

**Volunteer  
CONNECTION**

**SUMMER 2020**

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"Alone we can do so little, together so much" -Helen Keller The above photo by Suzanne Rose shows the hands of many volunteers at Ascension Mercy

**Waiting in the Wings**

As we respond to COVID-19 in the community our priority remains maintaining safe and effective operations while reducing the risk of transmission between associates and patients, and protecting those at higher risk of adverse health complications. Because of this priority Ascension has suspended volunteers from service since March. We recognize that some of you are anxious to return and others are not quite ready. Please know that we value and miss your presence, smiling faces and positive energy and want to ensure a safe transition back to service when that time comes.

I will continue to provide updates and happenings mainly via email. If you haven't shared your email address with volunteer services and you would like to, please email me at [Amy.Brownson@ascension.org](mailto:Amy.Brownson@ascension.org). Bev, Norma and myself want to thank you for your patience, understanding and support of Ascension Mercy Hospital.

Sincerely, Amy



Amy Brownson, Manager  
Volunteer Services

# Volunteer Spotlight – Deb Cowie

## Volunteer Spotlight – Deb Cowie

Deb Cowie has been a volunteer at Ascension Mercy Hospital since 2008 and has donated over 700 hours of service. She moved to Oshkosh from Madison at that time and had recently retired as a school counselor. Deb stated that she began volunteering because she wanted to continue to do something that would give back to others.

Deb has volunteered in these areas: children screening services, pet therapy, and as a tour guide. Currently she volunteers as a patient portal assistant for the Patient Access Department and as a clerical assistant for the Mercy Health Foundation. During the COVID situation Deb has been volunteering at home, in her patient portal assistant role, entering information on the computer so patients can access their health information online.

When not volunteering Deb shares a great enthusiasm for traveling. She has been all over the world and plans to pick that back up after a COVID vaccine makes it safe to do so again. In addition to traveling, Deb spends time with her young grandchildren helping with childcare. She also likes to swim, bike, read and spend time with her family.

Deb likes interacting with patients and hospital staff and the feeling of being helpful to others. She is looking forward to getting back to the hospital to volunteer whenever that may be.

Amy Brownson



Deb volunteering at home

# Timely News

## **Greetings from the Gift Shop – We are Open!**

Ascension national has given the go ahead to open the Gift Shop on a limited basis. The shop opened on Monday, August 3 and will be open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. As of now I am staffing it.

Summer is now in full swing and the shop has the perfect decor for staff and our limited visitors to browse and buy. This is a start and I am looking forward to when we can get back to business as usual with our volunteers in the shop providing the wonderful service that you do! We miss you!

Beverly Hoffman, Coordinator  
Gift Shop

## **New Class of Project SEARCH Interns Starting Off-site**

A new class Project SEARCH interns will be starting up again this fall. Due to COVID-19 the group will be starting the year off-site with plans to complete the year at Ascension Mercy. Please welcome back the Project SEARCH staff; Dana Zander, Dawn Stone, Kalli Pethan, Mike Schneider and Mary Connors. Our interns for the 2020-21 school year are listed below:

<i>Seth Boegh</i>	<i>Yamera Childress</i>	<i>Jack Cutter</i>	<i>Samuel Esson</i>	<i>Tia Griswold</i>
<i>Cassandra Novotny</i>	<i>Abigale Pask</i>	<i>Owen Polak</i>	<i>Robert Schuhart</i>	<i>Bao Thor</i>
<i>Ellery Wolf-Dahl</i>				

Project SEARCH is a high school transition program; a unique, business led, one-year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. The focus is on helping youth with disabilities make successful transitions from school to adult life. Ascension Mercy and Franciscan Courts partner with the Oshkosh Area School District, Goodwill Industries, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other agency support services for the benefit of the interns.

Amy Brownson



## TRIMEDEX Donates to Project Linus Volunteer Group

A TRIMEDEX department within Ascension in Wisconsin (Ascension Calumet Hospital Chilton, Ascension Northeast Wisconsin Mercy Oshkosh and Ascension Northeast Wisconsin St. Elizabeth Appleton) has been collecting donations for about the past six months with the intent to benefit Project Linus.

