

LOOKING BACK ON 2023 WITH GRATITUDE

Your generosity is improving the health and quality of life of people right here in our community.

The achievements celebrated within this report are YOURS. The appreciation expressed each day by patients, families, community partners and our healthcare teams BELONGS TO YOU.

Thank you for being an exceptional partner in this important work.

ABOUT UNITYPOINT HEALTH – MERITER FOUNDATION

THIS WORK BEGINS WITH OUR VISION:

A healthy community for everyone.

THIS VISION FUELS OUR MISSION:

To improve the health of the people and communities we serve through inspired giving.

These values drive the Meriter Foundation team to work to address the unmet healthcare needs in our region. Collaborating with donors like you, we are dedicated to upholding excellence in quality, safety and service—ensuring that high-quality healthcare remains accessible to every patient and neighbor in need. Together, we provide care and support for patients, families, caregivers and our community.

unitypoint.org/meriterfoundation



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YOU MATTER A Message from Rebecca



Rebecca Madson, President, UnityPoint Health – Meriter Foundation

Your generosity in 2023 has been nothing short of extraordinary, and it's because of you that Meriter Foundation has been able to make such a meaningful impact in our community over the past year.

I invite you to delve into the stories of hope, healing and transformation shared in this report—each one a testament to the difference your kindness has made.

Your trust in the Meriter Foundation team as stewards of your investment means the world. Your support is not just a gift; it's a lifeline for patients and families during their most pivotal moments

Thanks to you, we're creating a future where everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has access to expert, compassionate healthcare.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Rebecca Madson President UnityPoint Health - Meriter Foundation

Your Generosity

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS \$1,999,907

TOTAL # OF DONORS 805

OF NEW DONORS 326

TOTAL ASSETS \$24,807,653



A very good boy ready to begin his shift with Dogs on Call, providing therapy for hospital inpatients at Meriter. Visits from these calm, well-behaved furry companions lower stress levels and raise spirits for patients—and care teams.



The team from the Center for Perinatal Care poses in front of a mural, created by muralist Emily Balsley. This vibrant artwork, situated in the courtyard at the Center for Perinatal Care at UnityPoint Health - Meriter Hospital, is made possible through philanthropic funding. The mural transforms the space into a therapeutic and uplifting environment for patients, families, and care team members.



Dedicated volunteer and NICU cuddler, Anna Acardi, comforting two of Meriter's newest patients.

YOUR IMPACT

Here's a glimpse of how your generous support through Meriter Foundation has made a meaningful impact on the lives of patients, families, caregivers and neighbors.

A LIFELINE for Patients and Neighbors

329 neighbors facing housing insecurity and homelessness were served by the HEALTH Program. The HEALTH respite apartment accommodated HEALTH patients for a total of 202 days, providing them with a safe, quiet, and comfortable place to recover from medical procedures.

Nearly 600 patients entrusted Meriter's Adult Psychiatry services for comprehensive mental health care, compassionate support and transformative healing.

patients with substance dependence were cared for through NewStart Addiction Treatment. Of these, 187 patients enrolled in Intensive Outpatient Services. Additionally, 141 patients visited the walk-in clinic at NewStart, which welcomes all who are seeking addiction treatment.

442 survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence were provided compassionate medical, mental and emotional care through the Forensic Nurse Examiner program.



1,183 elder patients received companionship and assistance through the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP), totaling 5,663 hours of service. This initiative significantly reduces the risk of hospital delirium and mental confusion for patients aged 65 and older.

community members in an underserved area received free seasonal flu and COVID-19 immunizations through the Area of Greatest Need fund, improving health equity by removing barriers to accessing care in traditional healthcare settings.

COMFORT AND CARE to Tiny Patients and their Families

5,026 babies were delivered at UnityPoint Health - Meriter.





647 tiny patients (along with their loved ones) received care in the NICU, including those born as early as 22 weeks gestation.

Nearly **15,000** patients received care in the **Center for Perinatal Care**, which provides ultrasounds, diagnostic testing, and care for highrisk pregnancies.

1,500 nights of accommodation were provided at Ronald McDonald House for families of infants in the NICU.

437 scent hearts sewn for the Meriter NICU by Meriter Volunteers. These scent hearts allow NICU babies to smell their parents when separated, promoting the release of happy hormones and supporting sensory development.





reduced-cost infant car seats were provided for newborns and their families through the Littlest Angels Program.

6 community doulas and community health workers enrolled in Certified Lactation Consultant training through Roots for Change. This program aims to provide culturally sensitive support for breastfeeding.

