

SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital Auxiliary Newsletter

November/December 2025



RIPON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AUXILIARY LUNCHEON

Monday, November 17, 2025

12 pm

Maplecrest Manor Assisted Living
150 North Douglas Street, Ripon

Come and enjoy a wonderful lunch prepared by the chefs at Maplecrest Manor and visit with the residents.

Vicki Belleville will entertain us with a repertoire of music which includes every type of music except heavy metal or rap! She also dispenses witty anecdotes between her songs. Cost of the luncheon is \$15 and can be paid at the door.

- RSVP to Diane Shady, Program Chair, no later than **Friday, November 7** by calling 920-539-2150 or by email at kanddshady@gmail.com.
- Please indicate if you have any special dietary needs when making your reservation.
- Reservations made and not honored will be charged the cost of the lunch.
- If you have any suggestions about future programs you would like to see at our luncheon meetings, please contact me.

Diane Shady, Programs Chair

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

November 17
December 11
December 11
February 25
May 4 & 5

RCH Auxiliary Luncheon
Holiday Bake Sale
Lights of Love Tree Lighting
Advocacy Day
Flower Basket Sale

Maplecrest, Douglas Street
Hospital Lobby
Front of Hospital
Madison
Front of Hospital

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What a beautiful Fall we have had in the last few months! The colors are amazing, and the weather is getting considerably cooler.

The mum sale and brat sales are behind us. Thank you for all the help in making these a huge success! The candy bar sales have ended.

We have a Christmas Bake Sale coming up on December 11 in the hospital lobby. The lights on the Lights of Love tree will be lit on that day also. The tree will be in the front yard of the hospital this year. There is more information available in this newsletter regarding Lights of Love.

Four members of the Board of Directors (Barb Behlen, Jackie Halverson, Georgia Stellmacher and Julie Stellmacher) were able to attend the Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association Convention in La Crosse this year. It was a two-day conference with lots of good information from hospital administrators to volunteers in hospitals from all over Wisconsin. A business meeting was held regarding the future of the Partners organization. Various workshops were also held on Caring for the Caregiver, estate planning, brain health, nutrition, hospital gift shops, falls, and women's support groups. There were various vendors selling their items. Wonderful meals were available for all of us to enjoy. It was an enjoyable and educational few days!



On October 22, the Auxiliary hosted the Lakes District at Ripon Community Hospital. This group has decreased from 13 organizations to two. Decisions will have to be made regarding the future of the Lakes District which meets each Fall and Spring.

On Monday, November 17, we will have our Annual Luncheon at Maple Crest Manor on Douglas Street. I hope you can attend. It is always a nice event and good to see some of the residents. More information is available on the front page.

The Auxiliary Board would like to wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays! We hope everyone will stay healthy and happy until we meet again soon.

Julie Stellmacher, President

WHAT'S NEW AT SSM HEALTH RIPON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

An update from DeAnn Thurmer, President, SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital and SSM Health Waupun Memorial Hospital, and Nicole Gill, Vice President, Clinical Administrator, SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital and SSM Health Waupun Memorial Hospital

We have a lot going on at SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital these days - all exciting developments to help us continue our efforts to grow and offer as many services as possible at a local level. We're proud to share with you a few of these key advancements.

Ripon Community Hospital Cardiac/Pulmonary Rehab AACVPR Certification

The American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR) has certified SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital's Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab programs. This certification is recognition of Ripon Community Hospital's commitment to improving the quality of life of patients by enhancing standards of care.

Cardiovascular and pulmonary rehabilitation programs are designed to help people with cardiovascular concerns (heart attacks, coronary artery bypass graft surgery) and pulmonary issues (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, respiratory

symptoms) recover faster and live healthier. Both programs include exercise, education, counseling, and support for patients and their families.

Ripon Community Hospital's Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab programs are comprised of three clinical exercise physiologists, including Natalie Bartz, Joseph Clayton, and Lexi Voss.

