

# Aspirus Volunteers Newsletter

Winter 2023/2024



## From Yo

### GRATITUDE

Gratitude makes one appreciate what we have, rather than what we don't. Gratitude can change lives because paying attention to the simple things in life can be a powerful source of inspiration.

Learning to be grateful helps us appreciate the things we may take for granted, which can bring about a deep satisfaction that fulfills and nourishes us. It doesn't mean that we deny the fact that negative things happen (that would be delusional!). It means finding something to be grateful for, amid the struggles and chaos. And, gratitude has been proven to generate a positive impact on psychological, physical, and personal wellbeing.

I am grateful for so many things (my family, health, and freedom). I am also especially thankful that we are now able to have our volunteers back, and our Gift Shop and Coffee Shop open again. And, of course, coming into Aspirus every day to see so many wonderful volunteers. Each of you show the JOY you have in life with all the ways you give back.

Thank you to each of you for showing us how wonderful you are, each time you volunteer to help others.



Yo Voigt  
Director of Volunteers & Guest Services

## Take 'Small Steps' to Walk Safely This Season

The first snowflakes of the season may already be flying. With that in mind, Aspirus encourages all volunteers to take 'small steps' to walk safely this winter so that you can enjoy whatever it is you like to do. Here are some helpful tips to keep in mind as the temperature drops and Old Man Winter returns:

- Wear appropriate footwear and carry in your shoes.
- Always use designated pathways and crosswalks.
- Slow down and pay attention – ice could form at any moment.
- Be patient – leave yourself ample travel time and watch for hidden obstacles.
- Wipe your feet to avoid leaving water or snow in walkways.
- Clear all entrances and walkways of ice and snow as well as properly sand and salt.
- Notify the volunteer office to address any hazardous parking lot conditions.
- Preventing falls is everyone's responsibility!



## Aspirus Mission

We heal people, promote health and strengthen communities.





# WAVE Award Winners

The Aspirus Wausau Hospital (AWH) and Aspirus Merrill volunteers were each recognized at the 2023 Partners of WHA Wisconsin Awards for Volunteer Excellence (WAVE) ceremony.

The Wausau volunteers were recognized for their work with the Aspirus Family House in the category of Community Service. The award presentation was held at the Partners of WHA conference in October. AWH President, Jeff Wicklander, was in attendance as well.

The main goal of the Family House is to provide a home-like, supportive, and restful lodging experience for patients and families dealing with serious illness or medical crisis.



*Tasha Stencil, Aspirus Family House Manager, accepting the WAVE award from Pat Freeders, Partners of WHA WAVE Committee Chair.*



# Welcome New Volunteers

## Aspirus Wausau Hospital

- Milana Bublik – NICU Office VolunTeen
- Hannah Trush – NICU Office VolunTeen
- Krystal Hartis – Cancer Center
- Judy Frymark – NICU Cuddler
- Kara Nyhus – NICU Cuddler
- Jeanne Wunsch – NICU Cuddler
- Tanya Paschke – NICU Cuddler
- Heather Van Dalfsen – NICU Cuddler
- Michelle Pozorski – NICU Cuddler
- Chesney Eberlein – NICU Cuddler
- Ashley Downing – NICU Cuddler



## Hospice - Wausau

- John Igers – Hospice House
- Julie Kramer – Knitter/Crocheter/Sewer
- Anthony Lewis – Hospice House
- Evelyn Thome – Hospice House
- Kathy King – Hospice Homecare
- Barry Levine – Hospice House
- Mai Kao Hang – Hospice House

## Seasons of Life

### Hospice House – Woodruff

- Carla Simmons
- Linda Caldart-Olson
- Lynn Kenney
- Judy Lakota
- James Russler
- Angela Schuh
- Brian & Kate Drerup
- Lori Shepherd

### LeRoy Hospice - Antigo

- Aurora Kuntz
- Robert & Danette Raganyi
- James Fabian



# Calendar of Events

January 10

Volunteers Cookie Sale

March 19

Volunteers Board of Directors meeting

March 20

WI Hospital Association Advocacy Day

April 21 - 28

National Volunteer Week

April 24

Volunteers Annual Banquet (Mark your calendars)

May 28

Volunteers Board of Directors meeting & STAR review





## Community Health Education

by *Kitty Switlick, Community Health Education, NC District*

### Depression

In keeping with our theme of mental health, this article will address the topic of depression.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of emptiness, sadness, and inability to feel pleasure. It is a common and serious medical condition that affects how we think, feel and act. If left untreated it can negatively impact our home life, work life, relationships, and our overall wellbeing. A person with depression may have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities and sometimes feel as if life isn't worth living. It is the leading cause of disability worldwide.

