

Advancing Health...

SPRING/SUMMER 2024

CARING FOR PEOPLE

A NEWSLETTER FOR DONORS AND FRIENDS OF THE ASPIRUS HEALTH FOUNDATION



ASPIRUS FOUNDATIONS INTEGRATE TO PROVIDE ENHANCED PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

Earlier this year our Aspirus foundations integrated to become a unified charitable foundation. **Aspirus Medford Foundation, Aspirus Merrill Foundation** and **Aspirus Stevens Point Foundation** joined in officially integrating with the **Aspirus Health Foundation**.

As a **unified Aspirus Health Foundation**, we are working together to build important relationships with our passionate supporters, and to develop critical resources needed to support Aspirus Health in its mission to heal people, promote health and strengthen communities.

Growth in our fundraising efforts is more important than ever as the health care industry faces mounting financial challenges. While many other health systems

have furloughed staff, closed clinics, and reduced services, Aspirus Health has achieved strength through thoughtful growth, disciplined alignment, and rigorous improvement. Most recently, Aspirus Health completed an affiliation with St. Luke's Health System in Duluth, Minnesota, to create a comprehensive health system. This affiliation enhances our ability to maintain and add new services, advance innovation and quality of care, and retain the highest quality physicians and clinicians.

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Through the years, your generosity has been the cornerstone of our ability to provide exceptional care and support for our patients and families, and to grow in the ways we are. We hope you will continue to walk alongside us as partners in enhancing the health and well-being of our local communities. Together we can make a profound difference in the lives of those who rely on us for hope, healing and compassion.

We are excited for the possibilities that lie ahead and are deeply thankful for your continued support.

With gratitude,



Lanna Scannell

*Vice President, System Philanthropy
Aspirus Health Foundation*

INTRODUCING OUR NEW MAJOR GIFTS OFFICER

We are pleased to welcome Gregg Gutschow to our Aspirus Health Foundation team.

Gregg joined the Foundation in April as a major gifts officer. Within his new role, he serves as a resource through the Aspirus Health System, primarily supporting the Stevens Point community, growing a culture of philanthropy and building relationships with those who have a passion for health care and the health of our communities.

Prior to joining Aspirus, Gregg had been with the Tomorrow River School District where he oversaw fundraising, public relations, and communications efforts for the Amherst school district. He has an extensive history of marketing and fundraising and holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Gregg Gutschow



EXPANDING CARE FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS

ASPIRUS MEDFORD HOSPITAL LAUNCHES SANE PROGRAM

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) reports that about 1.2 million Wisconsin adults have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime and often by someone they know. Aspirus Medford Hospital recently became the seventh Aspirus hospital that now offers direct local access to a SANE program in its emergency department.

“SANE stands for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner,” says Kaci Klemm, RN, Director of Emergency Services and SANE Coordinator at Aspirus Medford Hospital. “At Aspirus, we have a team of nurses with specialized training to perform medical and forensic examinations for adolescents and adults who have been assaulted.”

The experience of sexual assault is deeply devastating for patients and their loved ones. To help begin the healing process, the nurses of the Aspirus SANE program provide compassionate care and treatment.

Your gifts to the Aspirus Health Foundation help nurses receive the specialized training, equipment and supplies needed to help during a difficult time.

With generous donor support, we recently purchased a cart and locking mechanism that will maximize accessibility, portability and patient safety,” shared Amanda Lang, Foundation lead in Medford. She noted, “When patients present to the emergency department, they are brought to a dedicated, safe and private environment where an exam will take place.

“We are proud to add this important program in Medford that excels in providing highly specialized clinical care in concert with the compassion needed under difficult circumstances,” said Dale Hustedt, President, Aspirus Northwest WI Division.

Because of your support, we’re helping people in important ways. SANE nurses receive extensive and ongoing training, mentoring and certification to provide the best care to victims of sexual assault and abuse.

PART OF OUR TEAM THAT IS HELPING TO EXPAND CARE FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS



Left to right : Amy Riegert, Registered Nurse, SANE Program Coordinator; Kaci Klemm, RN, Director of Emergency Services and SANE Coordinator at Aspirus Medford Hospital; Jessica Faude, RN-BC, Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer for the Aspirus Northwest, Wisconsin Division; and Dale Hustedt, President, Aspirus Northwest Wisconsin Division.



THREE BRIDGES RECOVERY

CONNECTING PATIENTS TO CRITICAL SERVICES

Your gifts help Aspirus Health partner with Three Bridges Recovery to provide substance use disorder related services to Aspirus facilities in Wood, Portage, Marathon, Langlade, and Taylor counties. Three Bridges Recovery aids patients who enter Aspirus emergency departments experiencing a substance overdose or withdrawal. Operating on an on-call basis, recovery coaches and peer support specialists engage with patients to encourage treatment utilization, reduce emergency department visits, and most importantly **SAVE LIVES!**

“We often see patients in our emergency departments with addictions to alcohol, opioids such as fentanyl, or methamphetamine,” said Mason Lucca, Director of Nursing at Aspirus Wausau Hospital Emergency Department. “It takes more than medicines; it takes people, it takes a community to really have a recovery last.”

