

The *spirit* of Giving

FALL NEWSLETTER 2023

CANCER CARE YOGA

A unique approach to cancer survivorship

Cancer is a disease that not only attacks the body, it also has a devastating impact on a patient's mind and spirit.

While treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation and surgery treat the physical components of cancer, the mental and spiritual impact still lingers — even during remission

Ascension Wisconsin Foundation recognizes the importance of addressing these important aspects of disease management. In recent months, Yoga Connection, an 8-week yoga session specifically designed for cancer survivors at any stage, has extended its offerings to Ascension All Saints Hospital and Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Hospital while remaining at Ascension SE Wisconsin - Mayfair Road in Wauwatosa. The sessions are also available to caregivers.

“Yoga Connection helps with physical fitness, but it also has the potential to reduce anxiety, depression and stress which works to improve mental health and quality of life,” said Kayla Thorne, Cancer Prevention, Wellness and Survivorship Coordinator for Ascension Wisconsin. “The specially-designed class instruction can also improve sleep, energy and confidence.”

This expansion is made possible thanks to **YOU**, our donors.



Read the full story online:
bit.ly/cancer-care-yoga

WHAT'S INSIDE

Words of hope from our Foundation President

Featured funding: Women's Outpatient Center

Stories of survival and inspiration

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LETTER FROM YOUR FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

I've thought a lot about how to describe how thankful I am for your support, but it's difficult to find the right words to describe the magnitude. Your support extends farther than we will ever realize, and I am so grateful that you have extended a philanthropic hand to Ascension Wisconsin Foundation.

First, I wanted to take a moment and introduce you to our new Ascension Wisconsin Foundation Board Chair, Cookie Fielkow. Cookie was the director of physician services for Ascension Medical Group Clinics for 25 years. Cookie retired in 2015 but has since continued to support Ascension Wisconsin in numerous capacities, including serving on the former Ascension St. Elizabeth Hospital Foundation board.

I am inspired by Cookie's continued dedication, and I see that same tenacity in you — our donors — every day.

No matter how you give — attending a Foundation event, making a planned or one-time gift, volunteering your time or responding to mailed pieces — you are making a difference. When you donate to the Ascension Wisconsin site and area of care that is nearest to your heart, you're enabling our associates to provide high-quality care to those who need it most.

As you read this newsletter, I hope you take a moment to reflect on the impact that you have. These stories are made possible by your continued support and I am so grateful for that. I recently read a quote from Mother Teresa, and I wanted to share it with you:

*It's not how much we give, but how much
love we put into giving.*

Every day, I feel the love that you extend to the Foundation. As we continue to move forward in 2023, I am excited to partner with you and make personalized, compassionate care possible for every patient that walks into our hospitals, clinics and community programs from Racine to Appleton. Thank you for your continued love and generosity.

Sincerely,



Racheal Faulks

President

Ascension Wisconsin Foundation



Racheal Faulks



Cookie Fielkow



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

SUPPORTING THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A HEALTHY LIFE



A pregnant patient arrives at Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - St. Joseph Campus in Milwaukee at the Women's Outpatient Center (WOC) with her three children in tow.

Thanks to donor support and coordination by Maternal Health Navigators, she left with much needed food, baby supplies, help to secure safe housing for her family and received a same-day prenatal visit.

The children were supervised in the children's waiting area during the mother's prenatal visit. The family went home with clothing from the donation closet and a bag of shelf-stable groceries.

Transitional housing was secured by the afternoon and transportation was provided using Lyft contracted services. The patient was also given a 30-day bus pass and connected with community food resources.

For many women in Milwaukee that may be experiencing hardship such as homelessness, unemployment or domestic violence, the WOC serves as a lifeline. The center provides connections for this vulnerable population to healthcare, housing, food resources, transportation and education.

Approximately 700 patients from the WOC deliver at Ascension St. Joseph each year, encompassing about 35% of all babies born annually at the hospital.

Thanks to your generosity to the Foundation, the WOC is in the process of remodeling the children's waiting area and is planning a ribbon cutting soon.

"We are so incredibly grateful for the donors that support the Foundation and help fund all that we can offer to our families to give their babies the best start in life," said Nicole Lorino, Nurse Manager for the WOC and Family Birth Center.

Participants can 'earn' points to choose items from the Stork's Nest, a room stocked with a variety of essential baby items, by attending appointments and participating in educational opportunities. The Stork's Nest is funded through the Foundation, other sponsors and private contributors.

Baby items funded by the Foundation totalled \$12,390 last fiscal year. These much-needed items included bath products, boppy pillows, bouncer seats, infant carriers, clothes, toys, books and blankets.