Project Linus, based out of Belton, Missouri, collects homemade blankets and distributes them to children in hospitals, shelters, social service agencies or anywhere that a child might need the comfort of a blanket. After talking to the local Project Linus volunteers, it was surprisingly discovered that adult patients also benefit from this organization as well. Ascension Mercy received 326 blankets last year from the local Project Linus group.

The TRIMEDEX team (cost center in the Fox Valley, Wisconsin) had a contribution bucket in each of the shops with a suggested donation of \$1 and were able to raise over \$400 to benefit the charity. **John Nimmo**, Imaging Engineer III for Ascension Northeast Wisconsin Mercy Oshkosh, suggested the charity after experiencing a donation to his family firsthand. ***Congratulations and thank you to the Trimedex team and our Project Linus volunteer group for making a difference in the lives of others!***

Michael W. Smith, P.E., MBA, BSBET, AAS-BioMed  
Senior Site Manager, Fox Valley Wisconsin



(l-r) Mary Ann Bieber ProjectLinus (volunteer), John Nimmo (Imaging Tech III), Scott Miller (BioMed Tech III) and Mike Smith (Senior Site Manager).

## UW-Oshkosh Nursing Scholarships Awarded

The Ascension Mercy Hospital Volunteer (MHV) board is pleased to announce the recipients of the UWO Nursing MHV scholarships for the academic year 2020-2021. Two scholarships are awarded, and recipients are **Savanna Jagoditsh** and **Carly Szada**. Each scholarship of \$1,000 is applied to the cost of tuition. Each student has demonstrated financial need and excellent academic achievement.

## School of Radiology Scholarship

Ascension Mercy Hospital Volunteers are pleased to award one \$1000 scholarship to a student in the Marian University Radiologic Technology (RT) Program for the 2020 – 2021 academic year; **Andrea Madson** of Sheboygan. The scholarship of \$1,000 is applied to the cost of tuition. The recipient has demonstrated financial need and excellent academic achievement.

Bev Fretchel, Scholarship Chair

## FY 2021 MHV Board Meeting Schedule (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)

### BOARD MEETINGS

Mondays 9:30 am – 11:00 am usually in the Volunteer Services Multi-purpose Room

August 17, 2020 **Via Google Meet**

November 16, 2020 **Via Google Meet**

February 15, 2021

May 17, 2021

**GENERAL MEETING** – Cancelled due to COVID, watch your mailbox for the MHV annual report

## Mercy Hospital Volunteers Advisory Board

### Executive Board Slate of Officers for FY 2021 – FY 2022

Chairman: June Wiechman

Vice-Chairman: Sue Knobloch

Treasurer: Debbie Seekings

Secretary: Sue Boerschinger

### Committee Chairpersons (continued)

Bylaws: Sue Knobloch

Craft Projects: Karry VandenHeuvel

Gift Shop: Karen Chapin & Bev Fretchel

Hospitality: Pam Anderson

### Committee Chairpersons

Nominating: Sue Boerschinger

Scholarship: Bev Fretchel

Members at Large: Joan Bitter & OPEN

Community Health Education & Public Relations: Tom Wollangk

Fundraising: Pam Anderson, Diana Drew, Bev Fretchel, Peg Larson, Sandra Mitchell, Nancy

Reichenberger, Karry VandenHeuvel & Sue Boerschinger



# Volunteer Opportunities

## Crafty Volunteers Needed

We are currently accepting volunteer applications at [www.ascension.org/ascensionmercyvolunteer](http://www.ascension.org/ascensionmercyvolunteer), but due to COVID-19, onboarding of new on-site volunteers is on hold. We are in need of crafty volunteers to help with our off-site projects you can make at home: Here is a list of these needs:

- Sewn masks for our patients and visitors to use off site
- Sewn, knit, fleece or crocheted hats for cancer patients,
- Knit or crocheted hats for newborns,
- Sewn ice pack covers for our rehab patients
- Sewn pretty pockets for our surgical patients
- Sewn, Crocheted, knit, or fleece (sized 40X60 inches) blankets – for our Cancer, Rehab, ER, Birthplace, Pediatric and Patient Access patients
- Craft projects to be sold in the Gift Shop

For more information on these projects, please contact Volunteer Services at [MHVolun@ascension.org](mailto:MHVolun@ascension.org).



