What a difference a year makes! Last year at this time, we were in the final planning stages of our department move to the fourth floor. Now we are all settled in, and it seems as if we’ve been here forever. We haven’t experienced any more physical moves since that time, but we had several transitions in our team. Sheila Erickson joined us as the Partners office assistant in June. That same month, Karol Fox celebrated 22 years with our department. Donna Niedfeldt started as Volunteer Services program coordinator in August. Articles about both Sheila and Donna are in this newsletter, so you can learn more about them. Congratulations to Eileen Wiltinger on a well-deserved promotion from Gift Shop coordinator to Gift Shop supervisor in August.

I also want to share my deepfelt thankfulness to Mary Jo Klos, Partners president, as she wraps up her term at the end of this year. Her leadership has lifted Partners to accomplish many wonderful acts of benevolence for Gundersen patients, families, staff and our community.

Lastly, because we do not have another newsletter before the end of this year – I want to wish each of you a wonderful holiday season from Thanksgiving through New Year’s! During this special time of gratitude, I know how very fortunate we are at Gundersen that you share your time as volunteers!

My thanks,
Lori
Community & Preventive Care Services
Enhancing Health and Quality of Life
By Carrie Zimmerman, CHES
Wellness education specialist, Community & Preventive Care Services

What does Community and Preventive Care Services (CPCS) have to offer you? CPCS provides many programs including tobacco cessation, physical activity, stress management, healthy aging and more.

**Tobacco Cessation**
Don’t light up! Log on! Join Gundersen Call it Quits support group on Facebook, and you will find mutual support from others who are trying or have already quit using tobacco and nicotine. You’ll also discover helpful tips, strategies, information on cessation products and classes from Gundersen’s certified cessation experts. Simply search for Gundersen Call it Quits to join this monitored, closed online community. For information on Call it Quits and other resources, visit our website at http://www.gundersenhealth.org/health-wellness/be-well/tobacco-cessation/classes-resources/.

**Physical Activity**
Walking trails are located in both La Crosse and Onalaska. Grab a friend and go for a walk while enjoying the fresh air.

Our Wellness Portal houses many of our challenges including Desk to 5K/13.1 and Minutes in Motion in the spring months. To access the Wellness Portal, visit www.gundersenhealth.org/tool and click on “Community login” to log in or create an account. The Wellness Portal can also be used outside of wellness challenges to track physical activity.

Seasons in the Coulee Region hikes take place each spring, summer, winter and fall. For more information, please visit http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events.

**Stress Management**
DeStress is a four-week workshop focusing on finding healthy ways to address life’s everyday stressors. The workshop is offered each fall and spring.

**Healthy Aging**
*Healthy Living with Diabetes.* This is a six-week workshop geared toward adults with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, adults with pre-diabetes, or adults living with or caring for someone who has diabetes. The cost is just $5 to participate in the six-week workshop. *Healthy Aging Conference on November 12, 2018 at the Radisson Hotel, La Crosse.* This conference, focused on Dementia, is geared toward professional caregivers and family caregivers who would like to learn more about this important topic.

**Upcoming Programs**
Spring and summer are filled with fun and exciting programs and events to enrich your life! You can look forward to Minutes in Motion and Desk to 5K/13.1, both found on the Wellness Portal. Other programs and events include Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and our summer Farmer’s Market.

For more information about the programs listed, call Gundersen Community & Preventive Care Services at (608) 775-4717 or email wellness@gundersenhealth.org. For additional resources, visit gundersenhealth.org/wellness.
Welcome Donna Niedfeldt, our new program coordinator

Donna has been with Gundersen since 2002. For the past eight years, she was in leadership in Revenue Cycle over the staff members in Patient Registration in the Hospital, Onalaska Clinic and La Crosse Clinic. Prior to her years at Gundersen, she and her husband were longtime restaurateurs in the La Crosse and West Salem areas. Donna and her husband, Bob, reside in West Salem.

