

# Volunteer News

Quarterly Newsletter for  
Gundersen Health System's  
Partners & Volunteer Services

**GUNDERSEN**  
**HEALTH SYSTEM®**  
*Where Caring Meets Excellence*

Summer 2016

## Volunteers needed at the Gundersen Gift Shop

**We are looking for individuals who have a passion for helping people. Interested volunteers can shadow with an existing Gift Shop volunteer to see if it's a fit for you. All new volunteers will work with experienced people who really like what they do. All profits from the Gift Shop support the charitable works of Gundersen Partners, the Health System Auxiliary.**

We need volunteers at the Gift Shop for all shifts but our greatest need is for early evenings and weekends. Whether you volunteer one day a month or nearly every day, the Gift Shop welcomes your time and efforts. Our hours of operation are: Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Contact Lori Van Lin, director, Volunteer Services or Eileen Wiltinger, Gift Shop coordinator, for more information and details. We would love to have you as a member of our team.

*By Eileen Wiltinger, Gift Shop coordinator*



As I settle into my role as Gift Shop coordinator here at Gundersen I continue to reflect on the great charitable works that Partners has been able to accomplish over the years. I am working hard to make sure they are able to continue their mission into the future while serving a need to patients and their families as well as Gundersen

employees. The shop will soon have a healing corner featuring products such as specialty teas, essential oils, and inspirational items. We are also expanding into a line of adult coloring books. Many of our customers have an hour or two to wait between appointments and come to the shop looking for items like this. We will continue to carry products that our customers have come to expect at the shop such as candy and snacks, seasonal décor, floral arrangements and plants, balloons and items for children.

The volunteers who staff the Gift Shop are a great group of individuals. Many of them have been volunteering at the shop for over 10 to 20 and a few even more than

that. They take great pride in the service that they provide. Customers visiting the shop can count on getting a friendly smile or comforting words when they stop in. I would like to thank all my volunteers and their families for sharing them with us.

Volunteering takes a special person willing to give of their time and talent and without them the shop would not exist. We are always looking to add to our volunteers in the shop. If this is something you have thought of stop by and spend some time with our staff find out why they enjoy their job. As a volunteer at Gundersen you are eligible to receive a 10 percent discount on fashion and gift items at the Gift Shop. This is a way for us to say thank you for the service you provide.

Eileen Wiltinger, Gift Shop coordinator

**GUNDERSEN**  **giftshop**

# Volunteer News

## From the director, Lori Van Lin



April is National Volunteer Month. We are always very thankful for all you do for the patients, families and staff throughout Gundersen Health System and in our communities—and during April we have the opportunity to specifically share our gratitude.

All volunteers will receive an invitation to our 2016 Volunteer Recognition Event. This year we are changing things up so all of our volunteers

can attend: adults, college students and teens! It will be held on Friday, April 8, in the Integrated Center for Education (ICE House) on the main medical center campus. We will provide dinner and entertainment. Registration information with more details will be sent to you directly. This will also include information about volunteers receiving hour-level pins/bars. We hope you will be able to join us for this special time in your honor.

My thanks, Lori

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## Teen Corner

*By Karol Fox, program coordinator*



The high school volunteers have had a busy year to date –over 90 students volunteer their time and energy at Gundersen for various reasons, such as the need for National Honor Society (NHS) hours, career exploration or maybe a loved one has been hospitalized and they have learned about volunteering while

being here. Whatever brings them through our door we are grateful for their time and eagerness to explore and help wherever there is a need. The teen crew can be found in many different departments throughout the medical center. This fall the students assisted in the flu shot clinic in Onalaska. They gave out the necessary forms, directions and kept the area tidy. Currently there are students placed at Onalaska after school during the week, this works out well for those who attend Onalaska and West Salem schools. On the La Crosse campus, teen/high school volunteers deliver mail and flowers to our patients six days a week and help at the Legacy information desk on Sundays. Besides delivering flowers and mail to hospitalized patients they process large mailings, assemble Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) sibling activity kits and fulfill a variety of other needs as requested. They are a terrific group of young adults who represent our organization and volunteerism to the fullest.

As it becomes spring, the teen/high school seniors will be finalizing their plans for next year. It has been exciting learning about their goals and aspirations. Many students say that volunteering has helped with their decision making, by volunteering they have gained interpersonal skills, developed organizational skills and most importantly have learned the value of volunteering and unselfishly giving to others. Because of that, I asked Stephanie and Maitê, two teen volunteers, to write about their experiences. Both have been dedicated and are outstanding young women. In the following pages, you will see their personal stories.

