

# N Volunteer News

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

**GUNDERSEN**  
HEALTH SYSTEM®

*Where Caring Meets Excellence*

Spring 2016



## From the director, Lori Van Lin

As 2016 approaches, I reflect on many reasons to be grateful. Serving all of you as Gundersen volunteers is on my top 10 list!

I recently read the article "7 Ways to Have a Happy New Year" by Wynne Parry. It states much better than I can why gratitude is so important. All of you are already living this, each time you volunteer at Gundersen. Thank you for all you do through your caring service to others. Wishing you a healthy, joy-filled new year!

Cultivating a feeling of gratitude can boost well-being, and it turns out, feeling thankful is pretty simple. Feeling grateful makes people feel good: That's not just intuition. It's science. Research also shows it's possible to cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

Following are some tips on how to feel more grateful and be happier in your New Year. Jacqueline Lewis, one of the creators of the "World Gratitude Map," shares the following:

1. Slow down and take notice: Pick three good things that you see or experience during the day, then write them down. You can also throw a quarter or a dollar in a jar. When it's filled, treat yourself, or better yet, someone else.
2. Saying thank you: Take time to thank someone every day—anything from a card to an email or a hand on the shoulder will do.
3. Build in ways to help others: For example, throw a party and ask that, in lieu of gifts, guests bring gift cards to donate to a local shelter or other non-profit organization.
4. Feel your feelings: If you miss someone, don't try to escape the feeling; instead use it to feel thankful. When missing her mom, who passed away in 2011, Jacqueline remembered how her mother used to rearrange the furniture when she was stressed. So, to thank her mother, Lewis rearranged her own furniture. "You are not going to avoid the loss and the sadness, but you can take control of it," Jacqueline says.
5. Find ways to connect to faraway loved ones: Around Easter one year, when Jacqueline's mother was ill, Jacqueline said she brought friends and family together in spirit—or at least in costume—by asking everyone to send photos of themselves wearing bunny ears for "Bunnyfest."
6. Be creative with nostalgia: Make a whimsical photo album to enjoy. Include silly pictures of yourself or friends and take a look back at it every so often. Turns out, nostalgia really can warm the heart: Research has found a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past can warm up the body. In addition, looking at the past in a rosy light, such as with silly photo journeys, can really boost happiness.
7. Notice what you have: Jacqueline once received a holiday gift that made her cringe: a bright-yellow ski suit. When she opened it, she envisioned herself as a big lemon, tumbling down a slope. Her husband at the time, who had given it to her, tried to explain. She had told him the story about the moment she felt most loved and safe, when her mother was zipping her into a yellow snowsuit as a young child. Her husband had wanted to replicate that moment for her. The lesson: "We have an idea of what the holidays should look like, what we are entitled to, what love looks like, what happiness looks like and then we are measuring our life against this idealistic version of what we should have," she says. "That is what stands in the way of noticing what we have."

# Volunteer News

## My senior exit project: Renal sleeves

*Note: Audra plans to attend University of Minnesota-Rochester to earn a bachelor's in health sciences and later become a physician assistant in surgery or women's health.*

*By Audra Gaikowski, teen volunteer*

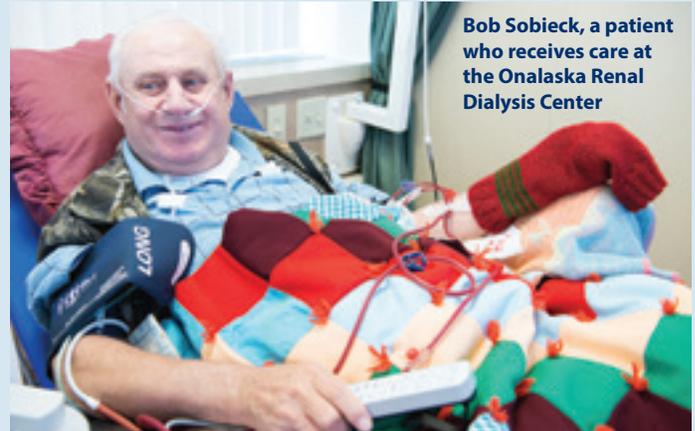


The West Salem School Board requires every senior to complete a senior exit project (SEP) as a graduation requirement. The SEP includes creating and implementing a project, writing a paper, creating an online portfolio and giving a presentation to peers and influential community members.