Depression can occur at any time and affects all ages. According to the American Psychological Association (APA) depression affects approximately one in fifteen adults (6.7%) in any given year. Women are more likely than men to experience depression and there is a high degree of heritability (approximately 40%) when first degree relatives (parent/child/sibling) have depression. According to Mental Health America, 15.8% of youth (ages 12-17) reported suffering at least one major depressive episode in 2022. The US News and World Report published an article (9/13/22) that reported mood disorders are increasing fastest among teens and young adults. This is due in part to the effects of social media. If untreated, childhood depression is more likely to persist into adulthood.

Symptoms of depression can vary from mild to severe and vary among individuals. The most common symptoms include:

- Feeling sad or having a depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Changes in appetite or weight gain or loss unrelated to diet

- Loss of energy or increased fatigue, anxiety, or irritability

Major life events such as the death of a loved one, the end of a relationship or the loss of a job are difficult situations to endure. It is normal to feel sadness or grief in response to these events. The person experiencing these may describe themselves as being "depressed." However, clinical depression is different than the mood fluctuations we all experience as a normal part of life.

Depression is an ongoing problem which persists despite changes in our circumstances. The APA has classified several types of depression, some of which develop due to specific circumstances. The two most diagnosed forms are Major Depressive Disorder and Persistent Depressive Disorder. A major depressive episode is defined as a period of at least two weeks when a person experiences a depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities and has most specific depression symptoms. Major depression is the most common mental health disorder in the United States and is the strongest risk factor for suicide.

While experts do not fully understand what causes depression many believe it stems from a combination of biological, genetic, environmental, and emotional components. Depression affects people differently and may exist on a scale of mild to severe. It is not simply a "bad mood" or something that one will "snap out of." It is a serious medical illness, and it will not go away on its own. If left untreated depression can have many negative effects on a person's life.

People experiencing depression can find it difficult to take the first steps in getting help. Seeking professional help is a sign of bravery and self-respect because it shows that you care about yourself. Start by talking to a close friend or your family physician. Depression is treatable and help is available. The goal is to find the treatment modalities that are tailored to your specific situation and needs.



## Community Health Education

by *Cindy Hermel, WHA Community Health Education Chair*

### Mental Health Self Care Strategies

Stress is a common condition for millions of people. There are a number of things individuals can do to deal with stress and enhance mental health. First and foremost, staying physically healthy can maintain and/or improve one's mental well-being. The CDC recommends eating a healthy diet including fruits, vegetables, lean protein and whole grains.

Meditation is an effective tool to deal with stress. According to Melanie Greenberg, author of 'The Stress-Proof Brain', meditation can recondition your brain to become more stress tolerant over time. Stress can cause increased levels of cortisol in the body, causing inflammation. This can disrupt sleep, promote anxiety and/or depression, increase blood pressure and contribute to fatigue. Research studies show eight weeks of mindfulness meditation led to noticeable improvements in stress and anxiety levels.

Maintaining relationships and connecting with people is important to one's physical and mental health. The Cleveland Clinic advises staying connected with people who you enjoy, make you happy, provide emotional support and give you a sense of belonging.

According to the Mayo Clinic's 'Stress relief from laughter? It's no joke.', a good laugh can increase your intake of oxygen which stimulates many body organs resulting in a flow of endorphins making you feel more relaxed. Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress. Negative thinking creates chemical reactions in the body which increase stress and weaken the immune system, while positive thoughts and laughter can release neuropeptides that help combat stress, enhancing the immune response.

Volunteering provides many benefits to both mental and physical health. According to HelpGuide.org,

volunteering helps counteract the effects of stress, anger and anxiety. The social contact that occurs with helping and working with others can have a huge impact on one's psychological well-being. Nothing relieves stress better than a meaningful connection with another person. Studies measuring hormones and brain activity indicate that helping others provides a sense of satisfaction and pleasure to the volunteer. Volunteering provides a sense of purpose and often results in increased self-confidence. Whatever one's age or situation, volunteering can take your mind off your problems and keep you mentally stimulated.

