Mission

The mission of UnityPoint Health® – St. Luke’s Foundation is to support UnityPoint Health – Cedar Rapids in giving the health care we’d like our loved ones to receive.

News and Information

- St. Luke’s Hospital is also addressing the nationwide nursing shortage with help from St. Luke’s Foundation. The Promise Program provides financial support to area nursing students during their senior year, with the promise of a job and sign-on bonus upon graduation. Read more about it inside.

- We’re on the grow again! St. Luke’s Hospital is meeting the increasing demand for cardiovascular care with a $25 million expansion of our heart services. This project will enable the CR Heart Hospital to treat more patients in a way that helps them get home faster and recover sooner.
A Caring Purpose

There is purpose to the work we do here. Our team members are united in that purpose and we continue to be inspired by their stories.

Inside this report, we share a few of those stories with you. You’ll meet a nurse who literally went the extra mile for her patient. And a woman who donates to the Foundation with her husband, while giving generously of her time as a volunteer chaplain at St. Luke’s.

The Foundation is helping us support caregivers like these through the Re-Igniting the Spirit of Caring program. It brings team members together to discuss how they can take better care of themselves during challenging times, so they can continue to provide the best care to our patients.

It’s just one of the ways we’re committed to retaining the wonderful people who make St. Luke’s special. We’re also recruiting new registered nurses through our Promise Program. By providing financial aid to students, with the promise of a full-time job after graduation, we attract the area’s most exceptional new nurses—like Ben, who says, “St. Luke’s is an awesome place to work and the Promise Program is the cherry on top!”

Finally, we congratulate Carmen Kleinsmith, UnityPoint Health - Cedar Rapids senior vice president and chief nurse executive. Carmen was honored as the 2022 Outstanding Nurse Executive by the Iowa Organization of Nurse Leaders and was recently named one of the Corridor Business Journal’s 2022 Women of Influence.

With gratitude for all you do,

Michelle Niermann
President & CEO,
UnityPoint Health – Cedar Rapids

Mary Klinger
President,
UnityPoint Health – St. Luke’s Foundation

Promise Program

Nursing is a rewarding career in many ways. Now St. Luke’s Hospital is making it even more rewarding for nursing students, with financial assistance for their education and the promise of a nursing role at St. Luke’s when they graduate.

“This is one way we are tackling the nursing shortage,” explains Carmen Kleinsmith, St. Luke’s senior vice president and chief nurse executive. “We support qualified students financially while they complete their degree. And we offer them a path to their hopefully long and rewarding career in nursing at our Magnet® recognized organization upon graduation.”

Students who qualify for St. Luke’s Hospital Promise Program receive significant financial support to help cover tuition during their final two semesters. After graduation, they work full-time as nurses in areas of greatest need at St. Luke’s, such as critical care, inpatient rehabilitation, behavioral health, and the emergency department. Promise Program award recipients also receive a sign-on bonus of up to $10,000. Tuition support and sign-on bonuses will be forgiven after the recipient completes 18 months of employment as a St. Luke’s RN. The program is available to students at Coe College, Mount Mercy University and Kirkwood Community College.

Ben Heath, now a registered nurse on 4 West, started working at St. Luke’s as a tech during his freshman year at Coe College. He says, “I really enjoyed St. Luke’s already. The Promise Program gave me even more incentive to stay here after graduation. The financial aid helped me pay for school and the sign-on bonus enabled me to get an apartment and start paying off my student loans.”

Recruitment

Funding for St. Luke’s Promise Program comes from donations to St. Luke’s Foundation. If you or someone you know is a nursing student and you want to know more about the program, email stlukescr@unitypoint.org.
Kate and Dick Minette’s experience with St. Luke’s cardiovascular team began when Dick first experienced heart-related issues. “We were impressed with their care, commitment to patients, candor and kindness,” Kate recalls. “They’ve stayed on top of Dick’s heart disease to make sure he lives a very full life.”

That’s just one reason why the Minettes are supporting the expansion of St. Luke’s heart care services. The $25 million project will enlarge and upgrade the hospital’s electrophysiology, vascular and interventional radiology, and structural heart facilities. St. Luke’s Cardiologist Richard Kettlekamp explains, “This expansion opens the window for us to treat more patients in a way that enables them to get out of the hospital faster, recover sooner, and live longer, healthier lives.”

