

A PUBLICATION OF GUNDERSEN MEDICAL FOUNDATION

# PATHFINDERS

Where generosity changes lives



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

In this community, we care about our neighbors, and that care shows up in many ways, including through your continued support for Gundersen Medical Foundation.

Our recent Gratefully, Gundersen event provided an opportunity to celebrate all of our donors and to recognize the impact of two special Foundation friends: Sally and Ed Sullivan and Fools Five Road Race, which you will read about in this issue of Pathfinders.

You will also read about community members who provided funding for new treatment chairs for patients receiving infusion therapies, including chemotherapy. Such a gift not only adds a layer of comfort and safety to patients undergoing extended periods of treatment, but also offers an inspirational example of the level of care our community has for our neighbors.

Other stories in this publication highlight the impact of education. The first demonstrates

how your gifts help support a vocational training program for teens with cognitive and physical disabilities. These young adults find purpose and a sense of independence that changes their lives, while developing skills that lead to employment. Our community—and entire families—are stronger because of you.

Now, as we look ahead to the new year, we will continue innovating and honoring our legacy of providing comprehensive care right here in our community. Your support allows us to remain focused on patient care and improving access to it.

Because of the many donors who choose to invest in medical education, research, or helping Gundersen Health System provide the highest quality of patient care, we are stronger. That sense of community spirit, the way neighbors come together to help today and shape the future, makes us all better.



With gratitude for community,

Dr. Stephen Shapiro  
Chief Medical Foundation Officer  
Chair, Gundersen Medical Foundation

Gundersen Medical  
Foundation

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## PATHFINDERS

Pathfinders is published by Gundersen Medical Foundation for friends and benefactors of the Foundation. We welcome comments or suggestions from our readers for future stories.

To learn more about the Foundation's medical education, research and community health outreach programs, or to inquire about making a charitable gift, please visit us at [gundersenhealth.org/foundation](http://gundersenhealth.org/foundation) or call the Foundation office at (608) 775-6600.

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**On the cover:** (L-R) Michael Dolan, MD, with Sally Sullivan and Kyla Lee, MD. Dr. Dolan and Dr. Lee are just two of the many Gundersen caregivers who have positively impacted Sally and her husband, Ed, who passed away in 2020.

# There's no greater gift than changing lives.

From their kids' yearly sports physicals to the occasional broken bone, Neal Meier and Clara Gelatt know the importance of quality care close to home.

That care is in large part thanks to donors like you. Your generosity makes it possible to improve local healthcare through medical education and research and increases access for our neighbors right here in the Gundersen region.

Neal and Clara are proud to play a small part in making a big difference for the future of healthcare in our community. Together, we are changing lives.



Join Neal and Clara in enhancing healthcare for our friends and neighbors with a gift today.

- **USE THE QR CODE** or visit [gundersenhealth.org/yearend](https://gundersenhealth.org/yearend) to donate online
- **RETURN** the enclosed gift envelope
- **CALL** (608) 775-6600 or (800) 362-9567, ext. 56600

# DARLA KRZOSKA, JD

## A shared focus on community



### CURRICULUM VITAE

#### **Board length of service**

- Two years

#### **Expertise**

- Business, real estate law
- Estate planning and probate

#### **Committees**

- Philanthropy Committee

As an attorney for Bosshard Parke Law, Darla Krzoska engages in meaningful work that she enjoys.

She also finds time to “fill her bucket” by volunteering for organizations whose values align with her own, which is why she joined Gundersen Medical Foundation’s Board of Directors in 2022.

#### **CHOOSING A PLACE TO CALL HOME**

Darla grew up in Maple Grove, Minn., and attended Winona State University. During that time, she met her husband, Dan, who was attending the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. After graduation, the two married and moved to Madison, Wis., to further their educations. Enrolling at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, her husband pursued a graduate degree while Darla enrolled in law school.

By 1998, the couple had each finished their degree and decided to move back to the area they had come to love as undergraduates. “We chose the La Crosse area because we felt it would be a good place to raise kids while still having access to the amenities of bigger cities like Madison or the Twin Cities,” she shares, adding that access to outdoor activities like biking, camping and enjoying the river were also important.

#### **COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY**

Later that year, Darla joined the legal team at Parke O’Flaherty, Ltd., and in 2005, she joined the Bosshard Parke Law Firm in La Crosse where she specializes in business and employment law, banking, wills and trusts, estate planning and probate, and real estate. Darla and Dan eventually had two sons, now both in college.

Being active in her community has always been important to Darla, so when her children were young, she volunteered for the Cub Scouts and the Gateway Area Council (BSA) Board. Then, as her kids got older, she sought out additional organizations that also spoke to her heart, including the Women’s Fund of Greater La Crosse, ORC Industries, Inc., and Gundersen Medical Foundation. Given her family’s positive experiences doctoring at Gundersen and the organization’s focus on community, Darla felt the Foundation would be a good fit and that her expertise in estate planning would be beneficial.

“I feel like I’m still learning about all the ways the Foundation touches our community,” she says, “but it’s clear that gifts to the Foundation directly impact many patients and families. Additionally, investments in medical education and research will impact our community’s access to quality healthcare for the future. That impact is nothing short of profound.” +

# Helping young adults find their voice

“During my year in Project SEARCH, I have learned things about myself. I feel changed and more able to be myself. I make more decisions for myself and share my ideas more... Project SEARCH has also helped me be better prepared for the world of work. It has helped me to learn how to work independently. It has helped me to learn how to do my best work.”

– Emma Monk

When a teacher from Central High School first suggested that Emma Monk might be a candidate for a vocational training program hosted at Gundersen Health System called Project SEARCH, her parents, Heather and Brian were uncertain.

Emma, a person with Down Syndrome, was often hesitant about interacting with people outside of her immediate family, so the Monks did not know if the program's goal of helping students with intellectual and physical disabilities achieve competitive employment would be a good fit. In the end, the Monks decided to apply, and Emma was accepted into the 2023–2024 cohort.

“Project SEARCH has been a life-changing experience for Emma and our entire family,” says Heather. “The program really helped Emma come out of her shell: she developed interpersonal skills, built strong relationships and proved she is an amazingly reliable and dedicated worker. We are so grateful to everyone who makes Project SEARCH possible.”

Since 2020, Gundersen Medical Foundation has provided annual grant funding to support the program. This funding, believes instructor Laura Anderson, has helped make Project SEARCH especially powerful. “Community members who support the Foundation should know that every single intern in this program has been touched by their generosity,” shares Laura.

### **JOB SKILLS AND A WHOLE LOT MORE**

Project SEARCH is an international program with a total of 730 sites, including 29 in Wisconsin. The La Crosse program was launched in 2017 with Gundersen Health System serving as the location for the programming and the Holmen School District holding the site license. Additional support for Project SEARCH is offered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and Aptiv, a disability services and support organization located in La Crosse.

While some Project SEARCH sites offer vocational training to adults, the La Crosse program is a student site that annually enrolls up to 12 interns (18-21 years old) who have completed the high school credits necessary to graduate. Each week during the school year, students attend class (Monday through Friday) for about 1.5 hours per day and work at internship sites (within Gundersen) for 5 hours. Each intern completes rotations in three different departments throughout Gundersen, so they can explore a variety of roles and practice different skills. During her school year, Emma completed rotations in Central Services (where she



*Emma delivers cookies baked by Project SEARCH students to one of her internship supervisors, Jen Weiker, from Gundersen's Central Services Department.*

stocked the case cart and helped sterilize and wrap surgical instruments), Food Services (where she prepared food for the hospital patients and staff), and Family Medicine (where she cleaned exam and waiting areas, worked with inventory/stocking, collected confidential mail and helped medical assistants “turn over” patient rooms). “Through these placements, Emma learned she is a gifted organizer and pays attention to detail,” shares Heather. “These are skills that Emma is proud of, and they translate directly into a variety of business settings.”

Project SEARCH's primary goal is to build vocational skills that will result in the interns gaining employment for at least 16 hours per week and, according to Laura, the numbers show the program works. “Nationally, the average employment rate for individuals with disabilities is 20%, but the rate →



*(L-R) Instructor Laura Anderson with Project SEARCH graduate Jake Dwyer, who was recently hired to work in Gundersen's Laundry Services Department as a result of his internship.*

for Project SEARCH graduates is approximately 76%," she explains, adding that numbers for the La Crosse program have ranged from 50 to 100% depending on the year.

Laura is proud of the employment rates because they are tied directly to program outcomes, yet it is the individual growth and empowerment of each student that she finds most compelling. "Most of our students finish Project SEARCH feeling more independent, more empowered and more fulfilled in their lives," says Laura. "Many students find their voice; the impact can be transformational."

### **ADDING LAYERS OF IMPACT**

Laura goes on to share just how the grants received from the Foundation have significantly enriched the Project SEARCH experience. For example, each fall, the cohort travels to Wisconsin Dells to attend the Self-Determination Conference. This conference is designed for adults with disabilities and aims to help them find independence. As a result, most students find the conference programming alone to be impactful.

Additionally, the experience of traveling and staying together in a condominium (with opportunities to share and reflect at the end of each day) changes students. "Some interns have never spent time away from home without their family, so this is an opportunity to practice independence within a supervised group setting," says Laura. "Each student's experience is different, but we are never the same group when we come back as we were when we left. The life lessons, the friendships, the independence...these things can all foster dynamic change."

