



Northwestern District

Fall 2020 Newsletter

Message from the Northwestern District Chair

Ginny Bosse - Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary, Park Falls

Fall is here and many of the beautiful fall leaves have already come down. Those strewn across our yards and driveways may get raked up and burned or added to compost heaps. For the last 10 years, I hadn't mowed or raked at all, but when COVID19 kept me home this spring, the Round Tuit I received years ago finally worked! It took weeks of raking and hauling the leaves in a collapsible round plastic bin to a pit on my extra lot to clean up just the small opening in the woods that my home sits in. I don't mow either, so won't rake again until next spring, when, I hope, it will be easier than it was this spring, and when, I also hope, our lives will be less constricted by the Corona virus.

Fall also brings two major events for our members. The first is coming up fast: the virtual Annual Meeting of the Partners of WHA on Wednesday, October 7th, starting at 9:00 a.m. We filled all the allotted Delegate spots as follows:

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Thank you all so much for your willingness to serve!

The second big event is the Zoom 2020 Fall Northwestern District Meeting hosted by Ashland beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 27th. PLEASE SAVE THE DATE! The Agenda will include approval of the Minutes of last fall's NW District meeting, the financial report to date, and the proposed 2021 Budget. Election of Officers for 2020-2022 will be held. Special Guest Partners of WHA President Jan Molaska

will address our group and install our new officers. President-Elect Peg Larson will also address our group as a Special Guest. Watch for printed copies of all the meeting documents via USPS mail, which will be mailed and on their way to you by the 17th. Be sure to RSVP your attendees' names, phone numbers and email addresses so that the meeting administrator can send the Zoom link and phone number for those joining only by phone.

Beth Burnham and Bev Lazar will be our new Northwestern District Co-Chairs. Two years ago, when the only candidates were me for District Chair and Linda Fish for Treasurer, I did a bit of virtual arm-twisting and got Linda to agree to serve as Secretary/Treasurer – for which I was extremely grateful! In thanks for her now 2 ½ years in the double office, I offered to be the Secretary. After several extremely long nanoseconds, she took me up on my offer. For the first time since August 2016, the Northwestern District will have four officers!

All who are willing to serve deserve huge thank yous! **Thank you, thank you, thank you!**

The Partners Board of Directors fall meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 1st. WHA Liaison to Partners Leigh Ann Larson, who had been on the job for one year and nine weeks reported on WHA. It's no surprise that the focus is COVID 19 and the science of slowing the spread. With Wisconsin now among the leading states for new cases, Wisconsin hospitals are stressed. All in-person events have been cancelled, and major events for next year are being planned virtually. There are daily virtual meetings, including advocacy for WI's hospitals through meetings with the Governor's office and the Department of Health and Human Services. One of the focuses is education. A series of Public Service Announcements that include the names of local hospitals have been created and distributed to air locally. More education events than ever before are being created. The one or two webinars held each week are well attended. As for the future, 2021 will not be back to normal. It "new normal" will include lots of virtual education pieces and combinations of in-person and virtual.

The Strategic Planning Committee has created a new "Leadership Tool Kit". The theme for the 2021 Convention has not yet been chosen. It will, however, be announced during the October 7th Annual Meeting. Three applications for WAVE Awards were received and will be kept for consideration in 2021. Peg said that the requirement of at least a one year history of the program will be waived. There may be a Public Policy category added next year. Some work still needs to be done on the report forms, as the levels don't match up completely. Sharon Scott is working on a retention schedule for Partners records. A discussion was held on the value of paper copies of the Leadership Handbook. A motion was made by Southern District Chair Judy Jaggard and seconded by West Central District Chair John Tully to do away with paper copies of the Leadership Handbook and turquoise binders. Motion carried. Note: This does not mean they can't be used. If local leaders want to use them, they certainly may. Personally, I'd rather read a paper copy than one on a computer screen. I plan to turn over the District Chair and District Chair-Elect binders to Beth and Bev. I also took a couple of extra ones that were being given away a couple of years ago at the Board meeting in Madison and have been updating them along with the official one received, so I will be keeping one for myself, too.

