From the director
By Lori Van Lin, director, Volunteer Services

As this newsletter reaches you, it is near the end of 2017. Reflecting on the many changes that occurred this year, I am especially grateful for your commitment to Gundersen and all that you do for our patients, families and staff. Wide-spread construction and moves (including our own department!), buildings such as the new Gundersen Hotel and Suites, new initiatives and other activities can make it more challenging for patients and families when they come to our facilities. Your presence, welcoming smile and kind offers to help make such a difference. Thank you for the care you provide others each time you volunteer. I wish each of you a wonderful holiday season and a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year!

My thanks,
Lori

Essential oils
By Denise Nicholson, BSN, RN, Gundersen registered and certified clinical aromatherapist

Just about every store you go to now days has essential oils available. It seems to be a very popular product that some may refer to as a fad. Essential oils however are not new. We know through Chinese manuscripts and Egyptian hieroglyphs that essential oils have played a key role for mankind for centuries.

With so many essential oils on the market how do you know what to buy? As a registered and certified clinical aromatherapist, I want to make sure that I am using the best essential oils out there. Looking at the label is a good place to start. Does the label contain the Latin name and the common name of the essential oil? Lavender for example should also have *Lavandula angustifolia* mentioned. Mandarin should also be referred as *Citrus reticulata*. While a bottle may claim that it is 100 percent essential oil it might only have one drop of essential oil in it. That isn't wrong because the one drop is 100 percent essential oil. What is important is that the label also identifies what else is in the bottle. Because light and heat can alter the essential oil it should be in a dark glass bottle and never stored by a heat source. Spending some time researching the company the essential oil is from is also important.

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Essential oils - continued

How essential oils are produced depends on the plant it comes from. Essential oils are steam distilled, expressed, or solvent extracted. Essential oils that are steam distilled are the safest essential oils to use, i.e. lavender, Roman chamomile, and Neroli. Expressed essential oils can cause some photosensitivity when placed on the skin, i.e. lemon, grapefruit or bergamot. Solvent extracted essential oils have a chemical residual and a small patch test should always be done prior to using it on the skin, i.e. jasmine.

Every essential oil comes from plants but not every plant gives us an essential oil. The part of the plant that is used to produce the essential oil can help us determine the benefit we may receive by its use. For example, essential oils made from the bark or root of the plant such as sandalwood, frankincense, cedarwood or ginger can support or ground us. Eucalyptus, patchouli and tea tree are some essential oils that come from the leaf of the plant and can open our breath and support our breathing. When we feel anxious flower essential oils such as lavender, rose and chamomile can help us feel calm. Individuals with serious health conditions should connect with their healthcare provider before using essential oils.

All we ever have to do to reap the benefits of essential oil is breathe it in. Our olfactory nerve cells carry the essential oil into our limbic system, the portion of our brain that controls our mood, emotions and reactions. Some people like to put essential oils on their skin. This should be done only when the essential oil is diluted with carrier oil.

Jojoba oil is a wonderful carrier to use when diluting an essential oil. Jojoba is actually a liquid wax and has a shelf life of at least 20 years. It doesn’t go rancid like other oils can. Essential oils also do not go rancid but they do have a shelf life very specific to each essential oil and that is based on the chemical components within it. Some other popular diluents are coconut oil, avocado oil, grapeseed oil, cocoa and shea butter.

Whether you want to use an essential oil to support yourself when you are feeling anxious, have pain, are nauseous or just looking for an additional way to support good health, researching the essential oil company, asking questions and doing some homework can give you the confidence needed to purchase a good quality essential oil and use it safely.

Teen Corner
By Karol Fox, program coordinator

This is the first edition of our 2018 Volunteer and Partners newsletter series. It is an opportune time to thank each of you, our volunteers, for your commitment. When I arrive at work, I always witness a few early birds already at their volunteer site, waiting for the first transport request; setting up forms to be assembled into Patient Education folders or packets and those at the Information Desks assisting our patients and visitors in numerous ways. And there are many other locations where volunteers go about their business day in and day out without much fanfare.

