

# N VOLUNTEER ews

**GUNDERSEN**  
HEALTH SYSTEM®

**Quarterly Newsletter for Gundersen Health System's Partners & Volunteer Services**  
April/May/June 2019

## From the director

Lori Van Lin, director, Volunteer Services



Throughout the year, we are very grateful for all you do for others within Gundersen Health System and in our communities. During National Volunteer Month in April, we want to especially share our thanks. This year's Volunteer Recognition Event will be held on Thursday, April 11, at the Gundersen Integrated Center for

Education (ICE House) on the La Crosse Campus. This celebration in your honor will include a meal, awards ceremony and entertainment. We hope you will be able to join us. Please watch for your personal invitation and be sure to RSVP.

I shared the following quote a few years ago, and it still rings so true:

*In every community, there is work to be done.*

*In every nation, there are wounds to heal.*

*In every heart, there is the power to do it.*

— Marianne Williamson, "A Return to Love"

Each one of you makes a difference in the lives of others each time you volunteer. Thank you for choosing Gundersen to do this.

I also want to thank our Volunteer Services/Partners team for all they do to support you and our programs. I was recently on a medical leave for several weeks, and the daily work and requirements of our department continued to be handled seamlessly and timely in my absence. This is a testimony to our awesome staff. Thank you to Karol Fox, Donna Niedfeldt, Sheila Erickson, Eileen Wiltinger and Kim Earll! Your passion, dedication and commitment shine through each day!

My thanks,  
Lori



# Volunteer News

Congratulations to the following individuals who have volunteered many hours and helped many more patients and families in the process. This year's top recipient is Darla Severtson who has donated over 8,000 hours. To read about Darla and her generosity, please see the feature article following the awards.

## 2019 Gundersen Health System Volunteer Recognition recipients Honoring 2018 volunteer hours

### Teen/ high school

#### 50 hours

Ally Ecklund  
Megan Hansen  
Joslyn Hanson  
Junaid Khan  
Lauren Lansing  
Sierra Mack  
Maddisyn Marx  
Laura Munson  
Shafee Rayhan  
Carmen West  
Kendall Woyak

#### 50/100/500 hours

Sarah Peterson

#### 100 hours

Aditya Ailiani  
Halle Burkhalter  
Nathan Burns  
Beau Clemmensen  
Kyle Fossum  
Kaiya Grass  
Sarah Hannan  
Junaid Khan  
Emma Peterson-  
Johnson  
RaghuRam Prasad  
Tara Zielke

#### 100/200 hours

Tessa Thurin

#### 200 hours

MyLe Luong

#### 500 hours

Kimmie Schmitz

### Adult/college

#### 100-hour bar

Becki Bamber  
Morgan Barber ©  
Michaela  
Bromberek ©  
Pat Chilsen  
Jennifer Connell ©  
Caryl Doberstein  
Ellie Dahms ©  
Terrence (Terry)  
Drexler

