

Volunteer Services Newsletter

July 2024



New volunteer software will improve volunteer online experience with Allina Health

In October 2024, Allina Health Volunteer Services will transition to a new volunteer management software

What you can expect:

- Log in and see your volunteer information, update your contact information, and more!
- Make it easier to stay in touch with your Allina Health Volunteer Coordinator.
- Streamline onboarding experience for new volunteers.
- Simplify completion and tracking of annual compliance requirements.
- Make it easier to find and see all the ways you can volunteer with Allina Health.
- Improve Allina Health's ability to create efficiencies, streamline processes, and maximize volunteer program potential to better serve our patients and communities.

User tip sheets for volunteers will be available in September.

In this edition:

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This October, look for this icon to access your volunteer account, search opportunities, and more!

Hospital volunteers ease distress

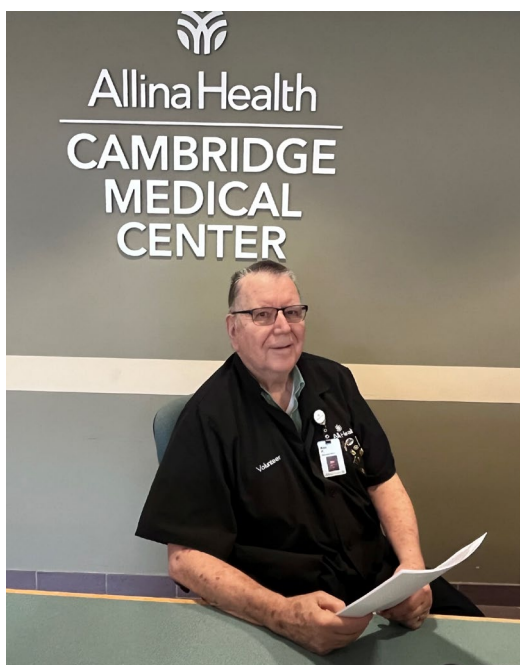
Waiting in a hospital lobby while a loved one is in surgery can be a stressful and emotionally charged experience for family or friends. Volunteers play an important role in many facets of guest and patient experience, including lending a hand or a reassuring presence during stressful times.

“The volunteer working in the waiting room was FANTASTIC. I could tell she had been putting out fires everywhere, and she just swooped in and helped this family member despite her anger and distress.

I can't express how good it felt to know we have someone like that at one of the last points of contacts for our patient's families, who clearly cares about what she does and the people she sees. I would like to let her know how impressed and grateful I was for her today.” ~ Alisa Adducci, Nurse at Abbott Northwestern Hospital



Jan, Surgical Services Waiting Area Volunteer at Abbott Northwestern Hospital



Ron Patrick,
Cambridge Medical Center volunteer

“I saw so much compassion in Ron yesterday while he was helping a patient.

The patient came in to see her husband who was hospitalized, the patient was very upset and started crying. Ron sat and talked with her for a while and then he got up and gave her a hug, that you could tell she really needed.

I want to recognize Ron for going above and beyond showing the patient how we care for them at Allina. Thank you for everything you do Ron!!”

~ April Fredrickson, staff member at Cambridge Medical Center

“Even before COVID, I always said that I wanted to try, somehow, to leave this world a little better than I found it.



Mark Lopez became a volunteer at Mercy Hospital, Unity Campus, in February of 2022.

From patient to volunteer

A COVID Story, by Mark Lopez

On December 23, 2020, I was admitted, via ambulance, to Unity Hospital with COVID-19 infection, respiratory failure and a fever of 103. And COVID was only the beginning.

I was started on BI-PAP. This did not work, and I was intubated and put into a medically induced coma. During the coma, kidney failure required dialysis. When I came out of the coma in mid-January 2021, I could not walk, talk, eat, or care for myself. A feeding tube was put in place as the ventilator tube had injured my vocal cords enough to make proper swallowing difficult. At some point, I experienced COVID nightmares which made any nightmares I had up to that point in my life, or since, feel like light-hearted comedy. Not to mention the near-death experience I sincerely believe I experienced. A few days later while recovering, or trying to, I had a bowel obstruction and perforation with sepsis requiring emergency surgery. Recovering from this surgery, atrial fibrillation had me moved to the cardiac unit. Thus, I was inpatient at the Unity, Mercy and Abbott Northwestern campuses from December 23, 2020, to February 20, 2021.