If you asked her to describe herself, she would say she is Jen and Sarah’s mom and step-mom to David, Rick, Beth and Michael. There are five little ones who call her Nana; four of them reside in Fairbanks, AK and one in Coon Valley. She has ten step-grandchildren and seventeen step-great grandchildren, most of who reside in Kansas. She says hers is a wonderfully large, loud and eclectic family.

After a recent battle with breast cancer, which she won, she decided it was time to re-prioritize a few things, and one of the big things was the demand of her time and energy in her previous role. When the role of program coordinator became available, she decided to take a chance and apply. Her favorite part of working at GHS is the people – from our patients and families to all of the people it takes to do all the great work we do for those patients, their families and our communities.

Donna says, “I am thrilled to be able to work in Volunteer Services and continue to serve the organization of which I am so proud to be a part.”

Teen Corner
By Karol Fox, program coordinator

Each February, Volunteer Services hosts our annual Valentine’s Day Carnation Sale, sponsored by Partners of Gundersen, Inc. The fundraiser’s proceeds are designated to the Teen Volunteer Merit Award program. This year, 11 teen volunteers were honored. The recipients are volunteers who have displayed outstanding dedication and commitment, are positive role models and enjoy helping others. A special thank you to Partners of Gundersen, Inc. for their generous financial contribution to the Merit Award program; without their support, we would not have been able to honor the number of teen volunteers that we did. Below are the recipients’ names, school graduated from, future plans and comments.

Aditya Ailiani, graduated from Onalaska H.S., attending University of Wisconsin-Madison. Volunteering helped him decide to pursue a more people-focused career rather than academia.

Halle Burkhalter, graduated from Onalaska H.S., attending University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Volunteering has solidified her desire to work in healthcare. She has met so many wonderful people, and she has been able to give back to her community.

Katie Chafoulias, graduated from Onalaska H.S., attending University of Wisconsin-Madison. Katie says, “I’m so thankful for the opportunities and lessons I’ve gained from my time volunteering at Gundersen. I’ve learned that even the little things in life, like a bouquet of flowers or a simple smile, can make big impacts on people.”

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Volunteer News

Kyle Fossum, graduated from La Crosse Central H.S., attending University of Wisconsin-Madison for engineering. Volunteering influenced his career and major decision (biomedical engineering!).

Kaiya Grass, graduated from Holmen H.S., attending University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Kaiya is striving to become a doctor.

Sarah Hannan, graduated from Bangor H.S., attending St. Mary’s University of Minnesota for pre-med with a Spanish minor. Volunteering has helped Sarah realize that she wants to pursue a career in the health field, serving others.

Maria Martell, graduated from La Crosse Central H.S., attending University of Minnesota-Twin Cities for Biology. Volunteering helped Maria with career decisions and opportunities for career exploration (e.g. Hands on Health day, AHEC summer camp).

Laura Munson, graduated from Onalaska H.S., gap year, working in New Zealand and saving towards college. Laura says, “Throughout high school, volunteering has made me join amazing clubs and meet fantastic people.”

Haley Nedegaard, graduated from La Crosse Central H.S., attending Winona State University. Volunteering gave Haley exposure to the healthcare field.

Ally Robinson, graduated from Onalaska H.S., attending University of Wisconsin-Madison. Ally says, “I loved being in a hospital environment and interacting with people. The opportunities I’ve gained from volunteering have helped me to decide that I would like to major in chemistry and hopefully continue my education at the pharmacy school in UW Madison.”

Treytan Stalsberg, graduated from La Crosse Central H.S., attending Western Technical College in the Architectural Technician program. Treytan said volunteering taught him communication, teamwork and leadership skills.
Greetings,

As we enter the last quarter of 2018, I find myself writing my last offering as the Gundersen Partners Board president. I can’t believe how quickly the past two years have gone. Being in this role has been such an incredible experience! I am filled with gratitude for the amazing support and enthusiastic engagement of the Board of Directors and Partners membership throughout my tenure.

I would like to provide my view of our current ‘state of Partners’ organization.

We are member strong, and have a committed board of directors. Our members support our activities in whatever way they can, allowing us to continue as a strong contributing presence for Gundersen Health System and the community.