Each recovery coach and peer support specialist has experienced addiction and recovery, so they are able to relate to a patient on a different level than someone who hasn't wrestled with addiction.

Last year, your gift helped Three Bridges Recovery serve 277 people in its recovery program.

From the moment a recovery coach connects with a patient in an emergency department, the coaching relationship begins and continues throughout the patient's journey to recovery. The recovery coach helps the person with goal planning, establishing primary care, getting a job, connecting them to resources and modeling healthy lifestyles to encourage them to be the best version of themselves and achieve their concept of success. They provide support to increase both availability and accessibility to various pathways of recovery through coaching, mentoring,

accountability, and peer behavior modeling.

There is no cost to those they serve because of your support and generosity.

Three Bridges Recovery recently shared a story of how a coach met with a patient in the Aspirus Wausau Hospital emergency department. The man had overdosed three times in one day. The first two times he would not agree to medical transport to the emergency department. The third time a recovery coach was able to meet with him. The man said, "I am sick and tired of being sick and tired." This statement resonated with the coach because he had experienced similar feelings when he was a substance user. The man had two small children and a wife. Upon meeting with the peer, he was connected

to detox services. From detox he was able to go to a treatment center and upon leaving the treatment center, Three Bridges Recovery had an aftercare plan in place. He soon gained employment, got a reliable vehicle and became the father he had dreamed of being. Still to this day, Three Bridges staff report he is clean and sober and doing well.

Because of your philanthropic support, this has been a successful partnership that is addressing a significant issue in our communities.

THANK YOU!

A GIFT OF GRATITUDE FROM A GRATEFUL PATIENT

Health care is a very personal experience, and one that brings us closer to others. Grateful patient Lori Kyhos recently made a gift to the Aspirus Hero program to honor her health care hero Dr. Ronald Miles. Dr. Miles is with Aspirus Heart and Lung Surgery at Aspirus Wausau Hospital, and with Lori's special gift, he is the first provider to receive 25 awards.

Lori shared: ***"I am forever grateful for Dr. Ronald Miles for the excellent care & compassion he provided for me when he did my heart surgery. Being a more challenging case due to another condition, he put my mind at ease with his amazing bedside manner. He was very thorough explaining things before and after the surgery. He genuinely cares and it shows. Thank you for saving my life!"***

We are grateful for our Aspirus Heros, and for recognition of their work. Every gift is important; every gift is appreciated; every gift makes a difference!

When you contribute to the Aspirus Hero grateful patient program, you recognize and celebrate the

excellent care you or your loved one received from Aspirus Health. Donations like this pave the way for our avenues of healing and hope while giving support to hospital programs, services and greatest needs for our patients and community.

Thank you, Lori, for your special gift to recognize your health care hero!

Congratulations to Dr. Miles (4th from the right) who was joined by his team to receive his surprise recognition with a special pin for his 25th Hero Award.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE 2023 FESTIVAL OF TREES

It was wonderful to see so many familiar (and new!) faces at the annual Festival of Trees event in Weston. Thank you for joining us. If you were not able to be there, we missed you! Thanks to your generosity, **together, \$214,118 was raised** with proceeds to support compassionate care through Aspirus Comfort Care & Hospice Services and the Aspirus Family House.

The annual Festival of Trees, held during Thanksgiving week, is the largest fundraising event for Aspirus Health Foundation. Families, friends, businesses, clubs and organizations create a glittering forest of holiday trees, wreaths, mantels and specialty items all decorated and donated by incredible community members for our silent auction and raffle.

Thank you to our amazing sponsors, decorators, donors, volunteers, committee, performers, guests, and winners who made the Annual Festival of Trees a huge success!

GET INVOLVED IN 2024!

Contact **Kim Smerda** at
kim.smerda@aspirus.org



FAMILY HOUSE GUEST EXPRESSES GRATITUDE

Dee stayed at the Aspirus Family House in Wausau for four weeks while needing to receive daily radiation therapy. She was so grateful to be able to stay, since she had very early morning appointments and lived an hour and half away in a small rural community.

“Family House felt like a home!” shared Dee. “Staff made me feel welcome from the very first day I was there and they are very compassionate and caring. I really didn’t want to leave. I met so many caring people and have made a lot of friends.”

The comforts of the family room and dining room is where Dee often spent her time, but she also appreciated the ease to slip back to her room for a nap when she got tired or just needed to be by herself. Family House staff member Shelly recalls how helpful Dee was and that she would even share her food. She said another guest once wanted soup but didn’t have any. Dee happily offered a can she had.

Aspirus Family House provides opportunities for those going through what can be stressful situations to come together as a group where they can support one another.

With the help of generous and compassionate donors like you, we can continue to leave the lights on and the doors open for those who need to travel for care.



