Racing for Zilber Hospice

Triathlon runner inspired to give back in memory of her mother.

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Message from Cristy

Dear Friends,

As we head into the final weeks of 2013, may I be one of the first to wish you a safe and joyous holiday season. It’s during this time of the year that I’m especially reminded of how your generous gifts are changing lives and altering the landscape of health care in our community.

In August, I was honored to host our 150th anniversary celebration of Aurora Sinai Medical Center. It was truly an amazing experience to be enveloped in our rich history. Thanks to the support of our honorary chairs, sponsors and more than 520 guests, more than $470,000 was raised for Well Community programs in the Milwaukee area. These programs provide free and low-cost medical services for men, women and children when they have nowhere else to turn.

It speaks to the heart of how your donations are being used at your local medical centers; whether it’s building one of the first palliative care programs in Sheboygan, or helping ensure every expectant mother has access to state-of-the-art fetal care monitors in Kenosha, your gifts continue to ignite hope for patients and families who rely on Aurora Health Care.

We are able to enhance the level of care and offer advanced services because of your support.

Through your generosity, you are providing patients with tools to improve health, giving comfort during difficult times, and helping individuals and families when they have nowhere else to turn. I look forward to sharing more stories in 2014 of how your gifts are making a difference – and igniting hope for so many in our communities.

Always,

Cristy Garcia-Thomas
Executive Vice President, Aurora Health Care and President, Aurora Health Care Foundation

P.S. Please remember to include Aurora Health Care Foundation in your year-end giving. Just call 877-460-8730 to make a gift.

Thank you for the support of our generous guests, sponsors and our gracious Sinai 150th Anniversary Honorary Chairs:

- Drs. LaRoyce and Minnie Chambers
- Doris Hersh Chortek
- John and Irma Daniels
- Sarah Dean
- Joan and Pat Kerns
- Stanley and Shirley Kritzik

- Jere McGaffey
- Stephen and Janice Marcus
- Toby Recht
- Allan “Bud” and Suzanne Selig
- Libby Temkin
- Dr. Nick and Kathy Turkal
Racing for Zilber Hospice

When you ask Dee Ragalie of Lake Geneva what keeps her going in a race, the answer is simple: “mom.”

“She was always with me when I raced, and today, I can still feel her pushing me to keep going.”

In the past 29 years, Dee competed in 307 triathlons, the Hawaiian Ironman, several half Ironman and sprint distance events. And at many of those events, Dee was accompanied by her mother, Joan. Dee describes her mother as a hearty soul who often traveled the country to watch Dee compete in races. In February 2013, Joan passed away from cancer, and spent her final days at Aurora Visiting Nurse Association Zilber Family Hospice.

“The care was phenomenal. They take care of your loved one and you. Everyone knows your name. It was just a beautiful experience,” recalled Dee. “We are so lucky to have had Zilber hospice.”

Inspired to give back to Zilber hospice, Dee decided to raise awareness and dollars so more families could experience the same personal care that she and her family received when their mother passed away. With help from her brother, Glenn Ragalie, MD, medical director of Zilber hospice, Dee began to develop “Team Zilber.” Starting with a T-shirt, Dee began to share her story and recruited her racing colleagues from across the country to join her “team” to support Zilber Family Hospice.

“It gives you purpose,” Dee said. “I wanted to have a cause for my racing. And racing for my mom, and the patients and families who need the services Zilber hospice provides makes it more rewarding. For me, racing in that T-shirt while promoting Zilber hospice, is all about remembering mom.”

Several team members and supporters joined Dee and more than 4,400 amateur athletes from around the country to compete at the USA Triathlon Olympic-Distance National Championships and the Sprint National Championships held in August 2013 in downtown Milwaukee. On that early Sunday morning, Dee launched into Lake Michigan, and focused on taking the lead in the 750 meter swim, 20K bike and 5K run event.

Dee placed fifth in the women’s 60-64 year age group. Surrounded by loved ones, Dee commented that thoughts of her mom helped her excel.

“As I was biking on the Hoan bridge, my legs started to get tired and I could hear my mom encouraging me and pushing me to keep going,” she said.

Team Zilber raised more than $2,000 to support hospice care. Dee takes pride in knowing her efforts in this race will help support the care offered at Zilber.

