinic Lobby</td>
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<td>18-19 Blood drive, Onalaska Campus</td>
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<td>24-25 Merry Christmas, Volunteer Services closed</td>
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**Save the Date**

- The **Volunteer Recognition Event** is scheduled for April 24 in the Integrated Center for Education (ICE House) at the medical center campus.
- The next **blood drive** is scheduled for Feb. 4-6 on the La Crosse Campus in the Legacy Lower Level Lobby.