When I was brainstorming ideas for my project, I knew I wanted to do something under the spectrum of healthcare. I discussed my ideas with Karol Fox, Gundersen volunteer program coordinator, and she asked me if I knew how to knit.

She told me about renal sleeves and how they are very important to those who are receiving renal dialysis. She gave me the contact information for Del Tuschl, who is also a volunteer and later became my mentor. Her knitting group, Three Rivers Knitting Guild, previously made these sleeves. I did not know how to knit, but I quickly learned.

I made some of these sleeves myself and asked community members and other local knitting groups to help me create sleeves so I could make this project as successful as possible. When my project was complete, I collected 87 sleeves that were donated to Gundersen's Onalaska renal dialysis center (W.R. Yutuc Dialysis Center). I am very excited to see the impact of my project on those who are dependent on these sleeves, which makes an intrusive procedure a little more pleasant.



**Bob Sobieck, a patient who receives care at the Onalaska Renal Dialysis Center**

***Brianna Henderson, MSW, CAPSW, Gundersen Social Services, describes why the renal dialysis sleeves are so important:***

Most people receive dialysis through a surgically created fistula in the arm—the fistula is then accessed by needles which allow the person's blood to circulate through the dialysis machine. The dialysis machine does the important work that a healthy kidney does: cleans blood and removes fluid.

Brianna says there are more than 220 people who receive long-term hemodialysis across the region at Gundersen Health System. The average patient spends approximately 11 hours every week in a chair while undergoing this life-sustaining treatment.

Because the fistula is accessed by needles, it is imperative that the dialysis staff can see the person's fistula access at all times during treatment. This means that layered clothing and long sleeves are not safe choices so patients often feel cold during treatment.

A renal sleeve is a knit sleeve that is pulled up the forearm over the hand. This provided warmth for the dialysis patients' forearm and hand during dialysis while leaving open access to the fistula.

These sleeves enhance patient comfort while ultimately ensuring safety. The people who use the sleeves are so grateful. The generosity of area volunteers like Audra has really helped patients. There are (at least) two groups of knitters in the region who have volunteered time, yarn and skill to create renal sleeves for our patients.

# Volunteer News

## Healthcare career exploration opportunities

High school and college students who are interested in healthcare careers are encouraged to visit Wisconsin Area Health Education Centers - Scenic River AHEC website at scenicriversAHEC.org. AHEC is funded by a federal grant and appropriation from the state legislature, and partners with schools, businesses and healthcare organizations to create and facilitate hands-on learning opportunities for high school and higher education students, professionals and their communities. Scenic Rivers AHEC serves a 10-county region including Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau and Vernon counties.

High school students can participate in healthcare curriculum presentations such as Hands on Health day, Job Shadow resources; multi-day health careers camps and AHEConnect mentoring programs.

For higher education students, opportunities include community health projects for third- and fourth- year medical students, inter-professional activities, rural healthcare tours and Wisconsin Express Program (cultural immersion).

Volunteer Services is hosting the second annual Hands on Health day on April 6. Hands on Health day consists of a job shadow, hands-on experiments in the simulator lab and problem-solving using team work. The day wraps up with lunch and evaluations. Participants need to be at least 16 years old and not a member of Health Science Academy program. If you are interested in attending this event, let Karol Fox know as soon as possible at [kjfox@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:kjfox@gundersenhealth.org). Space is limited.

## Mandatory education series for 2016

Here are the 2016 mandatory education dates for you, our great volunteers. In 2016 our live sessions are Tuesday, Sept. 20, and Wednesday, Sept. 21 (exact times to be determined).

### 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.

All will be held in the Gundersen La Crosse Clinic basement, Conference Room 2. Thank you for attending the sessions. We know that this is another day for you to drive in to the medical center and we greatly appreciate all you do.

### Sympathy to:

Family and friends of Beth Kabat, volunteer

Warren Bartash, on the death of his brother, Alan Rock Bartash

Family and friends of Richard Bye, volunteer

Bev Bodine, on the death of her mother

Gary Frahm, on the death of his wife

Susan Schaller, on the death of her mother

Cynthia Koby, on the death of her mother

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*"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

*- Maya Angelou*

**Ever wonder why the flags are at half-staff,** The Wisconsin Department of Military affairs, [dma.wi.gov](http://dma.wi.gov) website is where to learn more about the flag lowering operations and other information concerning military affairs.