Ruth Dunn

Peter Fiorini

Mary Frohnauer

Marian Hanna

Brittany Heilman ©

Caroline Holverson ©

Beth Hoth

Erin Hougum ©

Johanna

Jorgenson ©

Ben Kellner ©

Emily Kelm ©

Elizabeth Klocke ©

Rebecca Koch ©

Mattie Krause ©

Sandee Laufle

Dana Luedeman ©

Lucas Marinack ©

Louise Mathijs ©

Robert Mattson

Teresa Mears

Connie Mracek

Alisa Niki

Kristina Norgaard

Linda Richmond

Nicolette Scaffidi ©

Mary Schilling

Kim Schneider

Justin Servais ©

Jessica Shane ©

Denise Shedivy

Evan Smaby ©

Rebecca Sondrol

Kathrine Sullivan ©

Bria Theodore ©

Nicole Tomlin ©

Tori Walsh ©

Victoria Wiebke

Brenda Wilson

Laura Winkler ©

Candice Zehner ©

#### 100-hour bar/ 200-hour pin

Hope Anderson ©

Karen Butler

Mary Csiacek

Austin DeBoer ©

Nicole Heinz ©

Kaitlyn Kirtz ©

Linda Lee ©

Brittany Mueller

Linn Ann Polyak

Joseph Prekop

Nancy Schmidt

Mary Shaw

Suzanne Toce

Richard Wachter

#### 200-hour pin

Carol Banse

Judith Dixon

Karen Dunn

Leon Fernstaedt

Mary Jane Gentes

Linda Gillette

David Johnston

Karen Keil

Amy Kobs

Ingrid Matusek

Peggy Miller

David Needles

Marilyn Nyre

Patricia Shepard

Rachel Thompson

Arlene Trautsch

Kathleen Trussoni

Richard (Dick) Wieser

#### 500-hour pin

Eleanor Amundson

Doug Benkert

Susan Bugge

Ted Dewald

Ken Isler

Martin Ostromencki

Deborah Talle

Barbara Tarnor

Deborah Woerpel

#### 200/500-hour pin

Karen Hanson

#### 500/1,000-hour pin

Robert Johnston

#### 1,000-hour pin

William Atcherkirch

Nancy Dotz

Mildred (Millie) Frie

Joyce Kammel

Charles Kulas

Ruthann Kurinsky

Lawrence (Larry)

Stryker

Lawrence (Larry)

White

#### 2,000-hour pin

Joanne (Loretta)

Bedward

Ron Christensen

Sharon Clark

Thomas Neefe

Margaret (Peggy)

Nelson

Jane Rada

Marilyn Schreiner

Grace Smith

Robert (Bob)

Thompson

#### 3,000-hour pin

Dorothy Harris

Monique Howe

Judith Staats

Karen Vogt

#### 4,000-hour pin

Beverly Bodine

#### 7,000-hour pin

Paul Arena

#### 8,000-hour pin

Darla Severtson

# Volunteer News



## *congratulations!*

Darla Severtson has volunteered over 8,000 hours and is awarded the top recipient in 2019. When asked why she volunteers, Darla explained that when she retired from Gundersen Health System after working for over 30 years as a float receptionist, she was bored at home and missed her work family. She became a volunteer in October 2005, and 2019 is her 14th year of volunteering! Darla's shifts are Tuesday and Thursday in the Volunteer Transport Services department with a typical shift being six to seven hours. The most she ever walked in one day is seven to eight miles! Darla said what makes her feel good about volunteering comes from the patients she meets and transports. Many times, she has gotten to know the patients and looks forward to being part of the patient's overall experience. And the patients look forward to seeing her familiar face, too. Congratulations to Darla on donating 8,000 hours of dedication and care to others. We thank you for your contributions and longevity.

## Year-end totals

Every day of the year, you can find our volunteers helping patients, visitors, families and staff by doing a variety of tasks: advance care planning witnessing, transporting patients to and from appointments or day surgeries, giving directions, delivering flowers and mail, cashiering in the gift shop, assisting families and staff in the Surgical Waiting Area...the list goes on and on.

There are many volunteers not only at the main La Crosse Campus, but also at the Onalaska Campus where nearly 2,800 hours were donated and Prairie Du Chien where approximately 1,600 hours of volunteer service were given in 2018.

We wanted to share some highlights of 2018 with you! Although the number of volunteer hours speak volumes, what is most impressive is your dedication.

### **Sympathy to:**

Gary Anderson on the death of his mother.

Betty Klum on the death of her sister-in-law.

## Did you know:

- Nearly 44,000 hours were donated to Gundersen Health System by our volunteers in 2018. The Chart Collation/Literature Assembly volunteers assembled over 70,000 patient education packets and folders. The packets and folders are distributed throughout the organization and regional sites.
- Ron Christensen folded 64,005 towels for Anesthesia in 2018, equating to 1,230 towels per week. He did all this in 641 hours!
- Our Hospice volunteers donated over 1,700 hours as caregivers, giving office support, making hospice shawls and wood-working.
- Volunteer patient transporters added 11,200 hours; mail and flower transporters donated over 1,800 hours.
- The Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders volunteers totaled over 1,400 hours and the Gift Shop volunteers added over 5,000 hours.



