

**Volunteer  
CONNECTION**

**Spring 2024**

**INSIDE  
THIS  
ISSUE**

- National Volunteer Week - PG. 1
- Volunteer Spotlight - PG. 2
- Timley News/Scholarship - PG. 3 & 4
- Welcome Sheryl Bathke - PG. 5
- From the Manager - PG. 5
- MHV News – PG. 6
- New Volunteers - PG. 6
- Health Watch – PG. 7
- Patient Experience – PG. 8
- Health Care Advocacy – PG. 8 & 9
- Volunteers in Action – PG. 10 & 11
- Calendar of Events – PG. 12



“Alone we can do so little, together so much” -Helen Keller  
This photo taken by Suzanne Rose is hands of many volunteers at Ascension Mercy Hospital

**National Volunteer Week: April 21 – 27, 2024**



“Mercy Volunteers - A Recipe for Success” is the theme of volunteer week at Ascension Mercy this year. In anticipation of the week, Food and fun was served up at a recognition event held at La Sure’s Banquet Hall on Thursday, April 18, 2024. Mercy Hospital President, Shane Carter, spoke and Grillologists – Mad Dog and Merrill spiced up the evening as entertainment.

Mercy Volunteers are an essential ingredient to Mercy’s mission of supporting our patients, visitors, staff, and community. Last year alone nearly 200 volunteers gave 30,000 hours of their time and talent in a variety of areas. We have the best volunteers around - the icing on the cake, the crème de la creme! Please take the time to check out the displays in the cafeteria and by the volunteer office during the week.

Amy Brownson, Manager

# Volunteer Spotlight – Andrew Herman

Andrew Herman is a busy college student, studying chemistry at UWO, and is heading to the Medical College of Wisconsin this July to study medicine. Inspired by his desire to become a doctor, Andrew decided to begin volunteering at Mercy in 2017 while in high school. He said, “I wanted to learn more about the medical field and volunteering would give me experience in a hospital setting.” In addition to going to college, Andrew works part time as Phlebotomist at Mercy and in the Air National Guard, building bombs. Working in medicine appears to run in his family. His mother, Lori Herman, has worked as a RN in the Outpatient Procedures area at Mercy for over 30 years.

Andrew describes himself as “outgoing, studious and a *Jack of all Trades*,” all great qualities needed to become a doctor. His long-term goal is to become a surgeon, but he has not narrowed that down yet. He was inspired by Mercy Hospital’s own Dr. Weber who has become a personal mentor to him.

Throughout the years Andrew has volunteered in the ER Reception area, Errands and is currently in the Pharmacy. He says, “I really enjoy the relationships with the pharmacy staff. I have learned so much about medication. Volunteering has given me information on how the hospital works and a respect for all healthcare workers.” When asked how he could encourage people to volunteer at the hospital, he replied, “It’s a great experience to give back to the community. Everyone will need a hospital at some time.”

In his personal time, Andrew enjoys pickup basketball and video gaming with friends. After his college graduation in mid-May, Andrew and some of his friends are headed to the *Bad Lands* in South Dakota for some well-deserved vacation time. After Andrew finishes medical school, he plans to practice medicine in the Fox Valley area. We would love to see him back in the halls of Ascension Mercy.

Laura Hensel  
Volunteer Coordinator



Andrew volunteering in the pharmacy

# Timely News

## Natalie Bolin Scholarship Recipient - Kaden Kubicz

Congratulations to Kaden Kubicz this year's recipient of the \$1,000 Natalie Kate Bolin Scholarship. The Natalie Kate Bolin Mercy Student Volunteer Scholarship Award was created by the family of Natalie Kate Bolin, a former Mercy student volunteer, in memory of her beautiful spirit and life. Criteria for this scholarship administered by the Ascension Wisconsin Foundation are the awardee is to be an Oshkosh West High graduating senior and a Mercy Hospital Volunteer, in good standing, with the highest amount of volunteer hours. The student must also be planning to attend a technical school or university.

Kaden chose to volunteer because he is interested in becoming a physician. His mother works at Mercy and his friend volunteered at Mercy and they both suggested he apply to volunteer. He volunteers in the ER Reception area and likes watching the patients walk out from the ER satisfied with their care.

Kaden will be graduating from Oshkosh West where he has been involved in WAVE robotics, soccer, and the National Honors Society. He also plays soccer for the Oshkosh Youth Soccer Club.

His advice to future volunteers is to remember that patients are not always feeling well so be kind when they may not be able to be the same to you and to volunteer as much as you can. He will be attending the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh next fall to major in biomedical science.