“When life gets hard, places like Zilber Family Hospice provide comfort to families as they are losing a loved one. It’s an honor to be a part of a facility like that,” she said.
Physician shares impact of Aurora Partnership Campaign

When asked why Aurora Health Care caregivers support the organization’s annual Aurora Partnership Campaign, Mark Tucci, MD, of Aurora Health Center in Gurnee, Illinois, smiles. “Even though I’m a physician, I’ve been a patient, too,” Dr. Tucci shared.

In May 2012, Dr. Tucci experienced a life-threatening heart attack. He and his wife drove in the middle of the night to Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha. An immediate electrocardiogram revealed he had suffered a heart attack. He was quickly flown by Flight for Life to Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center in Milwaukee. In less than one hour of arriving at the emergency room door in Kenosha, Dr. Tucci had received his life-saving procedure at Aurora St. Luke’s.

“I don’t know if I’d still be here today,” said Dr. Tucci. “I look at every day now as a gift.”

While he loves practicing medicine, Dr. Tucci’s other passion is his music. He is in a band with other physicians called “Second Opinion” that plays jazz, blues and Motown at area clubs on the weekends. And as a way of giving back, his band donated their performance at the 4th Annual Infinity Ball supporting Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha.

Dr. Tucci has learned to never take anything for granted and to always give back in whatever way you can, whether it is donating your time, your talent or your money to worthy causes. He likes donating through the Aurora Partnership Campaign where he can donate to Aurora Funds and to other local charities. This year’s campaign runs from Oct. 7 through Nov. 30 and is expected to draw $3.5 million in donations from more than 9,300 Aurora caregivers.

For more information on how you can create a plan that can impact your community, contact Stephen Davis, director of gift planning at 414-219-4751 or legacyinfo@aurora.org. You can also visit AuroraLegacy.org.

From farmers to community philanthropists – turning the soil into transformational impact

Alfred and Marion Wunsch probably didn’t initially envision themselves as making an impact in their community through charitable giving. They began their married life on their family farm in 1944. Together, they raised their family and built a thriving business based upon hard work and community engagement. The couple taught their son, Roger, and daughter, Charlotte, the values of family, faith, farming and hard work. The Wunsch family didn’t take what they had for granted. They lived off of the land and were frugal with their finances. At times, the family experienced hardships, but still persevered. As a result, they created a sizable estate.

The couple spent their entire working lives farming in the Town of Sheboygan Falls. In spite of the long hours they worked on the farm, they always found time and the opportunities to give back. Alfred and Marion also understood the importance to share their resources with others in need. Roger describes his mother as kind-hearted and generous, and says it made her feel good to be able to give back.

For several decades, the Wunsch family generously donated to Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center, where they helped those in need access life-changing services offered at their local hospital.

Even though both Alfred and Marion have passed away, they continue to help patients in Sheboygan today. In 2001, the Wunsch’s used a portion of their appreciated stock to create a charitable remainder unitrust. This allowed them to avoid taxes on the sale of the stock and provide them with a lifetime income. As a result, the couple received an annual income of approximately $45,000 during the term of the trust. After they passed away, the remainder of their trust gifted more than $245,000 to charities in their community. Their generosity continues to positively impact the lives of the people of Sheboygan County.
Record Amount Raised at Aurora Sinai Medical Center’s 150th anniversary

More than 520 guests watched history come to life as Aurora Sinai Medical Center celebrated its 150th anniversary on Saturday, Aug. 24, at The Pfister Hotel in downtown Milwaukee. In the spirit of the Sinai Grand Balls held from 1954 to 1991, the hotel was transformed for this elegant and entertaining evening where community and civic leaders celebrated the hospital’s rich heritage.

More than $470,000 was raised to support Aurora Sinai’s Well Community programs, which include the Bread of Healing free clinic partnership, Center for Senior Health and Longevity, Midwifery and Wellness Center, Sexual Assault Treatment Center, The Healing Center and Safe Mom Safe Baby. In addition, guests supported the purchase of safe sleep swaddles for infants born at Aurora Sinai.

To learn more about the Sinai 150th anniversary and how you can make a tribute gift, visit Aurora.org/Sinai150.

