

# Volunteer CONNECTION

**Spring 2022**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Timely News - PG. 2 & 3

Volunteer Spotlight - PG. 4

MHV News - PG.5

Volunteer Opportunities - PG.6

Health Watch - PG. 7

New Volunteers & Patient Experience - PG. 8

Healthcare Advocacy - PG. 9

Volunteers in Action - PG.10

Upcoming Calendar of Events - PG.11



"Alone we can do so little, together so much" -Helen Keller  
This photo taken by Suzanne Rose is hands of many volunteers at Ascension Mercy Hospital

### **National Volunteer Week: April 17 – 23, 2022**

Ascension Mercy Hospital began reintroducing volunteers back into various assignment areas in July of 2021. Most of our volunteer areas are back up and running. Something to be thankful for during national volunteer week this year!

For those of you who have returned thank you for your flexibility, adjusting to any changes that have taken place. Thank you to those willing to try new areas and to those still waiting patiently to return. We did lose several volunteers over the past two years for various reasons. If you have a friend or two to send our way, it would be greatly appreciated.

Even during the period where we didn't have volunteers on site, Mercy volunteers were busy making items at home (baby hats, blankets, masks, etc.) to donate to our patients. Last fiscal year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 forty-nine volunteers gave nearly 12,000 hours of service. This fiscal year, now that volunteers are back, volunteers have given over 11,000 hours already. It is great to see volunteers back in our facility supporting our patients, visitors and staff. Volunteers are an essential part of Ascension Mercy's positive culture.

Ascension has COVID-19 restrictions in place limiting large group activities so the volunteer services department is unable to host a volunteer recognition event again this year for Volunteer Week. We do have a gift for volunteers to stop into the volunteer office to pick up during the week. We look forward to seeing you!

Amy Brownson, Manager  
Volunteer Services

# Timely News

## Spencer Gassere - MHV & Wilma Ritsema Scholarship Recipient

Congratulations to Spencer Gassere, this year's recipient of the \$500 MHV and the \$500 Wilma Ritsema Volunteer Scholarships. The MHV scholarship is funded through a Mercy Health Foundation endowment established by the Mercy Hospital Volunteers (MHV). Al Ritsema created the Wilma Ritsema fund within the Mercy Health Foundation to annually award a student in honor of his wife, Wilma. Al and Wilma were both very active volunteers at Mercy.

The Criteria for these scholarships are that the awardee is to be a high school graduating senior and a Mercy Hospital Volunteer, in good standing, with a high amount of volunteer hours. The student must also be planning to attend a technical school or university.

Spencer started volunteering at Ascension Mercy Hospital in 2018 wanting to gain experience in the medical field. Over the years he has dedicated his hours of service in ER Reception, Outpatient Testing, and the Pharmacy. While volunteering, Spencer has enjoyed working with patients and professionals within the hospital. Outside of volunteering, he is also active on the Baseball team, works at Big Apple Bagels, and likes to read and spend time with friends.

When asked what advice he had for future volunteers, Spencer stated "Try something you're not sure about" and "No one is just a volunteer." Although Spencer is not going into the medical field he cherishes his time here at Mercy volunteering and all of the experience he gained.

Spencer is graduating from Oshkosh North High School and will continue his education at Miami University. He plans to pursue a degree in Mathematics. Spencer will also be joining the Naval ROTC program to become an Officer. Spencer would like to extend his gratitude to both the Ascension Mercy Foundation and the Mercy Hospital Volunteers, for giving him these scholarships to support his future education. Spencer would also like to extend a huge thank you particularly to the Ritsema family.

Kristal Coats  
Gift Shop and  
Fundraising Coordinator



Spencer Gassere



John Vanden Heuvel

## John Vanden Heuvel - Natalie Bolin Scholarship Recipient

Congratulations to John Vanden Heuvel as this year's recipient of the \$1,000 Natalie Kate Bolin Scholarship. The Natalie Kate Bolin Mercy Student Volunteer Scholarship Award was created by the family of Natalie Kate Bolin, a former Mercy student volunteer, in memory of her beautiful spirit and life. The Scholarship is administered by the Mercy Health Foundation. Criteria for this scholarship are the awardee is to be an Oshkosh West High School graduating senior and a Mercy Hospital Volunteer, in good standing, with the highest amount of volunteer hours. The student must also be planning to attend a technical school or university.