The grant funding also allows the La Crosse site to establish a partnership with a Project SEARCH class in Arkansas. The students in different states get to know each other by becoming pen pals in the fall, and then each spring, the La Crosse interns travel to Arkansas to meet their peers and tour other Project SEARCH sites. This trip offers even more educational opportunities since it requires an airplane flight, navigation of a larger city, opportunities to practice social skills and lessons in cultural diversity.

Outside of these educational travel opportunities, grant funding has also allowed for the purchase of technology (including iPhones with apps offering assistive technology and timers that interns use on the job), uniforms (polo shirts and work jackets) and other educational materials. The grant also provides funds for meals and clothing items for any intern whose family may not have the means to afford these necessities.

One of the most popular and creative things to come from the grant is also something that makes the program's math curriculum more engaging and realistic. Early in the term, Laura gets to know her students and then uses what she learns about them to purchase desirable items she sets up in a "school store." The interns practice skills like punching into work on time, calculating imaginary paychecks, budgeting, saving and, eventually, shopping from the school store.

Of course, the mentors from various departments within Gundersen who train and supervise the interns for 25





The Project SEARCH class of 2024 is pictured on their graduation day: (L-R, front row) Ariel Volden, Emma Monk, Sierra Braun, Abby Britain, (L-R, back row) Jake Dwyer, Darius Myren, Holden Olstad, and Raygen Sturm.

hours per week are essential. “Our program would not be possible without the dedication of our mentors,” says Laura. “In addition to training interns for 25 hours per week, they attend program meetings, write evaluations and provide lots of support and encouragement.” To date, 20 departments within Gundersen have supported Project SEARCH by hosting an intern.

That is why, thanks to the grant funding, Laura has added mentor appreciation lunches and other recognition opportunities, as well as an end-of-year graduation celebration. The program’s mentors and each student’s family are invited to the graduation ceremony, which features speeches from each intern.

Though Emma’s family was able to witness her transformation firsthand, hearing Emma reflect on her personal and professional growth as part of her graduation speech was especially inspiring. “During my year in Project SEARCH, I have learned things about myself. I feel changed and more able to be myself. I make more decisions for myself

and share my ideas more. I also think I have more friends now because of this program,” shared Emma. “Project SEARCH has also helped me be better prepared for the world of work. It has helped me to learn how to work independently. It has helped me to learn how to do my best work. I have learned that I am good at being organized!”

In fact, the job skills and confidence Emma developed through her Project SEARCH experience helped Emma land what she considers her “dream job” in the fashion industry. Since September 2024, Emma has been working part-time at Duluth Trading Company in downtown La Crosse where her organizational skills are an asset.

“Emma’s story offers a tangible example of how community support for Gundersen Medical Foundation changes lives,” says Laura. “Emma was a reserved young woman without a voice who was uncertain about her place in the world. Today, she has a voice, and she knows her value.” +

## Project SEARCH by the numbers

# 12

maximum number of interns annually enrolled at the La Crosse student site

# 18-21

age of enrollees

# 25

hours per week the mentors attend program meetings, write evaluations and provide lots of support and encouragement

# 20

number of departments within Gundersen that have hosted a Project SEARCH intern

# 20%

average employment rate nationally for individuals with disabilities

# 76%

average employment rate for Project SEARCH graduates

# 16

number of hours (weekly) interns aim to achieve at a job after building vocational skills through the program

# Miracles on air: A couple's journey to support children through radio

*Sally Sullivan holds a photo of herself and her husband, Ed, who passed away in 2020. The couple has many special memories of their CMN Hospitals fundraisers and other Foundation events.*



In October 2024, Gundersen Medical Foundation presented the Founders Award to Sally and Edwin “Ed” Sullivan, a couple whose decades of support for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals® has touched thousands of local children and their families.

“We are proud to recognize the Sullivans as leaders in philanthropy,” says Mandy Richardson, the Foundation’s director of philanthropy. “Their dedication to community and ability to bring people together to make a difference in the lives of others is inspiring.”

## **BUILDING A LIFE AND BUSINESS**

High school sweethearts Ed and Sally Sullivan grew up in La Crosse, Wis., and married in 1960. After high school,

Sally was a teacher at Galesville-Ettrick-Trempealeau School while Ed was a crane operator by day and a musician by night. Vowing to live their lives without having to ever ask “what if,” they left their jobs in early 1968 and set off on a nearly one-year tour with Ed’s band.

When the tour ended and the couple returned to La Crosse, they took another risk by changing careers. In late 1968, Ed and Sally purchased a supper club in Trempealeau, Wis., that they named Ed Sullivan’s. Like many small businesses, the restaurant became a family operation later in life as each of their three daughters worked there during their high school and college years.

Though the restaurant kept the family busy, Ed stayed connected to the local music scene. In 1983, he was asked to do a radio show on 1490 AM every Wednesday morning. Ed agreed and, in honor of his

Irish heritage, decided to call the show “The Blarney Party.” Soon, Ed invited Sally to join him on-air. The couple bantered, took requests from callers and played hits from many decades. The show became so popular that it eventually moved to five days per week.

## **SHAMROCKS, SONGS AND SUPPORT**

In 1992, based on the popularity of The Blarney Party, Pat Smith of the La Crosse Radio Group asked the Sullivans to do a marathon, 24-hour radio show. Ed was willing, but he thought they should have a purpose. Since the radio station was a sponsor for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, a program of (what was then) Lutheran Hospital, Smith suggested the marathon become a fundraiser. Ed and Sally didn’t know much about CMN Hospitals at the time, but they were longtime Gundersen patients and loved the idea of helping local children.

Not one to do anything half way, Ed decided their fundraiser, The Blarney Party Challenge, should have a goal, which he set at \$5,000. “We stayed on all night and came close to our goal, raising \$4,000 in donations,” remembers Sally. “But the next day, we learned that an anonymous donor had enjoyed the show so much, they made a last-minute gift of \$2,000 so we could exceed our goal.”

Following that first marathon event, Ed and Sally met with members of Lutheran Hospital Foundation to learn more about CMN Hospitals. They even toured the hospital to visit children who were being treated for cancer. “Once we realized just what CMN Hospitals did for local families, we committed to doing the fundraiser annually,” says Sally. “We wanted to make each year bigger, better and more successful than the last.”

Then, Dean Morton of TCI Cable invited them to turn their annual radio event into a telethon, which they did. While the Sullivans served as hosts, the show featured a variety of musical acts, special guests and interviews with CMN Champions (now called Heroes) and their families. Volunteers operated the phone banks to accept donations and, occasionally, to pass along a caller’s challenge.

“Some callers, especially people who knew us, would sometimes make wild requests that Ed sell his shirt or tie—or even break into dance—as part of the show,” remembers Sally, laughing. “Of course, Ed usually accepted the challenge, as long as it came with a donation, which is why we had such crazy fun. There were so many memorable moments.”

As the telethon’s popularity grew, community members and organizations began fundraising at other times of the year and presenting the donations to CMN Hospitals during the annual Blarney Party Challenge. “Our philosophy was that when it came to giving, no amount was too small. Every gift made an impact,” says Sally. “We also emphasized that donations to CMN Hospitals stayed local, and that made a difference to supporters. The idea of neighbors helping neighbors really resonated.”

In 2001, Ed and Sally sold the restaurant and retired, but they continued the annual telethon event, which had moved to Charter television in Onalaska where Shirley Weibel and her Charter crew facilitated the program.

Perhaps the most memorable moment occurred near the end of the broadcast in 2008. Ed and Sally’s grandson, Braeden, had sold bracelets throughout the year to support CMN Hospitals, so he was scheduled to present his donation of \$1,000 to his grandparents. When Braeden came on stage with the check, a cascade of balloons began to fall from overhead in celebration of an incredible milestone. That donation from their very own grandchild pushed the cumulative funds raised (1992 to 2008) from The Blarney Party Challenge to over \$1 million.

### **GRATEFUL FOR CARE AND COMMUNITY**

Though Ed and Sally were often center stage at these fundraisers, Sally emphasizes that the community’s generosity, including the tireless support from “an army of friends, volunteers and fellow business owners” were at the heart of it all: “I can’t say enough about the dedication of so many people, too many



*Sally and Ed Sullivan at the Blarney Party Challenge event in 2008.*

to mention, really. Without those who manned the phone banks, operated the cameras, set up and tore down at events, donated items to be auctioned off—and much more—these events would not have been possible.”

The final Blarney Party Challenge aired in 2009, just before Ed was diagnosed with a muscle disorder called Inclusion Body Myositis (IBM). He passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, at Gundersen on March 19, 2020. “Though we have always been grateful for the care we received at Gundersen throughout our lives, including from our most recent primary physician, Michael Dolan, MD, I was especially touched by the compassion of Ed’s end-of-life care team, led by Kyla Lee, MD,” says Sally. “The level of empathy and compassion we experienced was simply extraordinary.”

Sally, who says she was both “proud and humbled” to accept the Founders Award, emphasizes there is power in community members coming together. “Ed and I have been inspired by so many wonderful people who believe in helping others and strengthening our community,” she says, smiling. “And, like Ed and me, many of them believe in making a difference while having a whole lot of fun.” +

# Unlocking potential and connecting to top talent



*MacKenzie Caya was one of six undergraduate students selected to be part of the 2024 cohort of summer fellows.*

One of our community's greatest assets is access to high-quality medical care, and—like any investment—the best way to ensure future access is by nurturing growth today.