To earn accreditation, the Ripon Community Hospital Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab programs participated in an application process that requires extensive documentation of their program's practices. AACVPR Program Certification is the only peer-review accreditation process designed to review individual programs for adherence to standards and guidelines developed and published by AACVPR and other related professional societies. Each program's application is reviewed by the AACVPR Program Certification Committee, and certification is awarded by the AACVPR Board of Directors.



Community Health Contribution

SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital has donated \$6,000 to the Green Lake County Health Department to support youth mental health programs in local schools, as well as a recent county wide event to address specific community health needs.

The Green Lake County Health Department serves more than 19,000 people, collaborating with community partners to provide services addressing maternal/child health, environmental health hazard management, injury prevention, health disparities and emergency event preparation, and more.

The community event, offered in July 2025, brought available community resources and access to care for residents in one location. "This event featured a resource fair for parents and families, in addition to a sports camp with free sports physicals for youth," according to Rachel Prellwitz, Green Lake County Health Department health officer. "Our goal was to reach underserved communities to provide access to health information and services."



Youth programs help to increase awareness of vital school-based mental health and suicide prevention resources and empower students to seek help when needed.

Retirement

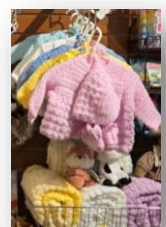
After more than 32 years of service, Pam Schmitz, an SSM Health Hemodialysis FDL technician, is closing a meaningful chapter in her life and stepping into a well-earned retirement on September 10. Her journey began in May 1987, just after her honeymoon, when she joined Waupun Memorial Hospital as a medical technologist.

In 1993, Pam and her family moved to Ripon, where she continued her work in the at the time Ripon Medical Center laboratory. However, her talents and dedication didn't stop there - she also contributed to rehab, registration, risk management/The Joint Commission, and medical imaging. Her versatility and willingness to step into new roles made her an invaluable part of the team.

Later, life brought Pam to Fond du Lac, where she transitioned into Hemodialysis. Amanda Hopp saw Pam's potential, recognizing the depth of her experience. Pam found a new home among the dialysis team.



Special Note: Thank you, Pam, for all the donated items you've made for the gift shop over the years. Everyone loves your baby sweater sets, blankets, scrubbies and dish clothes. We are happy you haven't retired from this activity.



TREASURER'S UPDATE

Financial Report - September 30, 2025

The financial report on September 30, 2025, is for the first three months of our fiscal year. Our fundraising efforts these first three months were very successful. Net proceeds from the mum sale were \$2,076 and we received \$324 from store roundups.

Gift shop sales were 5% higher than last year at this time. Merchandise for the holidays was purchased in this quarter. We have 30 paid members and need only two more to reach our goal. Registration was paid for the four members to attend the state convention.

We donated supplies to the Samaritan Clinic for \$301, materials for the sewing committee for \$197 and \$65 to SSM Health programs.

We had \$65,372 in cash and CDs at the end of September. So, we have the funds to support the needs of Ripon Community Hospital as they are identified and provide scholarships in the spring.

RCH Auxiliary, Inc. - Treasurer's Report - September 2025

	Three Month Actual	Annual Budget
INCOME		
Fundraising	\$ 4,964.61	\$ 20,197.00
Donations	136.75	175.00
Interest	380.78	1,812.00
Membership Dues	360.00	384.00
Gift Shop Sales	8,229.99	48,633.00
Total Income	\$ 14,072.13	\$ 71,201.00
EXPENSES		
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 2,565.00	\$ 8,337.00
Luncheons - Net	45.00	415.00
State Conventions/District Meetings	600.00	1,725.00
Organization Expenses	54.08	319.00
Gift Shop Expenses	6,174.97	31,836.00
Total Expenses	\$ 9,439.05	\$ 42,632.00
Net Income Before Distributions	\$ 4,633.08	\$ 28,569.00
DISTRIBUTIONS		
Scholarships		4,500.00
Donations for RMC	562.68	66,925.00
Total Distributions	\$ 562.68	\$ 71,425.00
NET INCOME AFTER DISTRIBUTIONS	\$ 4,070.40	\$ (42,856.00)
CASH AND CD BALANCES	\$ 65,372.32	