## Teen Volunteer Experience

By Lauren Carlisle, teen volunteer

I began volunteering at Gundersen Health System when I was 15 years old. Interested in healthcare career, I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to gain an inside perspective of the options in healthcare. Because I was interested, volunteering would impact my own life as much as the lives of the people I met.

As a volunteer, I do a variety of tasks that help the organization. Although these tasks are not grand in scope, the staff counts on me, and I take great pride in doing my small part. Whether it is delivering flowers or preparing mail, I know that I am contributing my part. My position as a volunteer has taught me that every position matters within an organization. Without the work of the volunteers doing simple tasks, a hospital would not run smoothly.

My favorite role is visiting with patients. Often, patients don't have frequent visitors, and many are feeling pretty low. Delivering flowers and taking the time to listen to a patient's stories are just a few of the ways I have served to ease patients' time at the hospital. Volunteering has shown me the importance of small acts of kindness and has allowed me to experience how amazing it feels to give back. Many people think that to make a difference in the world you have to do something really big, but I have seen firsthand the positive impact that small acts of kindness have on both the giver and receiver.



**Left to Right are Missy Plunkett, Imaging volunteer, Lauren Carlisle and Avery Miles, mail and flower transporters**

Through volunteering, I have found a place to share my talents within the community. As a volunteer I feel that I have made a difference. I have connected with many people who have the same passion for giving back as I do. Devoting my time at Gundersen Health System and many other organizations has allowed me to give back and leave things a little better than I found them. Volunteering isn't a duty to be checked off my list; it is something that I enjoy, value and am committed to. For me, it has become a way of life, and I plan to continue volunteering as I continue my education at University of Wisconsin-Madison next fall.



## Teen Corner

By Karol Fox, program coordinator

This edition of our newsletter is dedicated to celebrating our volunteers and their accomplishments. As the teen/high school program coordinator, one of my responsibilities is to pre-interview, place, orientate, train, supervise and schedule high school volunteers. I am also responsible for a variety of other volunteer programs. The teen/high school volunteers are a joy to work with; not only do they come in with an open mind and eagerness to help out, but they are our next generation of potential healthcare workers.

Many of the students are in the Health Science Academy program (HSA). HSA is designed for students who have an interest in healthcare careers. The students are required to apply, go through an interview and are selected to attend. The HSA program takes place during

their junior and senior years. Other teen/high school students who join our volunteer program are typically looking for experience in a healthcare setting. Whatever brings these students through our doors, I believe that when they graduate and move on, they have learned empathy, teamwork and giving of one's time and talents. Lauren Carlisle was gracious and wrote an article on her volunteer experience (see page 4), and I think she has captured the true essence of volunteering.

I hope each of you know that even though there is a designated week designed to honor volunteerism, we are grateful for your dedication year around, each time you volunteer. Thank you to all volunteers, no matter where you donate your time and skills. You're making a difference, and that's the most important part. Take care.

## Campus Corner

By Donna Niedfeldt, program coordinator

In 2018, 141 college volunteers logged 7,282 hours of service for Gundersen Health System! They served patients, families, visitors and staff in areas including In-patient Pediatrics, Volunteer Transport, the Medical Specialties Unit, Physical Therapy, Nuclear Medicine, the Surgery Waiting Room, Hospice, the Pediatrics Clinic, the MyHealth program, Medical Research, Center for Violence Prevention, and the Triple P/PRRC programs.

Another college volunteer assignment opportunity is the Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) and PRRC (Parents Raising Resilient Children) student intern programs. These programs are run by Jeffrey Reiland, MS, child and family therapist at Gundersen. In 2018, Jeff had 26 students participate over two semesters, logging 2,348 hours.

