

# Friends of VMH

Vernon Memorial Healthcare, Viroqua

November 2023

## Update from Your President

Hello! I hope you all had a great summer. Fall temperatures came and went quickly (I'm not ready for the white stuff yet). I don't know about you, but I thought the fall colors were especially magnificent this year. I want to introduce myself as the new President of the Friends of VMH. I have been an active member of Friends for years and recently celebrated 28 years of service at VMH. I started my career as a Physical Therapist under PT manager, Dan Nelson, and CEO, Garith Steiner. As things changed, and they always do, I became the manager of PT and Athletic Training. In 2021, after completing my Master of Business Administration degree from Viterbo University, I took the role of Compliance Officer. My official title is the Director of Quality, Compliance and Risk. On a personal note, I am married to Joel who teaches 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science at Viroqua Area Schools. We have four adult children, one married and another getting married in 2024. We have two dogs and one cat and live outside of Ferryville. We love being active outdoors.



He reviewed the Foundation Golf Outing and praised our very own Bonnie Rath who "out drove the CEO" on hole #1. David shared the new VMH Mission "**To inspire patient-centered, compassionate care in our community**" and Vision, "**To be the trusted healthcare partner that delivers exceptional care to all generations.**" He also spoke about Unity of Purpose which is helping to shape VMH's strategy. Rob Lovejoy, COO, inspired members to think about their strengths and how these are used to support others and/or when seeking support. He advised all Friends to take the Clifton Strength Finder quiz to find out their strengths. The Friends also approved funding requests for an obstetrics delivery bed and a Lyme's disease lab analyzer for approximately \$28,000.00.



*Newly installed officers: Linda Wagner, Treasurer; Gloria Fetty, Secretary; Trudy Wallin, President-Elect; Kathryn Anderson, President; Julie Steiner, Past-President*

Our Fall Membership Luncheon was a great success. We are pleased to welcome a new member, Bill Fieck.



*Nancy Welch and Shelley Dobbe*

Shelley Dobbe and Nancy Welch were honored for their many years and hours of volunteer work and were made Lifetime members. David Hartberg, CEO, gave provider updates including new providers that are starting now, and those coming in 2024. He announced the retirements of Dr. DeLine and Tamsen Morgan, PAC.

October was a busy month for Friends! Julie Steiner, Donna Nelson, and Trudy Wallin attended the WHA Partners convention in Stevens Point. They came back with great information about mental health AND Julie was elected President Elect for the Partners! Donna Nelson continues to serve as the Western District Chair and led a fantastic meeting hosted by Grant Regional in Lancaster in mid-October. Donna announced that all 9 district hospitals received an Honor Point Award.

# President's Report cont.

Seven of us attended the meeting and I thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality and camaraderie. The presentation was by a Grant Regional nurse counselor about the organization "Make it OK"- a program to stop mental illness stigma. We learned conversation points on what to say and not to say to someone with a mental illness. Do say things like: "Thanks for opening up to me", "Is there anything I can do to help." Do not say: "It could be worse," "We've all been there." "Just deal with it." The website "makeitok.org is a great resource.



*Donna Nelson, Julie Steiner, Kathryn Anderson, Bonnie Rath, Trudy Wallin, Diane Brown and Janelle Cisneros at the Fall District Meeting*

tips for talking	more tips for talking
<p><b>Stop the silence</b> If someone discloses that they have a mental illness, they are opening up to you in a big way. Ask questions, show concern, but keep the awkward silence at bay.</p> <p><b>Be nice</b> It sounds simple enough, but try to say the right things with openness, warmth and caring.</p> <p><b>Listen</b> The fact that you are there can make a world of difference, so in your conversation, try to err more on the side of listening.</p> <p><b>Keep in contact</b> Offer availability by phone, text, email, or time to meet up. Just be there.</p>	<p><b>Don't ignore it.</b> Don't be afraid to ask about the well-being of another if you think they might be hurting. Trust your senses.</p> <p><b>Offer help</b> Everyone is different. They may want very specific help or no help at all. Either way, you can always ask and be open to the answer.</p> <p><b>Keep the conversation moving</b> It's ok to talk about other things to keep silent lulls out of conversation; as long as they know you're completely open to revisiting the topic later.</p> <p>Tell your friends about</p> <p><b>Make It OK.org</b></p>

Romelle Heisel will be our new Community Health Educator (CHE). Trudy will continue to be the Public Policy Educator (PPE) and Alice Sloane the Membership Chair.