Lynn Mazingo with blankets donated by the Lakeside Quilters group



Kathy Martyna with baby hats she made and donated for our newborns



Ice Pak Covers made by Betty Pischke



Donated masks

# Health Watch

## Grief by Any Other Name is Still Grief

In my role as counselor, I have heard several people say in recent days, “I don’t know why I can’t get it together right now.” “I feel so exhausted, but I don’t do anything.” “I keep forgetting what day it is.” “I really miss people.” This weird cloud that is hanging over us in the quiet stores, the empty streets, and our own houses is grief. Sometimes we associate grief with death, however; *grief is also a normal reaction to any change or loss.*

Here are some things that may be causing you grief:

- Change of routine in work, school, and activities that used to order our time and keep our brains busy. In grieving, we lose track of time and concentration.
- Loss of contact with friends and family and not being in social settings. Grief makes us sad and lonely.
- Worries about when this will be over. “Will someone I know be infected? Will I lose my job? Will we make it financially?” Thoughts like these run through our minds. Grief can make us afraid.
- Negative feelings about the circumstances. “I feel impatient with my family. I wish this could end. I can only watch so many shows.” Grief makes us angry and irritable.

My advice: realize that you are grieving, and this is a normal response to circumstances.

- Grief comes in waves. Sometimes it is intense and other times not so bad. When it seems like it’s over, it hits you again. Be patient with yourself and expect ups and downs.
- Give yourself extra rest. Take frequent breaks to move around and think about something else. Get fresh air, sunshine, and get outside when you can.
- Watch out for addictive behaviors that make you feel good in the short term, but hurt in the long run, like overeating, oversleeping, over shopping, drinking alcohol, and online gambling.
- Try to accept where you are now. Look for the blessings in your life. Try to find some peace in the slower pace of life.

Excerpted from an Ascension WI EAP (Employee Assistance Program) resource

### **History Will Remember** *Adapted from Donna Ashworth*

History will remember when the world stopped and the flights stayed on the ground and the cars remained parked in the street and the trains didn't run.

History will remember when the schools closed and the children stayed indoors and the medical staff walked towards the fire and they didn't run away.

History will remember when the people sang from their balconies and porches, in isolation but so very much together in courage and in song.

History will remember when the people fought for their old and their weak and protected the vulnerable by simply doing nothing at all.

History will remember when the virus left and the houses opened and the people came out and hugged and kissed and greeted each other and started again, kinder than before.



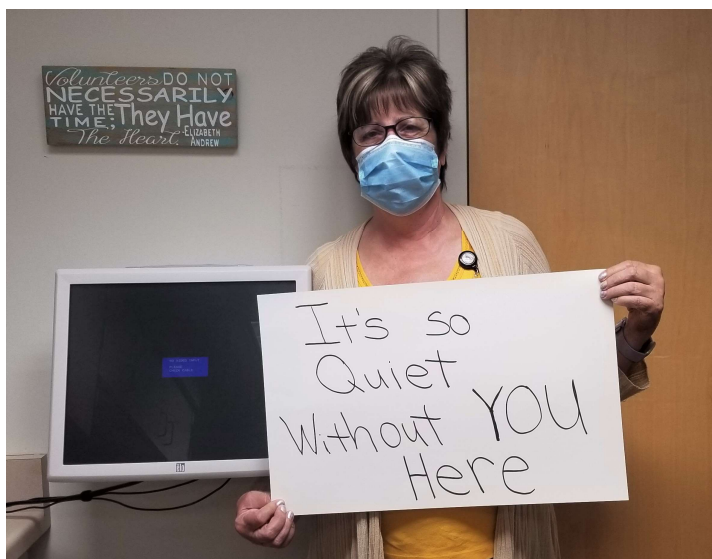
# Volunteers – Missing YOU in Action!



Birthplace Staff miss your sunshine smiles



Administration wants YOU back in the picture



Volunteer Services is so quiet without you



The Oakwood and Information desks sit sadly empty



Pharmacy Staff misses your support. Their work is compounding!