As an Oshkosh West High School student, John founded the peer mentoring program. He also enjoys being a part of the football team, tutoring, and the outdoors. Currently he volunteers at Ascension Mercy Hospital in the ER Reception area. While John applied to volunteer back in 2020, Covid restrictions with the volunteer program, made it unable to onboard and start as a volunteer until this past year. Even with a two year wait, John still chose to volunteer at Mercy Hospital because he is dedicated to helping others and also wants to gain experience within the medical field.

When asked what advice he had for future volunteers, John said "never be afraid to ask questions as the safety and well-being of patients are at risk, and don't be afraid to fail". John stated that knowing this helped him learn and grow quickly in his role as a volunteer. This is also advice that John will take with him into other situations as well.

Although John has not committed to a specific University, he does plan to major in the Neurosciences field and minor in statistics at either Marquette or Purdue University. John would like to extend his gratitude to the Ascension Mercy Foundation and particularly the Natalie Bolin family, for giving him this scholarship to support his future education.

Kristal Coats





# Volunteer Spotlight Sister Act – Cheryl Curtin & Mimi Adams

Cheryl & Mimi are both retired registered nurses and sisters who volunteer at Ascension Mercy Hospital in the Gift Shop. Mimi began volunteering in December 2021 and she recruited Cheryl to join in January 2022. Together they enjoy volunteering in the Gift Shop and especially like to keep the seasonal displays up to date. They prefer gardening, traveling, golfing, and spending time with family and friends.

When asked what words they would use to describe themselves, Cheryl chose relationship-oriented and adventurous, while Mimi chose ambitious and sociable. Both sisters chose to describe themselves as compassionate and that is most shown through their volunteer work.

Not only do these sisters give of their time with us, they also volunteer outside of the Hospital. Cheryl has volunteered with the Red Cross for their Disaster Action Team and Mimi currently volunteers with the Make a Wish Foundation. They also actively volunteer at their local church, assembling the fresh lily cross for Easter Sunday and also helping with the Food Basket project during the Christmas holiday season. Mimi & Cheryl's favorite part about volunteering is giving back and making a positive impact within the community.

One piece of advice that this sister act wants everyone to know is: "Volunteering kindles happiness, satisfaction and feelings of accomplishment knowing you're doing good for others and the community. Passion and positivity for helping others is a must".

Kristal Coats



Cheryl and Mimi in the Gift Shop



Ascension Mercy newborn modeling the new sleep sacks donated by the MHV

## Geranium & Plant Sale

After a two-year hiatus the MHV is excited to be bringing back our popular Geranium and Plant Sale on **Wednesday, May 11 and Thursday, May 12 from 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM**. Beautiful quality plants are being grown especially for us by Hrnak's Flowerland.

To pre order, pick up a form in the Gift Shop or by the volunteer sign in compute, or stop in on the days of the sale to purchase. Look for the tent on the corner of Oakwood and Ninth.

## From the MHV Chair

As we welcome and enjoy the freshness and sunshine of the coming spring days, I want to share with you some news from our Advisory Board:

It has been my pleasure to serve as your Chairperson these past 4 years. Thank you for your help and support, especially during the long COVID shutdown. Our new slate of Officers that you will be voting on soon for the 2022-2024 fiscal year are:

Chairperson - Sue Boerschinger

Vice-Chairperson - Sue Knobloch

Secretary - Lisa Peters

Treasurer - Debbie Seekings

If you would like to propose other candidates, please let me know. Please thank our returning officers and a big welcome and thank you to our newest member, Lisa Peters. Also THANK YOU to all of you who donated to the "Bakeless Bake Sale" to benefit the Michael D. Wachtel Cancer Center right here at Mercy. We raised \$2,030; a new high for our "bakeless" fund raiser. Also, in fiscal year 2021 we donated \$2,575 to the Mercy Health Foundation for the purchase of 280 Ascension branded newborn sleep sacks. See the adorable photo on this page for an example.

We always need more volunteers. During COVID we lost quite a few and need your help to recruit. If you know of someone you think would be interested, please ask them. Share your experiences and the joy you receive from helping others. Have them contact Volunteer Services for an application or to answer any questions they may have. Finally, thank you again for allowing me to get to know you and to serve you; I'll see you around the halls of Mercy. God's Blessings to all of you.

