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History and Activities of the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital Auxiliary, 1950-1959

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HISTORY AND ACTIVITIES OF THE LUTHERAN DEACONESS HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

On March 28, 1950, a group of volunteers met at the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital Chapel to plan the organization of an auxiliary of the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital and Training School. Those present at this meeting were Mrs. Fred Mathison, acting chairman, Sister Superior Marie Rorem, Sister Hilda Petterson, Mrs. Bernard Kvale, Mrs. Harold Larsen and Miss Betty Olsen. A committee of twelve was appointed to meet on April 4th. At this meeting a nominating and a constitution committee were elected. Mrs. Fred Mathison was elected president and Mrs. John Gaardsmoe, secretary. Invitations were sent to a number of people who it was thought might be interested in such an auxiliary to meet at the Nurses' Home on May 22nd at 1:30 P. M.

At the May 22nd meeting a constitution was approved and the name "The Lutheran Deaconess Hospital Auxiliary" was chosen. Officers were elected and the regular meeting date was set for the fourth Tuesday of each month (except July and August). Dues of \$3.00 per annum were decided upon and 70 charter members signed up that day.

The first Christmas Tea for the Student Nurses and Hospital Personnel was held December 19, 1950. This has become an annual affair.

The possibility of opening a coffee shop was discussed January 23, 1951. A committee was appointed to visit other hospitals to observe methods used in the operation of their "coffee shops". Subsequent discussions resulted in the Hospital Board giving their approval for starting a "snack room".

In April, 1951 space was provided in the basement hall near the then pharmacy location. The corner was painted, papered, draperies were hung, old student chairs with arm rests were painted, an old hospital table was fixed, and dishes and equipment

were purchased. It was decided to have one paid worker for 8 hours each day and ladies from all our churches were to be asked to serve voluntarily. The name "Coffee Nook" was decided upon and the "Nook" actually opened July 1, 1951 with Mrs. Olga Larson as the paid worker.

Actually it was fun, although not the most convenient place to work. All the volunteer workers were good scouts and few complaints were heard. We washed dishes in the pharmacy and the food was prepared in a very small room next to the "Nook" corner. You have heard of starting on a shoe string, this is an apt description as our beginning was certainly modest.

On May 29, 1951 the auxiliary had 97 charter members. In 1951 the Auxiliary purchased furniture for the lawn of the Nurses Home. On June 12 and 13, 1951 Dr. and Mrs. Hyde held their first "Peony Show" in the gymnasium of the Nurses' Home in connection with a Tea.

Bassinets were bought for the Hospital Nursery and on September 23, 1951 \$1,000.00 was paid on this bill; the balance of \$532.85 was paid later.

Twenty-five dollars was given to be used for a Halloween party for the Student Nurses. This is now done every year.

A Gage Hat Show and luncheon was held in October, 1952. This luncheon now is an annual affair for the month of October. A Chinese luncheon was held in 1953.

The Auxiliary joined the Tri-State Hospital Assembly April 1, 1953.

In May, 1953, "Hospital Day" was observed with guided tours through the hospital and refreshments were served.

Dr. and Mrs. Hyde held a flower show in June, 1953. Their flowers are always beautiful and their shows are something we all enjoy.

Tickets were given by the Auxiliary to all the Deaconesses and the student nurses who cared to attend the "Martin Luther" film.

Two small parlors on the second and fourth floors of the Nurses' Home were refurnished before the Christmas Holidays in 1953.

On January 5, 1954 it was reported that the gross receipts from the "Coffee Nook" during 1953 were \$10,216.33, the net gain was \$2,558.45.

During January, 1954, \$25.00 was sent to the "March of Dimes".

Another luncheon was held on February 23, 1954. During the year 1954 the Hospital Trustees provided space for a new location for the "Coffee Nook". (Our "baby" had outgrown the small corner in which it had its start.) They planned and paid for some of the alteration costs but the cost to the Auxiliary was sizeable in spite of this help. A new refrigerator was purchased. Also a new four-burner gas stove. So the "Coffee Nook" was moved to the present location and working conditions were much improved.

The Auxiliary affiliated with the First District Womens' Hospital Auxiliary in 1954. During this year two parlors in the Nurses' Home were completely refurnished. The Auxiliary bought lamps, tables, sofas, mirrors, etc.

The gross receipts from the "Coffee Nook" in 1954 were \$12,189.85, the net gain was \$1,267.91 in spite of heavy expenses which included equipment purchased in the amount of \$1,923.10.

In January, 1955 a new soup unit was installed in the "Nook".

In checking it was found that about \$2,400.00 had been contributed in the interest of the students alone.

The Auxiliary received \$25.00 from a scholarship fund through the Illinois Hospital Association in 1954.

Besides their time for volunteer work in the "Nook", several members gave money and items for use in the "Coffee Nook". Mrs. Martha Jensen designed, made and donated ten beautiful aprons for the use of the volunteer workers.

The Auxiliary decided to give scholarships as follows; \$250.00 for a graduate nurse of our Training School; \$150.00 for a first year student and two awards of \$25.00 each based on merit for "Bedside Nursing and Theory". This too has been voted as a yearly gift.

