

Communiqué

A newsletter for Aspirus Volunteers

Spring 2017

From the President

by Paul Dobbratz, President



Spring is finally here! The robins are busy, the sandhill cranes have returned, and trees are once again showing signs of life. In my winter letter, I gave everyone a challenge for 2017. I hope that you have had a chance to tell at least one person why you volunteer and why you volunteer at Aspirus.

It has been a busy late winter/spring. We had the ribbon cutting for our new Aspirus Coffee Shop. Thanks to Aspirus for providing the space and the remodeling. We had another successful cookie sale in March. In early April, we had six representatives attend the North Central District conference in Medford. We also had 18 volunteers go to

Advocacy Day on April 19th in Madison. Advocacy Day is a great chance to get an update on what is happening on both the state and national levels on issues that affect health care and to meet with local state legislators.

I hope that all of you were able to join us at the Volunteer Luncheon as part of National Volunteer Week. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet many of you and find out where you volunteer. A bit of trivia: President Richard Nixon established National Volunteer Week with an executive order in 1974 as a way to recognize and celebrate the efforts of volunteers. In 2016, we provided 48,649 hours of volunteer time, which is the equivalent of \$1.1 million!

I would like to close with a quote. This one is from Leo Buscaglia whom I had the pleasure of hearing in person way back in my college days.

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." ~ Leo Buscaglia

Once again, thanks for all you do for Aspirus – we really do make a difference.

Paul

Visitor Injuries

If you encounter a visitor on the main Aspirus campus with a serious injury or condition (shortness of breath, chest pain, seizure, fall with injury, uncontrolled bleeding), Code First Aid should be called by dialing "44" on one of the hospital phones. You will need to provide the operator with the location of the event and describe the injury or condition. Assigned staff will respond to the event.

Mission

The Aspirus Volunteers is an inclusive organization through which people individually, or as a group, volunteer time, talent, and resources to improve the spiritual and physical health and well-being of the residents of north and central Wisconsin, fostering the mission of Aspirus and its subsidiaries.



Direct From Yo!



One of the best parts of my job as the Director of Volunteers is celebrating National Volunteer Week with you! Our Aspirus Volunteers group is dedicated, passionate and you have an uncanny ability to encourage and support our patients, employees and your fellow volunteers.

I am so proud to have just celebrated 37 years of working for Aspirus; and I have seen so much change in this time. One thing that has remained constant is the loyalty and service of our volunteers.

Our theme this year for National Volunteer Week was “Touching Lives, Lifting Spirits!” I see our Aspirus volunteers doing this every day. I want to share this list with you.

“All I Really Need to Know I Learned from a Volunteer”

by Patti H. Walker

Be patient

Be kind

Listen

Share recipes with friends

Ask questions

Provide support

Be an advocate, not an adversary

It's okay to be your best customer in the Gift Shop

Respect the past

Look forward to tomorrow

Be welcoming to new ideas

Be accepting of others - because you never know their story

Laugh lots - especially at yourself

Make time for friends

Hug often

Eat dessert

Remember life's lessons

Share your knowledge

Don't be afraid to ask for help

Never underestimate what you have to offer

Volunteer your time, even if you don't think you have time to give

Say thank you!



So, I want to say **THANK YOU**. Thank you for all you do and for your passion and commitment to volunteerism. You truly show Passion for Excellence and Compassion for people!

Yo

Aspirus Volunteers Annual Meeting & Recognition Banquet



The Aspirus Volunteers celebrated National Volunteer Week on April 27th with a recognition banquet at the Holiday Inn Cedar Creek. More than 170 volunteers braved rain, snow and sleet to attend. Volunteers were recognized for their years of service and given a gift. Anyone not able to attend the luncheon can pick up their gift in the Volunteers office.

Aspirus Coffee Shop Ribbon Cutting

The Aspirus Coffee Shop (formerly known as Café Voluntario) hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 28th. There were special product promotions throughout the day. The Aspirus Coffee Shop is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 5:00pm. Profits are used to help support many hospital and community programs through the Volunteers.