Our financial status is viable and healthy. The money raised from Partners’ many successful fundraising activities, especially the Gundersen Partners Gift Shop, has increased in recent years and makes it possible for us to support more projects and activities.

Our connectivity is solid. Being active members of district and state Partners organizations allows us to be proactive advocates for healthcare at the regional, state and national level. Partners provides input at Advocacy Day at the Wisconsin state capital and the Western District and State Partners of WHA meetings. By having a platform for change that is consistent with the state Partners of WHA organization, we become a powerful force that has impact far beyond ourselves. Our legislative liaison provides monthly legislative updates to the board of directors that help us understand the current political climate as it relates to healthcare.

We have a “Culture of Caring” that is incredible. Our involvement in the greater La Crosse area through our many programs undeniably impacts lives every day. Be it through a reading program for local children, Hands on Health day for our teen and high school volunteers, scholarships for children of Gundersen employees seeking healthcare careers, support for the recovery community, or support for programs like Pawsitively for Patients, Place of Grace and St. Clare Mission, and much more – collectively we make a very positive difference. Our ongoing contributions to Gundersen Health System programs and services are aligned with the mission and plan of the organization, and they make a palpable difference for patients and families every day.

Partners’ upcoming fundraising events include walking in the 2018 Steppin’ Out in Pink event, the PRN Footwear Sale, the Simply Sweet Candy Sale, the $6 Merchandise Sale and on December 8, 2018, we will again have our amazing Love Lights Celebration and our annual membership meeting. We have two very inspirational speakers planned for our membership meeting; we highly encourage you to attend the event and be present for the one meeting of the whole we hold each year. Your involvement is so important. There will be more information coming out soon about the annual membership meeting – please watch for it.

Our future is so bright! We look forward to Linda Gillette becoming the president for 2019-2020 and to the energetic leadership of the board of directors as we move ahead. Gundersen Partners’ 70th anniversary is right around the corner in 2020. It is an exciting time for Partners as an organization!

As I close, I want to ask each member of the Gundersen Partners organization to be as involved as you can be. I understand that people are very busy or have limitations, and I highly respect that and understand it. We are grateful for whatever you can contribute.

That said, being part of this organization is truly something special. We need your talents, your energy and your involvement so we can continue all the amazing efforts we are involved in and grow into the future together.

We have fun! Our members have the passion to serve and share time, talent and treasure to make a difference. Invite a friend to join you – and give them the gift of contributing in such a positive and enjoyable way to something important and meaningful.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to each of you for your support; for giving what you can when you can; and for sending your positive energy my way over the past two years. I have felt it deeply and loved it, and I send it back to you with the same joy and gratitude in which you have given it to me.
Students receive scholarships thanks to you and Gundersen Partners

Once again, Gundersen Partners, the Health System Auxiliary, has awarded scholarships in a total of $10,000 to children of Gundersen Health System employees studying medicine or pursuing careers in healthcare-related fields.

“The Gundersen Partners members are extremely honored and privileged to be able to continue the tradition of contributing to the educational success of these students,” says Partners president, Mary Jo Klos. “Each of this year’s recipients is outstanding and deserving of such recognition and support. The scholarship program is such an important institution for Partners, and we are thrilled to be in a position help the latest generation of students attain success in their chosen healthcare field. Congratulations to all of this year’s recipients, and we enthusiastically look ahead to the opportunity of working with them as healthcare professionals in the coming years.”

Recipients were recognized for their character, academic and community excellence. The scholarships are awarded annually prior to the fall semester. The 2018 scholarship recipients are:

Hannah Brekke, daughter of Sandy Brekke. Hannah studies public health policy and administration at University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Rory Campbell, son of Mary Ann Campbell. Rory will be studying biomedical sciences at Marquette University.

