

SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital Auxiliary Newsletter

September 2026



**NO KID SLEEPS
ON THE FLOOR
IN OUR TOWN!**

You are invited

Ripon Community Hospital Auxiliary Luncheon
Monday, September 28, 2026
12 pm at Ripon Community Hospital
Green Lake Room

Ted Miller, representing Sleep in Heavenly Peace, will present on how this organization builds and donates beds to children in need in the Fond du Lac area so kids don't have to sleep on the floor.

To help support their mission, we will collect NEW twin size sheets, comforters (think sports, superheroes, butterflies, unicorns, etc. for elementary age children), mattress pad, or pillow at the luncheon.

Enjoy a homestyle meat lasagna buffet with all the fixings.
Cost of the luncheon is \$15 and can be paid at the door.

- RSVP to Diane Shady, Programs Chair, no later than **Thursday, September 17, 2026**, 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!

September 8 & 9
September 28
October 14 & 15
November 16
December 15

Mum Sale
RCH Auxiliary Luncheon
Partners State Convention
RCH Auxiliary Luncheon
Christmas Bake Sale

RCH Front Door
RCH Green Lake Room
Stoney Creek, La Crosse
Maplecrest, Douglas Street
RCH

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our Summer season is coming to an end. The mornings are slightly cooler, and it is getting dark earlier in the evening. All signs that we are approaching our Fall season.

We had a successful Spring Flower Sale with sales results of approximately \$2,825. Everyone is reporting how well the flowers they purchased did this summer. Now we are approaching our Fall Mum Sale scheduled on Tuesday, September 8, and Wednesday, September 9 in front of the Ripon Community Hospital starting at 9 am until 3 pm or until sold out. Put those dates on your calendar.

We held three successful brat fry fundraisers this summer. The two at HyVee resulted in profits of \$474.09 and \$397.75. The one at Crossroads Market raised \$356.50.

Our June Auxiliary Luncheon was held on June 22 at the hospital. DeAnn Thurmer was recognized by the Auxiliary and volunteers in honor of her retirement from the hospital on July 1. Nicole Gill is now serving in the hospital's lead role as vice president - clinical and operations administrator. Scholarship recipients were also recognized. The three honorees included Kyle Rieder, Ripon; Alyssa Schmidt, Princeton; and Mario Herrera, Markesan. While Mario did attend the luncheon, I am very happy to see Kyle working in the lab at the hospital this summer and will continue to do on his school breaks. Election of officers was also held with Mary Park elected as Secretary (2026-2028) and Bobbie Pollesch elected as Treasurer (2026-2028).

There was no board meeting held during the month of July as usual. No fundraising events were held either. Now we are back and making plans for the Fall events.

Remember the Annual Education sessions for Volunteers is scheduled on Tuesday, September 22 from 9-10 am and Thursday, September 24 from 1-2 pm in the Ripon Community Hospital Green Lake Room. Please contact Tara Rhodes if you have questions.

The September Auxiliary Fall Luncheon is set for Monday, September 28 at noon at the hospital. See invitation on the front page of the newsletter.

The 2026 Partners of WHA State Convention will be held on October 14 and 15, 2026 at Stoney Creek Inn, Onalaska, WI. If you have interest in attending, please contact a board member.

Our November Luncheon will again be held at Maplecrest on Douglas Street on Monday, November 16 at noon.

Lights of Love plans are being made with Bobbie Pollesch chairing the project. It was decided not to hold a formal program. More information will be coming in the near future.

As you can see, we have a very busy Fall ahead of us. Lots to do and enjoy. Looking forward to seeing you if you are able to attend. Take care and stay healthy.

Julie Stellmacher, SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital Auxiliary President

WHAT'S NEW AT SSM HEALTH RIPON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

An update from Nicole Gill, Vice President, Clinical & Operations 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.

CMS 5-star rating

SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital has been recognized by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as one of the top-performing hospitals in the nation, earning a prestigious CMS 5-Star Patient Survey Rating. In the CMS' most recent release of patient experience data, SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital was among 250 hospitals earning a five-star patient survey rating.

The CMS calculates patient survey star ratings from the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey, which summarizes patients' experiences during a recent hospital stay. A five-star mark is the highest rating on the survey's overall hospital rating measure. The data was last updated July 22 and made public August 13, and reflects surveys collected October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025.

DAISY & BEE Recognition Garden

When Desiree Stensrud, SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital inpatient nursing supervisor, looked around the organization, she realized many team members were receiving DAISY and BEE Award nominations that often went largely unseen.

