

N Volunteer News

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

GUNDERSEN
HEALTH SYSTEM®

Where Caring Meets Excellence

Fall 2015

From the director, Lori Van Lin



As you receive this newsletter we are on the cusp of the fall season—my hope for each of you is an autumn filled with many blessings. Walking throughout Gundersen Health System and seeing our patients and families, I am grateful for the gifts you bring of service and compassion.

Reflecting on 2015, this has been a year of many changes and accomplishments. Our new Chief Executive Officer, Scott Rathgaber, MD, AGAF, began his role in September. Since 2012, Dr. Rathgaber, a native of Indiana, served as medical vice president of Gundersen's Hospital Operations, Neurosciences, General Surgery, Anesthesiology, Emergency Services, Occupational Health Services and Pharmacy. Dr. Rathgaber has cared for patients in gastroenterology and hepatology at Gundersen since 1998. In addition to serving as section chief of Gastroenterology from 2005 to 2011, he also served on the Gundersen Board of Governors from 2010 - 2012. Dr. Rathgaber is the third Gundersen CEO since Gundersen Clinic and Lutheran Hospital merged in 1995. Jeff Thompson, MD, who served as CEO for 14 years and more than 20 years in leadership for our organization, will continue his involvement with Gundersen and assist Dr. Rathgaber during the transition period.

Gundersen Partners, the Health System Auxiliary, celebrates a milestone in 2015—their 65th anniversary, in October. Special celebrations and

events are planned for this achievement. Watch for more information as details are finalized.

In closing, as Dr. Thompson has always encouraged us, our charge is to “take care of the patients and take care of each other!”

*My thanks,
Lori Van Lin, director, Volunteer Services*

A reminder if you have been using emails with gundersenlutheran.org (address) to contact our office, this is no longer valid so we didn't receive your message. [Gundersenhealth.org](mailto:gundersenhealth.org) is now used systemwide. Contact us at:

Partners:

Vicki Jessen: vajessen@gundersenhealth.org

Volunteer Services department:

Lori Van Lin: lanlin@gundersenhealth.org

Karol Fox: kjfox@gundersenhealth.org;

Karla Korish: kakorish@gundersenhealth.org.



Campus Connection

By Karla Korish, program coordinator, Volunteer Services

Each semester college students aspiring to become physical therapists (PT) join our organization to gain insight into the field. Although most graduate schools require several 20 hour rotations in a variety of PT settings to apply, our students commit to a minimum of a full semester involvement. Many students, such as Darby Law, stay longer in order to absorb as much information as possible. Here, in her own words, Darby graciously shares what this experience has contributed to her growth and development in this pursuit:

I am currently a senior attending University of Wisconsin-La Crosse majoring in exercise sport science aspiring to be a physical therapist one day. I had heard about the volunteer opportunities at Gundersen in spring of 2014. From there, I had the chance to be accepted as a volunteer and head to orientation that summer. Because I am pre-physical therapy at UW-L, I could be placed in the Inpatient Physical Therapy clinic at the Hospital. Thirteen months ago I started volunteering in the clinic at least two hours a week, but I am now done and have not only a great number of hours of experience, but amazing memories as well.

At first, I was questionable about volunteering in a hospital setting. I have always had the mindset that I wanted to perform PT in a sports medicine clinic working with pediatric athletes. I had no idea what to expect walking into the hospital clinic working with a variety of patients. The physical therapists in

the clinic were so welcoming of me and ready to help me out when I needed it. Because they knew I was there not only to volunteer, but to learn as well, they asked for my assistance anytime they needed it. As a volunteer, I am not able to touch the patients or ask them why they are in this facility, but I still got the chance to help them with their balance, throwing and catching skills, walking in the hallways and outside, etc. Both the patients and therapists were eager to teach me about their road to recovery.

I can honestly say that this opportunity opened my eyes up to a variety of PT settings. Physical therapy is not just about the sports medicine aspect; it's about helping anyone who needs it. At this point in my therapy education, I would be more than willing to work in a hospital setting and experience new forms of therapy. Volunteering at Gundersen completely changed me and my thoughts about physical therapy, and because of this I believe every pre-PT student can benefit from this opportunity. They are always busy in the gym looking for more help, so then will definitely benefit from your help as well. It is a great way to learn from many therapists, because they are all different; they each use a different approach to therapy and see a variety of patients daily. I am truly going to miss being a part of Gundersen healthcare. However, I am so happy to have had the chance to express my thoughts to other pre-PT students. – *Darby Law*

Student Corner

By Karol Fox, program coordinator

This is the time of year when we say goodbye to our seniors who graduated from high school last May. This year there were 30 seniors who graduated. These busy young adults participated in extracurricular activities in school and outside of school; many held down jobs, kept their grades up and volunteered. This is a lot of balancing for high school students; their time and dedication is greatly appreciated.