Meredith Evenson, daughter of Vance Fishel. Meredith majors in psychology at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Christine Cheung, daughter of Kim-Wah (Victor) Cheung. Christine will major in chemistry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Beau Clemmensen, son of Martha Clemmenson. Beau studies biology/biomedical science at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Haley Nedegaard, daughter of Heidi Nedegaard. Haley will be studying pre-nursing at Winona State University.
Partners News

Morgan Groshek, daughter of Dale Groshek. Morgan will be studying genetics and biology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Nicholas Poellinger, son of Sandra Poellinger. Nicolas is pursuing his medical doctorate at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Emily Laylan, daughter of Barb Laylan. Emily is enrolled in the College of Nursing and Health Science - BSN Nursing Program at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Griffin Wolner, son of Bradlee Wolner. Griffin will study medical biology at the University of South Dakota.

Love Lights 2018

Our lives are enriched by so many people – those who have passed and those who continue to touch our lives every day. The annual Love Lights celebration sponsored by Gundersen Partners is a great way to honor, commemorate or thank these special people.

This year’s Love Lights celebration will take place Monday, Dec. 10, beginning at 2 p.m. in the Main Clinic Lobby on the La Crosse Campus. All are welcome to attend.

Love Lights gifts can be made throughout November and December. Each $5 gift celebrates the life of a loved one or a person who has made a difference in your life. Your $25 gift honors six special people. The names of those honored and remembered will be displayed in a memory book located near the Love Light Tree and published online at www.gundersenhealth.org/partners. When requested, acknowledgement cards are sent to the people being honored or to the family of a loved one.

These gifts ensure Gundersen Partners can continue funding Diversional Activity Kits for patients, Baby Dolls for Restless Souls, Pawsitively for Patients, healthcare advocacy, student scholarships and so much more for Gundersen Health System patients and their families.

Look for information and Love Lights gift forms in early November. Gift forms will also be available online at www.gundersenhealth.org/partners.

Welcome Sheila Erickson – Partners office assistant

Sheila Erickson started as office assistant in Partners and Volunteer Services on June 4, 2018 and supports the board of directors of Gundersen Partners. Sheila is a native of La Crosse, graduating from Logan High School. She has an associate degree from Western Technical College and earned her paralegal certification in 1994. During her career, Sheila was administrative manager for the patent and trademark division of USWest in Denver, Colo.; senior paralegal for Armstrong Allen, PLCC in Memphis, Tenn.; a title insurance examiner and real estate closer for a local title insurance company; and executive director of La Crosse Builders Exchange. During 2017, Sheila volunteered at Gundersen Health System’s inpatient transport services (VTS) and the surgery and procedures waiting area. Sheila can be contacted at (608) 775-3602 or sgericks@gundersenhealth.org.
Calendar of Events

October
4      Blood drive at Onalaska Clinic
4      Partners board meeting
10-11  Simply Sweet Candy Sale,
       Legacy Lower Level

November
1      Partners board meeting
11-12  $6 Merchandise Sale, Legacy
       Lower Level
15-16  $6 Merchandise Sale, Onalaska SSB
22     Thanksgiving - Volunteer Services closed

December
3-5    Blood drive, Legacy Lower Level
10     Love Light Celebration
10     Partners annual membership
       meeting, Rasmus Center
13     Blood drive at Onalaska Clinic
24-25  Merry Christmas - Volunteer Services closed
31     Mandatory Education deadline

January
1      Happy New Year - Volunteer Services closed

Beginning in 2019, the blood drives timeframe is changing. On Mondays, the hours are noon – 5 p.m.; Tuesdays 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; and Wednesdays 8 a.m.-1 p.m. We are hoping to attract more donors by running a later shift (until 5 p.m.) on Mondays.

Save the Date for the 2019 Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation Event
The ICE House (Integrated Center for Education) is reserved on Thursday, April 10, for our annual Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation Event.

Contributors to Volunteer News
Karol Fox
Mary Jo Klos
Donna Niedfeldt
Lori Van Lin
Cindy Zimmerman
Sheila Erickson

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(608) 775-6755

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Volunteer Services
Mission Statement
The Volunteer Services Department provides meaningful experiences for our volunteers – elevating services and programs for our patients and families and the community we serve.