Stress is a part of modern life. Awareness of these strategies provides the tools to manage stress symptoms and lessen the emotional load that can affect both physical and mental health. Let's nurture relationships with family and friends, laugh every day, volunteer frequently, meditate often, and stay active.

### Hospice News

Hospice Volunteers: Watch for your annual Hospice survey coming to you soon. Please complete and return as soon as you can. 😊

New Year's Eve Hospice House Food Spread  
This was volunteer, Reese Aarthun's, 25<sup>th</sup> year putting this event on for patients and families.



Reese with volunteer, Enid, and Hospice Nurse, Lacie.



## Festival of Trees

The Aspirus Health Foundation is pleased to announce that this year's Festival of Trees event, to benefit the Aspirus Family House and Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services, was a success due to the incredible support of our community!

For the 26th year, thousands of guests attended the Festival of Trees event during the week of Thanksgiving. Guests viewed 120 holiday trees, wreaths, mantels, and specialty items at the Central WI Convention & Expo Center in Rothschild, which were donated by people in our community for raffle and silent auction.



*Mary Fochs and Lois Jarosz with the Aspirus Volunteers' Festival of Trees donation titled 'Proud to Be an American', made with items from the Aspirus Gift Shop. Visit the Aspirus Health Foundation's Facebook page for photos of the various events.*

The Foundation is proud to announce that, together with our community and the Festival of Trees Committee, \$215,000 was raised!

**Thank you** to all who supported the Aspirus Health Foundation and Festival of Trees event ... we could not do it without you, our volunteers!





## *In Memoria*



### **Craig Lefebvre**

*October 1959 – August 2023*

*Craig was passionate about dogs and he and his dog, Finley, volunteered by visiting patients, staff and visitors at the hospital bringing comfort and joy to their day.*



### **Cleo Tyskiewicz**

*December 1932 – April 2023*

*Cleo spent years volunteering at Aspirus as a knitter, as well as throughout the community.*

## Volunteer Opportunities / Help Wanted

**Comfort Cart** – Volunteers provide patients with small items at their bedside to enhance their hospital stay. A variety of products are provided at no charge to patients (pens, playing cards, magazines, puzzle books, etc.). Volunteers are needed to stock the cart and walk the route through the hospital.

**Prayer Shawls** – Our shelves are empty! Both full-size and pocket prayer shawls are needed. Patterns are available, but the basic full-size is 30”x60”. Please drop off your donations at the volunteer desk near Entrance A of the hospital lobby.

**EZ Rider Drivers** – Driver transports patients and visitors needing assistance to their in-hospital destination using a golf cart style vehicle.



**Pack Mobile Meals** – Volunteers are needed to help pack Mobile Meals. Meals are packed onsite Sunday thru Thursday afternoons/evenings. Packing normally takes about 2 hours.

**Cancer Center Wig Room** – Help cancer patients with access to and education on wigs, turbans, and scarves. Training is provided. A level of comfort and compassion working with cancer patients is needed.

**Food Transport** – Using an Aspirus vehicle, volunteers are needed to transport prepared food and/or grocery items to the Hospice House, Monday thru Friday. Contact Holly for more information.

**Family House** – Assist staff with changing beds, cleaning, and basic household duties to keep the house looking homelike. Visit with guests in common areas. Bring homemade food for guests.

**Cafeteria Assistant** – Tasks include restocking seating area supplies and wiping down tables. Work in the kitchen as assigned.

**Heart Institute Waiting Room** – Keep track of guests waiting while a patient is having procedure. Escort guests to meet with a doctor or view video. Assist with making up packets or other projects as requested.

# LIFELINE

## Congratulations Aspirus Lifeline for 40 Years of Service 1983-2023

Aspirus Lifeline has been a community program of the Volunteers since 1983 providing Lifeline medical alert service to thousands of older and disabled people, promoting independence, security and peace of mind. For seniors, a fall in and around the home is the most frequently occurring accident. In fact, falls are the leading cause of injury or death among older adults. Lifeline reduces hospital stays and readmissions by reducing long lie times and serious injury.