Wherever there are volunteers, there is commitment, volunteering exemplifies the meaning of commitment, the dedication to a cause, devotion, allegiance, faithfulness along with kindness that is shown to our patients, families, visitors and others. Thank you, each of you are vitally important to our patients’ overall experience.

Part of my responsibilities as a program coordinator is the teen/high school programming. To the teen/high school students: You are learning about commitment, although you are committed to school, homework, extracurricular activities and other obligations, typically being committed to volunteering is new experience. Learning to volunteer independently or with other students who you may or may not know is new, too. Thank you for your dedication to volunteering and supporting organizations you believe in. You are the next generation of volunteers.

Mark your calendars: The 2018 Volunteer Recognition Event will be held on April 17 at the ICE House (Integrated Center for Education) beginning at 3 p.m. This year we have planned music, games and back by popular demand, the photo booth. The Recognition Event is designed to honor and recognize all of our volunteer’s commitment and dedication, we are hoping for a large attendance this year. Invitations will be sent to your homes.
Volunteer News

Hands on Health

Our teen/high school volunteers attended the Hands on Health Day, Sept. 27 here at Gundersen Health System. The students job-shadowed a healthcare provider and spent “hands-on” time at the Sims Lab in the ICE House (Integrated Center for Education). Scenic Rivers Area Hospital Education Centers (AHEC) provided information on public health careers.

One of the students wrote of her experience: “Hands on Health is a wonderful opportunity for high school students who are not enrolled in the Health Science Academy program to participate in job shadows, explore different fields and learn skills like using the laparoscopic surgery tools and performing CPR. The experience eased many of my anxieties surrounding college, and I feel I am ready to start making some big decisions regarding my future because of Hands on Health.”

Thank you to Gundersen Partners (the Health System Auxiliary) for covering the costs of our students’ lunches.

- Back row, left to right: Liv Mickschl, Olivia Lassa and Ally Robinson
- Kendall Woyak, Caitlin Caretta, Caroline Gundersen and Danielle Burr
- Michaela Harbach, Emma Peterson-Johnson, Maria Martell, Sierra Syzmanski
- Front row: Soua Yang

What can I talk about to patients while volunteering?

Many times a day volunteers are with our patients and families, besides talking about the weather, what other topics are okay? Since we cannot give medical advice, or shouldn't talk about religion and/or politics, we thought it'd be helpful to have a general list of acceptable topics.

1. Weather (yes, it's No. 1).
2. Compliment their clothing or jewelry.
3. Ask about hobbies. Maybe they've been to a craft show recently.
4. What do you do in your spare time?
5. What's your favorite color?
6. Retired or still working?
7. Do you enjoy traveling? What's favorite place you've ever been?
8. Favorite food or restaurant.
10. Best vacation site.
11. Concert or music festival.
12. What do you do to relax?

Preadmissions department needs assistance:

Volunteers are needed in Preadmission, Level 1 Legacy Building:

The Preadmission department is requesting a volunteer assistance Mondays through Thursdays and every other Friday (can be flexible). To assist with promoting a positive patient experience, the responsibilities of the volunteer in the Preadmission department include greeting and visiting with patients and their families in our warm, relaxing and calm waiting room; assisting patients to the clinic laboratory for their preadmission labs or to imaging for pre-operative X-rays; offering directions and help as needed to visitors; and, for those that don't mind helping with technology, supporting patients with their GetWell educational videos or enrolling in MyCare. Training will be provided.

Please contact Lori Van Lin at LAVanLin@gundersenhealth.org or 608-775-3697 if you're interested in helping in Preadmissions.

Sympathy to:

Marilyn Schreiner on the death of her Father
Here we are! It’s 2018, where did 2017 go? The Gundersen Partners Board has been very busy! On Sept. 7 the board held an off-site, day-long retreat to work on updating the strategic plan for the Partners organization. Gundersen Health System under the leadership of CEO Scott Rathgaber, MD, has a new strategic plan that is being implemented across the system and we want our plan to be aligned with this great new plan. It was an awesome day! It was facilitated by Ginny Moore, senior consultant for Gundersen Health System. She taught us about the new organizational strategic plan and guided us to organize our current work and our thoughts for the future in a way that will be consistent with the Gundersen plan. At the Nov. 2 board meeting we also updated Partners’ mission statement — you will hear more about all of this in the near future! Having a clear and meaningful mission statement and strategic plan can make a very positive difference for an organization and its members and I am very optimistic about our future as we continue to serve Gundersen Health System, our patients and families and the community.