HOPE AND HEALING to Kids in Mental Health Crisis

907 kids and adolescents from 48 counties, including those traveling from as far as Arizona, received care from **Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP).**

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

Each CAP inpatient received a take-home art kit to provide opportunities for creativity and self-expression.

And each CAP inpatient received a take-home safe kit to offer comfort and reduce self-harm.

103 adolescents were enrolled in CAP's Intensive Outpatient Services (IOS) Program, which offers day treatment for adolescents with primary psychiatric concerns who do not require inpatient psychiatric hospitalization.

parent-support group was launched for families with kids at CAP.

SUPPORT for the Next Generation of Healthcare Professionals

39 individuals were provided healthcare career and advancement opportunities through Meriter Pathways Programs.





19 local high school seniors planning a career in healthcare received college scholarships through the **Healthcare**Scholarship program at Meriter.

798 caregivers have received training at Jeff Levy Education Center, a state-of-the-art healthcare learning center, since it opened its doors in May 2023.



Meriter Volunteers studying for a career in healthcare received college scholarships.

In 2023, Meriter celebrated 125 years as Madison's community hospital.

Our dedicated team members, compassionate caregivers, devoted volunteers, supportive community partners and generous donors are the driving force behind Meriter's ability to provide exceptional, compassionate care to all in need. The mission of caring at Meriter will continue for many generations to come.

MERITER 2023

3,542 team members (and growing)

10,093 surgeries performed

43,373 visits to the emergency department

396 staffed beds

28 clinics

160,016 clinic visits conducted



Madison General Hospital, circa 1918



Babies at Madison General Hospital, 1921



Nurses at Methodist Hospital, 1929

In 1987, Madison General Hospital and Methodist Hospital combined to become Meriter Hospital. Meriter Hospital now stands on the site once occupied by Madison General Hospital.

FTER

YOU SUPPORTED Meriter's smallest patients and their loved ones.





You create a profound impact for Birthing & Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) patients and their loved ones.

Within the walls of UnityPoint Health - Meriter–Wisconsin's busiest birthing center and the premier regional center for high-risk neonatal care—babies and their families are surrounded by the most advanced practitioners and technology available in Birthing and NICU medicine.

Your support transforms their experience into a birthing journey that emphasizes a holistic approach to care, seamlessly blending medical expertise with those extra touches that provide each newborn with the most comforting and supportive start possible.

The impact begins even before families set foot in Meriter Hospital. Through your generosity, families in need gain access to essential resources such as prenatal classes, comprehensive childbirth education, and hotel accommodations for those facing high-risk pregnancies, ensuring they can remain close to the hospital during critical times.

Once within the walls of Meriter Hospital, your kindness extends beyond advanced medical care to foster a nurturing environment. Your contributions play a vital role in crafting Scent Hearts (sewn by Meriter Volunteers) that allow NICU babies to experience the comforting scent of their parents when separated, which promotes happy hormones and sensory development. Recordable Heartbeats provide solace as infants are soothed by the sound of a parent's heartbeat. Journals are provided to NICU parents, offering a therapeutic outlet during one of the most stressful periods in their lives. Thanks to you, patients hospitalized before delivery find comfort in arts and crafts and personal care kits, ensuring they can remain relaxed and comfortable ahead of delivery. Families in need within Birth and Newborn Services even receive two nourishing meals a day through the cafeteria, thanks to your generosity.

Their journey continues after families leave the comforting care of Meriter. Your generosity ensures that every family has access to necessities like car seats, pack 'n plays, backpack bassinets, and even funds for gas cards to ensure reliable transportation to and from Meriter for their follow-up care. Your support alleviates financial stresses and logistical hurdles, enabling each family to provide the safest and most comforting environment for their newborns.



YOUR IMPACT IS FELT THROUGHOUT THE BIRTHING JOURNEY, CREATING A LASTING DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF COUNTLESS LITTLE ONES AND THEIR LOVED ONES.



Scent Hearts allow NICU babies to experience their parents' comforting scent while in the NICU.



Recordable Heartbeats enable a baby in the NICU to be soothed by the sound of a parent's heartbeat.



"As an occupational therapist in the NICU, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for the invaluable support you've provided to babies and their families throughout their bonding journey. Witnessing the stress and apprehension that families experience while caring for their tiny infants, I see, firsthand, the role you play in fostering a sense of comfort and parenthood within the confines of a medical environment.

