



Celebrating our past to
inspire our future
GUNDERSEN ST. ELIZABETH'S
HOSPITAL AND CLINICS

ST. ELIZABETH'S
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION
A MEMBER OF GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM

Offerings

2023-2024

125 Year Anniversary Highlights



This year marked a significant milestone in our history. It was 125 years ago that the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother established the first hospital outpost in Wabasha. Though much has changed in that time, our mission to provide high-quality healthcare to those in our service area has not.

Throughout 2023, Gundersen St. Elizabeth's has taken time each month to commemorate this anniversary. Some events focused on our staff and facilities, while others turned outward to our communities, as we recognize that without the support of those with whom we share our home, we wouldn't be able to celebrate our longevity today.



In January, we kicked off the festivities with an opening ceremony that featured scrapbooks, photos and other memorabilia detailing St. Elizabeth's history. Scott Rathgaber, MD, CEO of Bellin and Gundersen Health System, spoke at the event, as did hospital administrator Jim Root and senior consultant Tom Crowley.

For February, several of our staff members braved the chilly temperatures to take part in the annual Grumpy Plunge as part of Wabasha's Grumpy Old Men Festival. Proceeds raised at the event supported Great River Homes, Inc., and the Wabasha Rotary Club.

March saw our annual food drive for three area food share programs in our service area. In total, Gundersen St. Elizabeth's employees and Auxiliary members donated 560 pounds of food and \$708 in cash.



In April, as the snow melted and the grass around our grounds reappeared, staff volunteered to clean up around our campus. And as a show of appreciation that morning, everyone was treated to a yogurt parfait.

We marked Healthcare Week in May by organizing games of Bingo that incorporated tidbits about our history, as well as offering daily reflections that included a look back at our past and a vision for our future. Daily prayers were also offered by Deacon Jim, for our staff to continue serving with a gracious love using the gifts God has provided, and our patients, who put their trust in the work we do.



June was a special month as we remembered Sister Gerina Harrer. Sister Gerina passed away in 1996, but Marcia Kjos, former employee in recreational therapy, went to great lengths to preserve the many crafts and treasures that Sister Gerina created over the years. Marcia held three presentations to talk about the items and encouraged those who knew Sister Gerina to share memories of her.

On the final weekend of July, staff proudly represented St. Elizabeth's in the 2023 Wabasha Riverboat Days parade, where we were honored to be named Grand Parade Marshall! We had a great time passing out beachballs and dancing to the music of Uncle Daddy.

August marked our biggest community celebration of the year with our picnic at the hospital. The community response was overwhelming, as we welcomed more than 600 neighbors for a night of food, games, presentations and comradery. Our anniversary was even

featured that evening on the KTTC newscast!

September was a busy month as we took part in the Kellogg Watermelon Days parade. Then we got involved with the two-month-long SeptOberfest celebration in Wabasha by sponsoring Movie Night Under the Bridge.

In October, staff from each department used their creative muscles to decorate a pumpkin that best defines the work they do.

Before the snow flies in November, we'll once again take time to beautify the hospital grounds through an organized clean-up effort.

Finally, to round out our year-long celebration in December, plans are to host a closing ceremony, sharing photos from throughout the year and hearing from hospital leaders.

St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation acknowledges, with deep appreciation, the following individuals, businesses and organizations for their generous giving. Donors are listed in alphabetical order by last name. Benefactors that request anonymity are privately remembered but not publicly recognized.

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St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation Impact Report



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370

Lucille Burrichter
Scholarships were
awarded totaling
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568

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Outpatient Services: Kathy Horn



From the time she was born, and for the birth of her own children, local patient Kathy Horn has been receiving medical care at St. Elizabeth's all her life. Like many patients, her health and wellness needs have varied over the years. But what has remained constant is the same standard of high-quality care she has relied on every step of the way.

Following a cancer diagnosis she received more than three years ago, Kathy most recently utilizes the hospital's outpatient services for routine Foley catheter care. The catheter has become an essential need throughout her cancer treatment journey, and it's a medical device she's quite grateful for.

"It has been a godsend," Horn said. "And with St. Elizabeth's close to home, it is

very convenient and helpful to have the option of going there to have my catheter changed out and maintained."

Kathy meets with a team of nurses every four weeks and says her decades of interaction with St. Elizabeth's staff, whether for catheter care, primary care or emergency services, has consistently been outstanding. She enjoys building a friendly rapport with her care team and appreciates the effort they make to provide a comfortable experience and patient-centered service.

"Everyone always goes out of their way to be positive, professional and kind," Horn said. Kathy feels right at home at St. Elizabeth's, and recent enhancements made to the hospital's outpatient area contribute to its inviting, comforting aesthetic and patient care environment.