The most recent report published by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) predicts a national shortage of as many as 86,000 physicians by 2036. That shortfall could put access to medical care at risk in some communities, especially those in rural areas. These predictions only serve to underscore the importance of investing in programs like Gundersen Medical Foundation's A.C.V. Elston III, MD, Summer Research Fellowship.

The Fellowship's goal is to teach undergraduate students interested in pursuing an advanced degree or working in the medical field about scientific research. Fellows are assigned to work

with a research team on a project that helps them develop skills in study design, statistical analysis and dissemination of findings.

Since its inception in 1985, the program has graduated 282 summer fellows mentored by numerous Gundersen physicians and staff members. Although the program is designed to support learners and clinicians, our entire community benefits from this investment in medical education and research.

## **TRAINING FUTURE PROFESSIONALS**

The fellowships are partially funded by generous benefactors who have established endowments of \$50,000 or more with the Foundation. The endowments, along with support from other sponsors, allow for the creation of these paid internships. That financial support, along with the high-quality design of the program that features mentorship and instruction from Gundersen clinicians and staff, make the program highly competitive.

MacKenzie Caya grew up in Stoddard, Wis., and attends University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. As a junior majoring in biology and on a pre-med track, she applied to be part of the 2024 cohort. MacKenzie was selected to be one of six summer fellows, and the experience was everything she'd hoped it would be and more.

"The opportunity to do clinical research was exciting," she says. "I learned so much from the process and from the other members of my research team. The entire experience changed how I look at research and affirmed my choice to pursue a career in medicine."

## **PRESERVING ACCESS TO CARE**

Outside of research and mentoring, summer fellows have opportunities to participate in job shadowing and simulation labs at Gundersen's Integrated Center for Education. They also receive lessons on manuscript writing, statistics, the graduate or medical school application process, research presentation skills and more. For MacKenzie and other

## Former Fellows turned Gundersen providers

These compassionate caregivers are alumni of the Summer Research Fellowship Program\*:

David Dawson, DPM (1988), Podiatry  
 Christopher Gogbill, MD (2001), Pathology  
 Stephanie Neuman, MD (2002), Pain Medicine  
 Julie Vircks, DO (2002), Obstetrics and Gynecology  
 Brad Abicht, DPM (2003), Podiatric Medicine  
 Charles Czczok, MD (2004), Anesthesiology  
 Andrew Lehman, MD (2004), Orthopedic Surgery  
 Mark Ringstrom, MD (2006), Otolaryngology  
 Andrew Colburn, MD (2006), Emergency Medicine  
 Kevin Riggle, MD (2007), General Surgery  
 Nicholas Coorough, MD (2008), General Surgery – Bellin Health  
 Heather Voves, RN (2009), Medical Oncology  
 Melissa Meinking-Morgan, PA-C (2010), Emergency Medicine  
 Emily Dolan, MD (2011), Hospital and Internal Medicine  
 Kevin Hanson, MD (2011), Emergency Medicine  
 Janelle Francksen, DO (2011), Anesthesiology  
 Alexa Lowry, MD (2013), Obstetrics and Gynecology  
 Xiaozan Anderson, RN (2013), Cardio Pulmonary Unit  
 Benjamin Strand, MD (2013), Behavioral Medicine  
 Mitchell Voter, MD (2014), Emergency Medicine  
 Erin Heiderscheit, RN (2014), Surgical Unit  
 Brittany Clements, PA-C (2015), Family Medicine  
 Jake Deviley, MD (2017), Internal Medicine  
 Sierra O’Shaughnessy, RN (2017), Behavioral Medicine  
 Evan Dolan, C-AA (2018), Anesthesiology  
 Marie Gernes, C-AA (2018), Anesthesiology

*\*If your name is not on the list and you participated in the Summer Research Fellowship at Gundersen prior to 1997, please reach out to the Gundersen Research Institute (research@gundersenhealth.org) so we can ensure our alumni roster reflects your valuable contributions.*

## Named Summer Research Fellow sponsorships

Joan Curran Memorial  
 Desmond & Lucille Harris  
 Gertrude Salzer Gordon  
 Sharon & George Kerckhove  
 Adolf L. Gundersen  
 Ward E. Brown and Ward M. Brown  
 Kenneth & Mildred Kuebler  
 Bernard & Sally Kuebler-Killoran  
 John & Nettie Mooney  
 Jerry & Anna Beth Culver  
 Lommen Family  
 Dr. A.C.V. and Mary M. Elston

*Gundersen Research Institute’s manager of Research Navigation, Alec Fitzsimmons, MPH, (center) is pictured with some former summer fellows who now work at Gundersen: (L-R) Christopher Cogbill, MD, Emily Dolan, MD, Stephanie Neuman, MD, and Andrew Colburn, MD.*



fellows like her, the opportunity to learn from Gundersen staff and physicians who genuinely enjoy teaching and learning makes a tremendous impact.

“I valued the opportunity to shadow several caring and passionate physicians who were open to questions and shared their knowledge,” remembers MacKenzie. “Those experiences helped me understand the kind of physician I want to be and the kind of environment I hope to work in someday.”

While the program regularly attracts local applicants like MacKenzie, top students from around the country also apply. In 2024, 46 applicants (with an average GPA of 3.76) from 26 different academic institutions in 18 different states submitted applications. These numbers speak to the program’s quality and reputation, and they underscore the connection to recruitment.

“The program attracts some of the best and brightest medical students to Gundersen and introduces them to the communities we serve,” says Gundersen

Research Institute’s manager of Research Navigation, Alec Fitzsimmons, MPH. “Their experience in the Summer Fellows Program may help them choose Gundersen for their residencies or as a place to practice medicine later in their career.”

Given the overall success of the program, including the number of former fellows (listed at left) who now work for Gundersen, it’s clear that the Summer Research Fellowship is an asset on many levels. With continued investment in programs that attract and train the next generation of caregivers, we can offset the projected shortages and help protect our community’s access to high-quality care in the future. +

### Invest today for a better tomorrow

If you would like to support the Summer Research Fellowship, please contact the Foundation: **Monica Herman, manager of Philanthropy**  
[monica.herman@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:monica.herman@gundersenhealth.org)  
 (608) 775-8427



# A warm hug for cancer patients

Leanne Markos, MSN, RN, understands the impact of kindness and generosity because she sees it every day. As the clinical manager of Infusion Services at Gundersen Health System, she observes the close bonds that develop between staff and the patients receiving infusion treatments like chemotherapy.

She also witnesses patients' reactions when, during treatment sessions that can last for hours, they are offered snacks or sandwiches funded by gifts to Gundersen Medical Foundation. The light meal offers more than just nutrients, believes Leanne. In the tough moments, knowing that other people care helps nourish the soul.





*Grace Coulter, RN, from Gundersen's Infusion Services Department demonstrates features of the new infusion chairs to Richard Jakes. Richard and his wife, Judy, are among the group of community members who contributed to the infusion chair project.*



*“We are now able to offer a level of patient-centered care that would not otherwise be possible. It’s like the community reached out to give these patients a warm hug.”*

– Leanne Markos, MSN, RN

Even with daily examples, Leanne was recently surprised and inspired by the swift show of compassion from community members who partnered with Gundersen Medical Foundation on a special project. After noticing Gundersen’s fleet of treatment chairs was aging and in need of replacement, Leanne reached out to the Foundation for support.

In a matter of months, 15 generous donors inspired by personal experiences with cancer care at Gundersen had pledged \$198,460 for new treatment chairs. Two of the donors made their gift as a tribute to a friend who had recently passed away from cancer. (See sidebar story.)

“This example of community members coming together so quickly to impact the quality of care for patients, many of whom are struggling under the weight of a difficult diagnosis, is incredibly powerful. We are now able to offer a level of patient-centered care that would not otherwise be possible,” says Leanne. “It’s like the

community reached out to give these patients a warm hug.”

### **HIGHER QUALITY OF CARE**

Once the funding was received, Leanne wasted no time ordering 23 infusion chairs that would replace the oldest and/or least functional chairs at Gundersen’s infusion centers in La Crosse, Onalaska and Winona. The new equipment arrived this summer and has already made a significant impact on patients and staff.

These chairs are used by patients with medical conditions that require fluid to be administered directly into their bloodstream through a needle or catheter. While about half the patients who use the chairs are oncology or hematology patients receiving chemotherapy or other supportive care, the chairs are also used by patients with various medical conditions, including neurological conditions, allergies, Crohn’s disease, rheumatology needs and more. →



*Part of the gift used to purchase new infusion therapy chairs was made in honor of Mike Blokhuis. Pictured (L-R) are Mike's son and granddaughter, Alex and Aubri; his wife, Jill; and his daughter, Jada. The family was photographed in front of the special sign hung in tribute to Mike and located near the infusion chair donated in his name.*

## A special tribute

A beloved former member of the La Crosse Police Department, lieutenant detective Mike Blokhuis, was diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer in December 2022. Soon after his diagnosis, he began an intense chemotherapy regimen. His treatment occurred once every other week and lasted 6-8 hours at a time.

Mike's wife, Jill, who was a Gundersen employee for 35 years, including having served 23 years in the Foundation, remembers those days as "emotional." The start of the day was stressful because tests had to be run to determine whether or not chemotherapy was even an option. Then, if approved, the actual course of treatment took hours and left Mike feeling weak, cold and exhausted.

"Anyone who has experienced cancer treatments or watched a loved one go through them knows just how difficult they can be," says Jill. Sadly, Mike passed away in October 2023, 10 months to the day of his diagnosis, but the outpouring of love and support from the community has helped with the grief.

