

# ASPIRUS VOLUNTEER Newsletter

Aspirus Wausau

Winter 2025



**Yo Voigt,**  
Director of  
Volunteers &  
Guest Services



Who would have ever thought 2025 would be here already! What a year! It's time to reflect as we move forward with even more changes. With a year of so much constant election coverage, I know I'm ready to move on.

I read a book by Leeza Gibbons called *Your Guide to Creating Happy Endings and New Beginnings*. Here are some thoughts from her book:

"If they held midterm elections for your life, what would your platform be? Would there be a referendum or change or maybe even a recall? Re-creation, reinvention, and transformation- whatever you choose to call it, you're ready to accept it, embrace it, and use it to your advantage. The person you were yesterday is not who you have to be today or tomorrow. You have the power, the will, the tools, and the energy to transform yourself into whatever you want. This is called 'Transformation Proclamation.' Think of this as your daily mantra to help remind you of who you are and where you're going. *(continued on pg. 4)*

## In this newsletter you can find:

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Direct from Yo

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Good to Know

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**Aspirus**

We heal people, promote health and strengthen communities.





## Welcome New Volunteers

### Aspirus Wausau Hospital

Ilona Gusman – Cancer Center

Brenda Kraft – Eucharistic Volunteer

Katy-Jane Shanak – Palliative Care Unit

Julie Trebus – Cancer Center

### Aspirus Wausau Hospital – VolunTEens

Kelsey McHugh – NICU Office

Brinly Stencil – Special Projects

Swayne Stencil – Special Projects

### Aspirus LeRoy – Antigo

Liz Dickman – Hospice Homecare

## Welcome New Staff

### A New Face at the Coffee Shop

Be sure to stop in to say hello to Autumn the next time you're getting your treat at the Aspirus Coffee Shop. Autumn started the last week of December as a 0.6 FTE.



**Welcome Autumn!**

## Calendar of Events

**February 12**

Cookie Sale

**February 18**

Volunteer Board of Directors meeting

**April 9**

Wisconsin Hospital Association Advocacy Day – Madison, WI

**April 20-27**

National Volunteer Week

**April 24**

Aspirus Volunteers Appreciation Banquet – **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

**May 26**

Memorial Day – Volunteer office closed

**June 3**

Volunteer Board of Directors meeting & Student Talent Art Review (STAR)

## Hello from the Aspirus Gift Shop and Aspirus Coffee Shop!

Thank you for a great holiday season in both the gift shop and coffee shop!

We are currently running Christmas clearance in the gift shop for the next couple of weeks.

Continue to come check out the store, as we have new merchandise arriving weekly.

Plus, if you know someone interested in volunteering, the gift shop is looking for additional help on an occasional basis, specifically, on Wednesday and Friday afternoons.



# Volunteer Hours Recognition

Annually, we recognize and thank volunteers for reaching service milestones! For 2024, these volunteers are:

## 100 Hours

Tracie Barthel  
Judy Frymark  
Cathy Howe Thwaites  
Aurora Kuntz  
Kathy Lenard  
Erica Maleski  
Denise Prosser  
Rich Rajchel  
Jim Russler  
Brock Warren

## 200 Hours

Kristen Anderson  
Penny Berg  
Sue Burtch  
Jim Carlson  
Connie Dulas  
Julie Jensen  
Holly Nash  
Jeff Schlatterer  
Debra Schleinz  
Laurie Wunsch-Maegli

## 300 Hours

Wendy Borgeson  
Taylor Hackel  
Linda Lawrence  
Diana Miller

## 400 Hours

Nancy Fischer  
Marty Patrickus  
Ashley Soukup  
Chris Zaglifa

## 500 Hours

Linda Le  
Tom McCool

## 500 Hours cont'd

Kitty Switlick  
Ann Wicklund

## 600 Hours

George Brahos  
Tom Daman

## 700 Hours

Sue Aho  
Curtis Barthel  
Eileen Guthrie  
Connie Michlig

## 800 Hours

Dave Martin  
Kris Peterson  
Gary Spranger

## 900 Hours

Monica Schreiner  
Angie Schuh  
Nettie Sosnoski

## 1,000 Hours

Steve Hessel  
Cindy Kleinstick  
Karen Peterson  
Jeff Raasch  
Mary Schreiber  
Marge Snippen  
Carol Steidinger