"I cannot express how truly empowering your support is for these families to feel like they have the community's support behind them. Thank you, thank you, thank you! We appreciate all of your support tremendously."

 Katie Zumwalde, M.S., OTR/L, NTMTC, TIP
 Occupational Therapist Level III Neonatal Touch and Massage Therapist Certified (NTMTC) Trauma-Informed Professional Certified (TIP)

YOU RALLIED around youth in mental health crisis.

As the sole provider of inpatient psychiatric care for children in our community, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) at UnityPoint Health – Meriter plays a vital role in our region, offering hope and healing to kids, age 6-18.

Your invaluable support sustains CAP's nurturing environment, which extends beyond therapy and medication to provide a variety of additional support and resources.



HEALING THROUGH MOVEMENT AND MINDFULNESS

Your generosity has enabled young patients at CAP to access transformative healing practices like yoga, meditation, and mindfulness sessions led by certified yoga instructor and Trauma Center Trauma-Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY) facilitator, Alena Jensen, LCSW. This specialized form of Hatha yoga is designed to help children affected by trauma find safety within their bodies, fostering a reconnection of mind and body often disrupted by trauma.

Held in CAP's tranquil yoga room and complemented by meditation and mindfulness techniques, these practices have shown remarkable efficacy in reducing anxiety and self-harming behaviors, especially among young individuals. Your support for this movement-based and mindfulness therapy equips patients with invaluable coping skills they can continue to use at home, especially during challenging moments when communication is difficult.

Through your generosity, CAP offers a diverse range of therapies that children can integrate into their daily lives, effectively reducing their symptoms. Whether practiced in group sessions or one-on-one settings, the benefits of Movement-Based Therapy (MBT) continue to positively impact young individuals long after they have completed the programs.

"Insight Counseling and Movement-Based Therapy helped me feel better mentally and physically. It helped me a lot with controlling my breathing and knowing when I need to take a break or a minute of silence. I now use what I've learned from this program in my daily life to help me calm down when my anxiety is trying to take over."

Caleb*, CAP Patient
 *name and photo changed to protect privacy





The new mural, situated above the outdoor track track at Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

HEALING THROUGH FOOD AND NATURE

Your contributions have connected kids to the therapeutic benefits of gardening and nutritious food through the Julie Bush Gathering Garden. This nurturing environment features fresh vegetables, vibrant flowers adorning living walls and tactile plants for sensory engagement.

Horticultural therapy, which involves plantbased activities to achieve therapeutic goals, proves beneficial for children of all abilities. This form of therapy not only reduces stress and anger but also enhances self-worth through accomplishment. Your support enriches outpatient care by providing fresh produce from our new garden area, positively impacting children like Ethan (name changed to protect privacy), an inpatient at CAP:

Eight-year-old Ethan, admitted to CAP due to escalating behavior, participated in regular programming to manage his anger and aggression. As the medical team contemplated medication changes to aid Ethan in reducing the intensity of his behavior, he encountered a remarkable intervention in the Healing Garden: lamb's ear plants.

Rubbing their soft leaves on his arm became a calming ritual, effectively reducing his aggression. Access to these plants provided Ethan with a simple yet powerful way to manage his emotions, resulting in a cessation of escalations on the unit. This intervention holds promise for replication beyond the hospital setting.



Photo taken in the Julie Bush Gathering Garden at Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

HEALING THROUGH LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

Every child in our community deserves to be celebrated for their uniqueness, recognized as the remarkable individuals they are, and equipped with the tools to navigate life's challenges with resilience.



This principle lies at the heart of Love is Love.

Love is Love was the premier event of 2023, uniting a vibrant community of friends, both new and longstanding, for an unforgettable night filled with joyous music, dancing, captivating performances, and an unwavering commitment to supporting LGBTQ+ youth on their journey toward hope and healing at CAP.

Your participation in Love is Love directly contributed to creating the safe, supportive, accepting, and non-judgmental environment at CAP. Together, we are championing inclusivity and promoting the well-being of all youth in our community.

"It's been almost a year since I finished the outpatient program at CAP. I think more teens should be able to get this type of help—especially LGBTQ+ kids. When you're dealing with queer issues, it can feel isolating and like no one else will understand. I connected with people who understood my situation. I



Former CAP patient, Damian, with CAP Medical Director, Dr. Katie Schmitt, at Love is Love 2023

was able to talk to other LGBTQ+ youth. A community is better than just one person alone, and Meriter provided a community for me. They provided it at a time I really needed it."