Jeff shared, "We started the Triple P internship almost six years ago. We had been running a parent program without a children's program and were experiencing a higher drop-out rate because of the challenges parents faced in finding reliable and affordable child care. We were planning to start our other parenting program, which is now called Parents Raising Resilient Children, the next year. This program had a sketch of children's activities that we might follow. We created a children's program for Triple P and the following year, we started the children's program for PRRC. All the parents who attend Triple P say that it would not be possible were it not for the children's program. Half the parents who attend PRRC say that the children's program makes it possible for them to attend; a safe place for their children is what parents wanted and need. We provide that. Our ratio of student interns to children is 1:1.

We strive to develop and implement programming that is non-competitive, non-violent, and fosters cooperation and creativity. We have created two additional children's program manuals based on activities that our student interns have trialed in our programs. We have shared our resource manuals with other children's programs around the world – Portugal, Japan, Taiwan, Brazil and the United



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## Campus Corner - continued

States. The program is entirely student-run. The training model we use is peer training. New interns learn the ropes from veteran interns. We ask for a year commitment, but it is not uncommon for students to stay on for an additional one to four semesters.

Our parenting programs are successful because of our student volunteers. Our student volunteers have eliminated one of the greatest barriers to successful completion of a parenting program-child care. In our

programs, children learn about important social and emotional skills while their parents learn effective parenting strategies!"

Jeff, along with all of us in Volunteer Services, are very proud – not only of our Triple P/PRRC students, but of the efforts, commitment and passion all our Gundersen college student volunteers have for the very important work they do and support they provide.

## Volunteer Impact Stretches Far and Wide

By Craig Masters, supervisor, Patient Experience

Volunteers play an integral part in the way we provide care here at Gundersen. They give of their time and talents with the sole purpose of enriching someone else's experience. Nothing is sought in return, making this valuable contribution to our organization and those they help the purest form of community and good there is.

For example, it is common to see volunteers taking patients to destinations spanning the furthest corners of our campus, from the Main Clinic to the East Building, from the Lobby to Adolf's, and everywhere in between. Whether assisting a patient or assisting staff, or simply having someone available to wait and have a conversation with a patient while their vehicle arrives, the volunteer impact is vast and something we have come to count on every day.

"When we do have volunteers staffed at the Clinic Information Desk, they become extensions of the desk staff. The routine changes daily, but volunteers shorten response times which make patient and visitors very happy when they have to reach destinations within Gundersen," said Rudy Williams, information desk receptionist, Patient Experience. Adding onto that, colleague Aaron Baird, patient attendant, states, "Having volunteers willing to take people to their appointments ensures a smooth handoff to the next group in line, even if there might be a language barrier."

It's not only the work the volunteers do that has benefits. As one staff member put it, "It's just nice having their perspective, too! Their experience and personal history make it enjoyable to learn from, also. It's fun getting to know them and their life's journey."

Volunteers make a difference every day. Their assistance helps us achieve the patient experience scores we do here at Gundersen and are a huge reason why so many would recommend their friends and families to get their care here. We are very lucky so many volunteers continue to choose to spend their time with us!



## From the president

Linda Gillette, president, Gundersen Partners

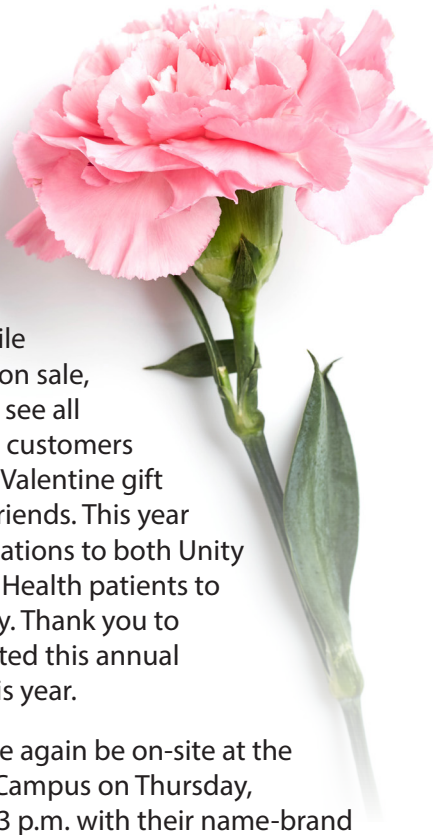


Greetings,

The first quarter of 2019 has started out strong for Gundersen Partners! In the last two years we have revised our strategic plan, and as part of that plan it has been our effort to update our identity as an organization. At our January board meeting, we approved our

new identity statement that will appear on all our documents and publicity. **Enhancing care through service and giving** really speaks to all that we do as Gundersen Partners. We are always working to serve our patients and their families, support healthcare education and promote community well-being through giving to local organizations.