## 1,500 Hours

Roger Aho  
Jerry Fochs  
Lynn Kenney  
Lyn Krohn  
Mary Literski  
Clark Loeffel  
Laurie Reinhart

## 2,000 Hours

Donna Rule

## 3,000 Hours

Jeanette Brandt  
Sheree Schaefer

## 3,500 Hours

Reese Aarthun  
Bonnie Koelsch

## 4,000 Hours

Ann Brandt  
Lee Ann Venne

## 4,500 Hours

Mary Fochs  
Ann Goetsch  
Marlene Schnelle

## 9,500 Hours

Enid Krueger

## 10,000 Hours

Gerri Loy

## 12,000 Hours

Dolly Feira

## 13,500 Hours

Nancy Zastrow

## 17,000 Hours

Joan Mais

## VolunTeens –

### 50 Hours

Anna Jacobson  
Ava Medo

### 100 Hours

Cassidy McMeeken



**THANK YOU to all our wonderful volunteers for volunteering 31,816 hours in 2024!**

*(Don't Forget – Please keep your volunteer hours recorded and up to date.)*

*(Continued from pg. 1)*

**Transformation Proclamation:**

I proclaim that this and every day is a blank page - a new chance to see things the way I want to. I choose to see possibilities. It is a choice, not chance that creates fate in life.

- I proclaim that I will always try. If I fail, I know failure is a teacher. It's a delay, not a defeat. Effort is my goal.
- I proclaim victory over the circumstances that show up in my life themselves; and I will look for a way through, under, around, or over the mountains that seem to stand in my way.
- I proclaim that I can move forward. I can forgive and forget. My rearview mirror is a perfectly nice place for all things in life that I passed over, passed by, or rejected.

Your proclamation should be your pledge – your promise to yourself about the things you want to guide your life, your limits, your lines in the sand, your list of non-negotiables.

I believe all of you have already started your own transformation proclamation. Remember, you're at the starting gate of the rest of your life, and you can come out of the gate strong."

THANK YOU for having the PASSION and ENERGY to volunteer and be part of helping to transform the world everyday with each bit of caring and compassion you share with others.

## LIFELINE

**This is a people business, and I feel so lucky to be able to make life better for someone. For 41 years, Aspirus Lifeline has supported those in need. Through these years we have seen many new companies and products that we compete with, but there is still a want and need to have a service that is local.**

**We make a significant difference in the lives of those we serve. We hear many stories from families on how our service has impacted their lives.**

**Many thanks to our volunteer installers for their hard work and genuine care and for making a positive contribution to our community.**

**Thank you for your support.**

**Susan, Aspirus Lifeline Coordinator**

## Cookie Sales Held

**Two cookie sales were held since our last Volunteer newsletter: one on December 5<sup>th</sup> and one on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Together they grossed over \$3,000!**



# 2024 Festival of Trees

The Aspirus Health Foundation is pleased to announce that the 2024 Festival of Trees event, to benefit the Aspirus Family House and Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services, was a huge success due to the incredible support of our community!

For the 27th year, thousands of guests attended the Festival of Trees event during the week of Thanksgiving. Guests viewed over 160 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.

The Foundation is proud to announce that, together with our community and the Festival of Trees Committee, over \$260,000 was raised! A record breaker!

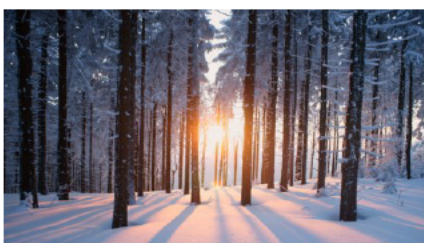
Thank you to all who support the Aspirus Health Foundation and the Festival of Trees event... we could not do it without you, our volunteers!