Each February Volunteer Services hosts the annual Valentine's Day Carnation Sale, facilitated by Partners. All proceeds from the sale are designated in scholarships for our teen volunteers who have graduated. The selection of the student is based on commitment, longevity and dedication to helping others.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

This year we were fortunate to honor the following teen volunteers:

- Heather Berg, Central High School graduate, attending St. Cloud State University
- Claire Craig, Central High School graduate, attending Viterbo University, La Crosse
- Radhika Edpuganti, La Crescent High School graduate, attending University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
- Stacie Fruit, Luther High School graduate, attending Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee
- Lucy Lee, Central High School graduate, attending UW-La Crosse
- Laney McCartney, Aquinas High School graduate, attending UW-Eau Claire
- Claire Trussoni, Logan High School graduate, attending Viterbo University, La Crosse
- Meredith Wedro, Aquinas High School graduate, attending Merrimack College, North Andover, Mass.

But none of this would be possible without the assistance from our dedicated volunteers and staff who sell and/or purchase carnations for their family and friends benefiting our high school volunteer program. Thank you to everyone who assisted with the sale.

To realize the gratitude students have for this recognition, please see the below excerpt of Stacie Fruit's thank you letter. The feeling is shared among all of the recipients:

"I am honored to be a recipient of the Gundersen Health System Volunteer Program Scholarship for 2015. Thank you for your generous support as I attend college. I think that it is really great that the Volunteer Services is able to give young students like myself assistance in achieving college goals. I will be attending college this fall at Wisconsin Lutheran College, where I will be pursuing a major in Nursing. Once again, I want to thank you for this scholarship as well as all of the time that you spent with me during my time volunteering at Gundersen."

PARTNERS NEWS



From Gundersen Partners president, Maria Runde

One of the greatest joys of being part of Gundersen Partners, the Health System Auxiliary, is that we are able to make something grand out of smaller contributions. We turn \$10 membership dues and monetary donations into:

- Support of lung cancer research, Gift of Life (organ and tissue donation) conference, breast cancer research and Alzheimer's caregivers support.
 - Scholarship program for Gundersen employees' children and Gundersen teen volunteers.
- As the gift-giving season approaches, I would like to suggest a few gift ideas that benefit both you (by crossing one more person off of your list!) and us. You can help Partners achieve our fundraising goals by:
- Buying a friend a membership
 - Purchasing one or more lights on our Love Lights tree
 - Making a donation in someone's name
 - Making gift purchases at our fundraising events such as candy and jewelry sales
 - Buying a gift certificate in the Gift Shop
- Diversion Activity Kit items for hospitalized patients. Also, baby dolls and stuffed dogs for others identified by nursing staff to help alleviate fear and anxiety.
 - Gundersen Legacy capital campaign and waterfall feature in the Healing Garden.
 - Hamilton Giving Tree for supplies for Hamilton Early Learning Center students and SOTA I students.

Partners 65th Anniversary

Submitted by Marilyn McElligott

As we celebrate our 65th Anniversary this year I reflect on our many accomplishments for the patients, families and staff of Gundersen – and thank you for your involvement which makes this possible.

Gundersen Partners, the Health System Auxiliary, a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization, marks 65 years of service in October. Founded in 1950 as the Lutheran Hospital Auxiliary, it has seen changes in name, but never the mission.

Mission Statement: Gundersen Partners seeks to make a difference in the lives of patients, families and our community by serving as a group of caring, committed individuals dedicated to exploring ways to support healthcare education, and to enhance patient care through services and fundraising.

To name a few examples:

- We support patients and families through volunteer service within the medical center, purchase requested major medical equipment, provide supplies for therapeutic recreation, furnish family rooms and make major contributions to capital campaigns. A major initiative was the establishment of Valet Services, now a contracted service.
- In community, we have provided supplies to Hamilton School teachers since 1995 and have been a partner in the Family and Children's Center fundraiser for Healthy Families.
- In education, we have a major scholarship program. Since the 1950s, nursing scholarships have been provided. Later, scholarships were added for students pursuing other health careers.

In 1995, endowed scholarships were established for Gundersen clinical pastoral education, as well as for UW-L, Viterbo University and Western Technical College. Funds were provided for employee educational loans and for the past 10 years, children of employee's have received scholarships for health related careers. We fund Teen Volunteer Scholarships which are administered by Volunteer Services. Support is given for Health Adventures™, a program for middle school students, managed by the Volunteer Services Department.

- A startup grant was given for the Reach Out and Read Program established by Dr. Richard Strauss in 1997.
- In the early 2000s, a golf tournament was initiated. Now directed by Gundersen Medical Foundation and supported by Partners as Drive for Hope, thousands of dollars have been raised for lung cancer research. Also in this period, an Organ/Tissue Donation Educational Fair was inaugurated as a collaborative effort with nursing, to educate staff, volunteers and community. It has become an educational conference called "Gift of Life." This program won an award from the Wisconsin Hospital Association Partners. Another state award was given for Partner's Alzheimer's Education, directed to staff and community.
- The Gift Shop was established in 1953 and operated with a total volunteer staff until 1995, when a paid manager was hired. This is a major source of income. Other current fund raisers are a Christmas Love Light Tree, candy and jewelry sales.