Northwestern District MEMBERS in "Reaching Out"

Since the last time the Northwestern District met together, a number of our MEMBERS have been highlighted in the *Around the State* section of the Partners newsletter. In the November 2019 edition, Essentia Health St. Mary's Hospital Auxiliary in Superior reported activities including a Pop Up book and popcorn sale in June and an Almost Everything is \$6 Sale in August, making \$2281. In the May 2020 edition, the Partners of Marshfield Medical Center – Ladysmith's purchase and installation of a ramp and handicap swing in Memorial Park was featured. The ramp and safety walls on the swing allow a wheelchair-bound person the joys of a swing. The same edition included a report of the Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary of Park Falls' donation of a Mindray portable ultrasound machine. A photo of the presentation of a check for \$47,551 to now-retired CAO Jim Braun at the January FHA Annual Meeting accompanied the story. In the August 2020 issue, two groups were highlighted. At the March 10th meeting of the Partners of Marshfield Medical Center – Ladysmith, which was their last meeting since the beginning of the pandemic, a "Hello Wisconsin" photo was taken of some of the Partners in attendance. The photo aired on WEAR TV Channel 13 in Eau Claire. The Hayward Hospital

Auxiliary reported that, during Hospital and Senior Care Appreciation Week, 250 Dilly Bars and 275 certificates for Dilly Bars were purchased from their local Dairy Queen, which also donated 275 \$5 gift cards. All were distributed to onsite staff, residents, and tenants.



Message from the Northwestern District PPE Chair

Ginny Bosse - Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary, Park Falls

Election Day 2020 is Tuesday, November 3rd, less than a month away. Every election cycle we all hear that “this is the most important election of our lifetime!” After years of considering the claim a ridiculous hyperbole, I changed my thinking. Because each election determines the direction of our future, it *becomes* the most important election!

Voting in an election is often described as a right and a privilege. I think it is also a duty of citizenship! Historically the U.S. has trailed most developed countries in voter turnout. In the 2016 Presidential election, less than 56% of eligible voters cast their ballots. In the 2018 midterm elections, just over 50% voted, the first time since 1978 that even the 50% mark had been reached.

Voting is an important part of advocacy. All of us have issues we care about to differing degrees, and the top two for me are accessible healthcare for every person and a free public education for every child. Every one of us should talk with people about what we and what they believe in, but we should also ask people about their plans to vote. Encourage them and help them to vote! Tell them about and, if needed, help them access resources like www.myvote.wi.gov. Follow through with help in using the site to find out where their local polling place is, whether or not they are registered to vote, and how to register if they are not, how request, fill out and return an absentee ballot if that is their choice, and how they can get to their polling place if that’s their choice. The National Education Association-Retired has adopted a Get 10 for Public Ed strategy, where each member is asked to have conversations with 10 people about the importance of voting, and in turn asking each of those 10 to reach an additional 10. A similar Get 10 for Healthcare would not be a bad idea!

Message from the Northwestern District CHE Chair

Beth Burnham - Volunteer Partners of Spooner Health

Hi everyone. I hope that you are all staying safe and healthy. The topic of mental health has never been more timely than now as the pandemic continues to spread in this country. All of us in some way are being impacted either personally or socially by this virus. September was Suicide Prevention month and this is a huge issue that affects young and old no matter gender, ethnicity or social status. As we have had to be more distant from family and friends, those who already were suffering from depression felt their symptoms magnified and much more difficult to cope with. It is therefore crucial that we are more aware of anyone that we know, be it friend or family member, who may be struggling and reach out to them. It can be a call or a small note of encouragement that they are not alone. Right now we could all use some of that. Our Partners Community Health state chair Sherry Jelic has shared with me and other district CHE chairs some great tools to keep us healthy in mind and body and I pass them along to you now since we cannot be together yet in person. These suggestions are meant to help us all navigate these troubled waters.

1- Rest- This sounds simple but is so important that a good nights sleep can help us to face any daily challenges that we may have.

2- Exercise be it a walk or a bicycle ride or even yoga. This is so vital to lower our stress level as well as feelings of anxiety plus being outside as long as the weather allows can boost your immune system and great for the lungs. Just do it safely.

3- Healthy diet. Just trying to increase your intake of fruits and veggies can be a positive step to fight of illness. Believe me this is not easy as I have had my own issues with too much ice cream to feed my stress. Keep trying but don't forget to be nice to yourself too.