"I'd like to thank the staff at UnityPoint Health - Meriter for being such cool people and providing that community. It's also amazing to be standing here, in front of all of you, knowing this is my community, too. Thank you for being here tonight and supporting kids like me."

- Damian, former patient at CAP and honored guest speaker at Love is Love

YOU BOLSTERED the healthcare workforce, helping to ensure exceptional care is available to all in our community.

In the Fall of 2022, Meriter Foundation launched the CARE for our Community's Future fundraising campaign, rooted in the belief that every individual in our community deserves access to expert, compassionate healthcare, both now and for generations to come.

However, our community, like the entire nation, faced what at times felt like an insurmountable challenge: a growing deficit in our healthcare workforce.

Setting ambitious goals in both fundraising and organizational development, Meriter sought innovative solutions to tackle this complex issue.

Thanks to your generous support, the CARE for our Community's Future campaign surpassed its fundraising target. This achievement is more than a significant financial milestone; it lays the groundwork for a brighter future for our community. The funds raised are essential in ensuring the healthcare workforce is well-prepared, and our training centers provide an environment conducive to learning and professional development.

A core component of this workforce initiative was securing a dedicated space for this crucial work. Centrally located in Madison along the W. Beltline Highway, the Jeff Levy Education Center opened its doors in May 2023, quickly establishing itself as a hub for healthcare learning, collaboration, and opportunity. This state-of-theart facility was named in heartfelt gratitude to lead donor Jeff Levy, whose steadfast generosity has left an indelible mark on our community.

"Making a financial gift in support of this important work seems small compared to all that healthcare teams have done for me and so many people I love over the years. I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to play a part in creating this critical resource for our community."

- Jeff Levy





"In February 2021, while working in sales, I was diagnosed with stage 2b breast cancer at 35 years old with 3 kids under 10. As you can imagine, this rocked my world. It left me feeling like I wasn't where I wanted to be in life. After meeting so many amazing people through my health journey, I knew I wanted to get into the healthcare field."

"I applied to be a Health Unit Coordinator at Meriter. I LOVED it, but I wanted more patient interaction. The MA Scholars Pathways Program at Meriter solved all my problems as far as paying for school and trying to figure out how I would work and go to school while being a mom. It was an amazing opportunity that I never once took for granted.

"It was a lot of work, both in class and at home. There were times I felt out of my comfort zone, but the instructors were very knowledgeable, compassionate, and understanding. They always seemed to know when to push me and when to give me more time if I didn't feel confident in the task."

"Now that I've graduated, I'm happily falling into my new position as a Medical Assistant with Meriter. It's such a great fit for me."

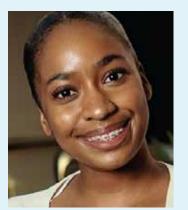
"Forever grateful for this opportunity!"

- Courtney Riege, CCMA, CPT | Medical Assistant at UnityPoint Health - Meriter





Students in the January 2024 cohort of the Gloria Jones-Bey CNA Scholars Pathways Program at Meriter undergo training at the Center for Healthcare Education and Simulation (CHES).



"While we never have met, as a graduate of the Gloria Jones-Bey CNA Pathways program at Meriter, I have deeply felt the impact of your support.

"You have made it possible for me to take this significant step along the path toward becoming a pediatric nurse (my ultimate dream) without a financial burden.

"Thank you for knowing the importance of having a strong support system early in your career. You have made such a positive impact on my future. My family and I are so grateful!"

Omani R., CNA
 Graduate of the Summer 2023 cohort,
 Gloria Jones-Bey CNA Scholars Pathways Program at Meriter

YOU PROVIDED companionship and mental enrichment for elder adults.

Your generous support has been instrumental in enabling the invaluable work of the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP), which provides essential assistance to elderly inpatients.

The dedicated HELP volunteers (numbering 113 in 2023) engage in a variety of activities with elder adults. They assist with eating and drinking, engage in peaceful conversations to keep patients grounded, participate in card games or crossword puzzles to stimulate mental activity, and, when appropriate, encourage gentle physical activity to promote movement.

Your kindness has facilitated the acquisition of necessary HELP supplies, including pocket talkers, reading glasses, music, art materials, puzzles and other activities aimed at keeping older patients mentally and physically engaged during their hospital stay.

Additionally, your support has played a crucial role in supporting ongoing staff training in specialized treatment and care for hospitalized elder adults, including those with Alzheimer's and dementia.