### 2016 – a Leap Year

Leap Days are needed to keep our calendar in alignment with the Earth's orbit around the Sun. It takes the Earth approximately 365.242199 days (a tropical year) to circle once around the Sun. If we didn't add a day on Feb. 29 nearly every four years, we would lose almost six hours every year. After only 100 years, our calendar would be off by approximately 24 days in relation to the seasons.

# Partners News

## Meet Partners' New Board Members



**Board members (l to r): Martha Balfany, Linda Gillette, Joan Brueggeman and Bonnie Hicks.**

Elections were held on Monday, Dec. 14 for four positions on Partners' Board of Directors. Congratulations to Martha Balfany, Joan Brueggeman, Linda Gillette and Bonnie Hicks each elected to a two-year term. We are excited they have agreed to serve on our Board and share their time and talent. Also Sally Miner has accepted the role of Board Secretary. Let's meet the new directors.

### **Martha Balfany**

Martha has a B.S. degree in Music Education and a M.A. degree in Education. She was employed for 33 years by various public school systems teaching band, orchestra and general music. She is presently employed as a personal caregiver. She is married to Greg and they have three grown children.

### **Joan Brueggeman**

Joan has held a variety of nursing positions in her 28 year nursing career with 24 years dedicated to work in case management. She has served as the Director of Utilization Management and Care Coordination at Gundersen since 2007. She is married to Rod and they have two children – a daughter attending Minnesota State University in Mankato and a son attending Holmen High School.

### **Linda Gillette**

Linda is a Materials Project Manager at Trane Company. She will be having her 40th anniversary at Trane in June, 2016. As a life-long member of Mary Mother of the Church Catholic Parish, Linda's volunteering has centered around her church serving as a lector, sacristan and communion minister. She has also helped at the Warming Center and the Place of Grace. She is married to Frank and they have two grown sons.

### **Bonnie Hicks**

Bonnie is a familiar face to many of you as she has served as a Gift Shop volunteer since 2010. This experience led to temporary responsibilities as Gift Shop scheduler as well as financial responsibilities during the Gift Shop manager vacancies. Prior to volunteering and working at Gundersen, Bonnie worked in a leadership position for GTE, Federal Mogul, Honeywell and Johnson & Johnson. Bonnie eventually returned to La Crosse to work at Northern Engraving and Trane. She is married to Ralph and they have three grown children.

# Partners News

## Volunteering and Civic Engagement in Wisconsin\*

Did you know that in 2014, Wisconsin ranked third among the 50 states and Washington D.C. in volunteering and civic engagement?

### In Wisconsin:

- 35.4% of residents volunteer
- 1.58 million volunteers
- 32.5 volunteer hours per capita
- 147.5 million hours of service
- \$3.4 billion of service contributed
- 62.2% of residents donate \$25 or more to charity

- 93.8% frequently eat dinner with other members of the household
- 92.9% frequently talk with neighbors
- 43% of residents participate in groups and/or organizations
- 74.4% of residents engage in “informal volunteering” (for example, doing favors for neighbors)

*\*Corporation for National & Community Service*



**Gundersen Partners, the Health System Auxiliary, received the State Honor Points award at Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association conference in October. President Maria Runde received the award on behalf of Partners.**

Did you know that our Partners group belongs to Partners of the Wisconsin Hospital Association? Partners president Maria Runde and Lori Van Lin, Volunteers Services director, attended the annual statewide meeting in October in Madison. Here you see the western district presidents, district chairperson, and state president (in the hat!) pictured with Maria (far left) holding her “Honor Points” certificate. Individual chapters within each district earn these points based on their level of participation in the conference.

Next year’s conference will be in Appleton but our district will be responsible for planning it. Please save the dates Oct. 4-6 if you’d like to attend. We are also looking for volunteers to help in the planning so call the Partners Office if you’d like to get involved.