While award recipients are recognized publicly, countless other caregivers and support staff receive heartfelt nominations from patients, families, coworkers, and providers for the difference they make every day.

Thanks to inspiration from a nursing school friend, Desiree created the DAISY & BEE Recognition Garden, a colorful display that symbolizes the partnership between caregivers and support staff. Flowers represent DAISY nominees and award recipients, while bees represent BEE nominees and recipients. Past DAISY winners are identified with yellow flowers, while past BEE winners are recognized with ribbons attached to their bees.

Mission in Motion Recognition Walls

At SSM Health hospitals in Fond du Lac, Ripon and Waupun, a new visual tribute is capturing the heart of what it means to live the mission each day.

The SSM Health Mission in Motion recognition wall was thoughtfully developed to serve as a visible and meaningful representation of the Mission and Values of SSM Health in action. More than a display, it reflects the people, moments, and meaningful connections that define a culture rooted in compassion, excellence, community, stewardship, respect, and exceptional care.



"This wall is so much more than a collection of names or photos," according to Elle Yeates, SSM Health Regional Director of Mission Integration with all three hospitals. "It's a powerful reminder of the countless ways our team members bring our mission to life every day - often through simple, quiet acts that make a profound difference."

By highlighting team members whose actions embody the mission, the recognition wall transforms stories into something tangible - making them personal, inspiring, and accessible to all who pass by. Visitors, patients, and colleagues alike are invited to pause, reflect and feel the impact of those who go above and beyond in service to others.

Ripon Chair Yoga program

SSM Health has awarded a \$4,000 Community Health funding gift to the City of Ripon Parks and Recreation Department to support its Chair Yoga program, helping expand access to physical activity, social connection and wellness opportunities for community members.

The funding will help offset the cost of offering Chair Yoga classes led by Tracy Matthias, owner and instructor of Lotus Root Yoga LLC in downtown Ripon. Chair Yoga is a fully seated class designed to improve strength, balance, flexibility, range of motion, and overall well-being while remaining accessible for individuals with mobility limitations, chronic health conditions or those seeking a low-impact form of exercise. The program is part of Ripon Parks and Recreation's broader Community Yoga initiative.

DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses

Ally Bentley, RN, Emergency Room, has been named a DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses winner at SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital. The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses® is part of The DAISY Foundation's mission to recognize the extraordinary, compassionate nursing care they provide patients and families every day. Nurses may be nominated by patients, families, and colleagues.

Ally was nominated for the care she offered to a young patient with a complex medical history and past traumatic care experiences. *"He was fearful and resistant to procedures due to previous experiences. Nurse Ally Bentley built trust by taking time to connect with him, listening to his fears, and using a trauma-informed approach. She asked others to step out, worked one-on-one with him, and successfully completed all necessary tests without escalating his anxiety. Her compassionate care, including small comforts like adjusting lighting and providing warm blankets, helped him feel safe and empowered."*

Retirement

After nearly 34 years of incredible service as a health care communicator, Shelly Haberman has made the decision to retire. It is difficult to put into words the tremendous contributions Shelly has made throughout her career. She spent many years with Agnesian HealthCare before it became part of SSM Health, and for the past several years has been an invaluable member of our communications team.

Shelly's passion for her work, unwavering dedication, strong relationships both inside and outside the organization, and remarkable work ethic have made a lasting impact on our ministry. She is a collaborative teammate who is deeply respected and genuinely cherished by all of us. Her knowledge, professionalism and commitment have helped strengthen our team and support countless initiatives over the years.

Shelly's last day with SSM Health will be October 2, 2026. Watch for details as we welcome our new communications team member.

TREASURER'S UPDATE

Financial Report - Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2026

Here are the financial results for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, compared to the three previous years.

We raised \$11,067 after expenses from the fundraisers of Lights of Love, Christmas Bake Sale, Flower Basket Sale, Mum Sale, Easter Bake Sale, Brat Fry Fundraisers, and Store Roundup. We also received \$606 in donations and earned \$1,249 for interest paid on CD investments.

Gift Shop sales were 2% less in FY 2026 than in FY 2025. Net Gift Shop profit was \$18,697.

Three \$1,500 scholarships were awarded this Spring. We provided funds for a bariatric stretcher for the Emergency Department (ED), two iPads for inpatients, a dental box for the ED, front door automation, supplies for the Samaritan Clinic, and SSM Health for some of its programs. We purchased supplies for the inpatient hospitality cart and sewing committee. We purchased five subscriptions to the Ripon Commonwealth Press for inpatients. We also provided an appreciation treat for the hospital and clinic staff that was very well received.