The carnation sale on Valentine's Day was a resounding success. We sold 1,400 carnations, and all the money raised will be distributed as scholarships to Gundersen Health System teen/high school volunteers. While working at the carnation sale, it was so wonderful to see all the happy faces of the customers as they bought a little Valentine gift for their families and friends. This year Partners donated carnations to both Unity House and Behavioral Health patients to help brighten their day. Thank you to everyone who supported this annual special event again this year.



PRN Uniforms will once again be on-site at the Gundersen La Crosse Campus on Thursday, April 4, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. with their name-brand footwear sale benefiting Partners charitable works. Choose from brands such as Merrell, Dansk, Asics, Sperry, Reebok, Birkenstock and many others. Life is short. Buy the shoes!

The 2nd annual Pawsitively for Patients bake sale will be held on Thursday, April 11, in the Legacy Lower Level. We hope this year's bake sale will be even more successful than the last one! It has been very rewarding for Gundersen Partners to help patients that have no one to care for their pets while they are at Gundersen for an extended medical appointment or hospital stay. If you would like to help with this event by providing baked goods or working the day of the sale, please contact the Gundersen Partners office at (608) 775-3602.

The Wisconsin Hospital Association, which Gundersen Partners is a member of, hosts Advocacy Day in Madison on Wednesday, April 17. Tommy Thompson will be a speaker and will discuss health care policy and new challenges. There also will be a state legislative panel and a state legislative issues update. Governor Tony Evers will deliver the luncheon address, and we will visit with our legislative representatives. If there are questions or concerns that you would like us to address at Advocacy Day, please contact the Partners office.



The district meeting of the Partners of WHA will be held on Wednesday, April 24, at Gundersen Moundview Hospital in Adams-Friendship. At this meeting, Gundersen Partners will learn what other Partners groups do to support their healthcare systems. We will also be updated on public policy, community health education and administration. It is extremely important for us to learn about the innovations of others to help make Gundersen Partners the best that it can be.

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## From the president - continued

Plan to join Gundersen Partners and Franciscan Healthcare Auxiliary on Tuesday, April 30, for Style on the River, the 32nd Annual Joint Luncheon and Style Show at The Waterfront Restaurant and Tavern in The Cargill Room. Tickets are \$25 and will go on sale beginning Monday, March 11, at Festival Foods (Copeland, Village, Onalaska), Gundersen Health System Gift Shop and the Mayo Clinic Health System Volunteer Services Office. Dales Clothing and Mainstream Boutique will provide the fashions for this year's show. There are a limited number of tickets available, so plan to purchase your tickets early!

Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 21, from 3 to 5 p.m. when Partners will hold a membership social at Gundersen Hotel and Suites. Hotel general manager Gretchen Henchen will give us a brief tour of the facility and all it has to offer. The tour will be followed by some light refreshments, appetizers and a social time for Partners members. We are excited to be able to provide a new gathering place for our members. Please bring a guest and join us to get to know other Partners members.

Partners is excited to announce that we are now enrolled as a Thrivent Choice® charitable organization. Thrivent Choice is a member-advised program that allows eligible Thrivent Financial members to recommend where Thrivent distributes part of its

charitable outreach funds each year. If you are a Thrivent Financial member and would like to direct Choice Dollars® to Gundersen Partners to benefit our charitable works, please contact your local Thrivent Financial office.

Finally, the application for scholarships for Gundersen employees' children is on the Gundersen Partners website. The deadline for the applications is June 12. If you are a Gundersen employee and have a student that is pursuing a healthcare career, please review the scholarship requirements on the website to apply. Gundersen Partners is proud to help students as they work to become healthcare professionals.