During National Volunteer Week, April 10-16, we take time to recognize our volunteers by hosting a celebration, this year we are very fortunate to have the event on-site on Friday, April 8 in the afternoon. For the first time in many years all of our volunteers will be invited to gather together for an afternoon of entertainment, food and fellowship. We will need your RSVPs back quickly so we can prepare for the correct amount of attendees. We do have something special planned so hopefully we will see all of you there.

Take care,  
Karol Fox, program coordinator

**Sympathy to:**  
Family and Friends of Shirlee Balfany

# Volunteer News

## Volunteering

By Stephanie Zhao, Teen/High School Volunteer



I began volunteering at the Gundersen Hospital in La Crosse back in December 2014. Back then, I worked the mail and flower delivery like any new teen volunteer. More than a year later, I work along the patient liaisons in the imaging department and help the MRI techs bring patients back into the exam rooms.

Week after week, I make the awful, traffic-ridden, and construction-filled drive to and from Holmen to La Crosse thinking, “Why in the world would I do this to myself?” However, every time I deliver a vase of flowers, wheel a patient to his next appointment, or just simply give directions, I am reminded of why I chose to be a part of the volunteering department at Gundersen and why I will continue my dedication to community service in the future.

My start in volunteering began as a whim and a coincidence. I had just received my driver’s license a couple of months prior and felt the need to explore the community in which I live—without my parents. Emphasis on the without my parents. At the same time, my guidance counselor at school knew of my interest in medicine, so when she suggested to me volunteering at the hospital, I (being a little desperate for freedom back then) jumped on the opportunity and scheduled my interview. In the next few months, the paperwork, the flu shots, and the orientation flew by. By December of 2014, my job as a volunteer officially commenced.

I still remember my first time volunteering vividly. I was lost coming to the Heritage Building and wound up somewhere in the Founders Building. Then while delivering the flowers to a patient, I was separated from my partner and wandered around the floor until she found me. It was quite the experience, feeling constantly overwhelmed with how much I had to remember and all the small etiquettes and rules.

But through the haze of remembering floor plans and “secret passageways,” the memory of the first vase of flowers I delivered outshines the others. It was a bouquet of roses to a sweet older lady. She asked us to hold the roses so she could smell them and to read the card aloud to her. She thanked us profusely, held our hands, and continued to touch the roses tenderly.

In the following months of volunteering, moments like that occurred all around the hospital. On the way to a patient’s next appointment, we would have a laugh about the latest development in reality television or a rousing discussion on the surprisingly appetizing hospital food. Even a simple exchange on the beauty of the floral arrangements can bring a twinkle to their eyes. I also participated in Gundersen-hosted events such as the Family Fun Fest and the Wellness Fest where I helped the Pediatrics booth and painted children’s faces. In recent months, I expanded my horizons and began working in the Imaging department cleaning up coffee cups, organizing magazines, and helping the techs bring around patients.

These volunteering experiences, whether big or small, all have had such a great impact on me. I knew since I was young that I wanted to become a doctor because I was interested in medicine. I had no concept of the care that came with being a doctor. But after delivering those vases of flowers, directing those patients through the maze that is the hospital, and seeing the delight in people’s eyes, I had silently made a resolve to myself. I want to go to medical school because I am interested in medicine. I want to become a doctor because I want to care for people, and volunteering is the first step towards that goal.

# Volunteer News

## Volunteering abroad: a challenging but wonderful experience

*Maitê Arouca Guariglia, Teen/High School Student Volunteer*



From the moment I decided to study abroad and attend high school in America, I already knew I wanted to get involved in community projects and volunteer to help as many people as I might. In other words, I wanted to experience everything about this country. After all, I did not travel thousands of miles just to sit on

the couch all day and watch TV while I could be outside, learning about the culture itself.

But before I start talking about my experience, let me introduce myself: my name is Maitê, I am 17 years old and I am an exchange student from Brazil. I attend Onalaska High School and I've had an amazing time in America so far.

Because I attend a public school here, whose teachers, students and staff members have embraced me ever since the first day of school as if I had always been one of their own, I felt like I had to give back to my community by volunteering and thus showing I was grateful to everyone who helped me settle in Onalaska for their support and kindness.

