Overview of WAVE Awards Programs

The Wisconsin Awards for Volunteer Excellence (WAVE) program was established by Partners of WHA, Inc. to recognize outstanding contributions of organized volunteer programs, and is patterned after the AHA HAVE Awards program.

In addition to acknowledging the value of volunteerism to individual lives and institutions, the awards program is designed to:
- Encourage service that greatly exceeds expectations, as a result of innovation, creativity and leadership;
- Promote visibility and goodwill toward the hospital or health care system;
- Increase allegiance among volunteers; and,
- Promote collaboration among organizations and community service.

2017 WAVE Committee Members:
Liz Emmerich, Chair
Aspirus Volunteers – Medford

Pat Freeders
SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital Auxiliary, Madison

Sharon Scott
Partners of St. Joseph’s Hospital, West Bend

Julie Steiner
Friends of Vernon Memorial Healthcare, Viroqua
Category: **Community Service Programs**  
Winning Program: “Dignity Quilts”  
Winning Organization: River Falls Area Hospital Auxiliary, River Falls

In 2014, the River Falls Area Hospital Auxiliary (RFAH Auxiliary) began their “Dignity Quilts” project, in an effort to bring a bit of peace and humanity to the moment when someone passes away, and soften the road to acceptance for those family and friends present at the passing. Witnessing the removal of the deceased from a hospital room for the journey ahead can be difficult to bear. RFAH Auxiliary members create Dignity Quilts with warm and soothing patterns, one of which is draped over the body bag and gurney, making it a more graceful and dignified experience as the deceased is removed. While initially created for and used in the hospital setting, the quilts have since expanded to include area funeral homes, nursing homes in their city and surrounding communities, area assisted living residences and to the families of especially difficult deaths. Twenty-five quilts have been donated to facilities or families, to date, by RFAH Auxiliary, to be used in appropriate situations.

Category: **In-service Hospital Volunteer Programs**  
Winning Program: “Discharge with Dignity”  
Winning Organization: Ascension Ministry Good Samaritan Volunteers, Merrill

The “Discharge with Dignity” program was established by the Ascension Ministry Good Samaritan Volunteers (Volunteers) in collaboration with their hospital’s emergency department patient care team. Its purpose is to provide clothing for patients who have a need for basic items to wear upon discharge from the emergency department, due to damaged, missing or destroyed garments. The emergency department made the Volunteers aware of a need for clothing for some patients upon discharge, and the Volunteers introduced the program as a new service area. They determined the need and volume for garments, established a list of suitable clothing items, determined how the inventory would be monitored and maintained, and how to fund the program. When the program was established in 2013, the Volunteers provided items to 26 patients from the “Discharge Closet.” In 2015, they provided items to 91 patients. During that time, the Volunteers have received numerous monetary and new clothing donations from individual Volunteer members and hospital employees. Today, this important program continues to meet both the physical and emotional needs of patients in the emergency department of their hospital.

Category: **Fundraising Programs**  
Winning Program: “Rag Cutters”  
Winning Organization: Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary, Park Falls

Since their Thrift Shop opened in 1953, the “Rag Cutters” of Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary (FHA) have been hard at work recycling unsellable clothing from their Thrift Shop or sheets and gowns no longer usable at the hospital. Every Tuesday, four FHA volunteers gather to cut those items into rags, which are then sold by the pound to area businesses, including the local paper mill, which orders 250 pounds at a time. The “Rag Cutter” program provides inexpensive cleaning rags to their community, repurposes items that otherwise would end up in the landfill, keeps the volunteer cutters sharp in mind and body, and brings in over $1,000 annually to the FHA treasury to help in its mission to help Flambeau Hospital. In addition, the volunteer cutters are always keeping their eyes open for buttons and zippers, which are removed and sold in the Thrift Shop, as well as for pieces of cloth appropriate for quilting, which are sent to local church groups for their quilting activities.

Category: **Community Outreach and/or Collaboration Programs**  
Winning Program: "Santa’s Workshop-Enchantment in the Park"  
Winning Organization: Partners of St. Joseph’s Hospital, West Bend

The commitment of the Partners of St. Joseph’s Hospital (Partners) in West Bend doesn’t stop once its volunteers step outside of the hospital doors. In fact, while the Partners understand their primary service is to St. Joseph’s Hospital, in the spirit of community and with the intent of increasing the volunteers’ visibility, the Partners have taken on a key role in the community’s Enchantment in the Park event. This one-mile, drive-through holiday adventure is organized by four local Rotary Clubs, drawing nearly 50,000 visitors annually, and bringing together many community groups in the spirit of providing volunteer service. Partners are responsible for the oversight of “Santa’s Workshop,” an interactive stop for visits and photos with Santa within the Enchantment journey. Partners assist with the planning and layout each year, as well as providing Mrs. Claus and elf costumes and on-site volunteers. In 2016, 191 hours were provided to Santa’s Workshop by 23 Partners volunteers during the 20 days Enchantment was open. The Partners also receive a donation from Enchantment each year, which is then directed toward their pledge back to St. Joseph’s Hospital.