Recently, the outpatient area was moved to its own dedicated room on the hospital's main floor, which was

also freshened up with new paint and a new patient chair. Previously, outpatient services were part of a shared space with the Med/Surg unit on the hospital's second floor.

"It's so bright and cheery," Kathy described. "I enjoy the new, remodeled room and brand-new, state-of-the-art equipment."

The outpatient room is used for the following services

- Wound care
- Infusions
- Injections
- Vaccinations
- Catheter changes
- Blood administration
- Suture removal
- Birth control injections

For any outpatient needs and keeping your care close to home, contact your provider to inquire about making an appointment.

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Patient Cardiac Monitoring System goes live, celebrates heart rehab success



Thanks to a generous community and a tireless Foundation, Gundersen St. Elizabeth's added a new, state-of-the-art cardiac monitoring system in its emergency and surgery departments in 2023.

The \$245,000-plus cost was covered entirely by donations from local community groups, as well as fundraising by the St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation.

The 16-piece GE system is used to record a patient's vital signs, EKG readings and other health indicators. Because this unit interfaces with Gundersen's patient records system, all information can be seen at Gundersen La Crosse or other major tertiary centers, in real time as it's entered at the bedside, rather than waiting until a nurse can enter it later. That, in turn, frees up nurses to do more of what they do best – care for patients.

This past May, Larry Anderson and his family celebrated the one-year anniversary of his heart transplant.

Prior to that, the Wabasha resident completed 30 sessions of the cardiac rehab phase two program, and having graduated from that level, he's now in the maintenance phase, attending sessions three days a week at Gundersen St. Elizabeth's, with the goal of slowly but steadily increasing his strength and endurance.

It was a far cry from where he was nine years ago where one day at work, he experienced shortness of breath and weakness as he climbed a flight of stairs. Rather than ignoring his symptoms, he heeded the warning signs, which resulted in a trip to the emergency room and the start of a battle for his life.

From then on, Larry and his doctors searched for medications or procedures that would offer more than simply temporary relief. When they ran out of options, they were left with one final possibility: a heart transplant. But the wait was long, and with 12-18 months to live, his outlook was grim.

"This is when your faith is really put

to the test. I had to trust in God's plan and timing. There was nothing more we could do but pray," Larry says.

Finally, Larry got the call he was praying for, and soon after, he underwent a heart transplant in Rochester. The procedure was successful, but the road to recovery was long. Part of that journey, though, wound back home to Wabasha and St. Elizabeth's, where he and exercise physiologist Brad Ziemer worked for months on his rehabilitation.

"Larry's commitment to stick with the program remained strong throughout his rehab and continues today," Ziemer says. "He has inspired all of us as we witness incredible progress in his overall health."

Larry's story is what inspires Monica Walters, nurse manager of inpatient and emergency services at St. Elizabeth's, to advocate for introducing the best technology available. "For patients, it means they're getting high-quality care locally, close to home," she says. "We're so lucky to have the equipment that we do for a small rural hospital."



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Robot assisting on knee surgery at St. Elizabeth's

David Puetz could no longer manage the pain in his knee following an injury he suffered way back in high school. For years, the 62-year-old Wabasha resident was told he was too young and active for a procedure such as a total knee replacement, so he carried on with treatments that dulled the pain, but never fixed the source of it.

Finally last year, David decided enough was enough. After considering options from hospitals in the Twin Cities, he met with orthopedic surgeon Tom Dudley, MD, at Gundersen St. Elizabeth's Hospital, who examined David's knee and told him he'd be a perfect candidate for knee replacement surgery. To David's good fortune, his surgery in May lined up with the introduction of a new piece of technology at the hospital: CORI.



Gundersen St. Elizabeth's recently began incorporating use of the CORI Surgical System, which features robotics-assisted technology that helps the surgeon plan and perform a knee replacement more efficiently and accurately than traditional methods.

The system creates a customized 3-dimensional model of a patient's knee, and that helps the surgeon in choosing the correct implant size and placement to perfect a patient's movement and function after the procedure. By increasing the accuracy of each step, it increases the likelihood of greater stability in the knee and wider range of motion.

The model also eliminates the need for a CT scan of the knee before surgery, therefore reducing exposure to radiation.

"We think that improving those things will improve patient outcomes," Dr. Dudley says.

Dr. Dudley has been Gundersen St. Elizabeth's orthopedic surgeon for the past two-and-a-half years, and he's performed all the knee surgeries using CORI since the hospital received it in April. The first one happened the same week it arrived,

and he hasn't had a traditional surgery since.

Having a joint replacement at Gundersen St. Elizabeth's provides another opportunity to receive care close to home.