4- Get creative during this time of staying closer to home. Arrange to meet with a small group of friends if possible and have lunch. I invested in a Facebook Portal so that I could see our grankids even if we could not physically visit. It has been great therapy for all of us. Some people have returned to jigsaw puzzles and rediscovering books.

5- Practice gratitude. In these times it is more important than ever to give thanks for what we do have, family, friends, our health, a safe space to inhabit. I lost my brother at the start of this year, and I am so grateful that our family was able to celebrate his life and give him a joyous sendoff. Cherish those you love now.

Final thoughts: We are all in this same big boat and doing the best we can. Please stay safe and healthy, and of course WEAR YOUR MASK!

Messages from our Presidents:

Linda Fish - Ashland

As of March 11, the Partners of Memorial Medical Center in Ashland began shutting down. The office was basically closed, and the Information Desk was not staffed. Our Lifeline Program Manager had barely returned after maternity leave, the Thrift Shop closed on March 18 because an end of season sale was scheduled for March 17 and had been posted in the shop. The Gift Shop was closed a week later. Due to some water damage from work on apartments above the Thrift Shop we lost a substantial amount of clothing. The manager took the opportunity to have some painting and rearranging done. Lifeline subscriber care was modified but still ongoing. In early June, the Thrift Shop was reopened for three days a week staffed by the Thrift Shop and Gift Shop managers. In mid-July, volunteers who chose to returned to work in the Thrift Shop. The Gift Shop was opened as a concession stand with only the manager in the shop. Both shops are now closed. The Thrift Shop will reopen on October 12 if deemed safe to do so. The Gift Shop is questionable at this time due to increased COVID. The week of October 4-10 Partners will have a virtual Nutman Sale. Depending on how that works out we are considering a Linen Sale in November. The annual Cookie Walk will be modified, but will be held.

Partners did not meet between March 11 and September 9. Our 50th year banquet was not held. We were able to meet in a church for our September Board meeting and will do so for our November and December Board meetings also. In addition, we will prepackage cookies for the Cookie Walk at the church the day before the sale.

Partners of MMC had a year of celebration for our 50th year. Unfortunately only one newspaper article was printed. Our June 12 banquet became a slide show on the MMC website, and small gifts that had been purchased for banquet attendees were mailed. Two of the past CEOs responded in writing for a newsletter and MMC had a nice congratulatory ad in the Ashland Daily Press and Bottom Line News and Views. Our Marketing and Communications Department put together a slide show which is on the MMC website.

Fortunately we had most of the details in place for our New Beginning. As of January 1, Partners of



MMC will cease to be an independent organization and will become part of the MMC family. The Board of Directors will be replaced by a Volunteer Coordinator and an Advisory Board. Partners began two years before the hospital opened.

We had a very sad month between May 22 and June 20. Fran Zepczyk, our board Program Chair, and a Life Member who helped Partners get started both ended their earthly volunteer days on May 22. On June 20, Past Co-President Kay Minten succumbed. I don't recall ever losing three members so close together.

Denise Williams - Hayward

When all volunteer and Partners of Hayward Area Memorial Hospital & Waters Edge activities were stopped on March 13, it didn't take long for our members to become discontent with not being able to do something to help the hospital we represent and love. We brainstormed and established a "Partners Helping Partners" fund to financially and emotionally support staff who were working so hard during the pandemic and also to support the residents and tenants who were suddenly living a very isolated life. Listed below is a list of Partners Helping Partners projects we supported financially and were implemented internally by hospital staff.