Not only did the police department and some special friends honor Mike by naming a drone in his memory, but Jill was also recently touched to learn that two families close to Mike and Jill had made a gift in Mike's memory to support the purchase of new infusion treatment chairs at Gundersen. Today, a special plaque honoring Mike is placed next to one of the chairs in La Crosse.

This tribute, shares Jill, is heartwarming for several reasons. "Mike dedicated so much of his life to protecting and caring for our community," she explains. "He would be touched by this instance of community coming together. Having experienced the discomfort caused by long treatment sessions, he would also be humbled to be included in an act inspired by so much love and kindness."

Because of her many years of service to Gundersen Medical Foundation, Jill has witnessed countless acts of generosity and believes each one serves as an example to others.

Depending on the regimen, infusions can take one to nine hours, and some patients receive treatments multiple times per week.


The former chairs, many of which were past their expected lifespan, were difficult for patients to get in and out of. Some chairs became hard to adjust and could not be easily repaired. As a result, staff sometimes had to strain or bend uncomfortably while tending to patients. The new chairs are state of the art and equipped with power, so patients and staff can easily adjust the chairs with the touch of a remote. The chairs are ergonomically designed, too, featuring a footrest and side arm tables.

"The new chairs don't take up as much room and are easier to work around. Patients can easily be raised or lowered—and they love the comfort features," says Ka Thao, medical assistant, referring to the special options for heat and massage. The updated models also feature USB ports so patients can keep devices charged while they are watching movies or playing games during long treatment sessions.

In addition to the new chairs, Leanne purchased two beds for patients who need to lay down fully during their treatments. The updated beds feature a new, more comfortable mattress model, easy-to-use controls and enhanced safety features that were not available on the former beds.

"Nobody wants to go through hours and hours of treatment," says Leanne. "These days are so difficult for patients and their loved ones, which is why small comforts—and the knowledge of just how much our community cares—means everything." +









The end of the year is fast approaching, and with it, so is your opportunity to reduce your taxes.

## TAX-WISE CHARITABLE PLANNING STRATEGIES

There are a number of charitable planning strategies that can help you lower your income and taxes this year. Here are some ways you can shift tax dollars to charitable dollars and support a cause you care about within Gundersen Medical Foundation.

-  **IRA Charitable Rollover**  
Persons age 70½ or older can roll over up to \$105,000 from their IRA to a qualified charity. This may lower your income and taxes.
-  **Outright Gift of an Asset**  
Make a gift of stock, real estate or another asset, avoid paying capital gains tax on the transfer and receive a tax-saving charitable deduction.
-  **Donor Advised Fund (DAF)**  
Make a tax deductible gift to a DAF, which gives you the ability to make grants to your favorite charities this year and in future years. Many donors make gifts to Gundersen Medical Foundation through their DAF.
-  **Zero-Tax Gift and Sale**  
Make a gift of part of an investment or property you intend to sell, avoid paying capital gains tax on the sale and receive cash back.



If you would like more information on any of these end-of-year planning strategies, please contact us. We can help you create a plan that meets your needs and goals.



### Let us help with your gift planning

Monica Herman, manager of Philanthropy  
(608) 775-8472 or [monica.herman@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:monica.herman@gundersenhealth.org)

**GUNDERSEN**  
**MEDICAL FOUNDATION**



**Mandy L. Richardson,**  
**MPH, CFRE**  
*Director of Philanthropy*



**Todd A. Mahr, MD**  
*Medical director of Philanthropy*

## The spirit of philanthropy

In 2004, our community came together at Gundersen's main campus in La Crosse to watch the unveiling of a life-size bronze sculpture of Adolf and Helga Gundersen, the founders of Gundersen Clinic. Commissioned by the Gundersen family, the statue pays tribute to a couple whose vision shaped the future of healthcare in our community.

At the same time, Gundersen Medical Foundation established the Founders Award, a distinction meant to recognize outstanding lay and medical leaders for their contributions to medical education, research, outreach and the philanthropic support of Gundersen Health System.

As you will read on page 29 of this issue, the 2024 Founders Award was presented to Ed and Sally Sullivan (Ed posthumously) in recognition of their decades-long support of Children's Miracle Network Hospitals®.

As small business owners and radio hosts, the Sullivans developed a network of friends and supporters who helped them raise over \$1.5 million for CMN Hospitals through a telethon called The Blarney Party Challenge. Aside from being just plain fun, these events underscored an important tenet of philanthropy: gifts (in any size) make a tremendous cumulative impact.

It was also twenty years ago that Gundersen Medical Foundation and the Fools Five Road Race of Lewiston, Minn., became partners in cancer research. And, like the Sullivans, Fools Five is helping drive impressive progress in cancer

research through gifts of all sizes, one road race at a time. Gundersen Medical Foundation is proud to have recognized them with the Outstanding Philanthropic Community Organization Award.

Today, the statue of Adolf and Helga Gundersen stands in front of the Founders Building. The quote featured on the statue from Alfred Tennyson reads, "Come my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world." This message not only serves as an invitation for us all to be part of shaping the future of healthcare, but it also represents the spirit—and the vision—of philanthropy.

We see the vision of innovation, access and care for neighbors every day, in every gift. Like the Sullivans and the Fools Five Road Race, your vision is an important part of our continued legacy. +

MARCH 1–SEPT. 30, 2024

Gundersen Medical Foundation thanks our many friends for their generous gifts.

# Commemorative gifts

Charitable gifts to Gundersen Medical Foundation are a thoughtful way to celebrate a specific individual on special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries or holidays, or to remember friends or loved ones who are no longer here to carry on their own legacy of caring. Our donors also find this method of giving is a meaningful way to express appreciation to Gundersen care providers or entire departments for exceptional care received, while also advancing healthcare quality for the future.

In response to your gift, we send a note of acknowledgment to the honored individual or, in the case of a memorial, to the family. You will be notified that your gift has been received and designated according to your wishes. The names of those recognized by tribute gifts are listed on the following pages.

*Commemorative gifts made after Sept. 30, 2024, will appear in the next issue of Pathfinders.*



## IN HONOR OF

Tammy Anderson, MBA, BSN, RN  
Andrew J. Barthel, PT  
Andrew J. Bell  
Marilu Bintz, MD  
Wayne A. Bottner, MD  
Gretchen L. Burns  
Tiffany H. Calteaux, PT  
Lyle V. & Marybeth M. Cary  
Michael K. Case, MD  
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Davis  
Jessica De Ruyter  
Patrick J. Dixon  
Emily C. Dolan, MD  
Nancy Ernst  
Emily R. Flannery  
Mary M. Garves  
Dr. A. Erik Gundersen & Sophia Ferris  
Gundersen Hospice Department  
Gundersen Orthopedic Staff  
Erin M. Gutowski, DO  
David & Barbara Hanson  
Gil E. Harmon, MD  
Andrea L. Hauser  
Richard F.\* & Mary L. Hauser  
Veronica A. Heath  
Herbert M. Heili  
Megan P. Heinlein, MD  
Justus X. Heise  
John F. Herath, MD  
Louise J. Hill  
Lisa A. Horstman  
Fatemeh, S. Jannati  
Chaplain Marvin R. Jonasen  
Charlie J. Kinneberg  
Carly N. Klunder  
Rita R. Kowalke  
Kyla R. Lee, MD  
Steven R. Manson, MD  
Joan M. Matey, MD  
Cara E. McArthur  
Susan L. McFadden, RN  
Roseanna Miller  
Brayen C. Morey's 6th Birthday

Jane A. Morgan  
Bruce J. Mullikin  
Eli R. Neisius  
Shirley M. Newberry  
Lisa J. Nutter, RN, NP  
Steve & Debra Oliver  
Gary Padesky  
Venki Paramesh, MD  
Benjamin M. Parsons, DO  
Mackenzie Peterson  
Premnauth Rabindranauth, MD  
Isaiah S. Ragner  
Everett A. Richardson  
Jedidiah P. Schaller  
Jude Schipper  
Kraig J. Schuster  
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Thomas J. Slaggie  
Emerson L. Small  
Travis J. Smith, MD  
Melanie M. Solum, MD  
Hazel K. Stehl  
Amanda D. Stein, PT  
Ella Stoker  
Addison Tarrence  
San Thida, MD  
Paul D. Ulland  
Duane K. Undeland, MD  
Timothy R. Whitehead, MD  
Dick Wieser's 80th birthday  
Eileen M. Wiltinger  
Cynthia Withrow

## IN MEMORY OF

Iris G. Abbott  
Revelino 'Mario' Abellera, MD  
Rafique Ahmed, PhD  
David J. Amborn  
Sean Arena  
Peggy Arentz  
Wayne A. Attleson  
Joseph H. Baker  
Norma 'Jean' Baker  
Barbara K. Bargabos  
Ann C. Barney

William A. & Ann C. Barney  
Barbara E. Bates  
Lorraine M. Beal  
Sydney M. Becker  
Leonard L. Bennett  
June F. Benton  
Taylor Benzing  
Paul R. Bequette  
Lorna J. Betsinger  
Lois A. Betz  
Donald Bina  
Roger C. Bjorge  
Teresa Block  
Michael Blokhuis  
John R. Boland  
Marion J. Bolanos  
Larry J. Booher  
Shirley M. Bosworth  
Ben Brandt  
Mathew L. Brasic  
Paul F. Bray  
Richard J. Brendum  
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Peter J. Brose  
Michael J. Brown  
Branden L. Brownrigg  
Carol Bullard  
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Gail K. Cleary  
Carli C. Clements  
Christian M. D. Cockrum  
Ralph S. Cole  
Mark V. Connelly, MD