# Partners News

## Welcome Eileen Wiltinger, Gift Shop coordinator



I would like to introduce myself: I am Eileen Wiltinger the new Gift Shop coordinator. I have more than 25 years of retail experience and came to Gundersen Gift Shop because I truly believe in their mission. One of the best parts of my job is working with people. In my role at the Gift Shop, I have the great privilege to work with wonderful volunteers. I am in awe of the time and talent they share every day.

The Gift Shop is always looking for new energetic volunteers that like to work with people. As a volunteer in the Gift Shop you receive 10 percent off gift items including jewelry, toys, plush and seasonal merchandise. If you have an interest in helping at the shop please stop by or contact me at (608) 775-3477. You can shadow one of our seasoned volunteers to see if this is a fit for you.

We carry great seasonal gifts as well as inspirational, uplifting and spiritual items. The Gift Shop works

with Monet Floral to make available floral arrangements and plants to patients in the hospital with no delivery charge to their loved ones placing the order.

Stop in at the Gift Shop and browse our broad selection of flowers, jewelry, gift items and of course treats. We are open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and some evenings until 7:30 p.m. We are also open most weekends 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. based on volunteers availability.

Hope to see you soon. Every time a customer buys a gift at the shop they are giving twice. The profits made in the Gift Shop support all of the great work Partners does at Gundersen.

Have a great New Year!  
Eileen Wiltinger, Gift Shop coordinator

*Note: Volunteers are needed for the Gift Shop. Please contact Vicky Jessen at (608) 775-3602 for information regarding a pre-interview, orientation, training and available openings.*



### Partners new members:

Gale Kreibich

Fran Rybarik

Kathleen Witte

Wanda Swanson



## Balanceyour7

### Get up and get moving

A January 2014 study found that sitting for long periods of time significantly increases the risk of heart failure in men, while a February 2015 study reports that women who engaged in regular exercise had a lower incidence of heart disease, stroke and blood clots.

#### **The take-away?**

The more you sit, the higher your risk of heart disease. Read what Gundersen physician Robyn Borge, MD, says about the benefits of motion: **Visit online at:** [gundersenhealth.org/wellness/body/the-more-you-sit-the-higher-your-risk-of-heart-disease](http://gundersenhealth.org/wellness/body/the-more-you-sit-the-higher-your-risk-of-heart-disease).

## Happy anniversary



Partners celebrated its 65th anniversary in October with an event honoring the service and commitment of its membership. The luncheon for members was also an opportunity to hear from Gundersen's new CEO, Scott Rathgaber, MD.



Partners president Maria Runde welcomed nearly 70 members who received education about Partners' collaborative initiatives with nursing, including the Baby Dolls for Restless Souls program and the Diversional Activity Kits – both designed to enhance patient care. Partners' memorabilia spanning the past 65 years was also available for attendees to view.



## Calendar of Events

**Jan. 1, Happy New Year**  
Volunteer Services closed

**Carnation Fundraiser**  
**Friday, Feb. 12:**  
Volunteer Services and Gundersen Partners will host the annual carnation sale at the La Crosse Campus, Support Services Building (SSB) and Onalaska Clinic. Proceeds from this sale are designated for the Teen/High School Volunteers Scholarships.

**Blood drives:**  
**Onalaska Clinic** – Thursday, Feb. 18, and Thursday, April 21,  
**Legacy Building Lower Level** –  
8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday, Feb. 29, and  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, March 1.

Your blood donation can help save lives. To meet the needs of patients throughout our state, the BloodCenter of Wisconsin must see more than 800 donors a day. Giving blood is a quick and enriching way to give back to your community.

You will feel great knowing that you've helped to give patients hope for better health.

**HCI Fundraising \$6 and Up Sale will be Feb. 22-24 in La Crosse, hospital lower level:**  
Stop by to check out all the fabulous merchandise. Proceeds benefit Partners.

**Lionne Design Sale - March 2 sale in La Crosse, March 3 in Onalaska:** This sale hosted by Lionne Designs Jewelry has jewelry in every price range. This fundraiser benefits Partners scholarship programs and other charitable works.

**Wisconsin Hospital Association Advocacy Day:**  
Open to Partners members and volunteers, Wednesday, March 30 at Monona Terrace in Madison

**2016 National Volunteer Week: April 10-16**  
Invitations to the annual luncheon will be sent to homes.

### 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

Lori Van Lin  
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### Volunteer Services

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### Partners

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