June Wiechman, Chairman  
Mercy Hospital Volunteer (MHV) Advisory Board

# Volunteer Opportunities

Summer is approaching and now is the time to encourage **everyone** including students to apply for year-round volunteer opportunities at Mercy. Volunteering can help students develop leadership skills, gain self-confidence and learn new roles. Students who serve can find mentors, career interests, boost their resumes, and improve their chances of being accepted into competitive colleges. Here are some of the many areas where we are looking for volunteer support:

Your friendly smile and knowledge would be appreciated by our patients and visitors at the **Reception Desk, Information Desk or Oakwood Desk** to offer a kind word of greeting or help patients find their destination. Duties may also include computer entry and transport of patients in wheelchairs. Each area has unique benefits and responsibilities.

If you are looking to help transport patients to their appointment, our **Outpatient Testing** department would be the perfect fit for you. Duties include transporting patients to the correct radiology department for their exam, restocking supplies as needed, and greeting visitors.

Weekend and Evening opportunities are available in the **ER Reception** and the **ER Department**. Duties may include collecting patient demographic data for registration, restocking, maintaining a clean waiting room, running errands, and cleaning rooms. For more information, please contact Ascension Mercy Volunteer Services at 223-0225 or apply online at [www.ascension.org/ascensionmercyvolunteer](http://www.ascension.org/ascensionmercyvolunteer)

Amy Brownson



Earl D. at the Information Desk



# Health Watch

## Six Healthy Reasons to Love Spring

Goodbye long winter! Birds are chirping. Flowers are blooming. When spring hits, it's hard to feel down in the dumps. Add longer days and the return of short sleeves to the mix, and you just might find yourself wishing that spring would last forever. The good news is that all the things we love about spring are surprisingly good for us!

1. **Extra Daylight.** Spring forward for daylight savings time feels rough the day after, but once you're recovered from a night or two of sleep deprivation the benefits are far reaching. In addition to giving us more time to spend outdoors and serving as a natural mood booster, that extra hour of daylight prevents automobile accidents (Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy) because daylight provides better visibility for motorists.
2. **A Healthier Home.** During warmer weather, open your windows and let the sunshine in while you spring clean, declutter, and organize your home. A little elbow grease can burn calories! A 150-pound person can burn 133 calories in 30 minutes of vigorous exercise (My-Calorie-Counter-app.aspx).
3. **A Spring-cleaned Diet.** Take advantage of fresh spring produce. Peas, asparagus, kale and rhubarb are just a few fresh foods that reach their peak during spring.
4. **Outdoor Exercise.** Get outside! Whether it's an after-dinner walk, an adult rec league, or early-morning run, longer days and moderate temperatures are perfect reasons to take your workout outside.
5. **No More Winter Skin.** Gone are freezing temps and harsh winds that wreak havoc on your skin. It can be tempting to skip moisturizing once you no longer feel like you need it but remember that sun protection with a daily SPF of at least 15 is essential year-round.
6. **Spring Break!** Whether spring vacation means a beachside getaway or a relaxing staycation, taking time off at the end of winter has definite health benefits. University of Pittsburgh researchers confirmed that leisure activities, whether at home or away can reduce risks for diseases such as breast cancer and cardiovascular disease as well as help manage stress long- term.

Excerpted from <http://www.everydayhealth.com/healthy-living/0320/healthy-reasons-to-love-spring.aspx>

Laura Hensel, Coordinator  
Volunteer Services



# Welcome New Volunteers!

12/1/21 – 3/31/2022

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Mimi Adam	Natalie Binder	Lisa Collins	Cheryl Curtain	Annette Drexler
Bob Fenrich	Bev Hoffman	Marcia McDermott	Mary Morelli	Lisa Peters
Sophie Polley	Alyssa Prothero	Lisa Steffens	John VanDen Heuvel	

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## Patient Experience

### What is Customer Experience in Health Care?

The Hippocratic Oath sets a precedent for patient experience: the patients' needs rise above all else. Yet, with a shifting attitude from the patient's end, one that favors *choice* in their healthcare options, and the rising healthcare consumerism, healthcare practices are focusing on the patient experience from a different lens, *customer experience*. *Patient-consumers* are searching for the optimal experience. And what do patients want? High-quality care, professional service, and value for their money. The expectations of customers in healthcare have undergone a significant change. Now, customers expect:

- **Personalized care** – Healthcare consumers expect care that is centered around their specific needs
- **Simple and streamlined process** – Patients don't want to have to worry about how information gets from one place to another, thus the internal workings of data exchange shouldn't impact their care
- **Limited wait times** – Consumers don't want to spend hours waiting in an office for an appointment. Timeliness is key to a good customer experience.
- **Transparency** – Healthcare consumers want transparent doctor-to-patient communication. This transparency extends from their health records to the costs of care.
- **Ease of access to care and care information** – Patients want online portals where their health information is readily available, updated, and easily accessible. Additionally, health care providers should allow patients to schedule, change, or cancel appointments with ease.
- **Data security** – Patients want the peace of mind knowing that their private health information is secure.