Kathryn M. Conway  
Terry A. Cozy  
Joan L. Curran  
Robert R. Cushman  
Shane G. Dagendesh  
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Devyn M. Doughty  
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Paul P. Dries  
Earl M. Drussell  
Jeremy R. Dunn  
Thomas M. Ede  
Gary H. Ekern  
Merlin 'Arvid' Ellefson  
June J. Else  
Delroy W. Elston  
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Margaret T. Ertz  
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Kenneth Gabrielson  
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Willis H. Gensmer  
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Carol M. Hanson  
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Delores Hare  
Natalie J. Hartigan  
Beth A. Hartmann  
Delaine A. Hayden  
Kyle R. Hayden  
Donald E. Hegy, Jr.  
Justus X. Heise  
Neil P. Hengst  
Stacy A. Her, MD  
Dennis R. Herold  
Evelyn Herrman  
Sylvia J. Hetland  
Ralph L. Hicks  
Dolores M. Hinit  
David M. Hoesley  
Kraig L. Hoff  
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John W. Holty  
Wayne J. Hood, Jr.  
Robert L. Hooverson  
Dona Rae Houser  
LeRoy & Ramona Hovell  
Ramona I. Hovell  
Tracey Howe  
Merlin E. Huber  
Gloria A. Hundt  
Jeneane M. Jacobson  
Joan Janis  
Margaret Jean  
Marie A. Johnson  
Edward R. Jones  
Doris Ann Jorstad  
Margaret A. Jothan

\*Deceased

Abraham T. Kaalele	Braeden L. Mahlke	Judith E. Paggi	Vicki L. Schroeder	John L. Thorsness, DDS
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Leo J. Lusk	Howard P. Olson	Peter M. Schnick	Marjorie E. Swiggum	Scott A. Zuber
Michael M. Lynn	Janet D. Olson	Albin (Dick) Schreier	Michael Teslow	
Julie A. MacDonald	Jeffrey L. Olson	Darrell O. Schroeder	Thomas Thompson	

\*Deceased

# Your gifts at work

2024

## Foundation Grants Report

The second half of fiscal year 2024 was a busy one for our internal grant program. From April 1 through Sept. 30, 2024, we received more than 300 grant requests from 70 departments within Gundersen Health System. Now, we are happy to share the details of the nearly \$2,068,581 in grants that were distributed during this timeframe.

Each grant is possible only because of generous support from our community. Your gifts play a crucial role in advancing patient care, investing in cutting-edge technology, furthering research initiatives and supporting patients during some of the most challenging times of their lives.

Therefore, it's our honor to share these specific examples and touching stories that illustrate the magnitude of your gifts at work.

### GUNDERSEN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF GRANT
Research Navigation	\$65,268	A.C.V. Elston III, MD, Summer Research Fellowship Program
Translational Research	\$68,124	Norman Gillette Jr. Research Fellowship Endowment Fund distribution
Research Institute	\$30,052	Norman Gillette Sr. Memorial Endowment Fund distribution
Research Institute	\$4,942	R. James Trane Surgical Research and Data Center Endowment Fund distribution
Research Navigation	\$3,095	Cameron B. Gundersen Endowment Fund distribution
Research Institute	\$13,938	Allyn O. Knaak Endowment distribution - cancer research
Research Institute	\$13,938	Allyn O. Knaak Endowment distribution - heart surgery research
Research Navigation	\$5,900	Kang student researcher
Research Institute	\$41,000	Breast cancer research
Research Institute	\$9,220	Nancy Lee Edwards-McNamara, MD, Memorial Endowment Fund distribution
Translational Research	\$92,512	Kabara Cancer Research Institute Endowment Fund distribution
Clinical Research	\$25,633	Pediatric oncology research associates
Translational Research	\$1,000	Dr. Cowden Dahl Lab
Research Institute	\$23,184	Center for Breast Care outcome research
Translational Research	\$12,854	William A. Agger, MD, Research Laboratory internship
Research Institute	\$453	Research study on effects of programmed lighting
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$411,112</b>	



#### Pediatric oncology research associates

As a satellite site for the UW Health American Family Children's Hospital in Madison, Wis., Gundersen is able to offer pediatric cancer patients clinical trials locally. These trials are available through the Children's Oncology Group, a worldwide National Cancer Institute-supported clinical trial group. By sharing clinical research efforts and measuring collective results, treatments are advanced more rapidly than any institution can accomplish alone. Participation in the Children's Oncology Group trials can shorten the time it takes for us to get new, more effective treatments on the market for our pediatric patients. We are privileged to care for this very special population, and it would not be possible without the support and funding from Gundersen Medical Foundation. With the Foundation's support, we are able to bring our pediatric cancer patients significant hope in their fight against cancer each day.

## MEDICAL EDUCATION OFFICE

PROGRAM	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF GRANT
Family Medicine	\$24,500	Mobile Medicine Program
Pediatrics	\$19,866	Coordination of medical student Pediatric rotations
Integrated Center for Education	\$8,564	Cadaver labs for residents and staff to conduct essential training
General	\$10,962	General operating support for medical education
Surgery	\$3,800	Surgical council on resident education curriculum for general surgery residents
Continuing Medical Education	\$4,000	Surgery grand rounds visiting speakers
Continuing Medical Education	\$359	Cancer Center grand rounds speaker
General	\$37,058	Edwin L. Overholt, MD, Chair of Medical Education Endowment Fund distribution
General	\$62,960	Edward Winga, MD, Director of Internal Medicine Endowment Fund distribution
Pediatrics	\$10,297	Pediatric Medical Student Clerkship Endowment Fund distribution
Pediatrics	\$26,358	Family Medicine Residency pediatric rotation
Surgery	\$38,319	William Kiskan, MD, and Thomas Cogbill, MD, Director of General Surgery Residency Endowment Fund distribution
Surgery	\$7,634	Susan F. Behrens, MD, FACS Surgical Skills Director Endowment Fund distribution
Transitional	\$54,356	James Webster, MD, and Lucian Griffith, MD, Director of Transitional Year Residency Endowment Fund distribution
Continuing Medical Education	\$21,299	Ryan Optometry Residency Endowment Fund distribution
Family Medicine	\$7,298	Lea Cornell, MD, FMR Endowment Fund distribution
WARM	\$12,250	Wisconsin Academy of Rural Medicine (WARM) Pediatrics director support
Family Medicine	\$7,350	Chronic and Preventive Care director support
Surgery	\$992	Acute care surgery curriculum for general surgery residents
Surgery	\$925	Surgical resident medical mission travel to Guatemala
Surgery	\$913	Journal Club with visiting faculty
Surgery	\$540	ACS Entering Resident Readiness Assessment for surgery program directors and residents
Surgery	\$482	General surgery residency wellness activity
Surgery	\$266	General surgery residency recruitment
General	\$265	Conference expenses for required education
Continuing Medical Education	\$250	Cancer Center grand rounds
Continuing Medical Education	\$172	Support for optometric conference
General	\$205	Orientation lunch for medical students
Family Medicine	\$67	Family medicine residency wellness activity
Family Medicine	\$14	Family medicine residency welcome baskets
Surgery	\$10	General surgery residency graduation and wellness event
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$362,329</b>	

## MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF GRANT
Behavioral Health Inpatient	\$3,000	Programming supplies and additional outdoor activities for patients
Behavioral Health Outpatient	\$3,000	Patient essential needs and self-care items
Behavioral Health Outpatient	\$1,500	Education materials for patients in addiction treatment programs
Behavioral Health Outpatient	\$1,000	Assisting with food insecurity for Partial Hospitalization Program patients
Behavioral Health Outpatient	\$450	Medication lockboxes to promote medication safety and prevent medication diversion
Behavioral Health Outpatient	\$270	"Atlas of the Heart" books for patients in group therapy sessions
Behavioral Health Inpatient	\$1,126	Academic and mental health education supplies for adolescent patients
Behavioral Health Inpatient	\$1,200	Adequate clothing and self-care items for hospitalized patients
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,546</b>	



### General surgery grand rounds

The Sigurd B. Gundersen Sr., MD, Memorial Fund supported the August general surgery grand rounds. Abe Tsigonis, MD, a 2016 general surgery residency alumnus of Gundersen Health System, visited from Alaska to present on "Surgical Practice and Pursuit of Quality Improvement in Rural Alaska." During his time visiting Gundersen, he was also able to participate in the Residency Journal Club.



### Programming supplies

Gundersen's Behavioral Health Unit recently added four additional acute beds to help meet the needs of the community. A grant of \$3,000 was awarded to assist with purchasing programming supplies and additional outdoor activities to better serve more patients. The department often hears from patients that one of the biggest benefits of their stay has been the time spent outside doing programming.