We have come a long way in the past 40 years. We have helped thousands of people in their time of need whether from a fall, medical or non-medical emergency. Lifeline protects more seniors than any other medical alert service. The Aspirus Volunteers, through this community program, offer seniors a meaningful and needed service allowing them to have the confidence to continue to live independently in the homes they love.

Currently, 3 volunteers install Lifeline equipment, change out batteries and buttons and assist subscribers in their homes as needed throughout Marathon County and the city of Marshfield. They are Curtis Barthel, Paul Dobbratz, and Kitty Switlick.

Thank you to the Aspirus Lifeline current and past volunteers, who so graciously give of their time and talents helping people live safely in their homes. Their dedication and willingness to provide the best customer service is a significant contribution to Aspirus and our community.



*Pictured left to right: Curtis, Susan Prah (Lifeline Coordinator), Bev Kordus (previous Lifeline Asst.-retired), Paul, Andy Barth (AWH COO), Yo and Polly (Lifeline Rep.).*

## A Little History of Aspirus Lifeline

Early in 1983, Lena Seidel, Director of Marathon County Department of Social Services, and Grace Berg, Director of Wausau Hospital Volunteers, attended a conference in Green Bay that featured Gerontologist, Dr. Andrew Dibner, the founder of Lifeline.

The Volunteers were approached about sponsoring Lifeline in Wausau. The program was discussed and at that time 15 units were purchased. Lena and Grace supervised the program from November 1983 until July 1984. Judy Hansen was hired as the first Lifeline Coordinator. Judy managed the program for 16 years. Cheryl Steen was the coordinator from May 2002-July 2021.

Looking back, the units were initially red and made of heavy metal. There was no ability to speak to the subscriber through the unit like there is now. Note cards with subscriber information were kept in a note card box. Emergency room staff would call the subscriber and responders after a signal came in. The personal help buttons were large and heavy on a subscriber's arm.

Through the years, technology has greatly advanced. In 2008, the Care Partner 6800XT was introduced with voice extension, 39-hour backup battery and activation voice prompt. Today we have the Care Partner 6900AT and 7200 cellular with auto test and auto fall detection as well as the On-the-Go mobile button.

Right now, we have 347 units in service and 97 with our one source program; compared to 1984, the first year of service, with 37 units in service.

The monthly rental fee for subscribers began at \$7 for a landline and is now \$25.

We take this opportunity to recognize our first installers - Jan and Len Johnson, and Marvin and Laverne Machel.

# Volunteers in Action - Volunteer Hours

We recognize and thank these volunteers for reaching these service achievements!

## 100 Hours

Kristen Anderson  
Wendy Borgeson  
Sue Burtch  
Jim Carlson  
Connie Dulas  
Susan Haugesag  
Emily Jacobson  
Lisa Jacobson  
Julie Jensen  
Lisa Maahs  
Penny Miller  
Holly Nash  
Chari Schalow  
Jeff Schlatterer  
Debra Schleinzi  
Patty Sowinski

## 200 Hours

Lynn Kenney  
Linda Lawrence  
David Lewis  
James Okraszewski  
Martin Patrickus  
Ashley Soukup

## 300 Hours

Marge Brzezinski  
Nancy Fischer  
Linda Griesmer  
Tara Jaramillo  
Gary Spranger  
Chris Zaglifa

## 400 Hours

Curtis Barthel  
Wendy Fox  
Tom McCool  
Kay Meyer  
Kitty Switlick  
Francis Van Slyke

## 500 Hours

Gladys Beese  
Tom Daman  
Kris Peterson

## 600 Hours

Susan Aho  
Paul Dobbratz  
Julie Duley  
Connie Michlig  
Monica Schreiner  
Carol Steidinger

## 700 Hours

David Martin

## 800 Hours

Marge Snippen  
Nettie Sosnoski

## 900 Hours

Cindy Kleinstick  
Jeff Raasch

## 1,000 Hours

Jane Blick  
Connie Dobbratz  
Jerry Fochs  
Mary Jo Literski  
Clark Loeffel  
Laurie Reinhart  
Mary Ventzke