"This robot is a good tool, where the people in Wabasha and surrounding small towns get the same state-of-the-art care as they might at Gundersen in La Crosse, Mayo Clinic or any of the surrounding hospitals," says Dr. Dudley, a Lake City native who returned home after practicing in Alexandria, Minn., for 13 years.

When David learned CORI would aid Dr. Dudley with the knee replacement, he was excited by the prospects of what may result.

"I was excited – I thought this was good," David says. "It'll help my surgeon out, it'll help me out, and I didn't have any reservations at all."

David says his surgery went well, and his entire care team did an excellent job. "It's such a great place because it's not such a big hospital that you get lost in the system," he says. "They all ended up knowing me at one point or another."

David began post-surgery physical therapy, and as he worked through the process, both in consultation with Dr. Dudley and the physical therapist, he was also able to clear out old scar tissue that had built up after his injury years ago. The work resulted in an outcome beyond what even Dr. Dudley could have hoped for.

Eventually, he was dismissed from physical therapy after he was told he made such great strides that their help was no longer needed.

"It feels very good," he says. "When I walk out the door at work, I'm not limping anymore."

Thankfully, this part of Dr. Dudley's job just became a little easier with CORI's help. Though it's a new possibility at Gundersen St. Elizabeth's, it's become common in larger hospitals. In that way, robotic knee surgery is now the standard bearer, and Dr. Dudley is thankful to have the tool at his disposal.

"I think we have the opportunity to provide that kind of care, and what would be considered the standard of care, in our rural service area," he says, adding that CORI could be used for other types of surgery in the future.

David is thankful it was an option for him. "I was so happy that I went to Gundersen St. Elizabeth's," he says. "When I got done, I thought, 'What a difference that made.'"

Commitment to Mental Health



Allison Beito, MD

In 2022, Wabasha County’s Mental Health Task Force commissioned a community health needs assessment that focused on the needs of its residents. Based on the findings, Gundersen St. Elizabeth’s Hospital and Clinics, a partner with the county, and community partners will focus on priority health needs: mental health and senior health.

As a partner in this work, Gundersen St. Elizabeth’s is committed to improving the wellbeing of its neighbors by tailoring resources to address the growing needs in this area. In that spirit, the hospital recently welcomed Allison Beito, MD, a behavioral health provider on the primary care team who has a special interest in geriatric psychiatry and is especially engaged in caring for patients living with neurogenerative disorders, those living in long-term care settings and patients experiencing comorbid medical illnesses.

“I enjoy collaborating with patients and their families, including those living with mood and anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders and personality disorders,” Dr. Beito says. “This organization has a big heart. I want to be part of the mission of providing the best and most comprehensive care close to home.”

Dr. Beito received her medical degree from the university of Kansas School of Medicine. She graduated from Mayo Clinic’s Psychiatry Residency program and, in June, completed Mayo Clinic’s Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship. Before pursuing a career in healthcare, she worked in engineering for the United States Coast Guard.

“I really missed the emphasis on personal connection in my daily work,” Dr. Beito says. “Medicine, and psychiatry in particular, feels like the perfect fit.”

There are many community partners that make up the county’s mental health committee, including Gundersen St. Elizabeth’s, which plays a vital role by providing emergency services and behavioral health services in primary care, starting with Dr. Beito, psychiatry, and Mindy Wise, licensed clinical social worker.

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Donor Spotlight: Paul Busch

For Paul Busch, donating to St. Elizabeth's Community Development Foundation holds more significance than just supporting local giving efforts—it's about the impact it has on St. Elizabeth's entire service area and beyond.

"Being a donor is so important to me," Busch emphasized. "The hospital is vibrant and well-equipped with the help of the Foundation's support. St. Elizabeth's is vital to the community and surrounding areas."

Paul, who is a longtime resident of Wabasha and owner of a local car dealership, has been connected to St. Elizabeth's all his life for various medical needs and care for members of his family.

Paul's son had brain cancer as a child and walking through the medical journey together as a family was eye-opening to the impact and importance of access to a strong local health system.

He particularly appreciates the 'small town' feel of his care experiences.

"You're not just a number at St. Elizabeth's—you're a person," Busch said. "Everyone knows you by first name. That kind of personal connection is rare, and it completely transforms the patient experience."

Paul was honored to have served on the hospital's Board of Directors for nine years. He was then appointed to the Foundation's Board of Directors in 2002 and currently serves as chair of the board.

He leads by example as a major donor for all the Foundation's capital campaigns and has a hand in the strategic planning for the use of funds raised. According to Tom Crowley, senior executive consultant and Foundation board member, "Paul is an outstanding leader and supporter of the Foundation. He's always the first to show his commitment to providing quality health care to the communities we serve."

“Do your giving while you're living, so you're knowing where it's going.”