Bobbie Pollesch, Treasurer



Mark your calendars!
The Christmas Bake Sale is December 11
8:30 am until sold out



VOLUNTEER NEWS AND NOTES

Hello Ripon Community Hospital Auxiliary members who are also volunteers! I hope all of you are well and enjoying the beautiful fall season as much as I have... my family took a quick trip to Door County to enjoy the beautiful fall colors.

This photo was taken on Eagle Tower at Peninsula State Park in Fish Creek - such a breathtaking view!

I continue to accept volunteer candidates for various roles including information desk, gift shop and Mobile Meals; please reach out with any questions.

It is the time of year for annual education and flu vaccination requirements!



Thank you to those volunteers who already have completed/returned an at-home education packet or attended an (optional) in-person education session. At-home packets will be mailed out soon to all volunteers who have not yet completed this annual education requirement.

Annual influenza vaccinations are due December 1. Please send documentation to my attention so that I can submit to your employee health record. If you did not obtain documentation at the time of your vaccination, please contact me (email or phone) and I can retrieve your documentation directly/easily from the Wisconsin Immunization Registry for you. *Please note the influenza vaccination is only required for volunteers that serve inside of the hospital, not those that only volunteer off-site such as mobile meals.*

As always, thank you to those who generously share their talents and time with us! I hope everyone has a wonderful upcoming holiday season.

Tara Rhodes/Volunteer Coordinator
St. Agnes Hospital (Mondays/Tuesdays)
Ripon Community Hospital (Wednesdays)
Waupun Memorial Hospital (Fridays)

MEMBERSHIP

Looking for NEW volunteers.....

The more members the more we can accomplish for Ripon Community Hospital and the greater good of our community! With our November 17 luncheon just around the corner, let me encourage each of you to invite a friend, relative, or neighbor to join us and learn about volunteering at Ripon Community Hospital. Remember, this is not a five-day a week commitment, you can choose how often and from front desk, gift shop, mobile meal delivery, spring flower sale, fall mum sale, bake sales, staff appreciation, Lights of Love, and of course enjoy our quarterly luncheons with great speakers.

Jackie Halverson, Chairperson, Membership



COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION

Mindfulness

If you've heard of or read about mindfulness meditation--also known as mindfulness--you might be curious about how to practice it. Find out how to do mindfulness exercises and how they might benefit you.

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.

What are the benefits of meditation?

Meditation has been studied in many clinical trials. The overall evidence supports the effectiveness of meditation for various conditions, including stress, anxiety, pain, depression, insomnia, and high blood pressure.

Preliminary research indicates that meditation can also help people with asthma and fibromyalgia.

Meditation can help you experience thoughts and emotions with greater balance and acceptance. Meditation also has been shown to improve attention, decrease job burnout, improve sleep, and improve diabetes control.

What are some examples of mindfulness exercises?

There are many simple ways to practice mindfulness. Some examples include:

- Pay attention. It's hard to slow down and notice things in a busy world. Try to take the time to experience your environment with all of your senses--touch, sound, sight, smell and taste. For example, when you eat a favorite food, take the time to smell, taste and truly enjoy it.
- Live in the moment. Try to intentionally bring an open, accepting and discerning attention to everything you do. Find joy in simple pleasures.
- Accept yourself. Treat yourself the way you would treat a good friend.
- Focus on your breathing. When you have negative thoughts, try to sit down, take a deep breath and close your eyes. Focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your body. Sitting and breathing for even just a minute can help.