Nearly every day from January 2021 to this day, I have been plagued with the question: why did I, of all people, survive all of this? I am still in therapy for PTSD and survivor's guilt. There is one question, however, that I do know the answer to, in no uncertain terms. And every day I think about the Allina nurses, doctors, nursing assistants, RTs, paramedics, EMTs, therapists and medical techs who saved my life (more than once), as they imperiled their own. I owe them my life. Words adequate enough to express my thanks and gratitude to them quite simply do not exist. This is a debt that I can never, ever repay.

Even before COVID, I always said that I wanted to try, somehow, to leave this world a little better than I found it. This sentiment has now been magnified exponentially. This has changed my life in a way that I don't know if they would ever fully understand. But it is my sincere hope that they will see this story, and to know that every day I strive, as best I can, to be a good person. I want them to know that this is why I became a volunteer. I am trying, even if in a miniscule way, to give something back for the extraordinary gift they have given me.

A simple invitation to join can transform a life

Natalie Rahn is a long-time adaptive sports and recreation participant, and also a peer visitor volunteer with Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. Her family has a saying - "life is good." But after Natalie's father passed away, when she said these words, she no longer felt it was true.

She was at adaptive waterski program when Kutchen, an adaptive waterski volunteer, suggested that Natalie try alpine skiing. Natalie thought she was crazy but decided to give it a try that winter.

After becoming more involved with the adaptive sports and recreation community, Natalie once again felt that her family's saying was true. **She continues to say "Life is Good" with her family and friends and gives credit to that Courage Kenny volunteer** who did one simple act by extending her hand and opening up a door to a new community of accepting friends.



Natalie Rahn, participant and volunteer with Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute

“ Courage Kenny helped me get back to my old self - Life is Good.



Kutchen (3rd from right), volunteer with adaptive waterski at Lake Owasso, Shoreview.

Art of Possibilities

Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute

The Art of Possibilities show was held May-June at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute in Golden Valley.

The opening reception drew over 300 people in attendance along with over 40 fabulous volunteers!

Over 500 pieces of art were submitted in total and to date, over 100 of those pieces have sold -with all profits going directly to the artists.

It was an exceptional, successful event again this year. A big thank you to all our volunteers who made it possible!

[Learn more here](#)



Rita Dauka, volunteer with Art of Possibilities and Adaptive Ski & Snowboard



Susan Hodder Volunteer of Excellence Award

Now Accepting Nominations!

Do you know an amazing Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute volunteer?

Nominate them today for the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute's Susan Hodder Volunteer of Excellence Award!

[Learn more here](#)



[See all Allina Health volunteer opportunities here](#)



Featured Volunteer Opportunities

Coon Rapids Clinic

Join the growing team of volunteers at one of Allina Health's busiest clinics!

Welcome Desk volunteers:

As a Welcome Desk volunteer, you will welcome patients and visitors, look up appointments and help patients get to their destination stress free. Time commitment is one morning or afternoon per week.

[Learn more here](#)

Hospice

Share your skills and talents with our hospice patients, their families and caregivers, and the life you change may be your own.

Featured areas in need for volunteers:

- Caregiver respite
- Companionship
- Hair stylists
- Pet therapy
- Patients living with severe dementia

Locations in need of volunteers include Blaine, Buffalo, Cambridge, Coon Rapids, Faribault, Monticello, Northfield, and St. Michael.

[Learn more here](#)



Courage Kenny Adaptive Sports and Recreation

Join a fun and active community of volunteers to deliver exciting adaptive sports and recreation opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities. Programs take place in the Twin Cities and surrounding communities.

Fall and Winter volunteer opportunities:

- Fall: Bowling, Pickleball, Rock climbing, Wheelchair Basketball
- Winter: Nordic Ski, Alpine Ski and Snowboard

Special Events:

- Wheelchair Football in partnership with Move United: September 14-15, National Sports Center, Blaine, MN
- Courage Kenny Classic Wheelchair Basketball Tournament: November 1-3, time and location TBD

[Learn more here](#)

Contact: CKRivolunteerservice@allina.com 612-775-2728

Aquatics and Fitness at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute

Children's Swim Lessons:

Share your love of the water (in our warm pool!) with children learning how to swim. Volunteers assist certified staff who lead the lessons. Classes are offered weeknights and Saturdays mornings in Golden Valley and Stillwater.

NeuroSplash:

Assist people who have experienced a neurological injury in a NeuroSplash Class that focuses on range of motion, seated balance, standing, walking and core strengthening. This class utilizes shallow depth water only. Volunteer shifts are weekday mornings in Golden Valley and Stillwater.

[Learn more here](#)

[See all Allina Health volunteer opportunities here](#)