FESTIVAL of TREES

GIVING A LIFT TO PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Hospitals face significant challenges with the dual issue of safe patient handling and minimizing work-related staff injuries. Thanks to you, we were able to fulfill a need for patient lifts, a gift most appreciated by the nurses at Aspirus Merrill Hospital.

“Thank you to the Foundation for purchasing the new in-ceiling patient lifts,” said Elida Berndt, RN. *“It allows me to care for our patients, knowing their safety and the safety of the caregiver is a top priority.”*

The lift system is attached to the ceiling of the room, allowing a patient to be lifted out of bed and moved throughout their room, reducing the risk of injury to both the patient and nursing staff.

“We would not have been able to provide this capability without the help of philanthropic gifts,” said Jane Bentz, who leads Foundation efforts at Aspirus Merrill Hospital, noting that gifts helped purchase six lifts for the Medical-Surgery Unit and Surgery and Emergency departments.

The lifts were purchased with gifts made to support the Aspirus Merrill Hospital Priority Support fund within the Aspirus Health Foundation.

“This is a wonderful demonstration honoring our promise to donors, patients, staff and the community who have given to help equip and provide support for our local hospital to better meet the needs of families in our community.”

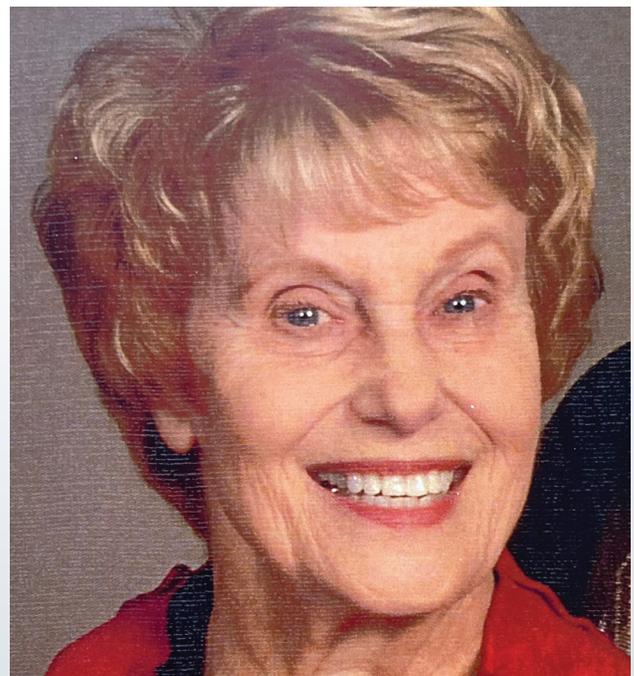
SUE HALL PATIENT CARE FUND SUPPORTS PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CANCER

Making a positive difference in people’s lives was a passion for Sue Hall, who has left a legacy following her death in January 2023.

Having survived a diagnosis of stage 4 colon-liver cancer, Sue developed a passion for helping others. In 1998, she helped start a Living with Cancer support group at the former St. Michael’s Hospital in Stevens Point to support cancer survivors. In 2009, she and close friend Anne Swenson created a Circle of Hope fund with the then Saint Michael’s Foundation, raising money through Circle of Hope bracelet sales and other donations to provide community programs, education, and support to those living with and affected by cancer.

“Sue demonstrated dedication and persistence in serving the Stevens Point community,” said Swenson, ***who worked the Aspirus Foundation after Sue’s passing to rename the Circle of Hope Fund the Sue Hall Cancer Patient Care Fund to honor Sue’s passionate work. “Sue impacted Stevens Point in many ways. With this fund, and through her work, she has made a lasting difference on our community.”***

Gifts to the Sue Hall Cancer Patient Care fund help provide support for patients within Portage County and Central Wisconsin who are living with or affected by cancer.



Sue Hall



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aspirus.org

LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY!

Are you looking for a way to make a future gift to help further the Mission of Aspirus Health and help us care for others? Consider a gift made through your Will or estate plan.

- A charitable bequest is one of the easiest and most flexible ways you can leave a gift to the Aspirus Health Foundation and make a lasting impact. Simply designate the Aspirus Health Foundation as a beneficiary of your retirement account (IRA, 401 (k), 403 (b) or pension) or life insurance policy.
- IRA Rollover – If you are age 70½ or older and have an IRA, you may avoid taxes by using your annual IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to make a charitable gift to support the Aspirus Health Foundation. Your tax preparer or financial advisor can help you learn more about the benefits.
- Beneficiary Designation Gifts – When you designate the Aspirus Health Foundation as a beneficiary of an asset like a retirement, investment or bank account or life insurance policy the asset bypasses probate and can make an immediate impact for good.

Please contact us if you would like information about how you can make a meaningful gift that will help others, for generations to come.

PLEASE CONTACT US TODAY, HELP OTHERS AND LEAVE A LEGACY!

ONLINE
[www.aspirus.org/
foundation](http://www.aspirus.org/foundation)

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