There are many activities that Partners members lead and participate in that are important in supporting the work of Gundersen Health System. We are so fortunate to have such engaged and involved members who bring their energy and skills to these projects and make them successful. It is indeed wonderful to be part of such a great group! Whether members support the work by their physical presence, their enthusiastic support or their financial contributions…all support is highly valuable and greatly appreciated.

As we move forward in 2018 you will hear more about our mission and strategic plan. We would love to have your thoughts, ideas and input on all of this. You are welcomed and encouraged to share your thoughts with any of the members of the board of directors. I am always happy to hear from you as well at my email: mjklos@gundersenhealth.org, or my direct line: (608) 775-3489. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to the board members or me anytime. We’d love to hear from you!

It is a great time to be a member of this amazing group of committed individuals – the future is bright! Thank you so much for your continued support, encouragement and enthusiasm – never doubt that it makes a significant positive difference each and every day!

Take care and stay safe,
Mary Jo

Welcome New Partners Members
Jacqueline Olson and Barbara J. Quillin

Where are they now?
By Marilyn McElligott, Partners historian
The Employees Children’s Scholarships program of Gundersen Partners started in 2004. Scholarship applications are open to the children of Gundersen Health System employees and who are pursuing healthcare careers. Annually, $10,000 is typically awarded, based on specific criteria.

Courtney Stilwell, daughter of Patty Stilwell, RN, Pre-Op Department Graduate of Viterbo University, BSN. Currently working in the Float Department of Nursing at Gundersen Health System.
Happy New Year to everyone! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season spent with family and friends. As we begin 2018 I would like to take a moment to thank all the wonderful volunteers in my life. The dearest to me are my Gift Shop volunteers. In 2017 they accumulated more than 5,700 hours in the Gift Shop.

They give of their time and talent every day. They are there to brighten the day of countless customers who are struggling with having loved ones in the hospital, employees who need their chocolate fix and to share a few hours with a good friend while they are volunteering.

Volunteers play a large role at Gundersen as well as in the community. We encounter them at church, at their children's and grandchildren's schools, at local community theaters, libraries and museum's.

Volunteers help to make non-profit organizations a viable part of our community. Volunteers enrich the lives of the people they serve.

My role as a volunteer coordinator is probably one of the most fulfilling jobs I have had. I get to come to work every day and be supported by a group of people who truly want to be here. Many of my volunteers have been volunteering for over 10 years and several have been here 20-plus. The funds they have raised in the Gift Shop have helped to pay out thousands of dollars in scholarships (awarded by Partners), patient programs, hospital improvements and community education. I am truly blessed to work with a wonderful group of volunteers here at Gundersen Health System.
Calendar of Events

January
1    Happy New Year, Volunteer Services closed
30   D&D Candy Sale, Onalaska Services Support Building

February
12-14  Blood drives at the La Crosse Campus, Lower Level Legacy
14    Annual Valentine's Carnation Sale, 100 percent of proceeds go to the Teen Volunteer Merit Awards. Carnations will be sold at the La Crosse Campus, Onalaska Clinic and the Onalaska Support Services Building.
19-21  D&D Candy Sale, Lower Level Legacy
22    Blood drive at Onalaska Clinic
22-23  D&D Candy Sale, Onalaska Services Support Building

March
11    Daylight Saving Time begins
17    St. Patrick’s Day
21    Advocacy Day
30    Good Friday

National Volunteer Week 2018 is April 15-22

Save the Date: Volunteer Recognition Date is set for April 17 at the ICE House

2018 blood drive dates
April 23, 24 and 25
July 9, 10 and 11
Sept. 24, 25 and 26
Dec. 10, 11 and 12

2018 blood drives at Onalaska
Feb. 22
April 19
June 14
Aug. 9
Oct. 4
Dec. 13

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