*The 2024 Aspirus Volunteers' Festival of Trees donation titled 'Pearl's Old-Fashioned Christmas'.*



A shout out to NTC Catering for catering such a delightful lunch!



# Annual Linen Sale Held

The annual Aspirus Volunteers linen sale was held on October 30<sup>th</sup>. Almost \$1,000 was netted from the sale. Proceeds will be used to benefit volunteer programs that help Aspirus patients and families.



## Calling All Sewers, Knitters, and Crafters for Hospice Vets

Aspirus Hospice, a four-star member of We Honor Veterans, provides special certificates and patriotic lap blankets to honor our Veteran patients. With nearly 10 Veterans admitted each month, they need more lap blankets to continue this tribute.

Lap blankets (approx. 36"x36") can be sewn, knitted, crocheted, quilted, or made as fleece tie blankets.

If interested, please contact Hospice Volunteer Coordinator Gabrielle Theilman at [gabrielle.theilman@aspirus.org](mailto:gabrielle.theilman@aspirus.org) or (715) 470-0783. Drop-offs are welcome at 520 North 32nd Ave, Wausau, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



## ASPIRUS GIFT SHOP COUPON

**\$5.00** off an item at the Aspirus Gift Shop!

*Exclusions: Ampersand sweatshirts, greeting cards, candy, balloons, flowers, postage stamps, and sale merchandise.*

Expires: 4/31/2025

**\$5 OFF  
AN  
ITEM**

# Our Volunteers in Action



Julie T.  
Cancer Center



David L., Penny M. & Colby  
Pet Therapy



Connie M.  
Cancer Center Wig Room



Jerry & Mary F.  
Gift Shop



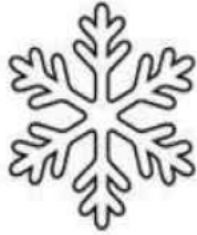
Kelsey M.  
NICU Office



Diya P.  
Comfort Cart



These little guys were donated by a generous spirit.  
If you know who they came from, please let us know. 😊



# WINTER



# WORD SEARCH

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| BOOTS    | HOT COCOA |
| MITTENS  | HAT       |
| ICICLE   | SCARF     |
| SNOWMAN  | SNOWFLAKE |
| JACKET   | FROZEN    |
| PENGUIN  | WINTER    |
| SKIING   | FIREPLACE |
| SLEDDING | SWEATER   |

Search the puzzle below to find the 16 winter related words.

J H I O E Z V V O H D D Y V J  
X O F Q D M V F K J H S D F O  
B T G G F I R E P L A C E R M  
O C E V R I P G P X P A Z O F  
O O S K I I N G R A E R H Z S  
T C F C Z D M W Q Z N F A E L  
S O L O L G P D D N G N T N E  
P A F K M Y W W H W U R S V D  
W Q U X U C U V D Y I S W R D  
I S N O W F L A K E N N E J I  
N C T Q T L K O P H K O A A N  
T I I P W G X X R J F W T C G  
E G E C M I T T E N S M E K O  
R G E X L K Q G S Z T A R E P  
H U D X G E W C Q H L N Z T N



# WORD SCRAMBLE

Try and unscramble the 5 winter related words below.

RADIBZZL \_\_\_\_\_

OWROSSNTM \_\_\_\_\_

GNIREFZ \_\_\_\_\_

OHT ETOCCOHAL \_\_\_\_\_

ODLC \_\_\_\_\_

Blizzard Snowstorm Freezing Hot Chocolate Cold





## Public Policy Education Report

By Cindy Hermel, Partners of WHA President-Elect

Registration is open for the Wisconsin Hospital Association's annual 2025 Advocacy Day. It will be held on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at the Monona Terrace in Madison. The keynote speaker is always entertaining and informative (see attached).

The bipartisan legislative panel is a highlight of Advocacy Day. The panel members will discuss the top health care challenges facing hospitals and health care providers. The day ends with legislative visits at the Capitol where you will have the opportunity to meet with your State Senator and State Representative.

