

# Volunteer Services Newsletter

December 2024



## Allina Health's volunteer leaders gather to look back, and look ahead

At our second Annual Meeting, 25 leaders of volunteer programs from across Allina Health gathered to share ideas, learn from each other, and plan for the future.

Dr. D'Andre Carpenter, Senior Vice President, System Chief Nursing Executive spoke candidly with Volunteer Services leaders about the diverse set of challenges and opportunities facing healthcare today.

He shared his perspectives on the value our volunteers bring to our work, and the important role volunteers play in the future of Allina Health.



**Dr. D'Andre Carpenter, Senior Vice President, System Chief Nursing Executive with Volunteer Services team members.**

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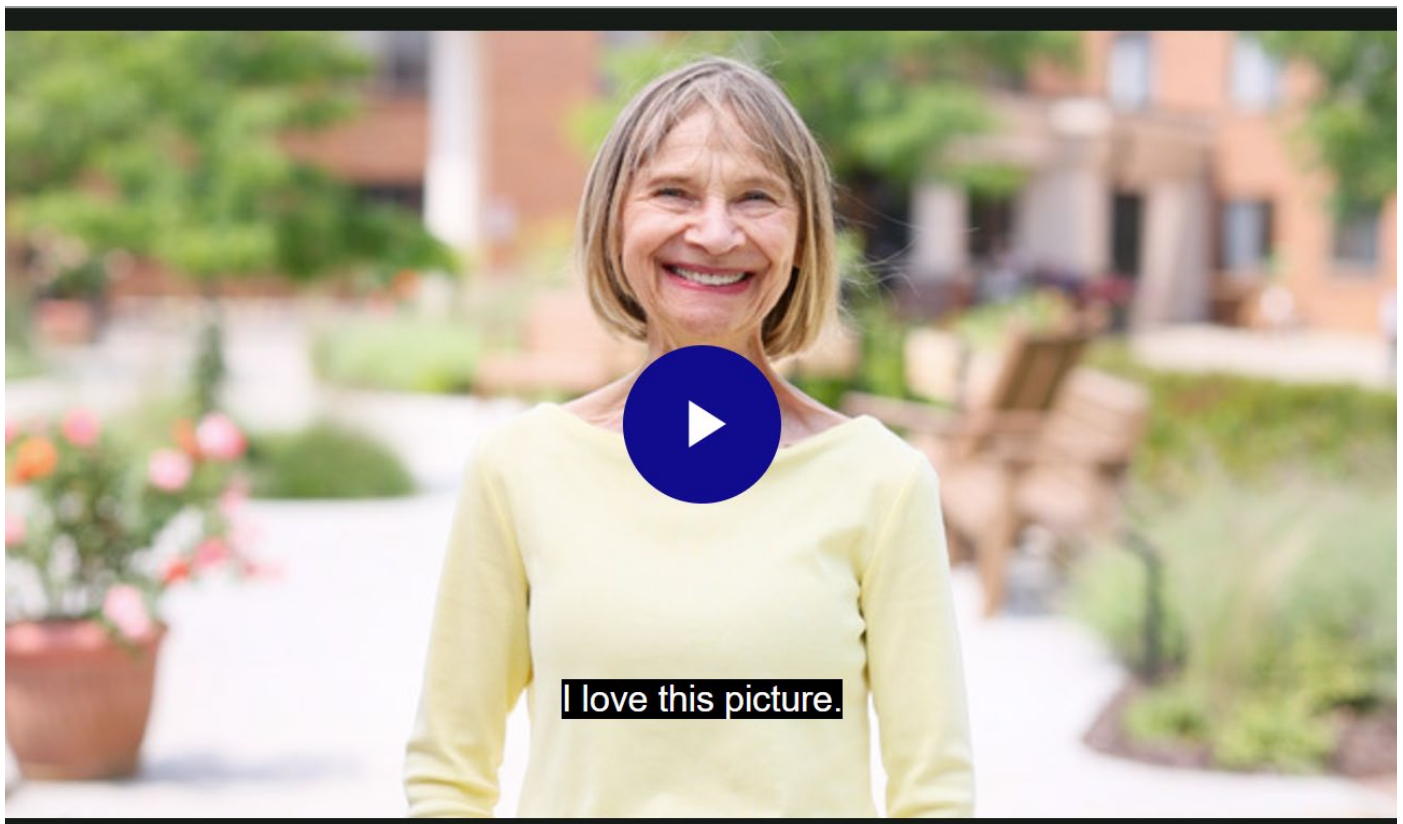
# Volunteer brings light to people in life's twilight

“If I light up somebody else's life,  
it lights up my own.

Volunteer Kathy Miller says that's especially true of her time with Allina Health Hospice, a special unit within the volunteer ranks that supports patients who are at the end of life. In the video below, Kathy explains how she came to the work and what she enjoys most about it.