Cash and CDs remaining at the end of the fiscal year was \$54,430, enabling us to make a significant donation to Ripon Community Hospital in fiscal year 2027. We had 31 paid members in fiscal year 2026 who did great and important work for the hospital and the community. Thank you to all.

RCH Auxiliary, Inc. Treasurer's Report - June 2026

Treasurer's Report	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
June 30	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
INCOME				
Fundraising	\$ 23,959.75	\$ 26,175.69	\$22,716.64	\$19,842.07
Donations	391.17	378.08	171.43	605.93
Membership Dues	320.00	310.00	350.00	372.00
Gift Shop Sales	26,999.40	34,977.34	42,104.59	41,181.70
Interest Income	-	-	1,457.67	1,248.75
Total Income	\$51,670.32	\$ 61,841.11	\$66,800.33	\$63,250.45
EXPENSES				
Fundraising Expenses	\$11,027.67	\$11,150.59	\$9,600.52	\$8,774.80
Luncheons	15.60	290.51	408.16	223.17
State Conventions/District Meetings	484.50	888.38	80.00	1,164.62
Organization Expenses	208.63	151.72	279.57	425.91
Gift Shop Expenses	17,717.80	22,062.74	28,821.48	23,247.60
Total Expenses	\$29,454.20	\$34,543.94	\$39,189.73	\$33,836.10
Net Income Before Distributions	\$22,216.12	\$ 27,297.17	\$27,610.60	\$29,414.35
DISTRIBUTIONS				
Scholarships	3,000.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00
Donations for RCH/SSM Health	10,303.83	16,037.67	8,527.93	30,585.40
Total Distributions	\$13,303.83	\$20,537.67	\$13,027.93	\$35,085.40
NET INCOME AFTER DISTRIBUTIONS	\$8,912.29	\$6,759.50	\$ 14,582.67	\$(5,671.05)
CASH/CD BALANCES	\$43,246.38	\$33,114.92	\$ 61,484.61	\$54,430.40

Bobbie Pollesch, Treasurer

Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."

~Albert Camus



VOLUNTEER SERVICES UPDATE

- Annual education time is right around the corner! Optional in-person sessions for hospital volunteers are scheduled at Ripon Community Hospital for Tuesday, September 22 at 9 am and Thursday, September 24 at 1 pm. All active volunteers who do not attend an optional in-person session will receive a packet mailed to their home which will contain required paperwork that must be completed and returned.
- Since its start in June, the Community Art Wall (coordinated by Volunteer Services) featured artists' work from Art MidWisconsin, Diverse Options, and Ripon Boys and Girls Club. The Green Lake School District will fill frames with artwork in October, followed by Ripon College in November. Thank you to the Agnesian HealthCare Foundation for supporting this program which is enjoyed by all who visit our hospital. Next time you are the hospital, check out the artwork located on the first floor, just to the left of the elevator.
- Thank you to Stuart's Landscaping for its recent donation to the RCH Auxiliary of an additional Lights of Love tree and updated landscaping!
- Did you know that all active volunteers and Auxiliary members can use their SSM Health badge to receive various benefits? If you need a badge, please reach out!
- Volunteer Services schedules hospital blood drives...mark your calendars: November 17, 2026 and May 18, 2027 for the next drives in Ripon.
- Our current volunteers are our best recruiters! Do you know of anyone who would be interested in becoming a Mobile Meal driver or Gift Shop volunteer? To apply, go to www.ssmhealth.com > scroll to bottom > click on *Volunteer*



For more information, please contact Tara Rhodes at 920-926-4955 or Tara.Rhodes@ssmhealth.com
Interested in

Tara Rhodes, Volunteer Coordinator

MEMBERSHIP

Could You Possibly Volunteer To Work...

* Front desk, flower sales, bake sales, gift shop, brat fry, Lights of Love

Serve on Board...

Vice President, Newsletter, Scholarship, Sunshine ...

*Brat sales, Lights of Love, Fundraising Chair

And they said YES

*Radene Abel

*Barb Behlen

*Sue Leonard

Thank you all for your time and devoted work.

You are a part of this amazing group, invite your friends to join us!