Rural hospitals continue to face many challenges. Keeping reimbursement rates up is critical for rural hospitals to remain solvent and open to provide services to their communities. The WHA and the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative are working together to keep the Wisconsin Insurance

Commissioner, Nathan Houdek, aware of concerning trends in health care from insurers that have increased bureaucracy in the health care system and negatively impacted patient care. The following are some of the most challenging concerns:

- claim payment issues, including delays, denials, and lengthy appeals;
- the burden of prior authorizations for both providers and patients;
- swing bed denials or delays in authorization for patients in need of these services at critical access hospitals;
- surprise out-of-network claims that seem against the spirit of the No Surprise Act; and
- contractual changes without proper advance warning.

You can help. When you receive HEAT Alerts asking you to support policy and/or legislation that supports Wisconsin hospitals, health care providers, and patients, please take a minute to forward your support to your legislators. Your contacts are very effective in convincing legislators to support bills addressing your concerns.



### Wausau Volunteers Staff:

- Yo Voigt, Director of Volunteers & Guest Services
- Mary Dobeck, Volunteer Administrative Coordinator
  - Sue Prah, Lifeline Coordinator
- Gabbie Theilman, Hospice & Hospice Volunteer Program Lead
- Sammie Giese, Manager of Gift Shop & Coffee Shop

For Hospital Volunteer staff call: 715-847-2848 or email [volunteers@aspirus.org](mailto:volunteers@aspirus.org)

For Hospice Volunteer Lead call:

## Aspirus Volunteers Mission

The Aspirus Volunteers is an organization where people share their time and talents to improve the health and well-being of patients and families through volunteer service and community programs. We collaborate throughout Aspirus to foster a passion for excellence and compassion for people.





*Registration is NOW OPEN for WHA's annual Advocacy Day on Wednesday, April 9! This event provides a powerful opportunity for hospital employees, trustees and volunteers to make a visible impression in the state capitol, and offers a chance to connect, learn and influence critical health care issues.*

Gather your hospital team and join nearly 1,000 peers from across Wisconsin to make Advocacy Day 2025 the most impactful yet.

### **Event Details**

- Date: Wednesday, April 9, 2025
- Location: Monona Terrace, Madison, WI
- Cost: Free (pre-registration required)
- Registration: [Register here!](#)
- For event information, visit our [website](#).
- *Note:* No onsite registration is planned for the day of the event. A WHA issued name badge will be checked and verified before entry into the meeting room is allowed.

### **Why Attend?**

- **Inspiring Speakers:** Including a keynote speaker you won't want to miss (announcement in a few weeks!)
- **Engaging Discussions:** A bipartisan legislative panel tackling today's top health care challenges.
- **Action-Oriented Advocacy:** Afternoon meetings at the state capitol, where you'll put insights into action by connecting directly with policymakers.

### **Legislative Visits**

Attendees have the opportunity to directly connect with their legislators and/or staff to discuss timely health care issues and share experiences from your hospital or health system. **It is highly encouraged that all attendees sign up for legislative visits — the "advocacy in-action" part of Advocacy Day.**

- All visits will be in-person. WHA staff will schedule your legislative visit with your State Senator and State Representative based on your home address. You will attend with constituents of your home district.
- Meetings will last approximately 30 minutes and are scheduled from 2:15 - 2:45 p.m. and 3:00 - 3:30 p.m. on April 9.
- If you have any questions about legislative visits, please contact WHA's Olivia Buell at [obuell@wha.org](mailto:obuell@wha.org).



### ***About the Wisconsin Hospital Association***

WHA advocates on behalf of its 150+ member hospitals and health systems to enable the delivery of high-quality, high-value care to the citizens of Wisconsin. Learn more at [wha.org](http://wha.org).

Wisconsin Hospital Association  
 5510 Research Park Drive  
 Fitchburg, WI 53711  
 Phone: 608-274-1820





# WINTER WELL-BEING

As the winter months set in, it's important to stay proactive about our physical and mental health. Cold weather and shorter days can make it harder to stay active and healthy, but there are plenty of ways to keep well-being a priority this season.