Kate and Dick know the importance of helping St. Luke’s remain a strong hospital with skilled practitioners and state-of-the-art equipment. Kate, who is chair-elect of St. Luke’s Hospital board of directors, says, “When physicians perform procedures repeatedly, it leads to better outcomes. The more we use our local services, the more exceptional they become.”

Dick, who lost his own father to heart disease, notes, “The advanced treatment I received at St. Luke’s was a lifesaver. At every stage of my recovery, whenever I needed assistance, they were there for me.”

Supporting the expansion of St. Luke’s heart services is our way of giving back for what they’ve given me.”

Kate encourages others to do the same. “It doesn’t have to be a lot. But at some point, you or someone you love is going to need the services of a hospital or clinic. We all have a stake in maintaining strong health care in our community.”

She adds, “I cannot be more proud of the cardiac services St. Luke’s provides, from a patient/family standpoint and from a board member standpoint. Dick and I saw no reason to go anywhere beyond St. Luke’s. That’s where our hearts are.”

Contributions to WeCare go full circle when they fund the Foundation’s iGrant program. These dollars underwrite innovative services and equipment requested by hospital departments and clinics to directly improve patient care. This year, St. Luke’s Foundation approved 38 iGrant applications giving back more than $274,000.

Kate & Dick Minette

Help us build brighter futures for heart and vascular patients in our community when you support the expansion of St. Luke’s heart services.

Call the Foundation at (319) 369-7716 or visit unitypoint.org/donate.

We were also proud to honor Nancy Lamb Skogbergh with St. Luke’s Founders Award. Nancy spent 46 years at St. Luke’s Hospital and School of Nursing as a registered nurse, beloved nursing instructor, and administrator, and is a generous contributor to the Foundation. She was recognized for her significant and outstanding impact on health care through a lifetime of leadership and devotion.

Jim Skogbergh (Nancy’s son), Nancy Skogbergh and her nephew, Dr. Andy McGinn
An Important Part of Their Lives

Planned Giving

When Lois and Bob Buntz look back on the organizations that have had a significant impact on their lives, one name stands out above the rest: St. Luke’s.

“St. Luke’s is our hospital,” says Lois. “We’ve both had services there and I am honored to be on St. Luke’s Foundation board of directors. It’s an extremely well-run, quality institution. We’re fortunate to have such a great hospital in our community.”

With that in mind and knowing they wanted to direct some of their assets to charity, Lois and Bob decided to meet with Johni Hays to discuss their estate plans. Johni, sr. vice president with Thompson & Associates, works with friends and supporters of St. Luke’s to use planned giving to minimize their tax obligations while positively impacting health care in the Cedar Rapids area. Explains Lois, “Working with Johni was entirely voluntary. There was no fee attached and no pressure.”

Bob adds, “We’ve had wills in place for some time but Johni took our planning to a whole new level. She encouraged us to think about our values and brought out what’s really been important to us in our careers and lives.”

In Bob’s case, St. Luke’s heart care has been especially significant. He had a heart attack in 1985, when St. Luke’s was the only local hospital performing bypass surgery. He was also an early participant in St. Luke’s cardiac rehabilitation program. Through planned giving, the couple can direct their assets specifically to cardiac care if they choose.

In June, Lois and Bob became members of the Koehler Legacy Society, which recognizes individuals who have included St. Luke’s Foundation in their estate plans.

“We’ve always donated annually, but this was different,” Lois says. “I think the more ‘plan-ful’ people can be, the better. If you’ve used St. Luke’s services, I encourage you to consider St. Luke’s Foundation when you do your life planning.”

For more information on estate planning services, contact St. Luke’s Foundation at (319) 369-7716.

Providing Financial and Spiritual Support

Cindy and Mike Dunn have contributed to St. Luke’s Foundation for years. But Cindy’s support for St. Luke’s patients and families goes beyond the financial.

“I’ve been a volunteer chaplain at the hospital for 12 years,” Cindy recalls. “It’s very rewarding work. Our role in Spiritual Care is to listen and provide support, no matter what your faith is. And everything we do is patient-led, empowering the patient to tell us what they need.”

Seeing firsthand the impact St. Luke’s makes on individuals led Cindy and Mike to begin donating to the Foundation on an annual basis. Their contributions include a major gift for the recent Inpatient Modernization Campaign.

“The updated inpatient area is wonderful, from the increased privacy to the beautiful artwork,” says Cindy. “Being in a comfortable environment like that really helps with healing. Now we’re excited about the new heart services expansion coming up! Mike and I have both had heart issues in the past, so we know there’s a need.”