### Crime Victim Services

The Foundation awarded \$2,500 to support the continuing education and training of staff who provide trauma treatment to victims of crime. "I found this educational training to be helpful in understanding cultural diversity, how different systems work, and trauma on the brain, not only for my patients, but also for myself, in working in this field for over 39 years here at Gundersen. Being aware of burnout and understanding trauma is so important in the healthcare field for oneself, our team, our patients and especially for trauma therapists." –Janis Elder, psychotherapist

## STAFF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT	DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT
Spiritual Care	\$67,450	Medical Specialty Unit	\$2,000
Department of Nursing	\$58,792	Philanthropy	\$1,990
Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Sports Medicine	\$24,230	Behavioral Health	\$1,769
Emergency Services	\$9,965	Integrated Center for Education	\$1,715
Social Services	\$8,020	Endocrinology	\$1,648
PICU	\$5,148	Nutrition Therapy	\$1,489
Intensive Care Unit	\$4,896	OB/GYN	\$1,390
Gundersen AIR	\$4,500	Pulmonary	\$1,130
Family Medicine Residency Clinic	\$4,000	Community Paramedics	\$1,065
Obstetrics & Nursery	\$3,980	Volunteer Services	\$975
Corporate Learning	\$3,000	Respiratory Care	\$920
Center for Breast Care	\$3,000	Lactation Services	\$646
Patient Experience	\$3,000	Exercise Physiology	\$540
Urgent Care	\$2,991	Renal Dialysis	\$450
Medical Oncology	\$2,952	Radiation Oncology	\$243
Gundersen Children's	\$2,770	Gastroenterology	\$200
Crime Victim Services	\$2,500	Infusion Services	\$125
Population Health	\$2,127	Resolve Through Sharing	\$113
Dermatology	\$2,025	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$235,753</b>
Lab	\$2,000		

## ONCOLOGY

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF GRANT
Dermatology	\$34,261	Cryostat cancer tissue cutting machine
Cancer Center	\$20,000	Genetic testing for cancer patients with financial need
Cancer Center	\$10,000	Comfort/organizational bags for every new treatment patient in the Cancer Center
Infusion Services	\$9,600	Port shirts for patients undergoing infusion therapy
Cancer Center	\$4,824	Cancer Center lodging program to provide emergency hotel stays to patients receiving treatment
Center for Cancer & Blood Disorders - Tomah	\$1,200	Provide food and supplies during support groups to patients coping with cancer diagnosis
Radiation Oncology	\$470	Art supplies for patients' treatment completion canvases
Cancer Center	\$5,000	Additional head covering options including wigs, hats and caps for cancer patients
Lab & Pathology	\$15,630	Replacement of microtome
Surgical & Digestive Care Unit	\$1,090	Handheld doppler devices to meet increasing demand on Medical Surgical Unit
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$102,075</b>	

### Cancer Center

A grant of \$25,000 helped the Center for Cancer & Blood Disorders in Tomah create a boutique for cancer patients to be fitted for head coverings and other cancer-related clothing. "The generosity shown has made such an impact for the patients. They are able to receive their Radiant Wraps and head coverings in an area that promotes healing. The ability to assist patients in such a beautiful space, knowing that we are providing a peaceful and calming atmosphere for them to start to regain some of their confidence, is priceless." –Cancer Center staff







### Group exercise class

A \$6,000 grant was awarded to provide a group exercise class to people with Parkinson's Disease and Parkinsonism. The Steady Strides Program focuses on movements and exercise to improve tasks and movement needed for day-to-day living. Benefits of the program include improving balance, enhancing strength and agility, challenging participants cognitively and physically, and counteracting symptoms.

## PHYSICAL & OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF GRANT
Sports Medicine	\$20,372	LIMS research
Orthopedics	\$17,010	SYNRGY 360T functional trainer system
Neurovestibular	\$6,000	Programming supplies for group exercise class for patients with Parkinson's disease
Neurovestibular	\$6,000	Wireless infrared goggles for diagnosing vestibular disorders
Sports Medicine	\$3,000	Rogue Training System to assist patients with whole-body strengthening
Pediatrics	\$2,400	Nutritious food to use during patient care treatment sessions
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$54,783</b>	



### Love + Medicine Program

On May 19, 2024, high school senior Maddie Breza was receiving months-long treatment at Gundersen Health System's Pediatric Department instead of walking across a stage with her graduating class. What could have been a sad day was made so much better by a surprise arranged by child life specialist Jessica Wadium and other Gundersen staff.

Gundersen's IT Department had worked with Maddie's high school to have the ceremony livestreamed into a conference room near Maddie's hospital room. As a result, Maddie was able to don her cap and gown and walk down the hallway lined with family members, Gundersen staff and special guests to "Pomp and Circumstance." After the ceremony, she was treated to a graduation party complete with cake, lunch, photos—and an enduring example of compassionate care.

## PATIENT SERVICES & COMMUNITY HEALTH

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF GRANT
Gundersen employees	\$33,564	Employees Helping Employees Emergency Fund
Crime Victim Services	\$125,524	Provide services to children who have experienced abuse
Cross-Functional Care	\$1,500	Fall leadership retreat
Onalaska Clinic	3,800	Creation of employee zen room
Recruitment	\$320	CNA textbooks for Health Science Academy students
Recruitment	\$215	CNA training supplies for Health Science Academy students
Surgical & Digestive Care Unit	\$13,571	Broda chairs for patients on the Medical Surgical Unit
School District of La Crosse	\$4,000	Annual support for the Global & Community Partners at School Program
Critical Care	\$3,915	Broda Chair for patients on the Critical Care Unit
Great Lakes Hemophilia Foundation	\$2,000	Amish clinic day with Hemophilia Treatment Center
Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit	\$2,000	Specialized shower chair for patients
Resolve Through Sharing®	\$1,206	Scholarships for Resolve Through Sharing's International Perinatal Bereavement Conference led by the Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance
Resolve Through Sharing®	\$450	Annual burial marker event
Family Medicine - Waukon	\$9,438	Bladder scanner for patient care
Family Medicine - La Crescent	\$9,438	Bladder scanner for patient care
Mississippi River Valley Critical Incident		
Stress Management Team	\$2,300	Education and training materials
Information and Referral	\$2,000	Sponsorship for the Suicide Prevention Summit
Neurology	\$1,600	Stroke survivor night event
Gastroenterology	\$1,045	Colon cancer screening awareness
Patient Experience	\$1,000	Adequate clothing for patients who need them at discharge
Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit	\$1,000	Rehab support groups
Family Medicine - Iowa Hub	\$760	Supplies for safe medication handling for patients who are in financial hardship
Care Coordination	\$573	Lois's Loose Change Program
OB & Nursery	\$374	Antepartum activities
Patient Experience	\$150	Patient support with Love + Medicine Fund
Medical Specialty Unit	\$725	"Dementia Café" supplies to enhance well-being of dementia patients and caregivers
Neurology	\$1,980	EMST 150 devices for expiratory muscle strength training
Neurology	\$16,870	Eye gaze communication device
Social Services	\$4,000	Emergency funding to assist pediatric patients
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$245,317</b>	



### CMN Hospitals direct patient support

Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals at Gundersen Health System continues to positively impact the lives of patients, families and staff through grants awarded for direct patient support. These grants assist with purchasing equipment, services, technology, camps, respite care and more to help children with chronic illnesses, trauma or disabilities. Carma Willers, a social worker for this program, assists patients and families in working through the application process. She has had the amazing opportunity to see the smiles on the faces of children and their family members over the years because of this program.



### Lucas CPR device

Gundersen Tri-State Ambulance received a \$38,982 grant to purchase two LUCAS CPR devices for their new locations in Richland Center and Tomah. These devices allow for optimal chest compressions and a single responder to provide patient care during transportation of critically ill patients, primarily from Gundersen Critical Access Hospitals to the La Crosse campus.

## PEDIATRICS

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF GRANT
Direct patient support through CMN Hospitals	\$204,667	CMN Hospitals funding for kids and families
Labor & Delivery/NICU	\$129,810	Panda iRES Warmers and Giraffe Omnibed Carestations
Cardiology	\$34,007	Pediatric echo probes for regional locations
Pediatrics - Onalaska	\$29,002	Adjustable-height exam room tables
Project SEARCH	\$20,675	Project SEARCH educational and social training
Pediatric PT/OT	\$17,014	Therapeutic toys and equipment
Pediatric PT/OT	\$8,198	Pediatric wheelchairs and adaptive car seats for Pediatric Wheelchair Loaner Program
Community	\$7,500	Wishland Pony fund distribution
Outpatient Surgery Center	\$6,000	Sensory rover and sensory tools for pediatric patients awaiting surgery
Pediatric Specialties	\$3,600	Pediatric toy updates
Neurology	\$3,414	Assessment and treatment supplies for speech therapy patients at St. Joseph's and Moundview
Resolve Through Sharing®	\$3,000	Evidence-based, compassion-forward perinatal bereavement support materials for Gundersen Health System
Direct patient support	\$45,508	Thunder Ride for Pediatric Diabetes
Social Services	\$3,000	Infant car seats for Obstetrics Unit newborns whose parents are in financial hardship
Social Services	\$3,000	Gas cards for pediatric patients' families
Pediatric Specialties	\$2,500	Type 1 diabetes community picnic for pediatric patients and families
Pediatric Specialties	\$1,318	Update interactive projector in pediatric waiting room
Family Medicine	\$1,200	Reach Out and Read books
Family Medicine - Residency Clinic	\$1,200	Reach Out and Read books
Pediatric PT/OT	\$922	Therapeutic toys and equipment to be used during therapy
OB & Nursery	\$848	Comfort kits for infants born to mothers with a substance use disorder
Pediatric Specialties	\$357	Stethoscopes for parents of an infant newly diagnosed with arrhythmia
Resolve Through Sharing®	\$350	Candle lighting ceremony
Family Medicine - Spring Grove	\$200	Summer reading program with local library
Pediatrics/PICU patients	\$5,363	HEPA filters for use with immunocompromised pediatric oncology patients
NICU	\$15,000	Participation in the VON QI All Care is Brain Care collaborative
Neurology	\$1,415	Low-tech AAC systems for use during speech therapy treatment sessions
Inpatient Pediatric Departments	\$9,500	Inclusive play furniture and items for waiting areas of inpatient pediatric departments
Inpatient Pediatrics and PICU	\$2,475	Small fridges for patient rooms in PICU and pediatrics
OB & Nursery	\$3,185	Swaddle baths for nursery
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$564,229</b>	