Here are a few key areas to focus on:



## Stay Active Outdoors (& Indoors)

Don't let the cold weather keep you from moving! Outdoor activities like walking, snowshoeing, or even a short winter hike are great ways to stay active. Be mindful of slippery surfaces and dress in layers for warmth.

If the weather is too harsh, bring your workouts indoors – try home workouts, yoga, or join a fitness class to keep your routine going.



## Boost Your Vitamin D

With less sunlight during winter, many people can experience low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is essential for bone health and immunity.

Whenever possible, spend some time outside during daylight hours to soak up the sun. You can also get vitamin D through foods like fatty fish, fortified cereals, and dairy, or discuss supplements with your healthcare provider if needed.



## Winter Safety: Slips, Trips & Falls

Icy sidewalks and snowy paths can be hazardous. To prevent slips and falls:

- Wear sturdy shoes with good traction.
- Take shorter steps on slippery surfaces.
- Clear pathways of snow and ice promptly.
- Use salt or sand to improve traction on walkways.



## Shoveling Safely

Shoveling snow is a common winter activity, but it can be strenuous and lead to injury if done improperly. Remember to:

- Warm up before starting.
- Use proper form – bend your knees and lift with your legs, not your back.
- Take breaks as needed and avoid overexertion.
- Consider using an ergonomic shovel to reduce strain.



## Eat Healthy Through the Winter

It's easy to indulge in comfort foods during the colder months, but staying mindful of nutrition is key to feeling your best.

Focus on seasonal fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Warm, hearty soups and stews filled with vegetables can be both comforting and nutritious. Don't forget to stay hydrated – even in winter, water is essential!



## Manage Stress

The holidays can be a joyful time, but they can also bring stress from busy schedules, financial concerns, and family dynamics. To manage holiday stress:

- Set realistic expectations and don't be afraid to say "no" to avoid burnout.
- Make time for self-care, whether that's relaxation, mindfulness, or spending time doing things you enjoy.
- Keep up with healthy habits, like exercise and good nutrition, to help manage stress and stay balanced.
- Prioritize rest – getting enough sleep can help you feel more grounded and better equipped to handle holiday demands.

**Let's finish the year strong by staying active, eating well, managing stress, and taking care of ourselves.**

**Winter may be challenging, but with a few adjustments, we can stay healthy and well all season long!**

80% of all bathroom injuries are caused by falls, with the highest injury rates in the oldest age groups. Falls often cause serious injuries, and one in three older adults will experience at least one fall in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Ask your aging adults to follow these 7 quick tips for ways to help prevent bathroom injuries.

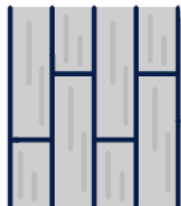
### 1) Install grab bars

Securely mount grab bars near the toilet, inside and outside the shower or bathtub to provide support when getting in and out.



### 2) Non-slip surfaces

Use non-slip mats on the bathroom floor, inside the shower or tub, and outside the bathtub to minimize slipping hazards.



### 3) Use a shower bench or chair

Consider using a shower chair or bench to sit while showering, especially if balance is a concern.



### 4) Install a raised toilet seat

Suggest to your aging adults to consider using a raised toilet seat to make standing up easier and to help reduce slips and falls.



### 5) Proper Lighting

Ensure good lighting throughout the bathroom, including nightlights, to improve visibility and reduce tripping risks.



### 6) Consider a walk-in shower or tub

If possible, install a walk-in shower or tub with a curbless entry to ease access if balance is a concern.



### 7) Use technology

Consider a subscription to the Lifeline Medical Alert Service that they can use to signal for help quickly in the event of a fall. Our fall detection technology can even place a call for help if they're incapacitated and unable to press the help button.



Contact Lifeline today to learn more:

Name: Call Lifeline today

Phone: 855-655-4400, ext 55000

1. Center for Disease Control, "Nonfatal Bathroom Injuries Among Persons >15 Years - United States," MMWR, June, 2010, 60(22):729-733.