# Volunteers – Missing YOU in Action!



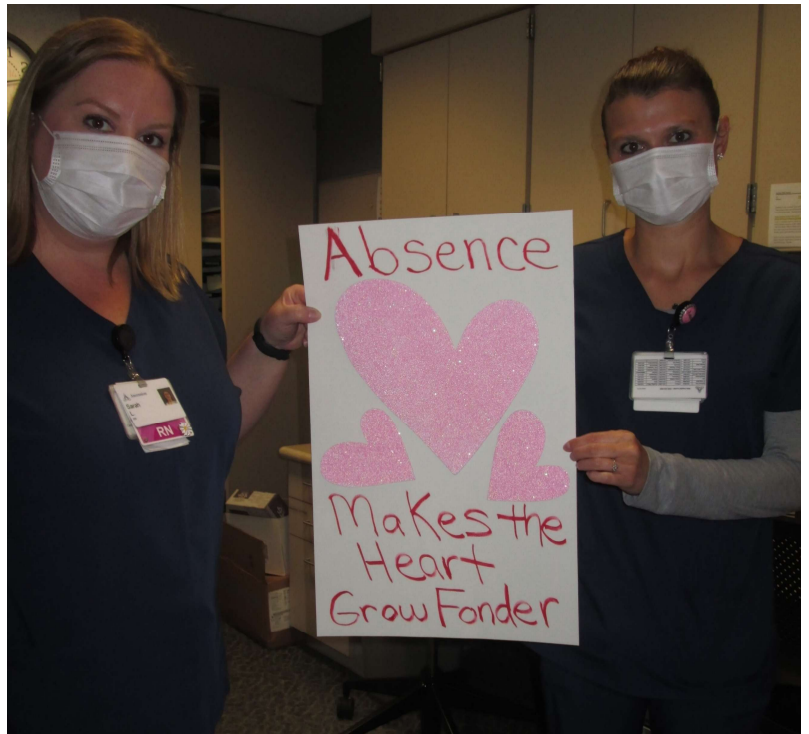
Outpatient Procedures is wishing you were here



Outpatient Testing wants you back in the picture



Reception staff are up in the air without you!



Patient Care Unit 1 staff with a message to you from the heart

# Health Care Advocacy

## COVID-19: State Medicaid Enrollment Rising; Similar National Trend.

*Wisconsin Hospital Association's (WHA) Eric Borgerding addresses payer mix challenges on WisBusiness podcast*

The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic toll it has taken on the nation's and state's economy is likely an important factor behind a recent increase in the number of citizens enrolled in the state's Medicaid programs. Wisconsin Medicaid enrollment numbers have grown since the pandemic first took major effect in March 2020, with overall enrollment increasing by nearly 72,000 people from March to May. The largest increase was in the Badger Care Plus program, with about 65,000 added to the rolls. This program includes children, pregnant women, parents/caretakers and childless adults.

WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding discussed the challenges hospitals and health systems face under these "payer-mix" changes in a recent "WisBusiness The Podcast Episode," first aired on June 19. Borgerding calls the COVID-19 pandemic "a one-two punch on health care right now," with hospitals first suffering significant revenue difficulties due to following federal directives to eliminate all non-emergency services and procedures in preparation for a possible COVID-19 case surge, and now facing further challenges as patients may move from employer-sponsored insurance to Medicaid or be uninsured altogether.

"As the general economy suffers and people lose their jobs and maybe lose their health insurance, or they transition onto a state government health care program like Medicaid where reimbursement for health care is far below the actual cost to provide health care – that creates another financial pressure," Borgerding says on the podcast. "Payer mix is changing – it's shifting from commercial health insurance to either no insurance or government programs like Medicaid. Just at a time when health care is still reeling from the financial impacts of shutting down services during COVID, there's going to be this trailing financial impact."

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## Upcoming Calendar of Events

August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	Fridays	Wear Fun Scrubs and Jeans	Hospital wide for onsite staff
August 19	Wednesday 11AM – 10PM	Dine Out Fundraiser	Benvenuto's – Dine in or Carry-out Mention MHV Fundraiser for 25% of your tab to be donated to MHV
October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30	Fridays	Wear Fun Scrubs and Jeans	Hospital wide for onsite staff