Partners Awards Student Scholarships

Gundersen Partners, the Health System Auxiliary, awarded \$10,000 in scholarships to 10 children of Gundersen Health System employees. Recipients are recent high school graduates or are currently attending college. They were recognized for academic, character and community excellence to pursue the goals of a health career. Congratulations to these recipients:

Lauren Cox, daughter of Diane Boyer; Austin DeBoer, son of LoAnn Stinson-DeBoer; Erin and Molly Dunlap, daughters of Michelle Dunlap; Sarah Eichenberg, daughter of Sally Eichenberg; Rebecca Frett, daughter of Stacey Lock; Casey Kriewald, daughter of Julie Kriewald; Michael Lubahn, son of Randy Lubahn; Sierra McNamer, daughter of Stephanie McNamer; and Sam Stekel, son of Anne Stekel.

Baby Dolls for Restless Souls™

The Baby Dolls for Restless Souls™ is a program that has been funded through Gundersen Partners.

The concept of including baby dolls in patient care has been a success story that has gained national attention. The baby dolls offer nursing staff a creative intervention to calm patients that suffer from cognitive impairment. When agitated patients are given baby dolls to cradle, their hands become directed and calmed. As a result, life-sustaining tubes and lines are maintained and patients' healing is optimal. The program has expanded to include stuffed dogs.

The program's continued success is possible through support of the Gundersen Gift Shop.

Following are a couple of stories shared by our nursing staff about patient experiences with the baby dolls:

We had an 87 year old patient who was anxious and confused. While brainstorming how to care for her, the nursing assistant suggested that she might benefit from a baby doll. We thought that she may stop trying to get out of bed if she was holding a baby doll. (This patient kept trying to exit the bed and she was very unsteady.)

Our assumption was correct. The patient named the baby and bonded so intensely that we discharged the doll with her! Yesterday I helped the nursing assistant take the patient out to her car. On the wheelchair ride to the car, the patient was cradling the baby, talking to the baby, fixing its cap, tweaking its nose and telling it how cute it was, and generally loving the baby. She was happy and had a sense of purpose with a baby in her arms again.

A baby doll was used with a dementia patient who had 72 foster children over her lifetime. When asked if she would watch the baby for a while, she said "Can I keep him for a week? Another Intervention successful!"

Our longevity and a bright future are due to committed members and leadership, positive endorsement of medical center administration, collaborative efforts with Gundersen Medical Foundation and support from staff and community.



**Welcome: Lori Falada,
new Partners member**

Sympathy to:

Cynthia Koby on the death of her father.

Sue Schaller on the death of her father.

Dave Becker on the death of his mother.

Family and friends of Lone Swanson, long-time Partners member.

Mark Your Calendars:

Become a blood donor. Blood is the essence of life and to give selflessly can make you feel more connected to your community and to the world around you. It's a fulfilling, powerful and enriching experience to know that your donation could save lives. Unfortunately, fewer than 5 percent of people who are eligible to donate actually do. Imagine the lives that could be touched by your gift. It's a quick, simple and amazing way to give back to the community. Blood Drives will be held at Gundersen Health System:

La Crosse Campus

Oct. 27, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Oct. 28, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Dec. 29, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Dec. 30, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Onalaska Clinic

Oct. 22, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Dec. 17, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Calendar of Events

Lionne Designs Sale is Oct. 13-14 Legacy Lower Level. Lionne Designs jewelry is hand-selected to offer the best in quality and style. Jewelry is handmade with authentic metals, gems and natural stones; all backed by a lifetime guarantee. Proceeds benefit Partners.

HCI Fundraising \$6 and Up Sale will be Nov. 9-11 in La Crosse and Nov. 12-13 in Onalaska Support Services Building. Stop by to check out all the fabulous merchandise. Proceeds benefit Partners.

Love Light Sale. The holiday season is just around the corner! Let your love shine brightly by making a commemoration to honor, thank or remember someone special. "Love Lights" will adorn the organization's holiday tree and symbolize

your recognition of those important people in your life. Names of those honored, thanked and remembered will be recorded in a book by the tree and listed on gundersenhealth.org/partners. Acknowledgement cards can be sent upon request. Watch for more information and order forms available soon!

Love Light Celebration will be held on Monday, Dec. 14 (*Partners membership meeting prior to the event*). More information will be available soon regarding this event.

The Volunteer Office will be closed on Thanksgiving, Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27; Christmas Eve, Thursday, Dec. 24 and Christmas Day, Friday, Dec. 25; and New Year's Day, Jan. 1, 2016.

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