Paul has a meaningful motto he lives by, which inspires his drive to give and help lead others on the same path: "Do your giving while you're living, so you're knowing where it's going."

"It's beneficial to pick and choose where your money will go and actually witness the difference it makes," Busch said. "By supporting St. Elizabeth's, it has supported us and the community in return."

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- James D. (Jake) Abbott
- James E. (Jim) Abbott
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- Shirley Anderson
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- Karen Mary Arens
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- Roberta Carrels
- Jim Christoffer
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- Lyle Cruser
- Lester & Marcella Culbertson
- Marjorie Deming
- Bernard & Ethel Denk
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- Robert & Lucille Dick
- Alfred John Paul Drenckhahn
- Janice Earney
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- Edwin Graner
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- Gary Gusa
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- Robert & Wilhemine Hanson
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- Sharon Helmueller
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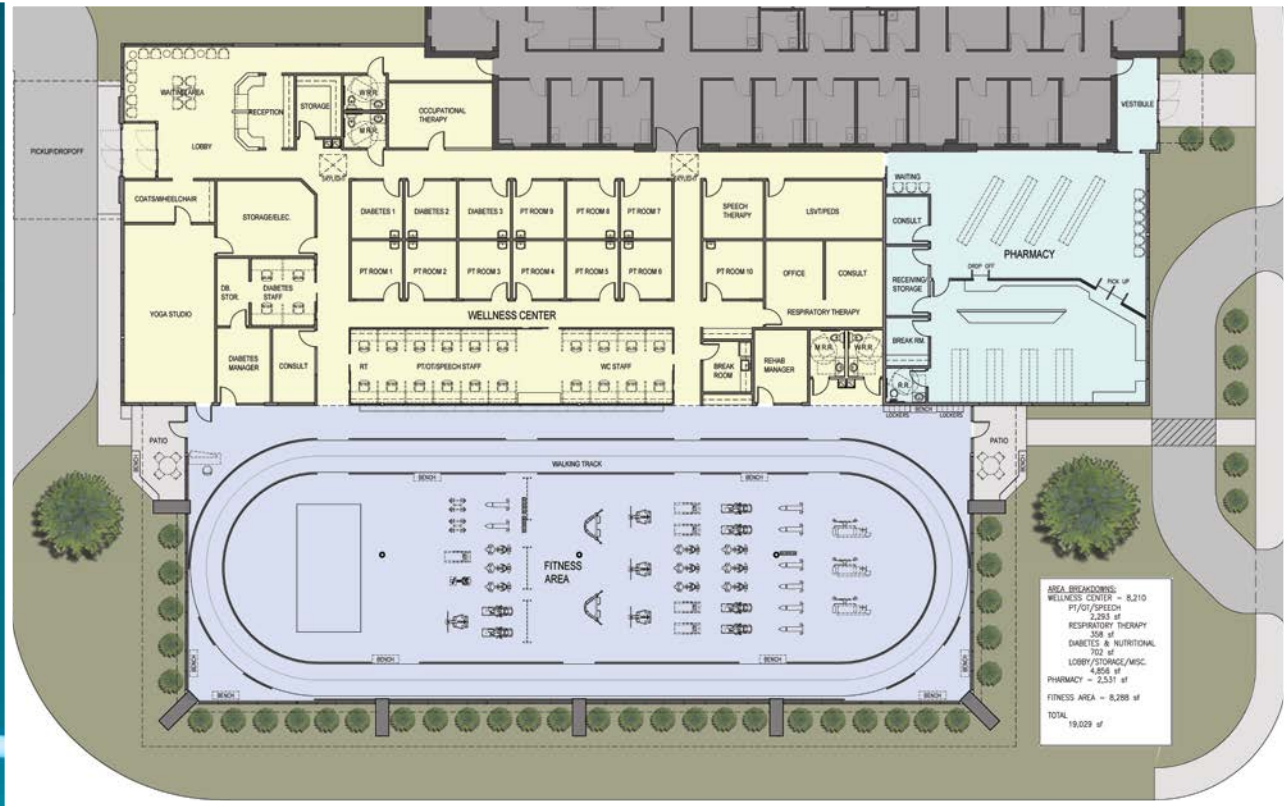
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Doctor's Day, March 30, honors physicians for their ability to comfort and heal through unsurpassed skill and dedication. Few professions in the world require the constant commitment and compassion that is necessary of doctors every workday of their lives. In recognition of its physicians on Doctor's Day, Gundersen Health System donated \$21,000 to 38 food pantries including Wabasha Area Food Shelf, Plainview Elgin Area Food Shelf and Alma Food Pantry.

- | | | | |
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Proceeds from this annual appeal will benefit the construction of a progressive rehabilitation and wellness center and retail pharmacy expansion.



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