Amy Brownson



Kaden



Kate

## Katherine Gassere – MHV Scholarship Winner

Katherine (Kate) Gassere is this year's winner of the \$500 MHV (Mercy Hospital Volunteer) Scholarship. The MHV scholarship is an Ascension Wisconsin Foundation Scholarship established by the Mercy Hospital Volunteers (MHV). The Criteria for the scholarship is that the awardee is a high school graduating senior and a Mercy Hospital Volunteer, in good standing. The student must also be planning to attend a technical school or university.

Kate's future interest in working in the healthcare field inspired her to start volunteering at Ascension Mercy Hospital. She states, "Volunteering at Mercy has given me the opportunity to learn more about what goes on behind the scenes to help things run smoothly in a hospital. I wanted to learn more about various areas so my experience volunteering in ER Reception, Gift Shop and Transport definitely showed me different yet very important aspects of Mercy."

Katherine reflects, “My favorite part of volunteering is learning new things. Sometimes that means learning through conversations with new people, or it’s learning a new skill. I have enjoyed this experience because while I have learned a lot, I have also helped others in the process.”

Katherine is very involved at school. Currently she is the Vice President of the National Honors Society and a student council member. Outside of school, she works at the *after school care* program at Oaklawn Elementary, enjoys skiing in the winter, and spending time with her dog and three cats.

Katherine is graduating from Oshkosh North High School and will continue her education at University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. She plans to pursue a degree in Biomedical Sciences and Spanish.

Laura Hensel



Olivia

## Olivia Kallas - Recipient of Wilma Ritsema Scholarship

Congratulations to Olivia Kallas the 2024 recipient of the \$500 Wilma Ritsema Scholarship. Al Ritsema created this fund within the Ascension Wisconsin Foundation to annually award a student in honor of his wife, Wilma. Al and Wilma were both active volunteers at Mercy. Wilma took on many volunteer roles as well as serving as president of the Mercy Medical Center Auxiliary. Criteria for this scholarship are that the awardee is to be a High School graduating senior and an Ascension Mercy Volunteer, in good standing. The student must also be planning to attend a technical school or university.

Olivia currently attends Oshkosh West High School and graduates in June of 2024. She is a member of the O’Neil National Honors Society and enjoys playing tennis on the Varsity tennis team. Outside of school and volunteering Olivia enjoys playing piano and participating in Christmas/Spring recitals. She plans to attend college at the University of Wisconsin Madison with a major in Biology.

Olivia was introduced to volunteering at Ascension Mercy Hospital by a family friend, who also volunteers at the hospital. Olivia became an active volunteer in April 2023 and has donated over 56 hours of volunteer service at the information desk and in ER Reception. She chose volunteering because she wanted to help in her community in an environment that could possibly spark a passion for her future. Olivia added that she is extremely grateful for the scholarship and is thankful for the amazing volunteers and staff who have made her time as a volunteer so enjoyable.

Laura Hensel

## Welcome Sheryl Bathke to the Gift Shop and Fundraiser Role

**Sheryl Bathke** is the new Gift Shop and Fundraising Coordinator. She began her position in on April 16<sup>th</sup> and is getting valuable training from former Gift Shop Coordinator, Bev Hoffman, who has been hired as part time relief to help train Sheryl and fill in when needed.

Sheryl's professional career was in purchasing for 30+ years, starting as an expeditor, moving up to Buyer, Sr. Buyer & capping her career as Purchasing Manager. Some of her previous employers included local manufacturing companies: Oshkosh Corp., Hoffmaster, & Essity. After retirement she found she needed something more to do so she began working in retail, part-time, at Dick's Sporting Goods in Oshkosh.

When asked why she chose Mercy and her new role, she states, "I have been involved as a volunteer to support the United Way campaigns and enjoyed the success of giving back to the community. Working in the Gift Shop will be a combination of my professional career in procurement and retail experience from previous jobs."

Outside of work, Sheryl has been a lifelong resident of Oshkosh. Her hobbies include growing flowers during the summer; sewing and traveling, to Florida to visit family, during the winter months.



### -----From the Managers Desk-----

This will be the last time I will write "from the Manager" as I will be retiring this summer. Thirty-four years seem to have somehow flown by. I have experienced many changes in health care and in volunteerism through the years. When I started in the department there were different groups of volunteers, the Auxiliary, VolunTEEN's, and Red Cross volunteers. Everyone had a different uniform. Now Mercy volunteers are woven together under one badge and uniform. Technology has made it easier to track volunteer hours, statistics, health, and training records. When I started everything was tracked on a spreadsheet and in a very rudimentary database. Since then, we have had three upgrades in volunteer software programs.