Grateful patient gives hope to those seeking addiction recovery

As a successful business owner, Joe Colwin of Mid-States Aluminum Corporation has decided to “pay it forward” through the President’s House campaign, which supports Aurora Behavioral Health Services’ addiction recovery programs in Wauwatosa. His passion to give stems from his own personal experience.

Nine years ago, Colwin began his own journey recovering from a substance abuse addiction that started following a football injury. His physician referred him to Aurora’s Dewey Center to receive his treatment. After two failed attempts, Colwin spent five and a half months in recovery.

“At Dewey, the medical team there saved my marriage … they saved my life,” said the 58-year-old Campbellsport resident. “Now this is my chance to give back.”

“When you hear people say ‘you’re on a journey,’ I have a better understanding of what that means,” said Colwin. “Dr. Longo and the staff at Dewey helped me through my journey and I’m very grateful to them. But I know a lot of people are fighting this disease and I feel this is a way I can help.”

Joe and his wife, Dawn, helped launch the President’s House campaign in 2012 with a $520,000 gift. This $2.1 million renovation project will update the former hospital president’s home that resides on Aurora’s Wauwatosa campus. With support from Colwin and other donors, this home will transform into a safe haven where individuals can go for ongoing support, fellowship, mentoring and renewal. The facility includes a state-of-the-art conference room and private counseling rooms, and space for 12-step group meetings, exercise classes and other events to incorporate a positive culture of healing.

“At Mid-States Aluminum, our motto is ‘Progress through People’ and I truly believe each of us can make a difference. That’s why our work to support the President’s House is so important,” said Colwin.

Visit Aurora.org/PresidentsHouse to learn more about how you can support the President’s House Campaign.
Aurora’s Community Benefit programs help the underserved

When a 43-year-old Milwaukee man in severe pain walked into Aurora Walker’s Point Community Clinic, Steve Ohly realized it was an emergency situation. Ohly, a nurse practitioner and clinic manager, recalled his first impression after evaluating the patient.

“He had dark blood in his urine, a warning sign of bladder cancer. Every minute counts when someone has bladder cancer,” Ohly explained. He acted quickly to tap into the resources available within Aurora’s integrated health care system.

First, he found an Aurora Medical Group urologist who agreed to see the patient the next day. When the cancer diagnosis was confirmed, Ohly’s team at the Clinic worked with the caregivers at Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center to get the patient scheduled for surgery to remove the cancerous tumor from his bladder. The Clinic also expedited the processing of Aurora’s Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program application for the patient and, within hours, he was approved for a 100 percent discount for the life-saving services he needed.

Open 48 hours a week, the Aurora Walker’s Point Clinic serves a Milwaukee neighborhood with the highest percentage of uninsured persons in the state, providing urgent care, family medicine, behavioral health and other specialist services, helping more than 3,000 patients who were seen and treated in more than 12,000 patient visits during 2012.

Without the Clinic, many people and families would be disconnected from the city’s health care provider network. It is just one of Aurora’s many community benefit programs, which receives donations from individuals, corporations and foundations through Aurora Health Care Foundation.

“Aurora is committed through our Community Benefits to provide a wide array of evidence-based community services and initiatives across eastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois, aimed at improving access to primary and preventive health services for underserved populations,” said Huber.

A team of community leaders collaborate with leadership at Aurora to review and develop annual Community Benefit plans for each of Aurora’s 14 not-for-profit hospital facilities. These plans are available at Aurora.org/commbenefits, and includes implementation of evidence-based models and innovative pilots designed to improve access to primary and preventive health care for underserved populations, reduction of emergency department utilization and improving health literacy and care coordination.

It is this level of research and collaboration that helps caregivers like Ohly continue to make a difference.

“We see people every day who are able to receive the tools to control their diabetes, high blood pressure or other chronic illnesses because of the care provided at Aurora Walker’s Point. It is an honor to serve these patients and we couldn't do it without the generous support from donors,” said Ohly.
Young scientists support Aurora’s research mission

The Aurora Research Institute™, Aurora Health Care Foundation and the medical staff supported the 2013 Summer Student Fellowship program, providing seven scientist interns with a 10-week participation in several important research programs. This year’s interns include: Thomas Gessert, Cameron Niazi, Sahitya Raja, Nathaniel Rein, Joe Reznicek, Ramail Siddiqui and Zain Taraweh.