Partners Helping Partners

- **Facebook Worker Recognition:** "They stayed at work for us – please stay at home for them." Encouraged Partners members to send in their photo with this sign on Facebook.
- Encouraged members to **send notes or call** shut-ins
- **Home sewn masks**
- **Gift Shop donated:** Easter and birthday cards, and Giggle Pills to staff in hospital and Water's Edge
- **Activity Boxes** for WE Tenants and Residents: Easter candy, color and activity books, puzzles, workbooks, nail polish, crayons and markers
- **Cake Pops** from "Caken Me Crazy" for hospital staff and WE residents/tenants
- **Dairy Queen:** Purchased 250 Dilly Bars, purchased 275 Dilly Bar coupons, and DQ--donated 275 - \$5.00 food coupons. Food coupons have been used for recognition to staff for above and beyond, such as when everyone worked extra when first Covid case was recognized in Care Center.
- **Art Supplies for Care Center:** beads and materials to make friendship bracelets and a dog leash for visiting therapy dog
- **Gift Shop Candy donation:** Marketing made "Monday candy bags" for staff
- **July 4th:** Decorated the grounds at Water's Edge with holiday decorations
- **Shoppers** for WE Tenants: Weekly shoppers for grocery items for shut-ins
- **Baked goods** for Independent Living Tenants
- **"Chamber Cash":** In September, Partners gave out 420 individual \$20.00 gift certificate for all Hospital/Water's Edge employees

Bev Lazar - Ladysmith

Partners of Marshfield Medical Center- Ladysmith meetings have been adjourned since March 2020. We have continued to get together via phone or email. In August, we put up a display board in our Rusk County Chamber office in Ladysmith. This board outlined what the Partners do for the hospital and for the community. The board stays in place for one month.

In September, Joe Bay and I did the "TALK SHOW" for WLDY/WJBL radio station in Ladysmith. The show airs every Tuesday and Thursday morning on our local radio station. Our message to the public: that we are still in existence and will be back when the virus is over. The Covid-19 has been hard on all of us. We furnished candy snacks on one day and then cookies on another time for the employees of the hospital. Some of the Partners have been sewing masks for the hospital and for the schools in this area.

One of the nicest things that was done is making phone calls to people that are shut-ins. It was hard enough for those of us that still have family that we live with, but for those that were all alone, I cannot imagine how the time would lag. It has been a trying time for everyone, but with a smile we are trying to help any way we allowed to. Please stay safe, and stay healthy.

Marilee Lealos and Amy Hulbert - Park Falls

The Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary in Park Falls has had one board meeting since last March. Our Thrift Shop was open two days a week for about three weeks in July, but closed again when our Price County positive COVID numbers started to increase. All of our volunteers are elderly and our major objective is to keep them healthy. Many of our volunteers continue to work in the closed Thrift Shop, pricing and putting out merchandise with hopes that it will reopen soon. Our Scholarship Committee met and awarded \$1,000 scholarships to six students in health care fields. As of September 1st, the hospital is now Marshfield Medical Center – Park Falls. Flambeau Hospital's Director of Finance Jim Braun was chosen to replace 2015 Best of the Best Award winner Dave Grundstrom as CAO after his retirement in December 2015. After five years as CAO and working into his 70s, Jim decided to retire. His last day was September 4th. It's too bad we didn't nominate him for the Best of the Best Award before he retired! So, in addition to a new sign for the Thrift Shop, revisions of our Bylaws, and numerous other housekeeping tasks, we'll need to create personal and organizational relationships with the new CAO and, possibly, other new hospital personnel. Co-President Amy Hulbert (in person) and Thrift Shop Chair Jean Nelson (by phone) met with the temporary CAO this past week.

Allison Posso - Spooner

Volunteer Partners of Spooner Health have not been volunteering in the hospital and the Gift Shop has been closed. I did hold a Gift Shop Sale for Spooner Health employees on June 16th. They made 15 minute appointments. It went very well. We were going to have, for employees only, a Gift Shop Christmas in October in the Classroom. With the increase in COVID in our area this has been postponed. I will probably just get the shop changed out and do several appointment days in the next 3 months just to move some inventory. We are having a No-Bake Bake Sale fundraiser during the week of October 12th.

We will also be having a virtual Love Light Ceremony with a recorded speaker. Our CEO will read the names with instrumental Christmas music in the background, and then the tree will be lighted. People will be able to access the recording via the internet after December 7th. We are going to add with our White Light sponsorship that people can designate it in honor of someone or in honor of an essential worker group. I think it will be a positive that people can access the recording more than once.

Patti Francisco - Superior

The hospital closed the gift and coffee shops as of March 18th due to COVID19. No fundraisers have been held and no volunteering can be done until further notice from the hospital.

Thanks for all you do!

Ginny