Volunteering happens in private homes, assisted living centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes and residential hospice facilities. Volunteers who work directly with patients are considered part of the care team, but typically act independently. They get regular help from volunteer coordinators who provide updates on patients and their care.

"I always feel supported," Kathy said. "I've never felt alone."



In this video, Kathy explains how she came to the work and what she enjoys most about it.



## Volunteering adds meaning to pre-med students' journey

Jillian and McKenna began their volunteer journeys at **Abbott Northwestern Hospital** earlier this year, each serving in the Piper Breast Center. Their volunteer service is a steppingstone to their long-term goal to become physicians. Both are pre-med college students. Jillian and McKenna play an important role in patient experience by welcoming patients, assisting them with robes before diagnostic appointments, and offering support as they wait. While they each have full schedules with college classes and jobs in the medical field, it is the time they make each week to volunteer that adds meaning to their journey.



**“Volunteering makes me feel like I get to be part of something important, it is a really special community here. I look forward to coming every week.”**

~ McKenna, Piper Breast Center volunteer and pre-med student



**“I know it's not an easy road for some of them. I'm glad they feel safe and comfortable being here and that they can share their stories with me.”**

~ Jillian, Piper Breast Center volunteer and pre-med student



**Find volunteer opportunities near you**



## From patient to volunteer

On November 25th, 2014, Dave Bancroft suffered a hemorrhagic stroke. He underwent neurosurgery and three months in Courage Kenny's Transitional Rehabilitation Program (TRP). After returning home he wanted to get back to the activities he knew and loved so he joined as a participant in Courage Kenny's adaptive waterski and alpine skiing programs. Several years later, he became a cycling volunteer to support other participants in adaptive sports and recreation.



“ I soon discovered that as a volunteer, other participants in the program were relating to me because I was a stroke survivor, and my hope was that I could then be an inspiration to them. This became a huge benefit to me because it gave me a purpose.

~ Dave Bancroft, volunteer with Courage Kenny Adaptive Sports and Recreation



## After 39 years and 10 months of service to others, Mercy Hospital Unity Campus volunteer Judy Sorensen retires

### Why did you become a volunteer?

I became a volunteer because as a visitor at Unity one day I noticed the volunteers working there and thought that this would be something I would enjoy.

### What are 1-2 of your favorite things about volunteering?

One my favorite things about being a volunteer was the friendships I made. Everyone was so nice. It also made me feel that I was doing something rewarding.

### What would you say to someone who is thinking about volunteering, but undecided?

I would tell them how much I enjoyed volunteering there and how rewarding it was. I would tell them to try it!



Judy Sorensen served as a Messenger volunteer for four decades.

## Patient goes out of her way thank volunteer

An elderly patient was leaving the hospital when she realized that she had locked her keys in her car, and she didn't know what to do. Barbara, a dedicated Guest Services volunteer, saw her distress and approached the situation with compassion to get the patient the help she needed. The following day, Lucy Pilgrim-Rukavina, the Volunteer Services Coordinator at St. Francis, received a call from the patient expressing her deep appreciation for Barbara's help. The patient stated, "I don't know what I would have done without her help."

“ I don't know what I would have done without her help.”

The next week, the patient made a special trip back to the hospital when Barbara was next scheduled, to deliver a thank you gift to her. Barbara made this patient feel seen and supported. A little goes a long way – thank you, Barbara!



**Barbara has been volunteering at St. Francis Regional Medical Center for five years.**



## Fitness & Aquatics volunteer John Haggerty



**John is a volunteer with Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute in Stillwater.**

For 14 years, John Haggerty has been a beloved volunteer with the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute in Stillwater. He began volunteering in 2012 in the adaptive horseback riding program called Courage Kenny Riders, which ended in 2022.

Today, John volunteers in the Neurosplash program; an exercise swim class for those with neurological disabilities. He assists clients in the pool while providing lots of encouragement and support.

John states that “being associated with parents, therapists and other volunteers is extremely rewarding and gratifying.” The staff and participants at Courage Kenny in Stillwater give John a huge shout out and thank you for all he has done and continues to do for the program.

# Happy Holidays

## Allina Health volunteer opportunities:

- Hospitals & Clinics
- Rehabilitation
- Aquatics & Fitness
- Hospice
- Adaptive Sports & Recreation
- Youth Vision Screening

Please invite your friends, family members, and coworkers to join you in volunteering with Allina Health.

You are our very best volunteer recruiters!

[Find volunteer opportunities near you](#)



Mercy Hospital President Michael Johnston (left) and his turkey friend Kristina McDonald (Supervisor Patient Care Services, RN) ham it up (or turkey it up?) during Thanksgiving week.

## Thank you, volunteers!

From all of us at Allina Health, we wish you a happy holiday season! Thank you for creating a warm atmosphere and caring presence for our patients, participants, visitors, employees, and communities we serve.

We are truly grateful for your service.