“It is always a highlight for me to see the important research being done by student interns here at Aurora,” stated Randall Lambrecht, PhD, senior vice president of research and academic relations. “Our intern program continues to grow due to the commitment of our talented researchers, and the enthusiasm and quality of student interns. Their individual contributions play an important role in our ongoing research studies and, most importantly, generate a positive impact in promoting scientific inquiry and exploring new knowledge and techniques.”

Funding for these internships was generously provided by The Medical Staff Endowment Fund within Aurora Health Care Foundation and the Aurora Research Institute™. The Endowment Fund was established at Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center in the early 1990s to support children of Aurora St. Luke’s medical staff working in an Aurora research laboratory.

To learn more about how to support this fund, please contact Carol Rausch, Aurora Health Care Foundation director of development at 414-649-7892 or carol.rausch@aurora.org.

Sahitya Raja worked with Aurora researcher Nina Garlie, PhD, to find ways to improve the patient experience for those experiencing debilitating side effects from treatment.

Left to right: Nina Garlie, PhD; Cameron Niazi; Farhan Rizvi, PhD; Ramail Siddiqui; Ekhson Holmuhamedov, PhD; Thomas Gessert; Arshad Jahangir, MD; Gracious Ross, PhD; Zain Taraweh; Nathaniel Rein; Sahitya Raja; John Richards, PhD; Martin Oaks, PhD; Hershel Raff, PhD. Not pictured: Joe Reznicek

For more information, visit: AuroraHealthCare.org
Event Profile

Family to Family Thanksgiving

Since 1996, Aurora Family Service’s Family to Family Thanksgiving Program has helped lift the spirits of more than 46,000 families in Milwaukee during the holiday season. This year, Aurora’s Family to Family Thanksgiving program aims to provide holiday groceries to 3,100 Milwaukee families who otherwise wouldn’t be able to host a traditional Thanksgiving meal. Each meal for a family of four costs $35, and can make a difference to a family in need. To learn more about how you can support this effort, visit Aurora.org/thanksgiving or call 877-460-8730.

Calendar of events

Nov. 8 ............ Vince Lombardi Cancer Foundation Food & Wine Tasting Gala – The Pfister Hotel, downtown Milwaukee | For more information, contact Lori Cichy at lori.cichy@aurora.org.

Nov. 9 ............ Vince Lombardi Cancer Foundation Celebrity Chef & Wine Dinner – Milwaukee Athletic Club, downtown Milwaukee | For more information, contact Lori Cichy at lori.cichy@aurora.org.

Nov. 16 ............ Inaugural Lake Country Gala, Aurora Medical Center in Summit – Oconomowoc Lake Club | For more information, contact Karlyn Agnew at karlyn.agnew@aurora.org.

Nov. 20 ............ Aurora Family Service Family to Family Thanksgiving Dinner, Pabst Mansion, downtown Milwaukee | For more information, contact Stephanie Shabangu at stephanie.shabangu@aurora.org.

Nov. 22 ............ Vince Lombardi Cancer Foundation Connoisseur Room Wine Tasting Event – Intercontinental Hotel, downtown Milwaukee | For more information, contact Lori Cichy at lori.cichy@aurora.org.

Dec. 4 ............ Tree of Angels, Aurora Zilber Family Hospice – Wauwatosa | Contact Judi Strout at judi.strout@aurora.org.

Dec. 10 ............ President’s House Dedication at Aurora Behavioral Health Campus in Wauwatosa | Contact Judi Strat at judi.strout@aurora.org.

If interested in attending an event or to learn about sponsorship, donation or volunteer opportunities, please call Aurora Health Care Foundation at 877-460-8730.

Segway-riding Ben Salzmann, president and CEO of ACUITY in Sheboygan, Wis., welcomed more than 550 guests at the Bucket List Bash on Oct. 12. His wife, Ann Salzmann, community education lead at Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical Center, distributed beads as part of the Mardi Gras celebration. The event raised nearly $160,000 to develop a Palliative Care program that will serve Sheboygan County.

To learn more about how to support this program, please contact Erik Barber, Aurora Health Care Foundation development officer at 920-451-5117 or erik.barber@aurora.org.