Jackie Halverson, Chairperson, Membership



Time to pay your \$15 dues for 2026-27

Let us pause for a moment of quiet. In the rush of organizing, planning, and supporting our hospital, it is easy to focus strictly on the tasks ahead of us. but the heart of an auxiliary, isn't found just in the events we run or the funds we raise - it is found in our shared intention to bring comfort into a place of healing. Every small kindness you offer creates an environment of trust. Let us listen well, encourage one another, and remember that our time and compassion truly matter to the life of the hospital and the people in its care.

~Anonymous

COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION

How to Afford Mental Health Care

As we continue working on ways to educate our membership on resilience/recovery, accessing, and advocating for mental health, we also look into how to pay for mental health therapy. Therapy can be life changing. It can give you a safe space to work through mental health struggles and provide you with the skills to cope. It can help you heal from pain in your past, increase your confidence, and send you on your way feeling stronger. Going to therapy can be a fantastic tool to help lead you to a happy, fulfilling life full of clear goals and strong relationships. Sounds simple, right? Not so fast...

Yes, therapy can be an amazingly positive experience. But the cost of an average session can be anywhere from \$75 to \$200. For some, that cost just is not realistic. If you don't have insurance, or if your insurance doesn't cover mental health services, you may not know what to do next. We believe therapy is a resource that everyone should have access to, and fortunately, other people do too.

Here are five reasonably priced ways you can work therapy into your life.

1. Ask your therapist about their sliding scale options. A sliding scale is an option that you can address before or during your first session with a therapist. Many therapists will adjust their hourly fee to match your income or base it on the financial resources you must put toward therapy. You just need to ask. It can also be an option if you've already been seeing a therapist and need to reevaluate your spending. Imagine you've found your dream therapist. Everything's going great: you're comfortable, the sessions feel productive, and you're truly benefiting from their help. But suddenly your life takes a U-turn, and you find that your finances are in a tough spot. You can't afford their services anymore, what now? Don't panic. Start a dialogue with your therapist and explain your situation to them. Not all therapists will provide a sliding scale to their clients, but it doesn't hurt to ask.
2. Look into a University Health Clinic program. If you happen to live near a university or college connected with an outpatient psychology program, there are students that are hungry to help at little to no cost. They have been given the same information as a seasoned therapist, but they won't have the same number of years under their belt, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. A university intern or resident could be a great fit in your search for a therapist. Give your local university a call and ask if they have an outpatient psychology program for the general public.
3. Group therapy can be an option. For some who are struggling with mental health issues, it can feel very isolating, and the support of a community can be extremely helpful. Group therapy typically costs about a third of the price of an individual session. You can share your story, hear from others dealing with similar issues, receive advice from a professional, and avoid the added stress of cost. While not the classic style of therapy most people would imagine, this could be the right fit for some. Community mental health centers near you should be able to guide you toward a certified group therapist that can be the most beneficial to you.
4. Take it Online. There are many resources available online or through an app - and you don't even need to leave your couch! While these aren't as low-cost as the other options, this is still a great alternative for some. It can also be the best resource for someone with a packed schedule. Online help services like Talkspace and Better Help are on the more affordable end of the spectrum, with costs ranging from \$45-\$70 per week. A huge added benefit to this is the ability to message your therapist anytime and anywhere. You can even video chat if you crave a face-to-face experience.
5. Utilize the benefits of a nationwide non-profit. Open Path is a national non-profit network of mental health professionals that are committed to providing therapy at a reduced rate. Therapist fees are between \$30-60 a session, and there's a whole slew of professionals for you to choose from. This is a great option for people wanting to access in-person, high-quality services at an affordable price.

Article by Donna Nelson, Partners of WHA, Community Health Education Chairperson

Jackie Halverson, Chairperson, Community Health Education

PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION

2026 Quarter 2 Wisconsin Hospitals Quality Snapshots

This snapshot showcases important metrics and achievements that reflect the commitment by Wisconsin hospitals and providers to deliver high quality health care. Additionally, the snapshot offers an overview of how Wisconsin compares nationally and where it excels in promoting health and safety across the state's health care facilities.



*Wisconsin
Hospitals Lead
the Nation in
Quality Care*

According to the latest CMS Overall Hospital Star Ratings, Wisconsin hospitals rank fourth in the nation overall, showcasing strong performance.

- Wisconsin ranks first in the country when focusing on states with more than 50 hospitals.
- 64% of WI hospitals earned a 4 or 5-star rating, compared to about 42% nationally. This places Wisconsin fourth in the nation overall.

Healthgrades recognizes 28 Wisconsin hospitals with the Outstanding Patient Experience Award.