Thanks to your donations, the Foundation also fully supports car seats and portable cribs for classes in the WOC. Last fiscal year, you helped provide **360 car seats** and **368 portable cribs** to parents who successfully completed training courses on safe sleeping for babies and proper use of car seats, totalling \$48,756 of funding.

Thank you for helping make this possible for mothers and their babies and families. By supporting areas like the Women's Outpatient Center, you are making a difference every day.

Total funding for
car seats and portable cribs
provided to parents who
successfully completed
training courses

\$48,756



WOMEN AND FAMILY HEALTH

A HEARTWARMING NICU EXPERIENCE: MARIA AND ELIA'S STORY

You help care for our tiniest patients, our NICU babies, and their parents and families in many special ways. Maria was one of those parents 12 years ago.

On August 18, 2011 Maria's water broke in the middle of the night at only 31 weeks gestation. Her pregnancy was already deemed high-risk so Maria and her husband, Bill, rushed to St. Elizabeth Hospital.

"Thanks to the prompt, amazing care from the nurses and doctors in the Birthplace, I was stabilized and did not go into labor, but had to stay on bed rest the remainder of the pregnancy," Maria said.

Maria stayed on bed rest until 34 weeks, at which point it wasn't safe for her, or baby Elia anymore. She was induced on Labor Day and after a challenging labor, Elia was born.

Elia had many tubes, wires and other medical devices attached, too fragile to touch. She was 4 pounds and stayed in the NICU for 16 days before her parents were able to bring her home.

Now at age 12, Maria describes Elia as one of her biggest blessings in life, a compassionate, loving, thoughtful child who is the best person she knows.

"We are so incredibly grateful to the St. Elizabeth Hospital Birthplace team, our doctors, the NICU team, and our pediatrician and her team. Without a doubt, they saved her life. And they brought such richness to ours," Maria said.

To watch Maria's complete video story, please scan this QR code.



HEART CARE

PERSONALIZED, COMPASSIONATE HEART CARE: JOY'S STORY

When Joy first realized she was having a heart attack, she was weeding her garden and became very warm. Nothing seemed to cool her down or help her relax. She knew deep inside something was very wrong so she called 911.

Joy was rushed to Ascension NE Wisconsin - Mercy Campus where she received a heart stent and later had open heart surgery due to her severe heart disease.

Joy is grateful for the care she received when she first arrived at Ascension Mercy, during her treatment and through her rehabilitation experience.

"The care I received was wonderful," Joy said. "They were so calm and I didn't feel frightened any more. I put all my faith in the providers at Mercy."

Joy was able to begin her recovery in the Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Services program at Ascension Mercy right away because there was no wait in the recently expanded facility.

Thanks to generous donor support, the cardiac rehab space was renovated and updated three years ago, offering more equipment options and doubling the space available.



Joy maintains her workout routine at Ascension Mercy with Exercise Physiologist, Scott Pethan.

Joy added, "When you are the most vulnerable in your life, you want to start recovering as soon as you can, even if it means starting with the smallest of exercises. Now I drive myself to my appointments and the entire journey has been such a positive experience."

Today, Joy is healthy and maintains her workout routine at Ascension Mercy. She will tell you that her rehab and the quality of care she received has made a lasting impact in her life.

To watch Joy's complete video story, please scan this QR code.



CANCER CARE

A LIFE CHANGING MAMMOGRAM

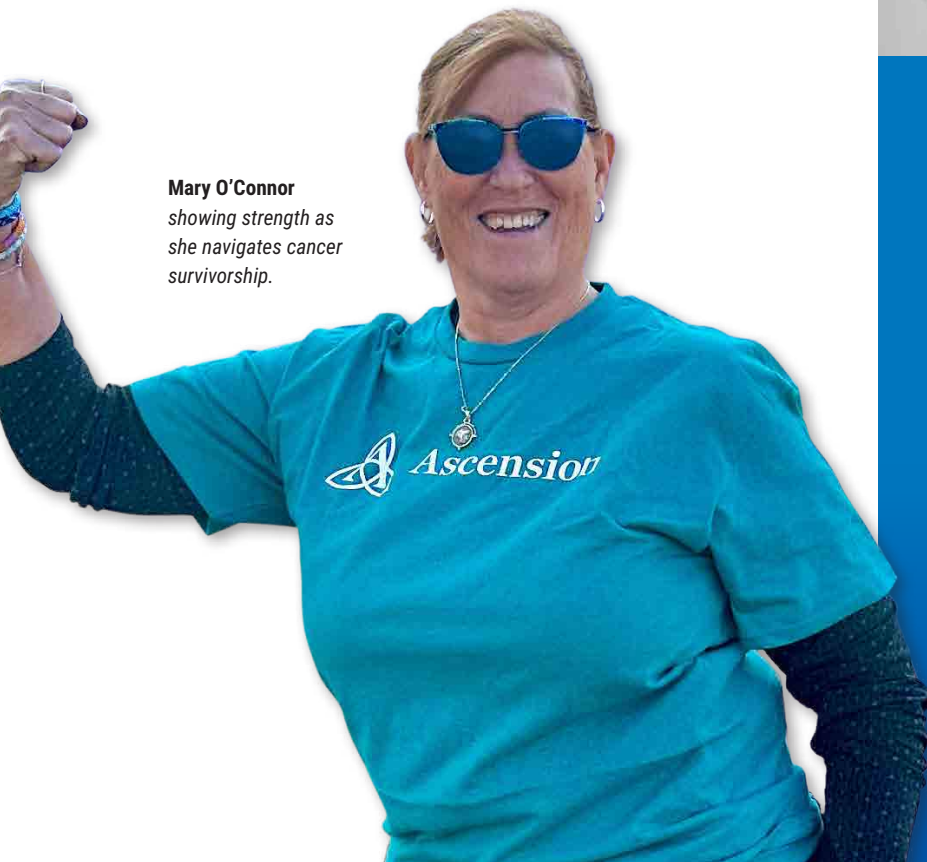
Mary O'Connor doesn't want to be known as a cancer survivor. Instead, she wants to be recognized as a prime example for early detection and a passionate advocate for routine mammograms and wellness exams.