Thank you, Mercy volunteers, for the part you play in providing a positive experience for our customers. Providing directional assistance, answering questions, and escorting patients and visitors to their destinations, and keeping patient information confidential, are just a few of the many ways you make a difference.

excerpted from <https://payrhealth.com/resources/blog/what-is-customer-experience-in-healthcare/>

Amy Brownson



# Health Care Advocacy

## Medicare to Cover at Home COVID-19 Tests

Although the number of COVID cases and hospitalizations has continued to decline in Wisconsin, the need for testing continues. The federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that Medicare will begin to cover over-the-counter COVID-19 tests for beneficiaries beginning in early spring.

CMS began requiring private insurers to cover at-home or over-the-counter COVID tests beginning Jan. 15, 2022. Like enrollees of private insurance, those enrolled in Medicare, whether in traditional Medicare or Medicare Advantage, will be able to access up to eight at-home tests per month with no cost sharing.

According to a release from the agency, this is the first time that Medicare will cover an over-the-counter test at no cost to beneficiaries. CMS indicates that Medicare Advantage plans may offer coverage and payment for over-the-counter COVID-19 tests as a supplemental benefit in addition to covering Medicare Part A and Part B benefits, so Medicare beneficiaries covered by Medicare Advantage should check with their insurance plan to see if it includes such a benefit.

Otherwise, until the full benefit goes into effect, people with Medicare can access free tests through community sites or by requesting four free over-the-counter tests for home delivery at [covidtests.gov](https://covidtests.gov). For those with Medicaid, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) currently offers recipients free at-home tests. The DHS website includes details about how to access tests for people with Medicaid coverage.

This story originally appeared in the February 10, 2022 edition of WHA Newsletter  
<https://www.wha.org/MediaRoom/WHANewsletter/2022/02-10-2022/Medicare-to-Cover-At-Home-COVID-Tests-this-Spring>

Laura Hensel

# Volunteers in Action



Heather A. – Chart Cleaning



Dick M. – Information Desk



Jo F. – Reception Desk



Beverly W. – Gift Shop



Carol H. – Volunteer Services



Maxine M. – Oakwood Desk



Tom N. – Patient Care Unit 2



Natalie B. – Pharmacy



Sue B. - Transport

# Upcoming Calendar of Events

March 25th – April 8 <sup>th</sup>	Thunderbird Bakery Fundraiser	Pick up an order form in the Volunteer Office or Gift Shop or email <a href="mailto:Kristal.Wiese@ascension.org">Kristal.Wiese@ascension.org</a>
April 17 <sup>th</sup> – April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	National Volunteer Week	Volunteers stop into the Volunteer Office to pick up your treat
April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Fun Scrubs and Jeans Friday Fundraiser	Wear your Fun Scrubs or Jeans, donate \$2 for each Friday to Volunteer Services or the Gift Shop
May 11 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup>	Geranium and Plant Sale Corner of Ninth & Oakwood Look for the TENT!	Stop in at day/s of sale, to pre-order, pick up a form in the Volunteer Office or Gift Shop or email <a href="mailto:Kristal.Wiese@ascension.org">Kristal.Wiese@ascension.org</a>
May 16 <sup>th</sup>	MHV Board Meeting 9:30AM	Volunteer Services Multipurpose Room
May 23 <sup>rd</sup> – June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Starla's Seasoning Fundraiser	Pick up an order form in the Volunteer Office or Gift Shop or email <a href="mailto:Kristal.Wiese@ascension.org">Kristal.Wiese@ascension.org</a>
July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Fun Scrubs and Jeans Friday Fundraiser	Wear your Fun Scrubs or Jeans, donate \$2 for each Friday to Volunteer Services or the Gift Shop
July TBD	Jose Madrid Salsa Fundraiser	Pick up an order form in the Volunteer Office or Gift Shop or email <a href="mailto:Kristal.Wiese@ascension.org">Kristal.Wiese@ascension.org</a>

TBD = to be determined