At our October Friends meeting David spoke about the LaFarge Family Fun night and the exciting news that VMH has three newly hired Licensed Clinical Social Workers who can provide Behavioral Health services to our community. They will start in November. Other exciting updates were the new 3D Mammography unit that Imaging received, the first of its kind in Wisconsin, and the level 4 Trauma Certification for the Emergency Department. The guest speaker was Ashley Lagerquist, Director of Revenue Cycle. She shared valuable information on discount and financial assistance options at VMH. She emphasized that filling out a Financial Assistance application is a good idea because there are many opportunities. The annual budget was approved, and

Donna and Trudy provided great reports. Donna shared information that the Partners focus this year is on mental health and spoke about the different levels of depression and simple ideas to help us dialy. Trudy reminded us to become HEAT members and to consider attending WHA Advocacy Day, March 20, 2024.

We are excited that the Brat and Mum Sales along with the Gift Shop and 50/50 raffles were successful this summer and fall. Thank you to all who volunteered to make this possible. We have many upcoming events and activities! The Calendar of Events for the remainder of the year can be found on page 5. It would be fantastic if everyone could participate in some way to help with these traditional activities and fundraisers. Lovelight Trees were decorated on November 21<sup>st</sup>. On December 7<sup>th</sup> the Holiday Bake Sale and Gift Shop Open House will be held from 10-2 pm. We need 36 members to provide baked goods as this is a very popular event! I know many of you LOVE to bake so please contribute. You may also make a cash donation. Cash donations may be left in the gift shop or mailed to our Treasurer, Linda Wagner at E9477 Cty. Rd. S, Viroqua. Please remember to pay your membership dues which are \$20.00. You may leave your payment in the Gift Shop, send to Linda Wagner, or send to Membership Chair, Alice Sloane at S4215 Cty. Rd. B, Viroqua. Remember we do not have a meeting in December. Phew! I am so grateful to all who give so freely of your time, talents, and treasures to the Friends of VMH. Many other volunteer organizations are struggling but we are thriving because of you! Thank you!



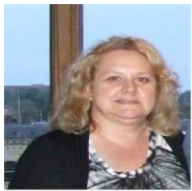


Dolores Swanson, Diane Brown and Linda Wagner work the Brat Sake



Mary Wilkie and DJ Brown served brats and hot dogs

## Community Health Education



Romelle Heisel, CHE Chair

I want to introduce myself to you. I will be taking over as CHE Chair, a position formerly held by

Donna Nelson. I am not new to VMH as currently I am the Infection Prevention Coordinator. I am a Registered Nurse. I have worked in various areas over the course of my career at VMH. I have a daughter who is the Supervisor in our VMH Hospital and Clinic Labs (Katee) and a son (Tanner) who currently is residing in Arizona. He works in gene sequencing and equipment (microscopes, etc.). He is an ex-Marine Sergeant with a history of supervising military. I'm very proud of both of them as you can tell.

The topic for this article is mental health care and strategies. Stress is common for many people. Here are some ways to help reduce stress:

- Staying physically active can help maintain or improve well-being (makes you feel happy, provides emotional support, gives you a sense of belonging).
- Healthy diet with fruits, vegetables, and protein.
- 7 or more hours of sleep.
- Regular exercise routine.
- Meditation (reconditioning brain to become more stress tolerant over time).
- Connecting with people and maintaining

relationships.

- Laughter (Can increase oxygen stimulating endorphins which can make you feel more relaxed).
- Volunteering (Counteracts effects of stress, anger, and anxiety).

Stress is a part of our modern life. Awareness of these strategies may help manage stress symptoms and lessen the feeling of being overloaded.

**Lovelights**  
Leave a light on for a loved one this holiday season.

Sponsor a Lovelight in memory of a loved one who has passed or to honor an individual at this special time of the year. **\$5** per Lovelight

Employees can purchase Lovelights until DEC 31st by completing a Lovelights form and inter-office mailing it in to Volunteer Services, or dropping it off at the Gift Shop M-F from 10 am - 4 pm. Forms are available outside the Volunteer Services office, in the Gift Shop, in the Hospital and MOB lobby, and online at [vmh.org/community/community-involvement](http://vmh.org/community/community-involvement). Make checks payable to "Friends of VMH."

**Lovelights Virtual Tree Lighting Ceremony**  
Friday, November 24, 2023 | 9:00 am | Facebook

All money raised benefits the Friends of VMH, a volunteer network who raises money to fund Healthcare Scholarship Programs, Medical Equipment Purchases, and more.