So I wanted to be a volunteer, but I didn't have any information about volunteering and I didn't know where to search for it or how to join a community project. I learned that one of my host sisters volunteered twice a month at a hospital in La Crosse. I asked my host mom if I could volunteer as well, and she helped me with the application process. However, we had to schedule a meeting with someone from the Volunteer Department, who turned out to be Karol Fox. So I went through a pre-interview, after which I felt like I had finally found an amazing volunteering opportunity to get involved in. I also had to go through a four-hour orientation meeting that made me realize how serious it is to work in a hospital and that, unlike other community services, it takes a whole new level of commitment to be engaged in such social project, which is a wonderful learning experience for me because it is an eye-opening opportunity and also because it helped mature my perspectives concerning ethics and professionalism.

So I started volunteering twice a month at Gundersen at last. To be honest, I loved it ever since the first day. My tasks are simple: in just a few words, I deliver flowers and mail to some patients. However, if a hospital is a perfect puzzle that only functions well if all parts work together in symbiosis, I acknowledge that, even though my tasks are simple, my contribution to this puzzle, my piece, is essential in order to complete it; just as crucial as the doctors' and nurses' pieces, the janitors' pieces and the secretaries' pieces.

That is why volunteering at Gundersen can be so fulfilling and emotionally rewarding: we, volunteers, feel that we are wanted there. I feel that our jobs are truly necessary and there is always someone who needs us to do it. And I do it for them, thinking that someone who truly needs me to do it will somewhat benefit from it.

That's why I always keep a smile on my face when I'm heading to a patient's room to deliver flowers. Firstly because flowers, in my opinion, are pleasing not only to the eyes, but also to one's soul and they always bring joy; their scent, their colors, even their shape. So I like to think that I'm bringing a little bit of happiness to a patient by taking flowers into their room. I've come to realize such thing because I once took a beautiful bouquet to a lady's room and she rejoiced with excitement. She also told me I had made her day. But, as a matter of fact, she is the one who had made my day. She reminded me that those little things that most people tend to ignore or neglect, are the ones that usually bring enormous joy to our everyday lives. This brief story basically explains why I think my time spent volunteering is worthwhile and it also explains why I want to join community projects and continue volunteering when I go home.

Since traveling and helping others are some of my biggest interests, I'd like to volunteer abroad again, but this time in different places, such as African, Asia and even Latin American countries, whose populations are often neglected in regions where poverty, inequality and hunger affect them the most.

One of my favorite actresses, Audrey Hepburn, once said: *"As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others"* and these are, in my opinion, beautiful words to live by.

# Volunteer News

## Safety Tips for Bicyclist and Pedestrians

There are many users of the road. Whether you are a biker, walker or motorist, all users have responsibilities. Check the lists to see how much you know about safety and using the road...



### ***Bicyclists***

- Always ride with the flow of traffic
- Don't ride on the sidewalk—you are at risk at every driveway and intersection
- Ride in a straight line, not in and out of cars
- Make eye contact with drivers
- Watch for turning traffic, use hand signals when turning and stopping
- Obey traffic signs, signals and lane markings
- Be visible—wear bright, reflective clothing, use reflectors, headlights and taillights



### ***Motorists***

- Drive at or below the speed limit
- Yield to pedestrians at crosswalks, even if it is not marked
- Share the road with bicyclists
- Motorists should watch for bicyclists and pedestrians at all times
- Avoid distracted behaviors
- Be patient when passing a bicyclist—slow down and only pass when it is safe



### ***Pedestrians***

- Always walk facing traffic
- Walk on the sidewalk if there is one
- Look right, left and right again before crossing a street
- Make eye contact with drivers
- Look across all lanes when crossing an intersection
- Stand clear of buses, parked cars, and other obstacles so drivers can see you
- Be safe and be seen – wear bright, reflective clothing and carry a flashlight

# Volunteer News



## Volunteers... Acts of Caring

Each day Gundersen Health System volunteers are called upon to help our patients and families. They listen, hold hands, share smiles, laughter and tears. This is their joy and payment – knowing they have touched the lives of others and made a difference. Scott Rathgaber, MD, CEO has encouraged us to do 125,000 Acts of Caring. Following are a few examples of caring acts by our volunteers:

- A young mother presented at Urgent Care alone with her children and was told she had to have an extraction immediately in Oral Surgery. She had no one, family or friends, to call for help so staff asked for a volunteer to take care of her infant and young child during the procedure. The volunteer watched the children and escorted the mother afterwards; stopping at the pharmacy and making sure she had everything she needed before her trip home (over 2 hours away).
- A volunteer was asked to visit with an elderly man who was hospitalized for a long period of time and did not have family close by. The volunteer visited several times a week and was invited to the patient's "graduation party" when he was discharged.