Just last year, Mary was on her way to volunteer at the Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - St. Joseph Campus NICU when she got a call that no one wants to hear — she had cancer.

The call came in October 2022 after a routine mammogram led to finding dense tissue and numerous lumps, something that wasn't unusual for Mary. Following that, she had a biopsy and MRI to confirm the diagnosis. Just a couple weeks later, she got the official diagnosis of stage 1 breast cancer — her tumor was the size of a pencil eraser.

“When I was on my way to the NICU to hold babies, my phone rang and I saw the call was from my doctor,” Mary said. “They told me that the lump was cancerous and all I thought was ok...what's the next step? I knew I couldn't change it and I get a mammogram every year so I knew it couldn't be that big yet.”

After talking through her options with her oncologist, it was decided that the best choice would be to undergo a lumpectomy at Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Franklin Campus. Following a successful surgery and follow-up appointment, Mary learned that she would not need chemotherapy and would instead receive 15 treatments of radiation at the Reiman Cancer Center.

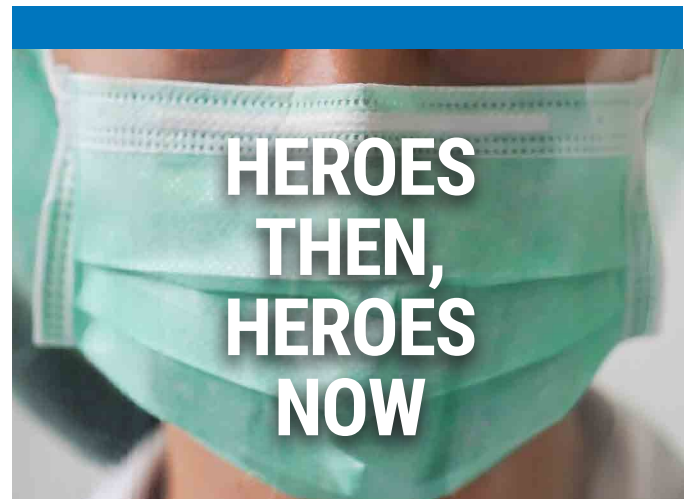


Mary O'Connor
showing strength as
she navigates cancer
survivorship.

This October marks nearly five months of being cancer free. Today, Mary is healthy and takes three supplements — calcium, vitamin D and an estrogen blocker — to help prevent the cancer from returning.

“I don't look at myself as a cancer survivor, I look at myself like I'm the poster child for early detection and that you need to get your yearly mammograms,” Mary said. “There's always a way to get it done, even if you don't have insurance. If someone tells me they're scared, I'll go with them. If someone can't drive, I'll take them. It's such an important piece in our health and I will always advocate for preventive care.”

Donor generosity to Ascension Wisconsin Foundation makes preventive cancer care possible. Mary is just one of many patients that receives routine care, such as a yearly mammogram, to stay ahead of her health. In this case, it saved her life. Thank you for making this care possible.



Our world forever changed just three years ago.

Face masks, social distancing and communicating through virtual means to our loved ones became the new normal. While the world shut down, our healthcare providers remained poised to fight on the frontlines of the pandemic.

Our providers are still feeling the lasting impacts of the pandemic physically, emotionally and spiritually. We wanted to take a moment and recognize our providers with what they went through and what motivates them to provide care to our local communities every day.

Please scan the QR code

to hear from five passionate, dedicated Ascension Wisconsin associates that experienced the frontlines of the pandemic and remain steadfast in their efforts today.