Healthy Aging Today 2017 Series

Healthy Aging Today is an Aspirus innovation that includes guest presenters discussing current aging topics, time for sharing, healthy refreshments and Bingo – with prizes! Attendance is free but advanced registration is required. To register or ask questions, call the Aspirus Customer Contact Center at 715.847.2380 or 1.800.847.4707.

June 9: *Solving Daily Living Challenges*

July 14: *Benefits of Volunteerism*

August 11: *The Three D's – Delirium, Dementia & Depression*

September 8: *Living Well with Chronic Conditions*

October: *Pill Sense for Older Adults*

November 10: *Defying Gravity – Fall Prevention and How Lifeline Helps*

December 8: *Holiday Fun and Homemade Crafts*

Evaluations

Thanks to everyone for completing your Volunteer Evaluation forms. Your feedback is valuable and helps us improve our program. While The Joint Commission requires us to perform evaluations every three years, we are always open to hear your comments and suggestions. There is a Suggestion Box located in the Volunteer Lounge.

Confidentiality

The tragic shooting incident in the Wausau area reinforces the fact that a crisis can strike at any time, and in any place. Aspirus provides vital services in many communities, and a hospital plays a special role in small towns. It is important to remember that our first job as health care providers, staff, and volunteers is to care for our patients and protect their right to privacy.

Anyone receiving care at an Aspirus facility can ask to be a “Privacy Patient”. No information about privacy patients can be given out to callers or visitors - - we cannot even acknowledge that we have a patient by that name.

On a normal day, people (including reporters) seeking information about a non-privacy patient may be given an appropriate one-word condition report if they provide the patient’s name. This information is provided by the hospital supervisor or a member of the Marketing & Communications team. Refer all information requests to the facility’s communications leader.

Do not discuss patient information with anyone.

Do not tell friends, family or acquaintances about any patient in any way.

Do not discuss a patient’s case, even with a colleague.

Do not read a chart or patient information.

Do not discuss patient information on social media.

Thank You!

Danae Norton, Recreational Therapist at Aspirus Wausau Hospital, commented on the Twiddle Muff project. “A couple of volunteers brought us several ‘Twiddle Muffs’. I just wanted to express my appreciation as they have really been wonderful for our patients with dementia and acute confusion to keep their hands busy. If they make any more, I’d love to have some for our Recreational Therapy stash. Thanks so much.”

Be Prepared!

by Cheryl Steen, Aspirus Lifeline Coordinator

Falls are a real concern for older adults. It’s estimated that one out of every three adults, age 65 and older falls each year, while fall rates increase sharply with advancing age. Many such falls cause serious injury – hip, wrist, or vertebrae fracture – and sometimes death. Not all falls can be prevented. However, an effective falls safety program provides a plan for how to reduce potential harm resulting from a fall and essential to that plan is how to call for help. Philips Lifeline Medical Alert can help.

The first step is to overcome fear and transform it into actions that help avoid them. Develop a plan that addresses these two important questions:

If you were to fall tonight, would you be able to get up safely?

If you were injured and couldn’t get up, how would you get help?

Fear of falling may lead you to cut back on physical activity, but you should do just the opposite. Regular exercise, by building strength and stamina, prevents loss of bone mass and improves balance actually reducing your risk of falling. Exercise enhances mobility, flexibility, and balance in older adults along with improving your strength, flexibility and posture, which in turn will help with balance, coordination, and reducing the risk of falls.

It’s a vicious cycle!

You fall – Fear of pain or falling again – Reduced activity – Increased risk of falling

Aspirus Lifeline has been empowering seniors to remain independent living safer, healthier, and more connected lives. To learn more visit www.aspirus.org/lifeline. Ask about our Auto Alert automatic fall detection button.

Many falls are preventable. The first step is to overcome fear and transform it into actions that help you avoid them. Talk to your healthcare provider about your concerns and together develop a plan.

Volunteer Spotlight

Hospice Music



Eric Weaver just completed his first year volunteering with Aspirus. He splits his time between the patient registration desk and playing music at Aspirus Hospice House. Patients and their families enjoy hearing him play.

Rainbows End

Summer must be just around the corner because plans have started for Rainbow's End Day Camp in July 2017. Each year we look for exceptional youth volunteers to pair with special needs campers and assist them with various activities like games, swimming,



art projects, and many more fun activities. This year's camp runs July 17 – 21 and July 24 – 28. Volunteers must be at least 14 years old. Apply online at aspirus.org/volunteers. For those entering their senior year of high school, hours volunteered at Rainbow's End Camp will count toward the hourly requirement to be eligible for an Aspirus Volunteers scholarship.

Help us set the stage for success!

Volunteers can help improve our patient's satisfaction and their experience at Aspirus by personally describing the person the patient will be seeing next. Set the stage for success! Say things like:

"Our nurses are amazing." "You will be in good hands." "Our doctors are the best." "Our joint camp program will have you back on your feet in no time."

Talking about our staff in a positive manner will also help ease the patient's fears and make them feel more comfortable.

Volunteer Opportunities / Help Wanted

Human Resources Orientation Assistant: Aspirus Human Resources is looking for someone to help with new employee orientation training. A volunteer is needed every other Tuesday afternoon to help new employees complete their policy and safety modules on the computer.

Teddy Bear Clinic: This is a unique volunteer program offered to area kindergarten students. Students visit the emergency department at Aspirus Wausau Hospital with their "sick" stuffed animal friend. Volunteers triage the "sick" stuffed animals demonstrating to the students what could happen if they ever needed to visit an emergency department. Volunteers are needed to direct children, function as a pretend doctor, take pretend X-rays, or hand out certificates and cookies. Teddy Bear Clinics are generally held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the school year.

The Village

by Michael McGrail, MD, Aspirus Chief Medical Officer

It is distressing that it's no longer unusual to hear about a tragic overdose from a prescription pain medication. With 50,000 associated deaths in the United States annually, including the 872 deaths in Wisconsin this past year, drug overdose now exceeds motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of accidental death. More than half of these overdoses are due to prescription pain killers, with another significant portion from heroin for which prescription opioids are a gateway drug.

How did we get here?

A number of factors came together. A national focus on optimal pain relief encouraged physicians to provide more effective pain treatment, which led understandably to patients' and families' expectations for complete or near-complete pain relief. Add into the mix the emergence of more powerful pain medications, a less-than-complete understanding of pain management within the medical and pharmaceutical communities, and the erosion of the social support structures that influence community health, and a fatal "perfect storm" was created. Essentially it took all of us – the whole village – to make it happen.

Although motives were well intentioned, the result is a public health crisis. As the use of prescription pain killers quadrupled from 1999 to the present, so did associated overdose deaths without any overall change in the amount of pain that Americans report. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four patients receiving prescription opioids long term struggles with opioid dependence. The irony is that in the vast majority of clinical situations, strong pain killers are rarely needed and may cause serious side effects such as delayed recovery and addiction. Attention has also turned away from more effective approaches. For example, in many situations such as acute low back pain, over-the-counter pain medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen, with encouragement of early return to usual activity, has proven to be more effective with fewer adverse outcomes than prescription pain killers.

The good news

Across Wisconsin doctors and advanced practitioners are collaborating to ensure safe prescribing practices. Prescribers are now required to review an electronic prescription drug registry that supports decision-making with information about prior controlled substance prescriptions including medications that may cause serious interactions, and other red flags for potential overdose or other harm. Over the past 12 months the Aspirus Continued Medical Education Program has also focused on these issues. Just recently, over 400 Aspirus medical staff completed a two-hour educational program review of the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board Opioid Prescribing Guidelines for safe prescribing, including the appropriate use of alternative approaches for effective treatment of pain, and the provision of thoughtful and compassionate care for those patients now dependent on these medications.

In addition to this important activity, Aspirus community outreach professionals and others are engaging and supporting multi-organizational collaborations to understand the varied factors associated with the epidemic, identifying the impact of this crisis on the community, workforce and families, and designing strategies to address these.

It is clear that many dedicated organizations, communities and individuals have united across our state to reduce harm and save lives. Many members of Team Aspirus have played a critical role. They have done their job and it's now up to us to do ours. Let's together recognize the danger that lies within a prescription bottle and manage our medications carefully. As patients, let's understand the associated risks and not use these medications unless absolutely necessary. Like so many difficult problems, the cause is not one single thing, but many things, and it will take all of us working together to make the difference. Just as it took all of us to create the current crisis, it will take all of us, our complete village, to successfully confront it. We have to. The alternative is too tragic to contemplate.

Volunteers in Action - Volunteer Hours

DON'T FORGET – Please turn in your hours every month to keep your records up to date. **Thanks for all you do!**

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

100 Hours

Elizabeth Mayberry
Mary Ellen Stieber
Paula Vogt
Eric Weaver

200 Hours

Gay Baumann
James Beese
Connie Dobbratz
Connie Michlig
Nettie Sosnoski

300 Hours

Paul Dobbratz
Thomas Gilbreath
Gloria Settermann
Mary Ventzke
Joan Wahlquist
Aaron Weaver

400 Hours

Steve Hessel
Ruth Naef
Gerald Ray
Sylvia Rothweiler

500 Hours

Kay Bizjak
Gene Nelson

600 Hours

Jean Dehn
Donna Rule
Betty Sadogierski
Lynnae Schulz

700 Hours

Warren Fabel

800 Hours

Roger Sommi

900 Hours

Rushnee Chantree-
Landowski
Joanne Howard
John Schlueter
Jaci Seliger
Jane Stotmeister

1000 Hours

Michael Cain
Jane Gajda

1,500 Hours

Mary Fochs
Marjorie Laffin
Martha Olafsson

2,000 Hours

Gary Zastrow

3,000 Hours

Enid Krueger

4,500 Hours

Bill Viertel

6,500 Hours

Mary Hardell

7,000 Hours

Patricia Rogalla

7,500 Hours

Dolly Feira

8,500 Hours

Bette Baumann

11,000 Hours

Joan Mais

15,000 Hours

Lee Borneman

18,000 Hours

Eve Baumann

28,500 Hours

Judith Trantow-Millar

Volunteers

50 Hours

William Clancy
Alex Howard
Hayden Knoll
Megan Peck

100 Hours

Liane Kee

In Memoriam

Barbara Betts was an honorary volunteer, ending her more than 10 years of volunteering in 2015. Barbara donated over 150 hours making bereavement calls, homecare, and hospice special projects. She passed away on February 8th.

Art Kimbel was an active volunteer, giving more than 19 years of service to special projects at Aspirus Wausau Hospital and Aspirus Comfort Care & Hospice Services. Most recently, he was the friendly face selling raffle tickets in the hospital lobby. Art passed away on April 7th.

Barbara and Art will be dearly missed.

Advocacy Day - April 19

The Aspirus Volunteers attended the Wisconsin Hospital Association's Advocacy Day on Wednesday, April 19th. Advocacy Day is an annual event designed to educate and motivate health care employees, trustees, and volunteers on important health care related issues and to encourage grassroots advocacy opportunities. Keynote speaker, Amy Walter of Cook Political Report, gave an insider's look at today's political landscape. Attendees participated in legislative visits, allowing them to speak on behalf of their hospitals.





ASPIRUS™

Passion for excellence. Compassion for people.

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\$10 OFF

Aspirus Volunteers Only
your purchase of \$30 or more

*Exclusions include: Cards, candy, balloons, flowers, doTerra,
stamps and sale merchandise. Expires 8/1/17*



Calendar of Events

May 29: Memorial Day – No Volunteers Scheduled

June 27: Board of Directors Meeting

June 29: Cookie Sale

July 4: Independence Day – No Volunteers Scheduled

July 17 – 21: Rainbow's End Camp

July 24 – 28: Rainbow's End Camp

August 22: Board of Directors Meeting

August 30: Cookie Sale

September 4: Labor Day – No Volunteers Scheduled