Some of the most interesting changes were those filled with growth and the unknown. Notably in 2000 when we moved from the former hospital building on Hazel St. to our current location. It was exciting to see how it all came together. More recently, we made it through the COVID-19 epidemic by continually updating processes to keep our community safe. Informing volunteers via email while they were suspended was important to me and I was pleased that Ascension included volunteers when administering the vaccination. Pivoting from managing volunteers to health screeners was a new challenge during this time as well. Bringing volunteers back on board once it was safe took a lot of planning, but it was a joy to see everyone's faces again. I know I am not alone in my feeling that Mercy Volunteers add that extra touch of community care and life to our building and our days.

Now it is time for the Volunteer Program to be stewarded into its next chapter. I will miss all of the wonderful people I have been privileged to know; volunteers from those in their teenage years to those in their nineties and staff from just about every department in our facility. Thank you all for your support!

In retirement I am looking forward to some travel and relaxation, spending more time with family, and enjoying activities like kayaking, exercising, singing, and getting my clarinet out of the attic! Of course, I will have plenty of time for a certain passion of mine – **volunteering!**

Amy Brownson



## Geranium and Plant Sale

The Mercy Hospital Volunteers are excited to host our annual Geranium and Plant Sale on **Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. This event will take place from 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM in the Oakwood Parking Lot (LOOK FOR THE TENT). Pre-orders can be placed until Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. To place a pre-order, pick up a form from the Mercy Hospital Gift Shop, Volunteer Services office, or by emailing [mhvolun@ascension.org](mailto:mhvolun@ascension.org). Return the completed pre-order form with payment to the Gift Shop or Volunteer Services office.

Geraniums, greens, hanging baskets, assorted potted annuals, tomato & green pepper packs are all being grown especially for us by Hrnak's Flowerland and will be available on the days of the sale. Proceeds will be used to help fund hospital & community healthcare programs as well as student scholarships. Please help us reach our goal of selling out this event this year!

## From the MHV (Mercy Hospital Volunteer) Chair

THANK YOU to all of you who donated to the "Love Lights" fundraiser over the holiday season. Nearly \$1,000 was raised to benefit Ascension Mercy Hospital.

I am excited to share that we have five people joining me on the MHV trip to New England fundraiser that will transpire in the Fall of 2024. If you or someone you know may be interested, please reach out to me or volunteer services for more information.

We are always looking for new volunteers. Share your experiences and the joy you receive from helping with other potential volunteer candidates. Have them contact Volunteer Services for an application or to answer any questions they may have.

Sue Boerschinger, Chairman  
Mercy Hospital Volunteer Advisory Board  
[sboers42@gmail.com](mailto:sboers42@gmail.com)

## WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEERS

**12/1/2023 – 4/15/2024**

Karen Bongert	Sarita Dogra	Maria Elias
Aliza Ford	Carol Horejs	Jenny Li
Charlotte Mattmiller	Melanie Pierce	Kathryn Surridge
Kendall Ziblut	Audrey Zimmerman	

# Health Watch

## Seven Surprising Benefits of Spring Cleaning

Tackling housework can be downright overwhelming...after all, it's called "work" for a reason. If you need some motivation to get off that couch and start dusting under it, check out these seven healthful incentives.

1. **Stress less.** Wipe away your worries! Just 20 minutes of cleaning can reduce stress and anxiety levels by as much as 20%, according to the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.
2. **Boost productivity.** Perhaps you've heard the saying, "clean space, clean mind?" *The Journal of Neuroscience* discovered that too much mess significantly clutters up your brain's ability to process. Less chaos means more headspace for tackling that to-do list.
3. **Breathe easier.** The American Lung Association notes that hundreds of thousands of dust mites can live in bedding, mattresses, upholstered furniture, carpets, or curtains in your home, triggering allergies and asthma. Dusting regularly helps you breathe better by preventing respiratory issues and supporting a healthy immune system.
4. **Fewer falls.** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury. Reducing home hazards such as clutter minimizes your risk of tripping and hurting yourself.
5. **Eat healthier.** How tidy you keep your home office can affect your food choices. A study published in *Psychology Science* showed that people who worked in an organized area were twice as likely to opt for an apple over a chocolate bar than those who worked at a messy desk.
6. **Sleep better.** The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) found that people who regularly wash their bedding and sheets weekly reported 19% better rest at night.
7. **Burn calories.** This spring, you can get your gut and gutters in gear. The American Heart Association counts housework as moderate exercise meaning you can burn as many calories vacuuming as you can on a leisurely walk.