The Dunns call their donations to St. Luke’s Foundation a win-win situation. That’s because the couple is rolling over IRA dollars that individuals are required to start taking out beginning at age 70½. Mike explains, “The advantage of a direct rollover gift to St. Luke’s is they receive 100% of the rollover without the normal assessment of taxes to the donor. We don’t have the tax liability, so the hospital gets a bigger donation.”

Cindy adds, “St. Luke’s has done so much for both of us. We want to support it so the hospital will continue to be available for everyone!”

Spiritual Companion Training

Spiritual Care volunteers like Cindy Dunn play an important role in helping patients and families of all faith backgrounds navigate their healthcare journey and stay connected to their spirituality. St. Luke’s Spiritual Care offers training for anyone interested in volunteering as an on-call chaplain.

“If you feel called to volunteer, Spiritual Care is a wonderful area,” says Cindy. “The training helps you find out who you are. If you can use that self-knowledge to help someone else, that’s awesome stuff!”

If you’re interested in volunteering or have any other questions about Spiritual Care, call St. Luke’s Foundation at (319) 369-7347.

Every donor makes an impact on health care in our community. For information on tax-advantaged IRA rollovers or other forms of giving, call St. Luke’s Foundation at (319) 369-7716.
Life can change in an instant.
For Chris Norton, that instant came during a Luther College football game in 2010. Chris mis-timed a tackle, fractured two vertebrae, and was given a three percent chance of regaining movement below his neck. But Chris overcame the odds.

Today Chris Norton is a husband, father and motivational speaker. He and his family also established a foundation to help others with spinal cord injuries and neuromuscular disorders. In April 2022, the Chris Norton Foundation awarded almost $30,000 to St. Luke’s Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PMR) for advanced equipment to help patients in our community.

The Xcite iFES Clinical Station delivers electrical stimulation to a patient’s muscles during physical therapy activities. A library of preprogrammed activities enables St. Luke’s therapists to use the equipment to work with patients on everyday tasks, from walking to reaching out and picking up an object.

“We were impressed with St. Luke’s PMR’s level of expertise, the number of people they serve, and how they were going to use the equipment to impact more people,” says Terry Norton, Chris’s dad and president of the Chris Norton Foundation. “We have to turn down a lot of requests, so we make sure we maximize the use of our dollars. St. Luke’s was a good match for us.”

He adds, “My son used equipment like this at Mayo Clinic during his therapy. We really believe in the benefits of it. We’ve seen the results.”

Scott Kallemeyn receives outpatient therapy at St. Luke’s PMR, after an accident in 2020 damaged his spinal cord. He says, “I think it’s one of the best rehab programs in the Midwest. I’ve been physically active all my life. I really appreciate that their equipment allows me to do some of that same level of cardiovascular activity again.”

St. Luke’s PMR provides comprehensive physical therapy and rehab services for patients from throughout Eastern Iowa. You can help them achieve their goals when you donate to St. Luke’s Foundation. Call us at (319) 369-7716 for more information.

Want to express your appreciation to the caregivers who made a difference for you or a loved one? Guardian Angel gifts can be of any size, and a ceremony honors those who go above and beyond for you. For more information, call the St. Luke’s Foundation, at (319) 369-7716.

Nancy Scott was home alone when she experienced a severe asthma attack in May. Well, not completely alone. With Nancy were Tiago and Dion—the beloved dog and cat of Nancy’s late daughter, Crystal.

“I could hardly breathe that day,” Nancy recalls. “I was in a dire situation.” She immediately called her pulmonologist at UnityPoint Clinic - Multi-Specialty and spoke with Nurse Laurie Mahoney-Willger. Laurie advised her to call an ambulance, explaining, “When you’re that short of breath, it is the safest thing to do.” But Nancy didn’t want to leave her pets alone, and no one was available to take them to their usual kennel.

That’s when Laurie went the extra mile for her patient. While Nancy called 911, Laurie came and picked up Dion and Tiago. “I remember being in the ambulance and seeing Laurie carry them to her car,” says Nancy. “Away they went!” Later, Laurie stopped in to see Nancy at St. Luke’s and showed her a photo of Tiago and Dion happily settled in at the kennel.

Nancy wanted to recognize Laurie’s actions. As a retired teacher, Nancy says she was motivated in part by thank you notes she received from her students over the years—notes she still treasures today. Nancy contacted St. Luke’s Foundation and made a Guardian Angel donation in Laurie’s name.