You can also try more structured mindfulness exercises, such as:

- **Body scan meditation.** Lie on your back with your legs extended and arms at your sides, palms facing up. Focus your attention slowly and deliberately on each part of your body, in order, from toe to head or head to toe. Be aware of any sensations, emotions or thoughts associated with each part of your body.
- **Sitting meditation.** Sit comfortably with your back straight, feet flat on the floor and hands in your lap. Breathing through your nose, focus on your; breath moving in and out of your body. If physical sensations or thoughts interrupt your meditation, note the experience and then return your focus to your breath.
- **Walking meditation.** Find a quiet place 10 to 20 feet in length and begin to walk slowly. Focus on the experience of walking, being aware of the sensations of standing and the subtle movements that keep your balance. When you reach the end of your path, turn and continue walking, maintaining awareness of your sensations.

When and how often should I practice mindfulness exercises?

It depends on what kind of mindfulness exercise you plan to do.

Simple mindfulness exercises can be practiced anywhere and anytime. Research indicates that engaging your senses outdoors is especially beneficial.

For more structured mindfulness exercises, such as body scan meditation or sitting meditation, you'll need to set aside time when you can be in a quiet place without distractions or interruptions. You might choose to practice this type of exercise early in the morning before you begin your daily routine.

Aim to practice mindfulness every day for about six months. Over time, you might find that mindfulness becomes effortless. Think of it as a commitment to reconnecting with and nurturing yourself.

Donna Nelson, Partners of WHA, Community Health Education Chairperson

Jackie Halverson, Chairperson, Community Health Education

PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION

Wisconsin Hospitals, Health Systems Show Modest Signs of Financial Improvement in 2024

MADISON, Wis. - The Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center (WHAIC) released on October 30, 2025 its annual [Guide to Wisconsin Hospitals for FY2024](#). Wisconsin hospitals and health systems showed slight financial improvement after facing significant challenges in recent years. The 2024 report shows operating margins improving slightly across both hospitals and health systems compared to 2023.

Key Findings

- While Wisconsin health system margins rebounded slightly to 2.2% in 2024 from -0.8% in 2023, margins remain far below pre-COVID health system margins.
- For 2024, 60 hospitals reported lower operating margins than in 2023. Forty-one hospitals, approximately 24% of all hospitals in the state, operated at a loss.
- In 2024, 17 of Wisconsin's 80 safety net hospitals experienced a loss (negative total margin).
- Hospitals continue to deal with rising costs. Supply and service costs have increased by 11% since FY2022, while salary and fringe expenses – largely driven by workforce shortages – have increased by 10%.
- Emergency department utilization has also increased, with over 2.4 million visits in 2024, a 5.4% increase from 2022.

<https://www.wha.org/news/press-releases/2025/guide-to-wi-hospitals-2024>

Jackie Halverson, Chairperson, Public Policy Education

GIFT SHOP

Greeting from the gift shop. It may not look like Christmas outside, but Oh my! It sure does inside the gift shop! Many new items to check out.

Here at the Ripon Community Hospital Gift Shop, we are truly blessed to have talented people who are willing to make items that are donated. Among those items are crocheted baby sweaters, with matching booties and a hat. We have them in assorted colors, along with a matching baby blanket, or a baby quilt! OR, Maybe you are in need of an emotional support pickle? We have those too! Assorted sizes and styles. We also have prayer pockets, scrubbies, dish cloths, bowl cozies, jigsaw puzzles and a vast assortment of books. Along with a few remaining super cute, crocheted fall pumpkins.

I hope you have the opportunity to stop in and check it out. Great Christmas gifts!

Wishing you the best of the holiday season.

Jeanne Payton, Gift Shop, Chairperson



FUND RAISING



2025 Lights of Love

Lights of Love will go on sale November 1. You will receive Lights of Love materials in the mail. The materials will also be available at the front desk and in the Gift Shop. The Foundation is in the process of identifying a specific need for the hospital currently. We will continue to work with them to determine the use of the Lights of Love proceeds.

The tree in front of the hospital this year will be lit on December 11, and the list of names will be published on the SSM system website. Names will also be in the Lights of Love book in the hospital lobby.