Excerpted from <https://stjosephhospital.com/7-surprising-health-benefits-of-spring-cleaning/>

# Volunteer Opportunities

Summer is approaching and now is the time to encourage **everyone** including students to apply for year-round volunteer opportunities at Mercy. Volunteering can help students develop leadership skills, gain self-confidence, and learn new roles. Students aged 15 or more who serve can find mentors, career interests, boost their resumes, and improve their chances of being accepted into competitive colleges. High school seniors who volunteer at Mercy may also be eligible for scholarships. Here are some of the many areas where we are looking for volunteer support:

Your friendly smile and knowledge would be appreciated by our patients and visitors at the **Reception Desk, Information Desk or Oakwood Desk** to offer a kind word of greeting or help patients find their destination. Duties may also include helping visitors at the registration kiosk and transport of patients in wheelchairs. Each area has unique benefits and responsibilities for a volunteer.

Weekend and Evening opportunities are available in **ER Reception** and the **ER Department**. Duties may include collecting patient demographic data for registration, restocking, maintaining a clean waiting room, running errands, and cleaning rooms.

For more information, please contact Ascension Mercy Volunteer Services at 223-0225 or apply online at [www.ascension.org/ascensionmercyvolunteer](http://www.ascension.org/ascensionmercyvolunteer)



Olivia – Information Desk



Kayannah – ER Reception



Lisa - ER

# Patient Experience

## The Role of Volunteers in Patient Care

A joke brightens the day of an elderly patient. A steady hand is extended at just the right moment. These are just a few examples of what hospital volunteers do every day to make a difference in the lives of patients.

As part of its ongoing research on volunteering and volunteerism, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's Knowledge Development Centre looked at how CEOs from various hospitals value donations of time, and what they think of their volunteer resources in general. The study asked what contributions do volunteers make to the quality of patient care, how essential are volunteers to the delivery of healthcare, and are volunteer programs cost effective?

Volunteers support hospitals in several important ways, including running the information desk or gift shop, sorting mail, spending time with patients, or fundraising. Volunteers improve the quality of patient care by

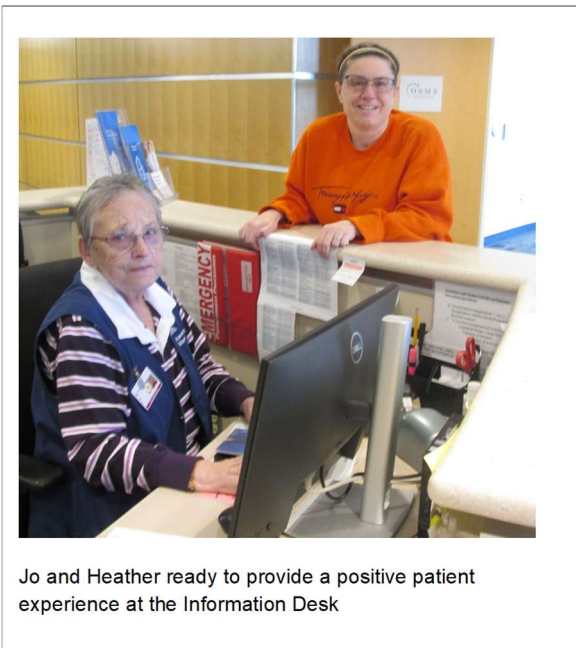


providing non-medical services in two main areas: contributing to patient satisfaction and reducing anxiety of family members. Volunteers reduce the stress of a hospital stay by providing a friendly face, by answering questions, and by giving directions. The study revealed that providing human contact is the single most important component of contributing to the quality of patient care, because it also provides the most support to hospital staff.

Without exception those surveyed said their volunteer programs were cost effective. Their responses imply that the benefits delivered by volunteers easily outweigh the direct and indirect costs of volunteer programs, including recruitment and training related expenses. Volunteers are perceived as not only providing valuable services in hospitals at little cost, but also as playing an important public relations role through their frequent interaction with patients and their family members. Most CEOs reported that the strength of their volunteer program reflects the quality and commitment of the volunteers themselves.

At Ascension Mercy we truly appreciate the important role our volunteers play in making the patient experience positive and our staff's daily tasks a little lighter. Thank you for being a part of our team.

Excerpted from Hospital News – Canada's Health Care News and Best Practices.