- A Gift Shop volunteer shared the following story... one evening a young couple stopped in the Gift Shop. The woman noticed the lovely rings displayed in the glass case in the shop. She picked out one she especially liked and the man paid for it. Then – surprising her - he then got down on his knee, and proposed on the spot. She said yes!
- A college volunteer escorted a discharged patient to the clinic entrance and waited for 45 minutes for the patient's transport vehicle to arrive – visiting with the patient, making sure she was comfortable, and was not alone until her ride arrived.

Our volunteers are a diverse group – from teenagers to senior citizens, college students entering healthcare careers, to those wanting to give back to Gundersen or the community. Patient and family care is impacted daily at Gundersen by our volunteer group of over 900 individuals.

## Healthcare legislation

By *Brian Vamstad, Gundersen legislative/policy analyst*



Late February was a very busy time in the Wisconsin Legislature. The Wisconsin Assembly voted on nearly 200 pieces of legislation over a two-day time period, which included a number of healthcare-related bills. In continuing a focus on behavioral health reforms, legislation was enacted to test alternate payment models in the state Medicaid program to promote mental health care coordination. Provisions of the bill aim to reduce emergency room waiting for patients that require inpatient services by creating an online database that will enable Emergency Room staff to more quickly identify which hospitals have an available psychiatric bed.

With Gundersen serving patients in multiple states, interstate policy issues continue to be a focus. The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, which enables improved physician licensing across states, is now in the implementation phase. Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin are among the 12 states that joined the physician licensure compact, which expects to begin issuing multi-state licenses by 2018. The compact should improve efficiency in issuing and renewing licenses to Gundersen providers, many of whom maintain licenses in more than one state. We expect more interstate policy solutions to be advanced on other issues, including a new interstate nurse licensure compact and telemedicine reforms.

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## Mark Your Calendars for the Mandatory Education series for 2016

In 2016 our Mandatory Education dates, live sessions are in the morning on Tuesday, Sept. 20 and Wednesday, Sept. 21 (exact time to be determined pending content requirements).

All will be held in the Clinic Basement-Conference Room 2. Thank you for attending the sessions as we know that this is another day for you to drive in to the medical center and we greatly appreciate all you do.

### **The Computer Lab Sessions are scheduled for**

Monday, Oct. 3, 4-8 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 4, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 6, 3-8 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 7, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

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## Partners new members:

Luis Delgado

Tricia Krueger

Kendra Maggert

Gretchen Henchen

Debra Wagner

## Calendar of Events

### April

- 6** *Scenic Rivers AHEC (Area Healthcare Education Center) Hands on Health Day for teen/high school volunteers*
- 6** *Joint Luncheon, Partners and Franciscan Healthcare Auxiliary, Radisson.* The 29th annual Style Show featuring clothing from Christopher and Banks. Purchase tickets in advance at our Gift Shop or at one of the local Festival Foods.
- 8** *Annual Volunteer Recognition Event* at the ICE House. Invitations will be mailed to your homes.
- 14** *Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association Western District Meeting, La Crosse*  
Open to Partners members for a small fee.
- 21** *Blood drive at Onalaska Clinic*
- 27** *Simply Sweet Candy Sale,* Onalaska Support Services Building
- 28** *Simply Sweet Candy Sale,* Legacy Lower Level – Sweet treats from around the world provided by D&D Candy Outlet. Proceeds benefit Partners

### May

- 3** *Blood Drive,* Legacy Lower Level, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 4** *Blood Drive,* Legacy Lower Level, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- 30** *Memorial Day:* Volunteer Services closed

### June

- 6-8** *\$6 and up Jewelry Sale,* Legacy Lower Level
- 10** *\$6 and up Jewelry Sale,* Onalaska Support Services Building  
Come check out the fabulous buys from HCI Fundraising. Something for everyone! Proceeds benefit Partners
- 16** *Blood drive at Onalaska Clinic*

### Remaining Blood drives in 2016:

Onalaska Clinic: Aug. 11, Oct. 7, Dec.15  
La Crosse Campus: July 6-7, Sept.14-15 and Dec. 5-6

## Calling all veterans

If you've served in the military, we'd like to know. Please stop by the office or email [kjfox@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:kjfox@gundersenhealth.org).

### Contributors to Volunteer News

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