Please support this very meaningful event. The lights will shine in memory and honor of our loved ones.

Donations can be sent to Sue Leonard, co-chairperson, or left in the gift shop.

Bobbie Pollesch, Co-Chairperson, Lights of Love

Christmas Bake Sale

The Christmas Bake Sale is being held on Thursday, December 11 starting at 8:30 am until gone. The sale will be in the hospital lobby near the gift shop. Look for your favorite cookie, bar, sweet bread, nut mix or candy recipes to bake for the sale. Drop off baked goods in the RCH Volunteer Room by 11 am. We will pack the sale items on Wednesday, December 10 at 11:30 am.
Barb Behlen, Chairperson



Mum Sale

The September Mum Sale was a success including good weather! We sold 275 plants and raised \$2,076. Thanks to all those who worked and supported the event. Special thanks to Radene for coordinating this fundraiser.



Mary



Marian, Radene, Pat Carol



Jeanne, Pat, Carol

Georgia Stellmacher, Chairperson, Fundraising

OTHER NEWS

The September 23 Auxiliary Luncheon/Meeting presentation by Missy Tate was about the SSM Health Samaritan Clinic based in Fond du Lac and including Ripon and the surrounding area. The clinic's mission is to provide quality health care to the uninsured/low-income patients within this area and to be a force for a healthier community. The clinic assists with non-emergency primary care, vision care, laboratory and pharmacy services offered through SSM Health Greater Fond du Lac locations. To assist the clinic's mission the RCH Auxiliary donated hygiene supplies to be used by its patients.



Electric All Purpose Bariatric Stretcher

RCH Auxiliary's newest
donation to the hospital.





HONOR POINTS

The Ripon Community Auxiliary received their Honor Point recognition for 2024-25 at the Annual Partners of WHA State Convention in LaCrosse. Honor Points are awarded to hospitals who meet certain benchmarks during the year.

State Officers Julie Steiner, Cindy Hermel, & Peg Larson

Local Members Julie Stellmacher, Barb Behlen, Jackie Halverson & Georgia Stellmacher

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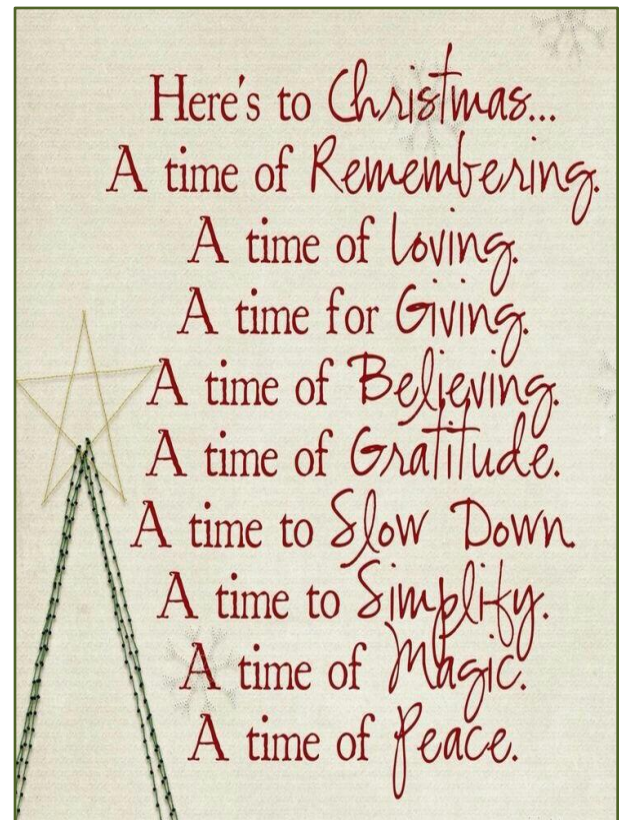
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Radene Abel, Flower Basket & Mum Sale

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Pat Albright, Brat Fry Fundraisers

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HAPPY
holidays