

The *spirit* of Giving

FALL NEWSLETTER 2026

A MILLION DOLLAR UPGRADE AT ASCENSION MERCY

When an ailment requires more than just medication or rehabilitation, surgery may be the answer. Whether the procedure is routine or complex, patients deserve access to a safe, modern surgical environment.

At Ascension Mercy Hospital, a \$1.5 million upgrade to surgical services is enhancing and modernizing operating rooms, ensuring individuals in Oshkosh and surrounding communities can continue to receive high-quality care close to home.

"We are committed to serving our local communities to the best of our abilities, and by upgrading our operating rooms we are ensuring just that," said Shane Carter, Hospital President at Ascension Mercy. *"This \$1.5 million investment, made possible by the generosity of donors to Ascension Wisconsin Foundation, allows us to provide patients with a modern surgical environment where they can receive exceptional care close to home."*

The new investment in surgical services will support surgical video integration, providing surgeons with better visualization, streamlined workflows and device connectivity, ultimately supporting surgical efficiency and patient outcomes.

The impact of these upgrades extends beyond the operating room. They help ensure patients receive timely, compassionate care in an environment designed to support the best possible outcomes.

Mary Ann, a recent patient, shared how the care she received at Ascension Mercy made a lasting difference in her life:

"I needed surgery, and the only opening was in mid-November. If I had it then, I would not be able to attend my grandson's graduation in Florida. My nurse asked the surgeon if he would do surgery on a day that he typically doesn't, and he said yes. They both went above and beyond for me, and now I was able to see my grandson graduate with a rocket science degree. I am one happy Grandma."



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– Shane Carter, Hospital President at Ascension Mercy

HOSPITAL PROGRAMS

PATIENTS IN BLOOM AT ASCENSION MERCY

Pulling weeds, watering the garden and picking home-grown vegetables are a regular part of everyday life for many people during the summer. For patients at Ascension Mercy, though, those tasks are helping them in their rehabilitation journey.

The inpatient rehabilitation team recently received funding to expand their outdoor gardening area, giving patients an opportunity to practice skills as they recover from strokes, surgeries or other injuries.

Jody Pomplun, an occupational therapist, sees the impact that the garden boxes have on patients both physically and mentally.

"As soon as we get outside, they go 'ahhh,' and simply enjoy the fresh air," Jody said. "We always start with a walk around the pond to look for wildlife, and then get to gardening. For some people this



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is something they would normally do at home, so it's great that we can offer them this resource."

Patients help pick vegetables, pull weeds, water the plants or simply read the vegetable labels to help with speech therapy.

During a normal planting season, the boxes are overflowing with cucumbers, radishes, peppers, tomatoes and green beans. This year, though, the local deer ate a large portion of the crop, leaving peppers and tomatoes as the primary harvest. Patients can use the vegetables in their meal or take them home, and any surplus is donated to Father Carr's.

For individuals navigating rehabilitation the garden offers more than an opportunity to get outside: it gives them a chance to continue doing something they enjoy, even if it looks a little different than before.

"Sometimes patients get scared, and may say that they'll never be able to do this again," said Sarah LaMarche, manager of rehabilitation services. "We show them that they can still do what they love, even if it doesn't look the same as before."

A photograph of a large, raised wooden garden bed. The bed is filled with a variety of plants, including green leafy vegetables and several tall stalks of purple flowers. The background shows more greenery and a fence.

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Sr. Oswaldina Nutz, administrator of Mercy Hospital from 1957 to 1961, is credited with founding the volunteer program in 1958.

A LEGACY OF ALTRUISM AT ASCENSION MERCY HOSPITAL

Ascension Mercy Hospital has an impressive history of volunteerism and fundraising that spans almost 70 years. Since 1958, volunteers have donated countless hours and helped raise more than \$1.5 million.

Last year, 115 active volunteers contributed nearly 22,000 hours of service. Some volunteers help patients navigate the hospital or provide transport. Others organize fundraisers or turn yarn and fabric into craft items that support both patients and Ascension Wisconsin Foundation.

After retiring from nursing, Lisa started volunteering at Ascension Mercy to give back to her community. She volunteers weekly with patient transport.

"Volunteering brings me great joy, and if I can bring a smile to a patient who is anticipating surgery or an anxious guest who needs directions to locate a family member who is hospitalized, then I've done my job well. Volunteering is my turn to give back to my

community, the community that has served my family and me," Lisa said.

Lisa also serves on the volunteer board, where fundraising is an important part of the work. One of the group's biggest fundraisers is its annual flower sale, a tradition that dates back more than 30 years. The sale has raised significant funds over the years, all benefiting the hospital and scholarships for the nursing and radiology program.

Next year will mark 20 years since Karen began volunteering at Ascension Mercy. After nearly three decades working at the hospital, she retired and chose to return as a volunteer and board member. She volunteers as a member of the "project ladies," who meet each week to sew, crochet, knit and embroider.

The "project ladies" fill the gift shop with embroidered dish towels, baby items, greeting cards, tooth pillows, walker bags and more. Last year, sales of their handmade items generated more than \$6,000 for the Foundation.

Fundraising is not the sole focus; however, some of their work is meant to simply make a patient's day a little better. The group also creates holiday tray favors that are placed on breakfast trays and small pillows for patients recovering from breast surgery.

"Mercy was such a big part of my life for so many years," Karen said. "Volunteering is my way of giving back to the Foundation and the community that has given so much to me."



Mercy Volunteers during their annual flower sale.

LETTER FROM YOUR FOUNDATION PRESIDENT



Racheal Faulks



I hope you've enjoyed reading our latest edition of The Spirit of Giving. Your generosity makes these stories possible, and I am honored that you choose to support Ascension Mercy Hospital.

Our operating rooms at Ascension Mercy will have the latest in surgical technology.

Patients recovering from a stroke, injury or other illness have a unique way to help them throughout their rehabilitation journey.

Volunteers at Ascension Mercy are making a positive impact for patients who walk through our hospital doors every day.

And so much more.

Today, and every day, we are truly grateful for your support. If you ever have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at giveAWF@ascension.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Racheal Faulks".

Racheal Faulks

President, Ascension Wisconsin Foundation

A legacy gift doesn't have to be complicated. For many people, it starts with one simple decision: including Ascension Wisconsin Foundation in a will, trust or beneficiary form alongside the people and causes they value most. Some choose to give a percentage of their estate. Others designate a retirement account or life insurance policy. The form matters far less than the intention behind it.

A legacy gift is a meaningful way to ensure the compassionate care you value today continues for future generations while reflecting the people, places and causes that have been important throughout your life.

Your gift can support whatever matters most to you at whichever Ascension Wisconsin hospital means the most to you.

Questions about legacy giving? Contact Maria Betts, Planned Giving Officer, at maria.betts@ascension.org or 414-454-9495.

Learn more at giveAWFlegacy.org