# Health Care Advocacy



## WHA Foundation Launches Statewide Workforce Campaign

The WHA Foundation unveiled a new workforce campaign entitled *So Many Options* to attract new workers to Wisconsin's health care workforce and foster a thriving and sustainable workforce for generations to come. The campaign features targeted digital advertising and website to showcase the abundant health care career options – both clinical and non-clinical – available to current and prospective

employees throughout Wisconsin. With a particular focus on middle and high school students, the campaign aims to inspire younger generations to pursue these career opportunities by highlighting appealing aspects such as competitive compensation, flexible schedules and wide-ranging educational requirements.

“Whether young, prospective employees are looking for their first job or veteran health care workers are looking to transition careers, there are countless health care career options throughout Wisconsin’s hospitals, no matter a person’s background or vocational interest,” said WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding. “Careers in hospitals and health care are consistently in high demand, offering stability and enduring relevance. These professions are essential and will always be needed.”

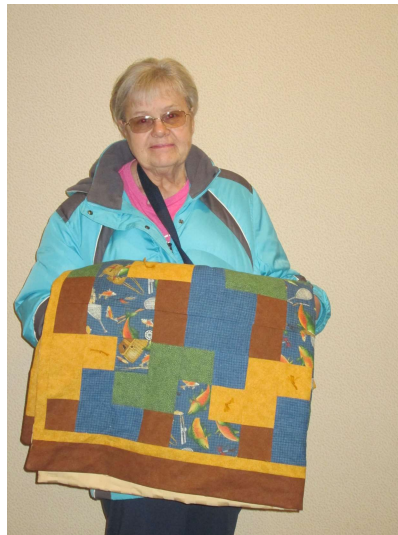
The website guides users through descriptions of a variety of health care professions and connects users to a number of workforce-related resources, including WHA, Future Health Professionals (HOSA) and Wisconsin Area Health Education Centers (AHEC). For more information, visit the *So Many Options* website at <https://www.wihealthcarecareers.com/>

Excerpted from WHA’s newsletter – The Valued Voice Vol. 68, Issue 6

# Volunteers in Action



Tom – Outdoor Beautification



Audrey – Blankets for Patients



Joan – Nutman Sale



Ruth, Toby, Marge – Transport



Nancy - Library



Laura, Lisa, Sue, Peg & Linda at Advocacy Day



Geraniums and More!



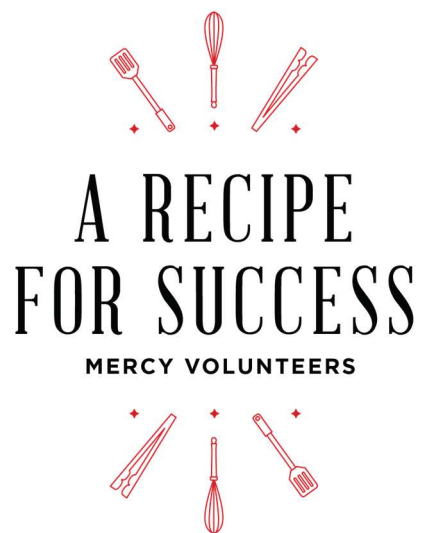
Kristal's send off



Gladys & Mary Crafty Ladies



Amy & Bob – Information Desk



# Upcoming Calendar of Events

April 21 <sup>st</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup>	National Volunteer Week	Check out the Display in the Cafeteria and by the Volunteer Office
April 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup>	Nutman Company Fundraiser	Main Entrance Hallway
April 26 <sup>th</sup>	Friday Funday	Wear your college or high school sports gear, favorite pro team gear, jeans, or fun scrubs. Donate \$5 to participate. Money can be dropped off in Volunteer Services or the Gift Shop
May 15 <sup>th</sup> & 16 <sup>th</sup>	Geranium and Plant Sale Corner of Ninth & Oakwood Look for the TENT!	Hanging baskets, assorted potted annuals, tomato & pepper packs, geraniums & greens will be available day of sale. Pre-orders accepted through May 10 <sup>th</sup> (forms available in the Volunteer Office and Gift Shop).
May 21 <sup>st</sup>	MHV Board Meeting 1:00PM	Volunteer Services Multi-purpose room, all volunteers are welcome
May 24 <sup>th</sup>	Friday Funday	Wear your college or high school sports gear, favorite pro team gear, jeans, or fun scrubs. Donate \$5 to participate. Money can be dropped off in Volunteer Services or the Gift Shop
June TBD	Strawberry Sale	Main Entrance Hallway
June 28 <sup>th</sup>	Friday Funday	Wear your college or high school sports gear, favorite pro team gear, jeans, or fun scrubs. Donate \$5 to participate. Money can be dropped off in Volunteer Services or the Gift Shop

TBD = to be determined