“I didn’t expect it, but it was very kind of Nancy,” says Laurie. “I was just happy I could help her out that day. I know it allowed her to breathe a little easier to know her pets were being taken care of while she got the help she needed.”

Nancy adds, “During my emergency, Laurie rescued Dion and Tiago, which helped to rescue me. There are many angels in this world, but Laurie is our Guardian Angel!”

Guardian Angel Program
Helping Nancy Breathe Easier
Andrea Watkinson took over director responsibilities at Helen G. Nassif Community Cancer Center in November 2021, but she's been part of the Nassif Community Cancer Center family almost since its beginning. "I started as a care coordinator," Andrea explains. "Now I'm excited to build on the center's success and expand our services for cancer patients, survivors and their families."

After having to cut back on some offerings due to Covid, Andrea is eager to raise community awareness of Nassif Community Cancer Center. "We welcome patients and survivors regardless of where they received their cancer treatment. They can get health care, support services and a sense of community, all in one place. And because of philanthropy dollars, there's no charge for most services."

Andrea adds, "Our people are what really makes Nassif Community Cancer Center special. We treat our patients like family and we treat each other like family. No wonder when people come to work here, they tend to stay."

One longtime team member is Matt Schmitz, program manager for physical and integrative wellness. Matt says his team innovated when Covid hit, looking for safe ways to support patients and survivors. Online classes added during the pandemic, as well as C.A.R.E. Connect (a streaming service aimed at relieving stress), are so popular they continue to be available for access at any time. But the demand for in-person programs—the center's "support groups that move"—returned as soon as they could be safely offered. "Our patients really wanted to come back and be part of the activities again," recalls Matt. "They know we are here for them and they wanted to be here for one another."

Special events have also returned, including the Fighting Cancer Together Golf Tournament with support from the women's golf leagues in Mount Vernon and Anamosa, Survivors’ Day, with thanks to Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust; and Take Me Out to the Ball Game at Kernels Stadium, sponsored by Aiming for a Cure Foundation.

"We really are a community," stresses Andrea. "From preventative services to programs that help patients transition to survivorship, Nassif Community Cancer Center has a lot to offer."

Charlie Becker wanted to change that. Charlie has served on hospital boards for decades, first in Jones County where he lives and works, and for the past six years at St. Luke’s Hospital. When he assumed the role of board chair in 2020, Charlie decided he wanted to know more about the women and men at all levels who help St. Luke’s deliver exceptional health care.

"I wanted to get a better understanding of what each department does," explains Charlie. "Even more, I wanted everyone at St. Luke’s to know the board appreciates the huge part they play in our organization. I’m a firm believer in being supportive. I’ve learned the more you give, the more it comes back to you many times over."

He started with the housekeeping and dietary teams. "If your room’s not clean or the food’s not good, that reflects on everything else we do for our patients. That’s why everybody at St. Luke’s is vital to our success. Everybody."

Once Charlie visits a department, he makes a donation to the Foundation’s Healing Power of Art. Through this program, individuals can honor someone by sponsoring a beautiful photograph for display in the hospital. “The department members select the photo,” Charlie explains. “I want it to be something meaningful to them, as well as a visible reminder that we as a board recognize what they do really makes a difference.”

Charlie adds, “St. Luke’s has wonderful facilities and great equipment, but at the heart of everything is our people. Even in the face of the pandemic and derecho, I’ve seen example after example of team members going the extra mile for our patients. We are so fortunate to have these people at St. Luke’s.”

Healing Power of Art offers a meaningful way to honor a loved one or caregiver, while supporting programs that benefit patients and families at St. Luke’s. For more information, call (319) 369-7716.

Your gift to Nassif Community Cancer Center helps ensure cancer patients and their loved ones will continue to have the support and services they need, close to home. For more information, visit communitycancercenter.org or call (319) 369-7716.
Looking for ways to give this holiday season? St. Luke’s accepts new toys, board games, DVDs, arts and crafts items and more. For information on what our young patients need and how you can donate, visit unitypoint.org/cedarrapids/donations.

Show your support for our healthcare heroes when you purchase T-shirts and other items from CAUSETEAM. *Our Hearts for Healthcare Workers merchandise lets team members know how much you appreciate them.* And 40 percent of every purchase goes to recruitment and retention programs at St. Luke’s. Visit causeteam.com and search UnityPoint.

WE’VE MOVED!

St. Luke’s Foundation has a new office. We’re still on St. Luke’s Hospital campus, but we’re now at 810 1st Avenue NE.

*Come visit us—we’d love to see you!*

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