An amount of \$25.00 is donated to the Student Nurses' Fund of the Illinois Hospital Association each year.

A silver coffee service and a lace cloth were purchased to use for teas and other festive occasions.

The Auxiliary contributed \$200.00 on two different occasions for reference books to be used by training school students. This too has now become a regular yearly contribution.

The furniture in the student's lounge was renovated in 1954 at a cost of \$506.50. In 1955 nine tables and 18 chairs were purchased for use in the hospital corridors. An orthopedic fracture table costing \$1,900.00 was presented to the Hospital. Also 12 folding tables seating 10 each. The Private Duty Nurses' Locker Room was renovated and refurnished.

In 1955 the "Coffee Nook" showed sales of \$13,055.48 and a net gain of \$3,422.71.

It was decided that money would be given each year to Sister Marie Rorem to be used to buy tickets for the Deaconesses and Students who would like to attend the St. Olaf, Augustana or Luther Choir Concerts.

August 16, 1956 the Board of Trustees of the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital voted to proceed with the erection of the new Lutheran General Hospital. A 200 bed hospital was at first planned but it has now been decided that it is much more economical to build it as a 325 bed hospital from the start rather than to add extra rooms later. This hospital and nurses residence for 100 students is the largest single undertaking of any Lutheran organization in the United States. It is a big commitment and takes courage and prayer. Many of the churches have shown a great willingness to help. If your church would like to assist you might contact Mr. Kaufmann or Mr. Nelson.

From time to time new improvements such as a new kitchen floor covering, meat slicer, new curtains, planters, etc. have been purchased for the "Coffee Nook". As food prices have become higher it has been necessary to raise prices of some items on the "Nook" menu.

A record was kept of hours of volunteer work donated by church members. From March 1, 1956 to December 31, 1956 an impressive 2,410 hours were recorded. United Lutheran Church of Oak Park topped the list with 228 hours. Mrs. Fred Mathison also of United had the high record for any individual worker, 42 hours.

The "Coffee Nook" gross income for 1956 was \$13,696.08 and net gain \$3,507.01.

March 26, 1957 the Auxiliary gave a check for \$5,000.00 to the building fund for the new hospital.

It may here be noted that these volunteer workers have made it possible for the Auxiliary to be able to do so much. It would otherwise take a great share of this money just to pay workers. So every hour you spend as a volunteer helper means extra money for necessary equipment, books for students, etc. We should also mention the untiring efforts of Sister Marie, Sister Hilda and many others.

A projector for the Nurses' Training School was also bought in 1957.

In 1957 the record of volunteer work showed 2,814 hours. Again United Lutheran Church in Oak Park was in first place with 270 hours. First Lutheran was second with 216 hours and third place was shared by Bethel and St. Timothy each with 210 hours. The "Coffee Nook" sales totaled \$13,784.28 and the net \$3,157.37. It was gratifying to note that each year's income shows some gain.

The Auxiliary sponsored the Augustana Choir Concert at Orchastra Hall on February 4, 1958. A profit of about \$1,000.00 was shown.

A check for \$1,000.00 was given by the Auxiliary to the building fund for the new hospital. This was specified for use for the new Nurses' Home.

The Auxiliary is planning to contribute \$5,000.00 to the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital towards the purchase of special pellet equipment for keeping food hot while being served to patients. This should prove to be a very desirable improvement in the hospital's service to patients.

The September, 1958 meeting was a pot luck supper and all members were invited to bring their families and friends. The program was given by the Home Finding Society.

This brings us up to date. I hope this has not been too tiring. We have

attempted to give you some idea of the work the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital Auxiliary has done since its inception. With God's blessing we hope its activities can be increased in the future.

Many who come to the "Nook" for lunch or just a cup of coffee have expressed pleasure and gratitude for the fact that this service is available and that the "Coffee Nook" is so cozy and convenient. The Auxiliary welcomes new members and if any one is interested in joining in this worthwhile work we shall be so very happy to have you.

The Annual Luncheon was given on October 28, 1958, Dr. Nasset, speaker.

A Christmas Tea was given in December for the Home and Hospital personnel.

The net income from the Coffee Nook for 1958 was \$3,018.17.

\$3,000.00 were turned over to the Treasurer of the Auxiliary in 1958.

A total of 2,832 volunteer hours were given in the Coffee Nook. United Lutheran Church Women gave the highest number of hours, with Mrs. Mathison in the lead with a total of 52 hours in 1958. A pin was presented to her.

An Appreciation Luncheon was given by the Auxiliary in May, 1959, for the volunteer workers.

Sister Thone Sandland was given \$100.00 for Family Welfare work.

It was voted to give a Silver Communion Set to the Lutheran General Hospital Chapel in honor of Sister Marie Rorem's 75th Birthday.

Norcross greeting cards with cabinet were installed in the Coffee Nook.

The Coffee Nook turned over \$3,000.00 to the Auxiliary in 1959.

Two \$25.00 Scholarships were given to graduating Seniors and a gift of \$275.00 to a Freshman student.