## CARDIOLOGY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

DEPARTMENT	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF GRANT
Gundersen Tri-State Ambulance	\$38,982	LUCAS-CPR devices for new ambulances in Richland Center and Tomah
Cardiopulmonary Unit	\$19,127	LUCAS-CPR device for the Cardiopulmonary Unit
Exercise Physiology	\$4,999	SciFit arm ergometer exercise equipment for patient use
Emergency Services	\$2,130	Swab dryers for victims of sexual assault
Emergency Services	\$2,100	Safety vests to identify staff quickly during mass casualty incidents/trainings
Emergency Services	\$1,520	CPR manual ventilation training device
EMS education	\$700	Training materials for first responder agencies on anaphylactic emergencies
Cardiopulmonary Unit	\$666	Emergency response bag for patient care
Cardiopulmonary Unit	\$120	Continuous pulse oximetry equipment for patient care
Cardiology	\$11,093	Pill boxes, scales and blood pressure cuffs for heart failure patients with financial hardship
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$81,437</b>	

# THE MIRACLE CONNECTION

GUNDERSEN MEDICAL FOUNDATION



Children's  
Miracle Network  
Hospitals®

Change Kids' Health.  
Change the Future.

GIVE TODAY. [gundersenhealth.org/cmn-hospitals](https://gundersenhealth.org/cmn-hospitals)

FALL/WINTER 2024



*Darren Budde, who works in Gundersen Health System's ITDS BioMed Department, with his youngest daughter Dakota. Dakota was born in the ER and was able to use the very equipment her dad is in charge of inspecting.*

## PANDA Warmer brings family full circle

Darren Budde, who works in Gundersen Health System's ITDS BioMed Department, regularly provides maintenance to hospital equipment. One such piece of equipment is the PANDA Warmer in Gundersen's Emergency Services Department.

The PANDA Warmer, recently purchased with a grant from Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, is a specialized piece of medical equipment used to keep newborns warm immediately after birth. It has features like a built-in scale for weighing the baby, a resuscitation system for airway support and an oxygen supply.

"I had been there, just in October, and checked on this device," Darren said. "I went through every single step of that

[inspection] process, and I knew that everything worked as it should have."

This knowledge would put him at ease a short time later while his wife, Laura, was delivering their youngest daughter, Dakota, in the Emergency Room (ER). After delivery, Dakota was in the PANDA Warmer for a day and a half due to her need for supplemental oxygen; she was one of the first babies to use the newly installed machine.

Darren and his wife are incredibly grateful to CMN Hospitals for their part in equipping the ER with a machine that is only typically available in labor and delivery departments or neonatal intensive care units, and Darren is proud that his work came full circle to help keep his own family safe.



# Celebrating miracles



## 2024 Miracle Gala sponsors

### Presenting

Market & Johnson

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### Fund a Miracle

JF Brennan

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### Child art auction

OSI, Inc.

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### Hero

Gundersen Credit Union

### Printing

DigiCopy

### Décor

Details Matter by Amber

The Miracle Gala held on April 12, 2024, provided a special opportunity to honor our Heroes and celebrate the impact of Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. The event was a record-breaking success, raising more than \$180,000 for local kids!

The evening included a lively dessert auction, child art auction and the opportunity to Fund a Miracle supporting the Pediatric Mobile Clinic project. Our community rallied, and we are thrilled to share that miracle was successfully funded.

Thank you to our attendees and our sponsors for helping make miracles happen.



**April 11, 2025!**



Andrew



Charlie



Liliana



Luther



Zari

**\$10**  
**PER PACK OF 20**  
 cards, envelopes  
 & seals

## Holiday card tradition continues

**Support your local Children’s Miracle Network Hospital and spread some holiday cheer by purchasing this year’s Hero holiday cards!** The cards are designed by five local Heroes—Andrew, Charlie, Liliana, Luther and Zari—who have been supported by CMN Hospitals. The back of each card features the child’s photo and medical journey.

**Cards are available at these locations:**

- Gundersen Medical Foundation, 201 Third St. N., La Crosse
- Gundersen La Crosse Campus Gift Shop, 1900 South Ave., La Crosse
- Gundersen Credit Union, 1910 South Ave., La Crosse
- Gundersen Pharmacy-East Building, 724 Denton St., Level 4, La Crosse
- Gundersen Pharmacy-Onalaska Clinic, 3111 Gundersen Dr., Onalaska
- Gundersen Pharmacy-Sand Lake Road, 111 Sand Lake Rd., Onalaska
- Gundersen Pharmacy-Cass Street, 528 Cass St., La Crosse
- Gundersen Pharmacy-Village Shopping Center, 2511 Green Bay St., La Crosse
- Gundersen Pharmacy-Holmen, 500 N. Holmen Dr., Holmen
- Gundersen Pharmacy-Winona, 1122 US-61, Winona

*Special thanks to Empire Screen Printing of Onalaska, Wis., who generously donates time and materials to bring our Hero designs to life, allowing 100% of card sales to help fund miracles for local kids.*



Andrew



Luther



Charlie



Zari



Liliana

**Inside message:**  
 “The gift of love. The gift of peace. The gift of happiness. May all these be yours this holiday season.”

[gundersenhealth.org/cmnhospitals](http://gundersenhealth.org/cmnhospitals)



## A gift from the heart

This holiday season is the perfect time to honor friends or family members with a gift (in their name) to Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals.

**Look at what your gift can do!**

- \$100** will cover gas cards for a family traveling to visit a child in the hospital
- \$250** can help cover the cost of sled hockey or other adaptive recreation
- \$500** will pay for tutoring and educational support
- \$750** will help a child attend a summer camp that supports their medical diagnosis
- \$1,000** helps cover the cost of technology and educational apps

These are just a few examples of the impact your gift to CMN Hospitals can make for children and families in need. Give today!





*Dear Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals,*

*When I went to my first power soccer practice with the Chippewa Valley Hooligans, I had to use one of my teammate’s chairs because we did not know there were specific chairs called StrikeForce.*

*At first, we tried to use a guard for my regular chair, but the guard could be dangerous to my chair and me (and it was also really slow!). For months, we tried to get a chair but could not do it. Then, a check from CMN Hospitals arrived.*

*So, we got a used StrikeForce—and I couldn’t believe how awesome it was! I could kick a goal easier, and best of all, I could finally keep up. I felt just like my teammates.*

*Even though we lost at the national power soccer tournament in Indiana, we played hard. After our team dinner, we got trophies that my teammate’s mom had made for us.*

*Today, when I look at that trophy, I think that I may have done a really good job—but CMN Hospitals is the real hero. Thank you to everyone who helped me get this chair and play power soccer!*

*From, Lincoln*



## **TOGETHER, WE HELP CHILDREN**

Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals®, a service of Gundersen Medical Foundation, is dedicated to saving and improving the lives of children. We directly assist children and their families and support pediatric programs and services that help kids battle diseases and injuries of every kind. In the Gundersen service area, Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals has raised more than \$24.8 million since 1986. Each charitable donation—whether through special events, annual gifts, business partnerships, sponsorships or planned giving such as bequests—benefits children in this region and provides support for specialty medical care, research and preventive education.



### **Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals | Gundersen Medical Foundation**

Mail to: 1900 South Avenue, Mailstop FDN-001, La Crosse, WI 54601 | Office location: 201 Third St. N., La Crosse, WI 54601  
cmnhospitals@gundersenhealth.org | (608) 775-4424 | gundersenhealth.org/cmnhospitals

## Acknowledging remarkable support

In Oct., Gundersen Medical Foundation hosted **Gratefully, Gundersen**, an annual event that celebrates the extraordinary impact made by those who give to Gundersen.

This special occasion included recognition of lifetime achievements of exceptionally generous donors.

These awardees serve as a testament to the incredible individuals and organizations that make a positive difference in the lives of others through their support of Gundersen Medical Foundation. +



See the *Sullivans' story*



### Founders Award Ed and Sally Sullivan

Ed and Sally Sullivan were honored as recipients of the prestigious Founders Award (Ed posthumously) in recognition of their impressive dedication and contributions to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. The Sullivans hosted a radio show, which later transformed into a telethon, called The Blarney Party Challenge that raised \$1.5 million for CMN Hospitals.



See the *Fools Five Road Race story*



### Outstanding Philanthropic Organization Award Fools Five Road Race

Fools Five Road Race was recognized with the Outstanding Philanthropic Organization Award for their superb commitment to finding a cure for cancer through their support of cancer research initiatives. Since the race's inception in 1979, Fools Five has raised more than \$2.6 million for cancer research, including more than \$470,000 for Gundersen's Kabara Cancer Research Institute.

## Your gifts at work

Scan the QR code to watch a 10-minute video filled with messages of gratitude from many grant recipients who are positively impacted by your generosity.