Message from a Grateful Donor

"My mother had three hospital visits between 2019-2021 before she passed away. She suffered from moderate to severe dementia and I was amazed at the extra care that was given by the HELP staff. I tried to visit as often as I could, and all of her nurses were amazing, but knowing that Meriter Hospital also offered this extra HELP service really lowered any anxiety and worry that she was sitting there by herself, not able to participate in normal activities."

"It made a world of difference to have someone come and visit with her (especially during Covid), offer activities like picture books and activity mats, and make sure she had something to eat during lunch and dinner. They helped cut up her food so she could use her fingers to eat, and they put music or a nature channel on her TV to fill the silence of her room, making it seem more like home."

"Being in an unfamiliar place is confusing and scary for most elderly patients—with or without dementia. The HELP program does a wonderful job of supporting the nurses in these special situations. It had a lasting impression on me, and I wanted to recognize how amazing this program is and offer them some funding to keep this very important program going."

- Becky C.





HELP volunteer Sue offers a patient a fidget toy, which helps keep hands occupied, easing stress and anxiety. This simple activity also allows patients experiencing symptoms of dementia to engage in activities without the pressure of achieving specific goals.



Volunteer Martie (pictured here with the HELP cart filled with books, magazines, games, and puzzles) joined the HELP volunteer team in February 2019. Since then, she has devoted more than 1,400 hours specifically to HELP!

YOU SHARED YOUR TIME & TALENT

Volunteers Services at UnityPoint Health - Meriter

Kind words and personalized assistance go a long way in creating a welcoming environment for patients and families. It takes a village to provide the high-quality care and comfort Meriter gives patients every day.

Meriter Volunteers serve as vital pillars in this collective endeavor, working hand in hand with dedicated healthcare team members to enhance the overall standard of care delivered to patients. Their selfless contributions and unwavering dedication amplify the impact of our healthcare services, ensuring that each patient receives the comprehensive support they deserve.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

312 volunteers supported **64** different areas in our hospitals and clinics.

48,205 hours were recorded by volunteers in 2023–the equivalent of **23** full-time employees!

5,495 hours spent in the NICU holding babies, hand hugging and doing laundry.

5,854 hours spent visiting hospital patients over age 65 through HELP (Hospital Elder Life Program), providing companionship, meal assistance, light activity and mobility support, thus reducing the risk of hospital delirium and mental confusion.

1,205 hours spent visiting patients under age 65 through the Team UP (Unit Partner) program, closely mirroring the successful HELP model to improve inpatient physical and mental wellness.

433 hours spent sharing music, conversation and connection through the inpatient music therapy program, Healing Beats.

6 Blood Drives hosted, collecting **283** units.

19 scholarships at \$1,000 were provided to high school students interested in healthcare careers. (Made possible thanks to generous tips collected at Dr. Joe Coffee Clinic and the Meriter Bistro!)

"After more than a decade as a NICU cuddler, I've come to understand the healing power of human connection. Each cuddle extends care, resilience, and encouragement to these tiny warriors when their families are unable to be by their side. As I train new cohorts of NICU cuddlers, I emphasize that cuddling benefits four groups of people: the babies, their families, the nurses and it benefits me.

It's been a great honor to provide this comfort to countless little ones during their most vulnerable moments."

- Longtime Volunteer and NICU 'Cuddler', George Falor

Volunteer Crafters Made and Delivered:

- ▶ 94 Baby Blankets for NICU families.
- ▶ **4,457 Baby Hats** for babies born at Meriter.
- ▶ 137 Bereavement Gowns for families of pre-term babies.
- ▶ 251 Comfort Blankets designed for longer-term patients or those going home on chilly days.
- 4,000 Fall-Prevention Kits to help ensure the safety of all patients who present a fall risk. Kits include non-slip socks, a gait belt, a wrist band and signage.
- ▶ 289 Eyeglass Holders for patients to keep their glasses safe during surgical procedures.
- ▶ 226 Heart Pillows for cardiac patients to help reduce pain.
- ➤ 273 NICU Crib Sheets to add comfort to the NICU cribs.
- ▶ 437 NICU Scent Hearts, allowing NICU babies to smell their parents when separated, promoting happy hormones and sensory development.
- ▶ 199 Patient Cards filled with heartfelt messages, cheerful drawings, and photos to lift spirits and brighten days.
- 189 Recycled Tote Bags, crafted from unused surgical drape and filled with a blanket, word puzzles, pens, and kind notes, were delivered to patients to help make their stay more comfortable.
- ▶ 24 Tie Blankets for children as a comfort when they have surgery.



you matter— TO THE HEALTH OF THIS COMMUNITY

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