## Where are they now?

By Marilyn McElligott, Partners historian

Gundersen Partners has been awarding scholarships to children of employees for 15 years. This is just one of the many scholarship programs in which Partners has offered for over 60 years. Recipients will be highlighted to keep the membership and others aware of the important support of healthcare education.

**Name:** Andrew Colburn

**Education:** Rush Medical College, Class of 2012

**Where you are employed:** Gundersen Health System Trauma and Emergency Center

**Your parent who is employed at Gundersen:**

Jean Colburn, RN (care coordinator)

**Anything you would like to add:** My wife (Vanessa) and I have enjoyed our time being back in La Crosse. We have two small children – Olivia (2 years old) and Anthony (8 months old).





# Partners News

## Gift Shop News

By Eileen Wiltner, supervisor



I want to thank all the volunteers in the Gundersen Health System as well as all community volunteers. Volunteers play a very important role in the success of any nonprofit organization. We are very fortunate in the Gift Shop to have such talented volunteers willing to share their time with us. The 50 volunteers who help keep the Gift Shop operating range in age from 14 to 84. They volunteer anywhere from four to 32 hours each month.

Last year, the Gift Shop recorded 5,433 volunteer hours. Those volunteers helped to raise over \$40,000 in profits.

The monies went to Gundersen Partners to help fund patient and patient family programs in the hospital, community programs and student scholarships for those pursuing a career in healthcare. As we always like to say in the Gift Shop, "When you purchase a gift from us, your gift gives twice." The Gift Shop has volunteer opportunities in the evenings as well as the weekends. If you are interested, please call or email me at (608) 775-3477 or [emwiltin@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:emwiltin@gundersenhealth.org).



**Left to Right: Judy Stemper, Jane Rada and Linda Arentz, prepping the pre-ordered carnations for delivery on Valentine's Day. 1400 Carnations were sold benefiting the Teen Volunteer Merit Program. Thank you to all of the volunteers who assisted in this important fundraiser.**



## Calendar of Events

### April

- 4 PRN Footwear Sale
- 7-13 National Volunteer Week
- 11 Volunteer Recognition Event | La Crosse Campus, Integrated Center for Education (ICE House)  
Invitations will be mailed to your home.
- 11 Pawsitively for Patients bake sale on National Pet Day, La Crosse Campus, Legacy Lower Level
- 17 WHA Advocacy Day in Madison
- 19 Good Friday
- 21 Happy Easter!
- 22-24 Blood drive, La Crosse Campus
- 24 Partners of WHA Western District Spring Tour
- 30 Partners Joint Luncheon

### May

- 10-11 Blood drive, Onalaska Campus
- 12 Mother's Day
- 21 Partners spring membership social

### June

- 12 Gundersen Employees' Children Scholarship applications due
- 10-12 \$6 and Up Fundraiser, La Crosse Campus, Legacy Lower Level
- 13-14 \$6 and Up Fundraiser, Onalaska Clinic, Education Center
- 16 Father's Day

**The next blood drive** in La Crosse is scheduled for July 22, 23 and 24, and July 10 and 11 in Onalaska. For an appointment to donate, call (877) 232-4376.

### National Volunteer Week

#### April 7-13, 2019

The Volunteer Recognition Event is scheduled for Thursday, April 11, at the Integrated Center for Education (ICE House). Back by popular demand is magician Isaiah Foster! Isaiah has a whole new show, so be ready to be entertained. Also, for the first time, we will play Bingo and have a delicious meal prepared by Serves You Right. We hope many of you will be able to attend!

### Contributors to Volunteer News

Lauren Carlisle  
Karol Fox  
Linda Gillette  
Craig Masters  
Marilyn McElligott  
Donna Niedfeldt  
Lori Van Lin  
Eileen Wiltinger

**Volunteer Services**  
(608) 775-6755

**Partners**  
(608) 775-3602

**Volunteer Services Mission Statement**  
The Volunteer Services Department provides meaningful experiences for our volunteers – elevating services and programs for our patients and families and the community we serve.