## Celebrating excellence

In honor of National Philanthropy Day on Nov. 15, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (Upper Mississippi Valley Chapter) recognized the following individuals and organizations for their remarkable contributions:

*Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser, Deb Skarlupka*

*Outstanding Philanthropists, Will and Shirley Oberton*

*Outstanding Volunteer Organization, Thunder Ride*

*President's Award, Sara Battison*

*Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy, Riley Schuldt*

Congratulations to each of these awardees!



## Gundersen Medical Foundation is pleased to welcome these new employees to our team



### Rachel LaValley

*Philanthropy officer*

ralavall@gundersenhealth.org

Direct: (608) 775-0180

Rachel brings to the Foundation a background in community health education and public health programs. She previously spent 2.5 years in the Medical Research Department at Gundersen Health System, and in her new role, Rachel is excited to see projects and programs come to life through philanthropy.



### Monica Herman

*Manager of Philanthropy*

monica.herman@gundersenhealth.org

Direct: (608) 775-8472

Monica has worked in the nonprofit sector for the majority of her career, including having served for the last nine years as the executive director of a nonprofit in Winona, Minn. She brings to the Foundation a wealth of leadership experience and, having moved with her family to Onalaska in 2023, is enjoying settling into a new community.



### Abby Ryan

*CMN Hospitals specialist*

abby.ryan@gundersenhealth.org

Direct: (608) 775-4469

Abby was an elementary educator for 16 years before becoming a manager and, later, a content creator. Because of her own childhood medical diagnosis of Crohn's disease/ulcerative colitis, Abby experienced the impact of CMN Hospitals firsthand, so she is thrilled to be part of an organization that had such an impact on her life.



### Clark Thiele, MNLM

*Philanthropy officer*

clark.thiele@gundersenhealth.org | Direct: (608) 775-8469

Clark returns to the La Crosse area from the Twin Cities where he worked in a variety of roles at a nonprofit while earning his master's degree in nonprofit leadership and management. He is excited to serve in the Foundation helping to support the future of healthcare in our community.



### Ashley Rickaway, OTR

*Fund allocations specialist*

alrickaw@gundersenhealth.org | Direct: (608) 775-1767

Ashley has been with Gundersen Health System for six years, serving previously as both an inpatient and outpatient occupational therapist. This experience has allowed her to transition smoothly into her new role within the Foundation. She is inspired by the Foundation's impact and how that translates to Gundersen patients and their families.



# Honoring the impact of a surgeon, leader and friend

Gundersen Medical Foundation extends our deepest sympathy to the family of Mark V. Connelly, MD, who passed away on June 21, 2024, at age 81. In his 36 years as a skilled and compassionate surgeon, Dr. Connelly touched countless lives, and the impact of his 34 years of service to the Foundation is immeasurable.

“Dr. Connelly was an inspirational and instrumental leader during a pivotal time in the Foundation’s history,” says Stephen Shapiro, MD, chief medical officer and chair of Gundersen Medical Foundation. “His respect for history and past leaders, combined with a keen eye for opportunity and the ability to strategize, made it possible to accomplish great things.”

Born in Iowa, Dr. Connelly was introduced to Gundersen when he served as an intern from 1969 to 1972. He then returned to Iowa to complete his medical residency in 1975 before serving for two years in the United States Navy. In 1977, Dr. Connelly returned to Gundersen to join the department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. As a facial plastic surgeon, his special interest was helping patients with cleft lip and palate.

In addition to serving patients, Dr. Connelly joined the Foundation’s

Board of Trustees in 1979 and went on to serve in various leadership roles. When the Foundations of Lutheran Hospital and Gundersen Clinic merged in 1997, Dr. Connelly was elected to be chairman of the newly-formed organization. Later that year, Adolf L. Gundersen, MD, retired, and Dr. Connelly assumed the role of Foundation president, which he held until he retired. One of the highlights of his professional career came in 2013 when Dr. Connelly was elected as president of the American Board of Facial, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.

Under his leadership, the Foundation experienced exciting growth. The organization’s total assets grew from \$26 to \$62 million, and several facilities directly tied to the Foundation’s mission of supporting patient care at Gundersen, advancing medical research, and growing medical education programs were opened. For example, the East Building and Norma J. Vinger Center for Breast Care were dedicated in 2003, the Kabara Institute for Cancer Research was established in 2008, the Integrated Center for Education (ICE) opened in 2012 and the Inpatient Behavioral Health building was dedicated in 2013. His work in establishing the Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine (WARM) partnership with the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health was also important.

In 2013, Dr. Connelly retired with the distinction of having been the Foundation’s longest-serving leader.



Mark V. Connelly, MD

In recognition of his leadership and outstanding service, Dr. Connelly, along with his wife, Jeanne, received the Founder’s Award that same year. His impact as a caregiver, a leader, a colleague and a friend was simply monumental.

“Dr. Connelly was a thoughtful and dedicated leader at Gundersen. He exemplified this in the surgical care of his patients and as a responsive leader of Gundersen Medical Foundation. I am thankful and privileged to have worked with him in both settings. His dedication to patients, surgical education and family set a high bar for all of us,” says Sigurd B. Gundersen, MD, former chair of the Foundation. +

2024



# STEPPIN' OUT IN PINK

Gundersen Medical Foundation

\$443,000+

RAISED

250

VOLUNTEERS

240

TEAMS

4,000+

WALKERS\*

60

SPONSORS

\*INCLUDING 400 BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS & 1,200 FIRST-TIME WALKERS



*"Nothing is more inspiring than seeing our community come together to celebrate survivors and pay tribute to those we've lost to breast cancer. The success of this year's event is a testament to the generosity of our volunteers, community partners and walkers."*



**Olivia Moths**  
Philanthropy program coordinator

## GUNDERSEN MEDICAL FOUNDATION

### Leadership

#### Chair

Dr. Stephen Shapiro

#### Vice President

Lindsey Preston, MASL, RN

#### Executive Assistant

Jean Hougom

#### Philanthropy

Dr. Todd Mahr, medical director  
Mandy L. Richardson, MPH, CFRE, director

#### Medical Education

Dr. Benjamin Jarman, vice president of Medical Education/designated institutional official  
Jennifer Lee, director

#### Research Institute

Dr. Jennifer Kleven, medical director  
Carolyn Heath, director

#### Resolve Through Sharing®

Dr. Randi Berg, medical director  
Mary Beth Hensel, director

### Philanthropy Staff

#### Administrative Support

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#### Data System

Nicole Aponte  
Sarah Worman

#### Annual Support

Courtney Daniels Burke  
Carly Frerichs

#### Major Gifts & Planned Giving

Monical Herman  
Rachel LaValley  
Jon McKenzie, CFRE  
Clark Thiele, MNLM

#### Operations/Stewardship

Katie Berkedal

#### Fund Allocations

Ashley Rickaway, OTR

#### Special Events

Colleen Lubinsky  
Olivia Moths

#### Children's Miracle Network Hospitals®

Abby Ryan  
Ashley Zibrowski, MASL



SAVE THE DATE

NEXT YEAR'S EVENT WILL BE HELD ON SEPT. 13, 2025

## Making a difference for breast cancer research and patient programs

Despite a bit of rain, Riverside Park was awash in pink on Sept. 14 as more than 4,000 walkers turned out for the 19th annual Steppin' Out in Pink fundraising event.

The event raised an incredible \$443,000, which will be put to immediate use supporting breast cancer research at the Kabara Cancer Research Institute, funding equipment needs and providing things like gas cards, wigs and Radiant Wraps to patients going through treatment.

### Thank you to all our sponsors!

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GPC

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Mike Martino Studios  
Balloon Babe Winona  
The Charmant  
Brian Jorstad

# Your generosity can help save lives.

When Kevin Mease suffered a life-altering accident in 2023, it was the compassionate and professional care of the superheroes on his care team and his experience at Gundersen Health System that he credits with saving his life.

Your generosity plays a vital role in supporting the teams who care for our community. By making a gift, you help provide life-saving treatments and compassionate care to patients just like the Mease family.



Join Kevin and Wendy in enhancing healthcare for our friends and neighbors with a gift today.

- **USE THE QR CODE** or visit [gundersenhealth.org/yearend](https://gundersenhealth.org/yearend) to donate online
- **RETURN** the enclosed gift envelope
- **CALL** (608) 775-6600 or (800) 362-9567, ext. 56600

**GUNDERSEN  
MEDICAL FOUNDATION**

1900 South Avenue  
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

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Permit No. 119

**Our Mission**

*Be an integrated and trusted partner to improve health and care in our community through exceptional medical education, research, and philanthropic support of Gundersen Health System.*

[gundersenhealth.org/foundation](http://gundersenhealth.org/foundation)

Gundersen Medical Foundation's  
**HOLIDAY SOCIAL**

Friday, Dec. 13, 2024 | 4:30–7:30 p.m.  
Gundersen Medical Foundation downtown office, 201 3rd Street N., La Crosse

Join us for a holiday social that features everything to make the season merry! Enjoy refreshments and live music while you shop from a variety of local vendors.

**All of Us**  
RESEARCH PROGRAM



**GUNDERSEN  
HEALTH SYSTEM®**

A Member of **All of Us Wisconsin**

The future of  
health begins  
with you.

The more researchers know about what makes each of us unique, the more tailored our healthcare can become.

Join a research effort with one million or more people nationwide to create a healthier future for all of us.

To learn more and enroll, contact us at:

[JoinAllofUs.org/Gundersen](http://JoinAllofUs.org/Gundersen)  
(608) 775-2171  
[allofus@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:allofus@gundersenhealth.org)