**Vernon Memorial Healthcare**  
So much care, so close.

Friends provided funds this summer for the purchase of a TicTacToe board and Activity Board for Occupational Therapy patients





# Public Policy Report

Trudy Wallin, PPE Chair



Members of the Friends of VMH have heard PPE reports at our monthly meetings and read newsletter PPE articles concerning some of the same issues that have been front and center for a few years now. We spent a couple of years dealing with COVID issues and how they affect the hospital as well as each person individually. COVID concerns continue to be important as we have settled into our new normal, which includes COVID as a fact of life now and in our futures.

Other ongoing PPE issues include the workforce needs within all areas of the medical field and Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement. This month, I'd like to reserve a few lines of this PPE report to write about our Friends organization and how we make a difference on the regional and state level. This year, one of our members, Donna Nelson, is serving her second term as President of the Western District of the Partners of WHA (Wisconsin Hospital Assoc). And our very own Julie Steiner is President Elect of the Partners of WHA state organization. As you can imagine, these ladies are doing a wonderful job of representing VMH. I can identify with those of you that are thinking as you read this, no thank you, not me! Even if we do not want to hold a district or state office, we can lend our support and voices to the "cause" by attending District Meetings and/or the State Convention. These meetings are well planned. The networking is fun, food is good and we always learn something in the process. Please consider attending one or more of these meetings as they come up. The car ride together is always filled with good conversation too.

Of course, we cannot forget the importance of Advocacy Day in Madison each year. This is a great learning experience and a good way to add Your voice in support of healthcare solutions. Please save March 20, 2024 on your calendar and join the VMH group in attendance at next years Advocacy Day.



\$670.00 in Gift Shop merchandise donated to Toys for Tots  
Thanks for your support!

## FRIENDS OF VMH BAKE SALE



DECEMBER 7TH, 10 AM TO 2 PM



ACROSS FROM THE GIFT SHOP

CASH OR CHECK ACCEPTED



## VMH GIFT SHOP OPEN HOUSE

DECEMBER 7TH, 10 AM TO 4 PM

STAFF WILL RECEIVE 20% OFF ENTIRE PURCHASE, EXCLUDING CANDY AND CARDS



SIGN UP FOR DRAWING- ONE ENTRY PER PERSON. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY.



Thank you  
for supporting  
the Friends  
of VMH.





# Friends Calendar of Events December 2023 - October 2024

December 7, 2023

50/50 Raffle 7-4 hospital lobby  
Friends Bake Sale & Gift Shop Open House  
Bake Sale 10-2 Open House 10-4

January 5, 2024

Lovelight Trees down

January 8

Friends of VMH Mtng. Lunch 11:30 Meeting - Noon  
Medical Office Bldng. Conf. rooms

February 12

Friends of VMH Mtng. Lunch 11:30 Meeting - Noon  
Medical Office Bldng. Conf. rooms

March 11

Friends of VMH Mtng. Lunch 11:30 Meeting - Noon  
Medical Office Bldng. Conf. Rms.

March 12 & 13

Nutman Sale - outside Gift Shop

March 20

Advocacy Day - Monona Terrace, Madison

March 28

50/50 Raffle 7-4 hospital lobby  
Friends Bake Sale & Gift Shop Sale  
Bake Sale 10-2 Gift Shop Sale 10-4

April 4

Western District Spring Meeting - Prairie du Chien

April 8

Friends of VMH Mtng. Lunch 11:30 - Meeting Noon  
Medical Office Bldng. Conf. rooms

May 6-24

Remember a veteran with the purchase of a \$1 or \$5  
American flag

May 12-18

National Hospital Week  
provide cookies/bars during staff lunch

May 13

Friends of VMH Mtng. Lunch 11:30 - Meeting Noon  
Medical Office Bldng. Conf. rooms

May 17

Geranium Sale 8:00 - 2:00  
Hospital Main Entrance

No regular meetings

June, July, August

July 1 & 2

Nutman Sale - outside Gift Shop

July 22

Mum pre-orders begin

August 28

Brat Sale 11:00 - 1:30 Hospital entrance  
50/50 Raffle 7-4 hospital lobby

September 9

Fall Membership Luncheon  
Medical Office Bldng. Conf. rooms

September 18

Mum Sale and Pre-Order Pick-Up 6:30 - 4:30  
Hospital parking lot  
50/50 Raffle 7-4 hospital lobby

October 1-3

Partners State Convention - Stevens Point

October 22 & 23

Nutman Sale - outside Gift Shop



Western District Honor Point recipients were presented with certificates at state convention. Note Trudy Wallin and Donna Nelson far right representing Friends of VMH