## 1,500 Hours

Joanne Howard  
Lois Jarosz  
Karen Schubert

## 2,000 Hours

Duane Askew

## 2,500 Hours

Gloria Kostka  
Jane Stotmeister

## 3,000 Hours

Susan Gau-Krueger  
Bonnie Koelsch  
Lee Ann Venne

## 4,000 Hours

Mary Fochs  
Ann Goetsch  
Marlene Schnelle

## 8,000 Hours

Gerri Loy

## 9,000 Hours

Enid Krueger

## 10,000 Hours

Joan Campbell

## 11,000 Hours

Dolly Feira  
Nancy Zastrow

## 16,000 Hours

Joan Mais

## 20,500 Hours

Sylvia Erickson

## VolunTeen

## 50 Hours

Cassidy McMeeken



**THANK YOU to all our wonderful volunteers for volunteering 19,484 hours in 2023! Thanks for all you do!**

**(DON'T FORGET – Please turn in your hours every month to keep your records up to date.)**

## Annual Requirements Training a Success!

Volunteer Annual Requirements Training was held on October 9. Speakers presented volunteers with required training on Corporate Compliance, Aspirus Code of Conduct, Safety, Infection Control, and Service Excellence. In addition, Kevin Rios Martinez, Pharmacy Resident, gave an informative talk on Pharmacy Good to Know topics.



## Annual Linen Sale Held

The annual Aspirus Volunteers linen sale was held on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Over \$1,200 was netted from the sale. Proceeds will be used to benefit Volunteer programs that help patients and families.



Lisa & Linda helping at the sale.

Answers to Puzzle on Page 10:

NEW YEARS DAY  
FRIENDS  
RESOLUTION

PARTY  
COUNTDOWN  
CLOCK

FIREWORKS  
CHAMPAGNE  
JANUARY

BEGINNING  
MIDNIGHT  
FAMILY



## Emergency Code Reminder – Dial 44

If a volunteer encounters a serious injury/condition on the hospital property, Code First Aid should be called by dialing 44 on a hospital phone and identifying your location. Operators will page staff beepers and assigned staff will respond. Serious conditions include uncontrolled bleeding, shortness of breath, chest pain, loss of consciousness, or unwitnessed a fall with injury or pain.

## Berry Chicken Salad



### Ingredients

- ¼ c olive oil mayo (or regular)
- 1 t sugar
- ½ t dried tarragon
- 1½ c chopped or shredded cooked chicken
- 1 c quartered fresh strawberries or whole blueberries
- ½ c fresh or frozen peas, thawed
- ¼ c chopped celery
- Torn fresh salad greens or spinach

### Instructions

1. Whisk the first three ingredients together in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
2. Add chicken, berries, peas, and celery and stir well to combine.
3. Scoop chicken salad over salad greens or spinach for a fresh and filling lunch.

## Welcome New Staff

Welcome Kiarra to the Aspirus Coffee Shop! Kiarra started in August as an Occasional barista. Be sure to say hello the next time you're in getting your Coffee Shop treat. 😊



Keepsake 'memory bears' like this one are made for those who have lost a loved one.



Old clothes of the deceased are transformed into a beautiful and comforting memory bear. If you're interested in helping with this project, please contact Holly.

**ASPIRUS GIFT SHOP**

**COUPON**

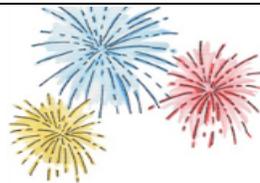
**EXPIRES 3/1/2024**

30% off an item at the Aspirus Gift Shop! Exclusions include: Ampersand Sweatshirts, Cards, Candy, Balloons, flowers, stamps, and sale merchandise.

**30%  
OFF AN  
ITEM**



# HAPPY NEW YEAR



## ACROSS

2. A mechanical or electrical device for measuring time.
8. First month of the year.
9. All the descendants of a common ancestor.
10. The point in time at which something starts.
11. Low explosive pyrotechnic device used for entertainment purposes.
12. A social gathering of invited guests.

## DOWN

1. January 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. A white sparkling wine associated with celebration.
4. A firm decision to do or not to do something.
5. Counting numerals in reverse order to zero.
6. A person one knows and with whom one has a bond of mutual affection.
7. Twelve o'clock at night.