DONOR IMPACT

A GRATEFUL PATIENT AND PASSIONATE DONOR

Beth Dowhen's throat cancer diagnosis came as a surprise. She had never smoked, didn't drink and tested negative for HPV.

"My diagnosis came out of the blue," Beth said. "After I was diagnosed I was sent to see Dr. Offerman at Ascension Elmbrook. She told me it was going to be a battle, and it definitely was."

Shortly after being diagnosed, Beth underwent a biopsy on her lymph nodes to confirm her diagnosis and begin treatment. Beth's treatment consisted of 33 sessions of daily radiation and seven sessions of chemotherapy at Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital - Elmbrook Campus.

The treatments took a toll on her body. Beth experienced frequent nausea, pain and was tired. She expressed her feelings to a social worker at Ascension Elmbrook and was then given vouchers from Ascension Wisconsin Foundation to receive acupuncture services at low to no cost.

The acupuncture, Beth says, made a true difference in her care and recovery.



"My husband and I have contributed to other charities, and after talking about it, I said 'you know what, I'm going to support the Foundation.'"

BETH DOWHEN

"I had never heard of acupuncture as a part of cancer treatment before," Beth said. "It really helped me a lot. There were times when I wasn't eating well and had an upset stomach from chemo and radiation and all of a sudden after acupuncture, I felt better."

Today, nine years after her diagnosis, Beth is feeling like herself again. She's in remission and no longer needs to have regular check ups. She also extends a philanthropic hand in support of Ascension Wisconsin Foundation, helping others that may be in a similar situation as she once was.

"My husband and I have contributed to other charities, and after talking about it, I said 'you know what, I'm going to support the Foundation,'" Beth said. "I'm just so grateful for the care I received and for all of my providers. Everybody from the receptionist to my doctors were so friendly. I'm so grateful for them and I know God gave them the gifts that they are using to help other people like me."

FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHT

We recently asked what drove you to extend a philanthropic hand to Ascension Wisconsin Foundation, and we are proud to share some of those 'whys' with you. Every day we are inspired by your generosity to help those who need it most. Thank you.

"I believe in our mission, and I believe in our medical teams. I believe we can and must do more for our communities."

"I am deeply passionate about serving those who experienced vulnerable times, especially throughout the course of pregnancy and continued support of their new families."

"Ascension was there for me many years ago when I needed help. About six years later I started working for Ascension and saw how much they gave back and I wanted to be able to give back, too."

"I believe in Ascension's mission, vision and values. I know the money given is making an impact in the lives of patients."

"I work here, and I am able to see the difference it makes. I like that I can direct my donation to a site and cause that I feel passionate and make a difference."

THANKS TO YOU

Your generosity to Ascension Wisconsin Foundation has enabled us to support personalized, compassionate care close to home.

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EVENTS

Mark your calendar and plan to join us for these upcoming events. We would love to see you!

For more information on upcoming events, please visit giveAWF.org/events or email AWFEvents@ascension.org.



SpringBeginnings Gala

Join us at one of Milwaukee's most picturesque landmarks — the Greenhouse at the Mitchell Park Domes. This formal gala will feature dinner, dancing and more for a night of fundraising.

MAR

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2024



Kentucky Derby Gala

Come watch one of racing's most popular events — the Kentucky Derby — at our annual Kentucky Derby Gala! You can enjoy the southern charm of Churchill Downs right in Racine. Watch the race live while you enjoy fine dining, dancing, charitable gambling, a bourbon tasting and more.

MAY

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2024



Golf Outing

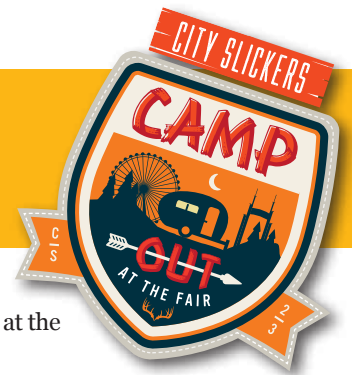
Dust off those clubs and hit the driving range because golf is coming back! We're pleased to announce our Inaugural Ascension Wisconsin Foundation Golf Outing on August 6, 2024, at Geneva National Resort & Club. More details will be available in the near future.

AUG

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2024

THANK YOU



A special thank you to our sponsors and all of those who attended this year's City Slickers CAMPout event on Saturday, September 9 at the Wisconsin State Fairgrounds.

Fair favorites were a part of the menu and 'campout' at CAMP bar was the theme of the 'wild' event.

Together, we raised vital funds to support cancer care for Ascension Wisconsin. We could not have done this without the support of our donors and friends of the Foundation. We appreciate you and our generous event sponsors:

