



## Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary President's Newsletter, Fall 2017



I am super-excited to announce that the Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary Rag Cutters won the Partners of WHA's 2017 Wisconsin Award for Volunteer Excellence (WAVE) in the fundraising category! The award will be presented at the Partners of WHA Convention in Green Bay at an Awards Dinner on Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>! Rosie Neeck, Lois Kunder, and sisters-in-law Anita and Laura Yunk are the current rag cutters, carrying on a program that began with the opening of what is now the Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary's first Thrift Shop in 1953. You may be wondering – Rag Cutters??? Yes, every Tuesday morning, these four FHA volunteers sit across from each other at two card tables in a smallish, but brightly lit room in the basement of the Murphy Building. Between the two tables is a large rolling cart filled with items of clothing, old sheets and towels, and other mostly-cotton fabric pieces, all of which were washed in the hospital laundry. On the floor beside each of them is a cardboard box, recycled from area businesses and waiting to be filled. The mostly-cotton items are things unsellable at the Thrift Shop because of stains or being too outdated, or they are worn sheets, gowns, and other items no longer usable at the hospital. The ladies spend three and a half hours cutting off buttons and zippers to be sold at the Thrift Shop, as well as cutting off seams and hems (and areas with too much ink, sequins, lace or other decorative material on them) which are deposited in the plastic garbage bag on the floor on the other side of their chair. The now odd-shaped, but somewhat rectangular pieces of fabric are cut again if too large, then folded and placed in the box. When the box is full, the volunteer folds the lid closed, adds it to the "filled" stack, sets another empty box beside her, and resumes cutting. The boxes of clean, cut rags are priced by the pound, according to their weight. Someone from the hospital Maintenance Department weighs each box and marks the weight on it. Many area businesses and individuals buy the rags, which are sold at the Thrift Shop. Watch for more information and photos in an article in the *Price County Review* and in the December FHA newsletter.

I got the news about the Rag Cutters winning the WAVE just one week after having the privilege of helping to determine six \$1000 scholarship winners! Shortly after the application deadline of July 15<sup>th</sup> had passed, the Scholarship Committee spent 4 hours considering this year's applicants. As always, each committee member used the same scoring rubric in which up to a certain number of points can be given for various parts of the application. After each Committee member has read and scored each application, the point total is added up for each applicant.

The six \$1000 scholarships this year went to Michelle Hecimovich, a UW-Eau Claire student on her way to being an Occupational Therapist; Jessica Withey, medical student at Ross University; UW-Eau Claire nursing student Brianna Mader; ThedaCare School of Radiologic Technology/UW Oshkosh student Jordan Scherwinski; Tyler Kennedy, who will receive his Doctor of Pharmacy Degree next May

from UW-Madison School of Pharmacy; and UW-Green Bay student Breanna Scharp, whose goal is to be an AODA Counselor. Congratulations to each of these outstanding young people – and to the parents who raised them!

Wow! Summer is winding down, and our August temperatures make it already feel like fall! ***Our first meeting after the summer break will be held on Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will begin at noon with a potluck lunch.*** I hope to see you there! Meetings are on the second Monday of the month in the Board Room of the Murphy Building, which is connected to Flambeau Hospital. The October through May meetings begin at 1:30 PM.

Much has happened since the last newsletter, including the Babysitting Clinic, which was held on May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, for interested fifth-grade students. After two evenings of presentations and activities on safety and first aid, child development, and other topics, 24 students received their certificates. Thank you, Kathy Klein for organizing the Babysitting Clinic, and thank you to Amy Hulbert who helped both days, Mary Erickson who helped on Tuesday, and Sandy Dane who helped on Wednesday. The kids were great: respectful to the adult presenters and facilitators, attentive, and eager to learn! And, they were certificated in time for summer babysitting jobs.

Our Salad Luncheon was one week later, on Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. The rainy weather put a bit of a damper (pun intended) on it, but we again had an outstanding number of volunteers making the all the salads, deviled eggs, and desserts, as well as working to set up, sell tickets, keep the serving tables well stocked, and clean up afterward. FHA made nearly \$1000, enough for one of the scholarships awarded in July.

On Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, Arlene Morrison, Marilee Lealos, Amy Hulbert, and I traveled to Hayward for a Northwestern District Leadership Meeting. Six of the seven partner groups in the NW District were represented by the eighteen people who attended. To my knowledge, it was the first time that a meeting like that had been held in our district, and all who participated enjoyed the day and all the sharing of information and experiences.

The Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association, the “parent group” of the FHA, will hold its annual convention from Tuesday, October 3<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, at the Hyatt on Main in Green Bay. This year’s theme is construction work – “Partners Building A Better Future”. The FHA is sending four members again this year, Rhea and Gordon Lucht, Arlene Morrison, and me. Rag Cutter Rosie Neeck, FHA Secretary (and possibly future Rag Cutter), Rosie’s daughter, Jayne Russell, Amy Hulbert, and our Flambeau Hospital liaison, Tom Kaster are going to the WAVE Dinner Tuesday evening!

I still have lots of raffle tickets to sell to all of you who also hope to be a winner. (Remember, we had three winners last year!) Tickets are \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. You can buy them at the potluck lunch on September 11<sup>th</sup>, or call me at (715) 762-3193, and I will figure out how to get them to you. Then, if and when you win one of the raffle prizes, I will make sure it gets delivered to you!

FHA is hosting the fall Northwestern District meeting, which will be at the Northwoods Supper Club in Fifield on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. There will be a guest speaker who will educate us on a medical topic, both yet to be determined. Attendees will also hear reports from the Partners Convention, as well as from each of the other six partner groups (auxiliaries) in the district. District

meetings are a nice way to connect with like-minded people who learn from each other as they share their own success and challenge stories. It will begin with Registration and Continental Breakfast from 8:45 until 9:30, when the meeting will begin. More detailed information will be given at the September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, and we will begin signing people up. If you can't make the meeting, but wish to attend, call me at (715) 762-3193 before the end of September. (We can't wait until the October FHA meeting, because it's only two days before the NW District meeting!)

On Wednesday through Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup>, Thrift Shop volunteers completed the Changeover to fall and winter, and the Thrift Shop reopened on Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>. A huge thank you goes out to everyone who helped! Stop in to shop for fall and winter clothing and holiday décor. Also keep in mind that household items are available year-round, and that the FHA T.S. has the lowest prices in Price County – and maybe anywhere!

If you love the bargains, maybe you'd also like the camaraderie of being a Thrift Shop volunteer. Once you have come in and "learned the ropes", you can volunteer when your own life schedule allows you the time. Our volunteers know that the donation of the Thrift Shop profits to Flambeau Hospital helps not only the hospital, but indirectly helps the people who need its services. They also know that what they are doing helps the entire community by providing so many items at such low prices! Please give volunteering a try!

At long last the Rag Cutters are getting some recognition, and I'd like to shine another spotlight, so to speak, on a very long-term FHA volunteer. Louise Hoefflerle worked at the Thrift Shop for over 50 years before health problems forced her to stop. She wanted to continue to help out the T.S. even if she couldn't work *at* the T.S. Well, you know those little squares of masking tape that are stuck onto some of the clothing to show the size or onto other items to show the price? They don't appear by magic, and it would be a royal pain for markers (our volunteers who price items) to cut them one at a time when they need one. Long ago, someone at the T.S. created an efficient system for handling this issue. One person cuts them and sticks them, overlapping and pointing out over the edge, around old saucers! (We have a matching set that stacks several inches high.) When the supply is running low, the empty saucers are delivered to Louise, along with rolls of masking tape, and she cuts the squares for us! When they are ready, she gives us a call, and someone picks them up. Louise started doing this job around five years ago, when health issues required a stay at Pine Ridge (now Waterford). After returning to her own home, she has continued to help us out in this way. Thanks, Louise!

### **Drugs End Dreams – Opioid Abuse Is a Community Issue** – Sherry Jelic, Partners CHE

In 2017, on an average day in the U.S., someone begins nonmedical use of opioids every 22 seconds; someone starts using heroin every two and a half minutes; someone dies from opioid-related overdose every 16 minutes; and by May 18, more than 12,500 Americans had died from an opioid overdose in 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Opioid use is nothing new. People in the U.S. have been taking, smoking, or injecting opioids in various forms since at least the 19th century. Bayer, the pharmaceutical company we associate with aspirin, used to sell heroin as a cough suppressant and pain reliever for children in the late 1800's and early 1900's. An article in the Washington Post from June 2, 2017, referenced a letter written in 1980 by Dr. Hershel Jick, a Boston University doctor. After review of nearly 12,000 hospital records, he concluded that addiction to narcotic painkillers was rare in hospitalized patients. In following decades, doctors, pharmaceutical companies, and others used this letter as evidence that the risk of addiction

was low and that liberal prescription use was justified. In almost 500 articles, no mention was made that this research was only done with hospitalized patients on small monitored doses, not those given bottles of narcotics to take at home. “This pain population with no abuse history is literally at no risk for addiction,” read one 1998 article.

But today, opioid abuse is a community health issue. It has become a complex and chronic issue affecting thousands of families each day. One in seven Americans faces substance addiction, according to the Surgeon General’s 2016 report. Toddlers are dying of drug overdosing. Wisconsin is seeing an increase in babies born dependent on opioids or other addictive drugs (Fox News 6, February 12, 2017). Children are left without parents, brothers, sisters, and friends; parents are left without their children. Although experts say they know treatment works, people aren’t able to access the help they need when they need it. Only one in 10 people with substance abuse disorders receive the treatment and support to address their addiction. Addiction is not a choice that an individual makes, but the result of bad decisions.

On June 16, two bills passed in the Wisconsin Senate, one granting persons immunity from probation, parole, or extended supervision revoked for possessing a controlled substance while seeking or giving emergency assistance to another, and the second extends comprehensive programs to those who are suffering from addiction, making it easier to get needed help. The ultimate goal is to help as many people as possible succeed in recovery.

**REMEMBER:**

- Lock up opioids, especially to keep them out of the hands of teenagers.
- Use pain killers safely. When given opioids, know what they are for and how to safely take them. Ask if there are other ways to relieve the pain.
- Dispose of the pills safely, such as turning them over to law enforcement agencies or participating in community “take back” days.

**Public Policy Education Report** – Adapted from Partners PPE Barb Filla’s August report

The Wisconsin Hospital Association advocates for Wisconsin’s hospitals at the federal, state and local levels. As an affiliate, Partners of WHA is included public policy education and advocacy efforts. In May, three state WHA Partners members accompanied the President/CEO of WHA, the WHA Public Policy liaison to Partners, and many Wisconsin hospital administrators and representatives to Washington, D.C. They met with Wisconsin members of the House and Senate to discuss important issues and solutions for Wisconsin hospitals and patients. The discussion focused on the following important areas:

**American Health Care Act (AHCA)**

- Over the past four years, Wisconsin had a 38% reduction in uninsured through the ‘Wisconsin Model,’ which covered with Medicaid everyone in poverty and those just above poverty level by moving them onto the federal exchange. In 2016, over 225,000 individuals found affordable coverage on the exchange, of which 85% received income-based premium assistance averaging \$332/month, and 129,000 received cost-sharing assistance for co-pays/deductibles.
- Wisconsin’s “partial expansion” should be federally funded at same level as full-expansion states.
- AHCA provisions, like “safety net” funds and Disproportionate Share Hospital roll back, do not offset Wisconsin costs.
- The AHCA doesn’t address situations where providers/states have no control.

**Support Rural Hospitals**

- WHA supports the Rural Hospital Access Act (S 872/HR 1955), which would make permanent two Medicare payments which expire September 30, 2017.

- Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs): WHA and CAHs continue to seek a statutory fix to the “96 Hour Rule” (regarding a hospital’s ability to continue running during a catastrophe) by reintroducing and passing the Critical Access Hospital Relief Act.

Support the 340B Program (Drug Discount Program)

- Important to many rural and urban safety-net hospitals in Wisconsin to address the increasing cost of pharmaceuticals.

Discuss Wisconsin’s High-Quality, High-Value Health Care as an Important Reason to Recognize and use Wisconsin as an Example and Basis for Health Care Policy at the Federal Level.

- Wisconsin ranked: #3 in the nation for health care quality by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ); in top four states for last nine of 10 years; overall health care system ranked 11th in country by The Commonwealth Fund; etc.

*Note: Just last week (August 22<sup>nd</sup>), AHRQ ranked Wisconsin #1 in the nation for quality! Our advocacy can help Wisconsin stay #1!*

*I hope you’ve enjoyed your summer and that I see you at noon on Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, for the potluck lunch and meeting! Enjoy the fall weather and colors!*

*Ginny*