- Only hospitals in the top 15% of those surveyed were recognized.

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- Only hospitals in the top 15% of those surveyed were recognized.

Eight Wisconsin hospitals have earned the 2026 Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals Rankings by Chartis.

- From this top 100 group, Wisconsin stood out prominently, with two hospitals earning Top 20 Critical Access Hospitals distinction.

Increasing from 64% in 2021 to 71% in 2025, SEP 01-Sepsis Bundle compliance has improved over the last five years.

- Additionally, Wisconsin hospitals have maintained top 10 national performance during this timeframe.

Complete report can be found at: https://www.wha.org/getmedia/3686e5ec-8ce8-4f62-a7a0-bf265e88c7fd/2026_QualitySnapshot_Q2.pdf

GIFT SHOP

Ready for fall, school starting, lower temperatures, and fall colors?

We are getting ready in the gift shop with our new fall decorations. We continue to get in new items, some of the latest are Luumii Lights, a new line of jewelry including charm bracelets, earrings, and necklaces and fall themed decorations.

I hope you have a chance to stop in the gift shop to check out these new items and thank you for your continued support. It is very much appreciated.

*Jeanne Payton, Gift Shop,
Chairperson*





FUNDRAISING

Mum Sale

As autumn approaches, subtle hints of the changing season emerge - golden sunlight slanting through trees and the melodic chirping of crickets signal summer's end. Our annual Fall Mum Sale returns on Tuesday and Wednesday following Labor Day, at 9 am conveniently located at the hospital's front entrance.

These vibrant chrysanthemums offer the perfect opportunity to add rich, seasonal color to your landscape. We invite you to spread the word to family and friends to stop and shop at the sale. Volunteers are needed to assist with the event, so if you have some spare time, your help would be greatly appreciated. Contact Radene if you can assist with the sale at 920-229-9827.

Other questions can be directed to Sue Leonard, new Project Chairperson at 920-740-7194.



Christmas Bake Sale

Believe it or not it's time to look for your favorite cookie, bar, sweet bread, snack mix or candy recipes for the bake sale on December 15.

Plan to make and buy some delicious treats!

 **SSMHealth.**
Ripon Community Hospital

Mum Sale 2026



Join the SSM Health Ripon Community Hospital Auxiliary

**Tuesday, September 8 &
Wednesday, September 9 • 9 am - 5 pm**

Ripon Community Hospital Main Entrance • 845 Parkside Street

The sale will feature a choice of high-quality and multicolored 9- and 10- inch fall blooming plants with some new choices added. These include mums in various colors, lavender, black-eyed Susan's, coneflowers, fireworks fountain grass and zinnias.

Prices range from \$15 to \$25 each.

Cash • Check • Employee Quick Charge • Credit Cards

All proceeds will support Ripon Community Hospital programs and services.

For more information, call (920) 229-9827.

2026 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 at this time. We will continue to work with them to determine the use of the Lights of Love proceeds.

The tree will be lit on December 10, and the list of names will be published on the system website. Names will also be in the Lights of Love book in the hospital lobby.

Please support this very meaningful event.

Bobbie Pollesch. Lights of Love Chairperson

Seu Leonard, Chairperson, Fundraising





2026 Partners of WHA State Convention Wednesday, October 14, and Thursday, October 15, 2026 La Crosse, WI

Keynote speaker is Patty Hendrickson, a well-known engaging and inspirational leadership speaker. Check out her website at <https://pattyhendrickson.com>.

A CEO panel of hospital executives with Partners of WHA presence in their hospitals will once again update us on the continued challenges of providing quality healthcare in our state. Kari Hofer, Senior VP, External Affairs and Member Engagement of WHA will serve as the moderator.

Round Table discussions will be on topics submitted by members.

The following workshop sessions are planned: Active Response Training, Before the After - Causeway Interfaith Volunteers, Chair Yoga, Dementia Live® - La Crosse County ADRC, "Don't Let Your Think Tank Hit Empty" (HeartMath), Empath (Emergency Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment, and Healing), Essential Oils, Nourish to Flourish - Registered Dietitian and Role in Enhancing the Patient Experience.

Plan to visit vendors on Thursday (October 15) before the conference opening and during conference breaks. There will also be 2 or 3 traveling gift shops on Wednesday with the option of also staying on Thursday. Vender displays on Thursday only.

More information available at: <https://www.partnersofwha.org/copy-of-2025-conference-annual-meeting>

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Time to stop and shop!

